Why I Am a Prophetic Futurist

by Glen Burch

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Please feel free to quote me; attribution would be a blessing.

Also by the author: *Why I Am a Trinitarian*, *The Dispensational Basis of John's Gospel*, *Abraham's Progress in the Covenants of God*, *The Economy of the Pastoral Epistles*, *The Mystery of Godliness*, *Notes on Titus*, *Tithing and Other Gifts* – all these can be downloaded from:

https://gracebibleofvirginia,org

Prefatory Note: Most of the text translations in the following work are my own, aided by the *BibleWorks* software application, which is itself based on the Masoretic Hebrew text and the ABS Greek NT text. I have tended toward a literal translation, except where the idiom was too obscure to make good sense in English. As an example of idiomatic translation, where I have used "surely" in a text, it likely represents the figure *Polyptōton*, which does not translate well literally (see *Figures*, p.276). I have also relied heavily on the lexicons of Brown-Driver-Briggs (Hebrew), Thayer (Greek), and Bullinger (Greek), and the Greek vocabulary of Moulton & Milligan. I have used various articles in *ISBE* for dating, as well as for other historical information (such as the succession of Assyrian kings).

Where I have supplied an elliptical word, or words, to make for smoother English in a translation, I have used *italic* font. I have also used *italic* font for Hebrew and Greek words cited, and I have transliterated them into Roman alphabet using the spelling conventions of *Strong's Concordance* (the Dictionaries at the back). Apart from Scriptures cited, I have occasionally used *italic* font to emphasize my own words. Wherever God has spoken the word "**behold**" (most often Heb. *hinnêh*, or Gk. *duo*), I have double-underlined it in bold font – this is God's own emphasis of parts of His word. I have treated "**Amen**" in the Lord Jesus' discourses in the same manner, as well as divine interjections like **Alas** (Heb. *ahâh*), **Hah** (Heb. *hôwy*), **Woe** (Gk. *ouai*), **Ha** (Gk. *oua*) and a few others. I have not altered the font of these words where men have spoken them on their own behalf.

For the most part, I have avoided the annoying use of exclamation points, except in direct quotes where the use of the imperative mood seemed to demand it. An exclamation point is, in effect, a raising of the voice. Those authors who make frequent use of them are what I call the "screamers". If you enjoy being screamed at from the pulpit, you will likely *not* appreciate this work. Whether you agree with my teaching points, or not, my purpose has been to provoke you to think, not to provoke you from your seat in hysterical enthusiasm.

In cases of two-word expressions, in which both have the definite article, these are emphatic. In some cases a literal translation of both articles makes for very awkward English. In order to capture the emphasis in these instances I have

capitalized both words. An example will suffice – instead of “the secret of the lawlessness” I have translated this as “the Secret of Lawlessness”.

Note that I have not included an index. The work seemed sufficient without it, considering that it is published in an Adobe Acrobat file format, which is eminently word-searchable.

This is a serious study – the casual reader may find it tedious.

Abbreviations Used and Bibliography:

Abomination of Desolation, The, Athanasius Iskander, series of articles published in *Parousia*, Sep 1997 - Jan 2003, https://ukmidcopts.org/download/239/

ABS – American Bible Society, *The Greek New Testament*, 3rd Edition

aor. – Greek aorist tense

Aram. – Aramaic

Baker’s Bible Atlas, Charles F. Pfeiffer, Baker

BDB – Brown-Driver-Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Oxford University Press

Bride and the Body, The, C.H.Welch, Berean Publishing Trust

cent. – century

Companion Bible – KJV with extensive notes and appendices by E.W.Bullinger, Zondervan

cp. – compare

Deuteronomy 32:8 and The Sons of God, Michael Heiser, Bibliotheca Sacra 158 (January-March 2001) 52-74

fem. – feminine

Figures – Figures of Speech Used in the Bible, E.W.Bullinger, Baker

Fourth Gentile Kingdom, The, C.G.Ozanne, Henry E. Walter

Gk. – Greek

hapax – Gk. “once”, i.e., a single, unique occurrence of a word or phrase in the Heb. or Gk. (Gk. NT, unless *LXX* is specified)

Heb. – Hebrew

imper. – imperative mood of a verb

indic. – indicative mood of a verb

In the Beginning – *In the Beginning, Compelling Evidence for Creation and the Flood*, 8th ed., Walt Brown, Center for Scientific Creation

ISBE – International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, editor G.W.Bromiley, Eerdmans

Kingdom Is Coming, The (Seed & Bread #194), O.Q.Sellers, https://seedandbread.org

Kingdom Rebellion, The (Seed & Bread #114), O.Q.Sellers, https://seedandbread.org

Kingdom Restraints, The (Seed & Bread #113), O.Q.Sellers, https://seedandbread.org

Lexicon – A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament, E.W.Bullinger, Bagster

lit. – literal, literally

LXX – Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament, edited by Alfred Rahlfs.

masc. – masculine

mss. – manuscripts, i.e., hand-written copies of the Scriptures

Moulton & Milligan – *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, Eerdmans

MT – Masoretic (Hebrew) Text

neut. – neuter

Number – Number in Scripture, E.W.Bullinger, Kregel

occ., occs. – occurrence(s)

NT – New Testament

OT – Old Testament

pl. – plural

sim. – similar

sing. – singular

Revelation, The, E.W.Bullinger, Kregel

Rich Man and Lazarus, The, E.W.Bullinger, 1992 reprint by The Open Bible Trust

Sorting Prophetic Material (#SS33), O.Q.Sellers, https://seedandbread.org

Stars – Witness of the Stars, The, E.W.Bullinger, Kregel

Text of the Old Testament, The, Ernst Würthwein, Eerdmans

Thayer – *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Joseph Henry Thayer, Zondervan

Thirty-Five Contrasts Between the Kingdom of the Heavens and the Thousand Year Reign of Christ (#SS29), O.Q.Sellers, https://seedandbread.org

This Prophecy, C.H.Welch, Berean Publishing Trust

transl. – translation, translated

Wars – Wars of the Jews, Flavius Josephus, transl. by Wm. Whiston, Kregel

Webster's – Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, G. & C. Merriam Co.

Y' – abbreviation of Yahweh

KJV, NAS, NIV, NKJV, YLT – common abbreviations of English Bible versions

Introduction

To get straight to the point – is God done with the Jews as His covenant people? In this book I will attempt to give a studied answer. But this will also be a qualified answer, because God *is* doing something different today than He did in His covenant relations with the sons of Abraham. In today's "dispensation of the secret" (Eph.3:9) God is working out a prior, hidden plan (that is, prior to His revelation to Abraham concerning "all *the* families of the ground" – Gen.12:3). This prior plan concerns a super-reconciliation (Gk. *apokatallassō*, Col.1:20) of the heavenly "principalities and powers" and the earthly "body of Christ", with blessings for us "in the heavenlies" (Eph.1:3). In effect, we have been brought into the company of those unseen heavenly principalities, although we spring from Adam, a creation from the dust of the ground.

Today God is dealing with people individually, not with nations collectively. Humanly speaking, the working out of this divine plan for "the heavenlies" can be viewed as an interruption (some have called it a "parenthesis") in God's covenant plan for the earth. Many preterists believe God started something new, *permanently*, with His revelations to Paul in his prison epistles – Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, 2 Timothy (and the doctrinally aligned 1 Timothy and Titus). They believe that God did not interrupt His earthly plan, but terminated it, when He cut off His covenant people from being a nation before Him. This also seems to be the view of some covenant-believing Christians, who view the "Gentile" church as having supplanted Israel from their New Covenant privileges. But is this Replacement Theology a correct application of "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Tim.2:15)?

This book principally addresses the full-preterist perspective. I can agree to disagree whether certain prophecies have been fully filled, or not. With the exception of a few prophecies in 1 and 2 Timothy, all the remaining prophetic Scripture is about Israel – or the nations in their relation to Israel and the earth. So, if you believe that God is done with the Jews, then logically you must believe either –

a. that all OT and most NT prophecy has been fulfilled, or
b. that the unfulfilled parts have been *rescinded*.

Introduction

With so many expository books on prophecy available, it is reasonable to ask, "Why another?" Although preterist interpretations of prophecy are centuries old, my exposure to them is relatively new. And I have found some of preterism's specific interpretations so fanciful, so plastic in their use of Scriptural texts, that there seemed to be room for a more rigorous and disciplined approach to understanding prophecy. I am a Scripture literalist – that is, I believe one's first attempt to make sense of Scripture should be to use the language in its most literal sense, as the people first hearing the Hebrew and Greek words would have done. If that fails to make good sense of a text, only then should we seek some indirect or hidden meaning. And I consider that if God has hidden a meaning from us, it may be His intent to keep it hidden until the correct group of people comes along to reveal it to them. That is certainly no warrant for us to manufacture a meaning out of our imagination. Thus, where this book has strayed into conjecture, I will tell you plainly, so that you might test my theories with extra scrutiny.

On the other hand, to turn large swaths of Bible text into symbols or "allegory", as the preterists sometimes do, is a great mistake. Once on that slippery slope of allegorical interpretation, you can make Scripture mean almost anything you want. A simple example may suffice here at the start. I have been told that the "Mystery Babylon" of Revelation chapters 14, 16, 17, and 18 is an allegory meaning Jerusalem, and specifically the Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. But this is sound-bite Bible study, typical of the shallow student. As far as I can see, this interpretation is promulgated for no other reason than that the full-preterists want to see apostate Israel condemned in every way possible. What they fail to consider is the many OT prophecies against Babel/Babylon as an enemy of Israel and Jerusalem, and the convergence of these more ancient prophecies with the Babylon prophecy of Revelation. The word "Babel" occurs 287 times in the OT, but you will not find exhaustive studies concerning Babel in the preterist literature. True, many OT citations of "Babel" are in historical contexts or immediate prophecies of the Babylonian captivity (BC 586). But at least five chapters in Isaiah and Jeremiah are devoted to a Babylon that does not yet exist. In general, preterism fails to "compare spiritual *things* with spiritual *things*" (1 Cor. 2:13), a fundamental principle of Biblical interpretation. In your search for hidden meanings, I urge you not to discard these fundamentals. I would also challenge the

reader, “Dare we set aside any prophecy as no longer fulfillable?” Jesus Himself said,

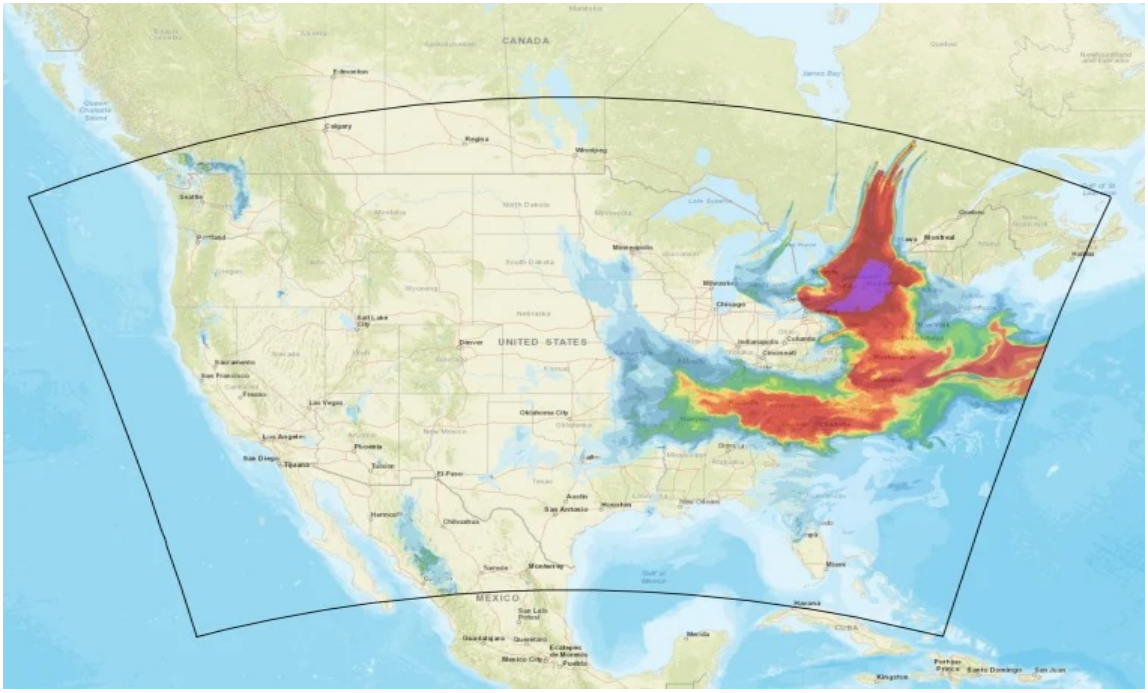
> “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, **or the prophets**: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Mat.5:17-18, *KJV*

The last sentence concerning fulfilling the whole law must be seen as including the prophets. And it will be fulfillment to the finest detail.

Apostate Israel is certainly depicted in no uncertain terms in the Revelation. Just look at the persecution of the “two witnesses” in “the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” (Rev.11:8) This textual self-explanation takes the guesswork completely out, that apostate Israel will be at work in latter-day Jerusalem (unnamed). It also means that a fiery conflict is coming between a faithful Israel and an apostate Israel. I suspect that a large, fence-sitting portion of Israel between those extremes will become the nation born in a day – those rescued and fed in the wilderness in Revelation 12.

One reason for defending an allegorical Babylon in Revelation was given to me by a sea-faring man, who claimed that at sea level in the northern Persian Gulf, the blaze of a burning Babylon would not be visible almost 300 miles away. But that view reflected an unsupported assumption that the seafaring merchants of Rev.18:17 were standing on the decks of their ships, and docked in the Persian Gulf, when they witnessed “the smoke of her burning” (v.18). What the text specifically says is that “they stood from afar” as they watched her “smoke”. Such is the difference between careless and careful interpretation. Also, anyone who has lived near an ash-erupting volcano or massive forest fires knows how far smoke and ash can carry when they reach high into the atmosphere. I recall standing on a mountaintop in central Idaho and the view was obscured by moderately dense smoke all-around, accompanied by an aroma of wood burning. A few days later in the Fraser River Valley of British Columbia I saw the major sources of that smoke – forest fires burning over 300 miles away. More recently (Aug 2021) I heard a news report of a massive forest fire in central Oregon generating enough smoke to

be seen in New York City, about 3,000 miles away. While making changes for the Second Edition, I experienced days of heavy smoke in Central Virginia, originating from wildfires northwest of Montreal. This smoke map shows flows extending beyond 1,000 miles.



A screenshot of a radar-based analysis by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration taken late Tuesday afternoon shows near-surface smoke over the U.S. NOAA – date 6-6-2023

The photo below shows the effect of those same fires across the Atlantic Ocean (air distance from Montreal to Lisbon is 5,224 miles).

A yellowish cloud of smoke from huge forest fires in Canada is seen near Cabo Raso Lighthouse, in Cascais, Portugal on June 29, 2023. Horacio Villalobos/Corbis via Getty Images

What those future merchants dealing with Babylon will see is her *smoke*, and possibly not the fire itself. How "far off" they will be, as witnesses to the

destruction, is not specified. Further, it is wholly reasonable that some of these merchants and seamen will be traveling overland to Babylon city ("sin cities" have always attracted some of the sea-going) – so witnessing the fire itself is not ruled out. Now, is this interpretation more reasonable than allegorizing "Babylon" into Jerusalem with no real textual basis? Decide for yourself. And expect more of this kind of factual, textual reasoning throughout this book.

We are also going to examine definitions of Hebrew and Greek words, as well as some of the so-called word "particles" that are often ignored in our English translations, as though they were meaningless. I believe that God means what He says – ignore parts of His word at the peril of misinterpretation and misunderstanding. I do not pretend to have all the answers, and I will sometimes point out where a text has confounded my understanding. I hope you are able to improve upon my meager efforts here.

I have reviewed the Bible studies of other men that were light on Scripture, but heavy in man's words explaining a few of God's words. Many prophetic scriptures are quite extensive, and I have seen fit to quote them extensively. In part, this has been needful in order to capture context. But seeing that the word of God is in itself powerful (Heb.4:12), I make no apology for my extensive quotes and I hope to have captured the abundance of God's truth in my English translations of these prophecies.

At the start of this project, I was seeking to answer the doctrine of preterism with a better prophetic paradigm than the preterists have put forward. In the course of investigating what was spoken by the prophets of Israel, I found many riddles difficult to comprehend. If you cherry-pick your texts, exposition is made easier, but less accurate. Likewise, if you gloss over difficulties by using allegorical and symbolic interpretation. But do these easier approaches do justice to the word of God, however difficult it may be to comprehend? Taking short-cuts in exposition, in effect, makes God out to be a capricious author, Who can only be understood by smoothing out the difficulties in His word. I would compare such a view of God to the Greco-Roman model of Zeus/Jupiter with all his human arbitrariness. I believe we can do better as servants of God.

Introduction

As this book project progressed, it became clear to me that it really needed to cover a wide range of prophecy concerning Israel. Otherwise, I might be guilty of the same cherry-picking that I object to in others. It is easy to overlook some detail that may make a huge difference in what we conclude on a Scripture topic. In the final book of Scripture (in terms of when it was written), Paul counseled –

"All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable…" 2 Tim.3:16

Therefore, it seemed incumbent upon me to consider everything possible in this vast subject, even though some of it is "hard to be understood" (2 Pet.3:16, *KJV*).

Another reason for this book is that we all have an influence over our neighbors for truth or untruth. We might be living today through the "last days" (2 Tim.3:1) of the dispensation of grace. Seeing that we know not when the transition from the current dispensation back to the covenants may occur, it is possible that our example and words may ultimately influence someone going through Daniel's final "seven". Although this will not be our personal conflict in the Body of Christ, it ought to concern us whether a future individual lets himself fall under the sway of the Beast and the False Prophet, or instead becomes a help to persecuted Israel (Rev.12:16). Is it not better to plant seeds of truth today for a future generation, rather than just be cheerleaders from the sidelines in that future? In the final analysis, "all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable", so let us turn it to the profit of all.

The Purpose of Prophecy

In general, pro-phecy (Gk. *prophēteia*) is to "speak" (Gk. *phēmi*) "for" (Gk. *pro*) God. Moses was, perhaps, the greatest prophet of old, but he had little to say that was distinctly predictive of future times. One of his utterances for Yahweh was the great chapter of Deuteronomy 28, which included the promise of blessings (vv.1-14) and the threat of curses (vv.15-68). These blessings and curses were general in nature, and did not pinpoint specific times or places they would occur. They would be tied to circumstance, that is, the behavior of the covenant people.

This Mosaic example of prophecy should be used as a model for evaluating all the prophecies which followed him. The purpose of all prophecy has been to stimulate an obedient response in Yahweh's people, Israel, and secondarily in the other nations. Note how often we find Moses cajoling the Nation to obey the Lord, sometimes in the heat of temper. It often seems as if he were leading a band of delinquent children through the desert, and not adults who should have served as better examples of God's people.

Looking at another general prophecy in Deuteronomy –

> "Now it will come to pass *when* all these things come in upon you, the blessings and the curses which I have set before you, and you bring *them* back to your heart among all the nations where Yahweh your Elohim has driven you, and you return up to Yahweh your Elohim and hear His voice, according as all that I *am* commanding you today, you and your sons, with your whole heart and with your whole life. Then will Yahweh your Elohim turn back your captivity and have compassion on you and return and gather you from all the peoples where Yahweh your Elohim has scattered you. If it comes to pass your being driven into the extremity of the heavens, from there Yahweh your Elohim will gather you and from there He will take you." Deu.30:1-4

This pattern of threatened dispersal and captivity, followed by promises of re-gathering, is repeated throughout most of the OT prophets, taking many different forms, different times, and different adversaries. I have underlined portions of the text above to show the underlying purpose of this "stick and carrot" approach in God disciplining His people – they must return unreservedly to Yahweh and obey

His commandments. That was, and still is, the whole point of prophecy – to educate, to correct, to discipline. And observe that the great abundance of prophecy dealt with Israel, so that they might become that promised "priestly kingdom" (Exo.19:6; 1 Pet.2:9). But occasionally God also spoke concerning the nations with whom Israel came into contact. Only rarely in the current "dispensation of the secret" (Eph.3:9) do we find prophetic warnings, like 1 Tim.4:1-7 and 2 Tim.3:1-15. I will have more to say about "last days" and "perilous times" of the current dispensation in a later chapter, **Is Today Part of "the Coming Age"?**

By the way, this same pattern of "stick and carrot" is repeated constantly throughout the book of Proverbs, for example –

> "On *the* lips of a discerning one is found wisdom, but a rod *is* for *the* back of one lacking sense." Pro.10:13

The reward of wisdom and the punishment of folly are continually contrasted in Proverbs, making it a classic book of prophecy after the Mosaic model.

A brief note about divine names – I have chosen to use "Yahweh" throughout this book. That was the personal name that God gave to Israel to identify Himself. The *KJV* use of "LORD" follows the *LXX* use of Gk. *Kurios*, but this is a generic title, not a personal name. "Lord" also translates Heb. *Adôwn*, which is a title and not a name. Occasionally Yahweh was shortened to "Yah". I have also chosen to transliterate "*Elohim*", "*El*" and "*Elyôwn*" where they occur, because all three are translated "God" in most versions. How else can we distinguish which "name" God used for Himself, except to cite them in the original Hebrew?

Conditionality in Prophecy

Implied Conditionality

Considering that the purpose of prophecy is corrective, it should not surprise us that there is implied conditionality in the forecasts of doom uttered by the prophets. A very notable example is from Jonah –

> "Then began Jonah to enter into *the* city *on the* first day's walk, and he proclaimed and said, 'Yet forty days and Nineveh *will be* overthrown!'" Jon.3:4

Note how there are no conditions expressed in Jonah's proclamation. Now, after his experience being swallowed by the great fish and his plea for salvation from it, do you think Jonah made up this threat in his own words? Or was this "the proclamation that I (Yahweh) am speaking to you" (Jon.3:2)? It seems unreasonable that Jonah would exaggerate the threat, although he was also a stubborn man. If the time element of forty days seems to be of Jonah's invention, note that there was no disapproval of this later, when Yahweh addressed Jonah's attitude problem.

But above all, why did the king of Nineveh not declare a holiday to eat, drink and be merry, if such a doom was unconditional? Instead he proclaimed fasting, sackcloth and ashes for his people (Jon.3:5-7). The people and king of Nineveh understood the implied, underlying condition, "start obeying God, or else…"

And this is what Yahweh later told Jonah about the goal of his mission –

> "And will I not take pity upon Nineveh, the great city, which are in her more than one hundred twenty thousand men, who have not known between right hand and left hand – and much cattle?" Jon.4:11

This divine explanation rather shows that a wholesale destruction like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, was looming. This being the last word in that prophetic book gives it all the more force – it is the conclusion of the tale. Because the Ninevites "believed God" (Jon.3:5) and responded in repentance and humility, they were spared. And because the "forty days" of the prophecy was conditional too,

nothing happened after forty days. The simple, predictive part of this prophecy was what the Ninevites understood in their day. Its effect was to be almost immediate, but it did not come to pass as it was pronounced.

The book of Jonah gives no identifying information as to the date of Jonah's commission to Nineveh, or who their king was. 2 Ki.14:25 indicates Jonah had also prophesied about exploits of the Northern king Jeroboam II, who reigned BC 824-784. But when did Jonah make these unwritten prophecies – before Jeroboam was king, or during his reign? If we assume the latter, then Jonah might have been an active prophet ca. BC 820-780, which would have also been during the reign of either Samsi-Adad V or Adadnirari III – potential Assyrian kings at the time of Jonah's arrival at Nineveh. This would place his visit to Nineveh after Shalmaneser III, and before Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, all of whom were nemeses to the people of Northern or Southern Israel in their own times. I am trying to establish a time-frame for Jonah's 40-days-until-doom prophecy against Nineveh, because Nineveh eventually fell in BC 612, roughly two centuries after Jonah's proclamation. One could easily argue that Nineveh's overthrow was unrelated to Jonah, but it is also possible to take the view that the prophetic doom fell upon a later, disobedient generation. I shall uncover more examples of postponed prophecy below.

And consider that, in a later day, Hezekiah prayed for the salvation of Jerusalem from the threat of Sennacherib. That prayer included –

> "Yahweh of armies, Elohim of Israel, sitting on the cherubs, You *are* He, the Elohim by Yourself <u>to all the kingdoms of the earth</u>. You made the heavens and the earth." Isa.37:16

Seeing that God has mastery of the nations, I think it reasonable to view the later downfall of Nineveh as His eventual judgment in His controversy with the Assyrians. The Assyrians were also His instrument for a time to scourge His people Israel for their sins. So at the time of Jonah's visit to Nineveh, God was not finished using Assyria as His whip. I will deal more specifically with the phenomenon of multiple fulfillments in a later chapter, **Partial and Deferred Fulfillments**.

Prophetic Types and Shadows

Now, to take the book of Jonah out of its immediate historical interpretation, we need to consider what was said about it many centuries afterward –

> "But having answered, He (Jesus) said to them, 'A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For just as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. Men of Nineveh will rise in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah and, behold, a greater than Jonah *is* here.'" Mat.12:39-41

This NT interpretation of an OT event demonstrates Jesus' and the Holy Spirit's use of His prophetic word to express –

- types (Gk. *tupos*, "example"," pattern" – e.g., in Rom.5:14),
- antitypes (Gk. *antitupos*, "counterpart", "copy", "figure" in Heb.9:14; 1 Pet.3:21), and
- shadows (Gk. *skia* – e.g., Heb.8:5; 10:1; Col.2:17)

Of course, these would not have been apparent to the initial hearers of that word. Jesus referred to Jonah as a "sign" (Gk. *sēmeion*). Many of the types and shadows that I have become acquainted with anticipated Messiah's work in some respect. The "sign of Jonah the prophet" was the foreshadowing of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, but this sign was not for Jonah and his Ninevite hearers. And even later, it seems "the sign of Jonah the prophet" was lost on Jesus' hearers. We who have the completed word of God have a great benefit in the things we can compare, to see what matter is like another in His word. However, interpreting "types" and "signs", just like interpreting Jesus' parables, can become quite fanciful, if done out of context and without some restraint. Further, if our Bible study becomes a mere series of "sound bites", it will lack the required context to draw reasonable conclusions. We need to anchor our interpretations on the clear textual examples that are before our eyes.

Although later Scripture may draw upon earlier Scripture for types, shadows, and even allegory, this does not constitute a wholesale endorsement of the

allegorical approach to interpreting prophecy. Such an approach used on the book of Jonah, might dismiss that book as an allegorical fable that was meant to prefigure the death and resurrection of Christ. It is this dismissive attitude that is most objectionable in allegory-leaning interpretations of the prophets. Yes, many prophecies lack the detail that would make them perfectly clear as to outcome. It is God's prerogative to conceal what He wishes to conceal. But that gives us no authority to spin off allegorical explanations that will satisfy our desire to understand vague, or even fantastic prophecies. Where our understanding ends, our faith and humility should take over.

The Principle of Conditionality

Another text, directly quoting Yahweh, demonstrates how an explicit conditionality operates in prophecy –

> "Thus said Yahweh, 'Against all My evil neighbors who *are* touching My inheritance which I have caused My people Israel to inherit – Behold, I *am* plucking them from off their land, and *the* house of Judah I will pluck from their midst. Then it will come to pass after My uprooting them, I will return and have compassion on them and bring them back, each to his own inheritance and each to his land. Then it will come to pass **if** (Heb. *'îm*) they learn surely *the* ways of My people to swear by My name, 'Living Yahweh', as they taught My people to swear by Baal, then they will be built in the midst of My people. But **if** (*'îm*) they will not hear, then I will surely pluck up and destroy that nation' – an utterance of Yahweh." Jer.12:14-17

This is a figurative "Encircling" (*Epanadiplosis* – see *Figures*, p.245), Thus said Yahweh … utterance of Yahweh – that gives greater emphasis to the message thus encircled. I point out this example to demonstrate that figures of speech are not something fanciful we can imagine into a text. They have been scientifically catalogued by Bullinger in his encyclopedic master-work *Figures*. I recommend reading that work cover to cover, to gain an appreciation of the use of figures of speech in Biblical interpretation.

Note the two "**if**s" in the Jeremiah 12 text above. The "if" (Heb. *'îm*) is one of those language "particles" I referred to in the **Introduction** that needs careful

attention. *BDB* (pp.49-50) defines *'îm* as either a "hypothetical particle" (the case in this Jeremiah text) or the "interrogative particle". I believe that Jeremiah's warning here states an important principle: the conditionality of Yahweh's threats to tear down and His promises to restore peoples.

Even without the hypothetical particles, this next text teaches clearly the conditionality principle of Yahweh's prophetic threats and promises:

> "*The* **moment** I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to pluck up and to break down and to destroy, and that nation which I spoke against turns back from its evil, then I will repent over the evil that I planned to do toward it. And *the* **moment** I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to build and to plant, and then it does the evil in My sight to not hear My voice, then I will repent over the good which I spoke to make it glad." Jer.18:7-10

Note how the suddenness of the "moment" applies to Yahweh relenting His initial judgment. However, we often find delay in His taking *action*, after His relenting. Again, it is His prerogative to take action immediately or with delay, as He sees fit in His wisdom.

A specific instance of this conditionality principle is shown in a later Jeremiah prophecy –

> "Perhaps they will hear and they will turn, each from his evil way. Then I will repent toward the evil which I *am* planning to do to them because of the evil of their deeds." Jer.26:3 (also vv.13, 19)

We need to keep this divine principle in mind whenever we interpret how a prophecy has turned out in the history of its fulfillment – and whether it has seen a complete, or only a partial fulfillment. Yes, some texts appear to speak in absolutes, but contextual study demands that we keep this conditionality principle in mind. Let me give a few examples, besides the example of Jonah and Nineveh already cited.

> "In those days Hezekiah became sick toward dying, and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came to him and said to him, 'Thus said Yahweh: give charge to your household, for you *are* dying and will not live.'" Isa.38:1

This statement may seem unconditional on the face of it, but Hezekiah understood it otherwise, because he pled his case before Yahweh and was heard – 15 more years were added to his lifetime. In a sense, we might say that this prophecy was postponed another 15 years. We often find postponement in time-specific prophecies. How about this next one?

> "In year one for his (Darius') reigning, I, Daniel, discerned from the Scriptures the number of years which had come to pass of the word of Yahweh to Jeremiah the prophet, to fulfill in regard to the ruin of Jerusalem **seventy years**." Dan.9:2

Daniel had understood that the fulfillment of the following prophecy from Jeremiah was near –

> "Therefore, thus said Yahweh of armies, 'Because you have not heard My words, Behold, *I am* sending and I will take all *the* clans of the north – an utterance of Yahweh – and to Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babel, My servant, and I will bring them against <u>this land</u> and against those dwelling in it, and against all these nations round about. And I will exterminate them and set them for a horror and for hissing and for age-abiding ruins. And I will destroy from them *the* voice of mirth and voice of joy, voice of bridegroom and voice of bride, sound of millstones and light of lamp. And this whole land will become for a ruin, for a horror, and these nations will serve *the* king of Babel **seventy years**." Jer.25:8-11

The rest of chapter 25 makes it clear that the prophecy applied to 15 other nations besides Judah, but central to the prophecy was Judah, "<u>this land</u>". It appears from Daniel's expectant attitude, and his offering of "prayers and supplications with fasting, sackcloth and ashes" (Dan.9:3), that he perceived the restoration of the kingdom to be imminent. The answer to his prayer was an angelic announcement that another seventy times seven years were being added to postpone the full restoration (and Messianic kingdom) –

> "**Seventy sevens** are determined upon your people and upon your holy city – to finish the rebellion, and to seal up sins, and to cover guilt, and to bring in

righteousness of *the* ages, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint holy of holies." Dan.9:24

Some of what Jeremiah and Daniel had expected at the end of 70 years would now be stretched out over an additional 490 years instead. Yes, Cyrus' decree for Jewish captives to return and rebuild the Temple came at the end of the 70 years, and Babel was no longer dominant. Temple and city were eventually rebuilt, but Israel was now a vassal state and not the long-awaited Messianic kingdom. Although Daniel himself may have been ready for the kingdom, how many others shared his spiritual maturity? The listings of those returning from Babylon in those first years are detailed in Ezra chapter 2 and Nehemiah chapter 7, and they totaled only 42,360 of the Jewish captives. Cyrus' invitation to the Jews to return was open to all, so this seems to have been a very poor response, indeed. The Nation was not yet ready for restoration of a kingdom, so it was postponed for many more generations while this small, returning enclave grew back into a large nation. The "seventy years" aspect of Jeremiah's prophecy was conditional upon an obedient response from the people, and it was only partially fulfilled. For more insights on the book of Daniel's expansion of the 70 years, see **Appendix H: The Seventy Sevens of Daniel 9**.

Unconditional, Yet with Conditions

Although Rom.11:29 speaks of "the gifts and the calling of God" being "unrepented of", how are we to understand that? The rest of Romans chapter 11 is dealing with only a remnant of Israel receiving those gifts, and because of unbelief, some of the nations were brought into the blessing as an agent to provoke unbelieving Israel. Note that God did not rescind His blessings, but He did redistribute them in a way that men did not anticipate.

Elijah, in his flight to Sinai to save his life, declared that the Northern kingdom was entirely corrupted (1 Ki.19:10). And yet Yahweh had preserved 7,000 faithful whom Elijah knew nothing about (1 Ki.19:18). If God pronounced His blessings on a generation of Israel, but they proved themselves unworthy, then He would reserve those blessings (or some portion of them) for people of another time and circumstance. That was the oft-repeated cycle with Israel: the promise of kingdom restoration, followed by its deferment.

Conditionality in Prophecy

Yahweh relenting His prophecies of doom is mentioned in the following texts – Psa.106:45; Jer.15:6; 18:8,10; 26:3,13,19; 42:10; Joe.2:14; Amo.7:3,6 and Jon.3:10. Note how frequent they are in Jeremiah, in whose time doom was, indeed, imminent for Jerusalem and Judah. Some have pictured Yahweh as the God of wrath, but His many relentings show Him rather to be the God of kindness and mercy. He is also the God of "the purpose of the ages" (Eph.3:11), and He will not postpone His purpose indefinitely.

The Stick and the Carrot

Besides the blessings and the curses listed in Deuteronomy 28, referred to in the previous chapter, we have a similar statement in Leviticus 26, which I have divided into topical areas with these **Headings:**

Commandments:
"You will not make for a worthless image, nor erect for yourselves a pillar, nor will you set a stone figure in your land for bowing down toward it, for I *am* Yahweh your Elohim. You will keep My sabbaths and reverence My holy place – I *am* Yahweh.

Promise of Blessings for Obedience:
If (Heb. *'îm*) you walk by My statutes and keep My commandments and do them, then I will give your rains in their times, and the land will give its produce, and the tree of the field will give its fruit. And threshing will overtake vintage for you, and vintage will overtake sowing, and you will eat your bread to satisfying abundance, and you will dwell in security in your land. And I will give peace (Heb. *shâlôwm*) in the land, and you will lie down, and none *will be* causing terror. And I will make cease evil beasts from the land, and a sword will not pass through your land. And you will chase your enemies, and they will fall before you by *the* sword. And five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by *the* sword. Then I will turn to you and will make you fruitful and will multiply you, and I will establish My covenant with you. And you will eat the old *harvest* grown old, then you will bring out what has grown old from before the new. And I will set My dwelling in your midst, and My soul will not loathe you. And I will walk about in your midst, and I will become to you for Elohim, and you will become to Me for a people. I *am* Yahweh your Elohim, Who brought you out from *the* land of Egypt, from becoming slaves to them, and I have broken *the* poles of your yokes, and I caused you to walk upright.

Threats of Punishment for Disobedience:

But **if** (*'îm*) you will not listen to Me, and will not do all these commandments, and **if** (*'îm*) you reject My statutes, and **if** (*'îm*) your soul loathes My judgments to not do all My commandments for you to break My covenant – indeed, I will do this to you. I will even commit over you a sudden terror: the wasting disease and the eye-consuming fever and a soul pining away. And you will sow your seed to vanity, and your enemies will eat *it*. And I will set My face against you, and you will be smitten before your enemies. And those hating you will rule over you, and you will flee even *when* none *is* pursuing you. And **if** (*'îm*) even up to these you will not listen to Me, then I will add to chasten you seven times on account of your sins. And I will break your pride of strength, and I will set your heavens as iron and your earth as bronze. And your strength will be spent for vanity, and your land will not give its produce, nor the tree of the land give its fruit. Then **if** (*'îm*) you walk contrary with Me, and are not willing to listen to Me, then I will add to you seven blows according to your sins. And I will send among you the wild beast, and it will make you childless, and it will cut off your cattle, and it will make you *so* few that your roads will be deserted. But **if** (*'îm*) by these things you are not chastened to Me, but walk contrary with Me, then I will walk – even I Myself – with you in contrariness. And I will smite you – even I Myself – seven times according to your sins. And I will bring upon you a sword, avenging a covenant-vengeance. And *as* you are gathered into your cities, then I will send out pestilence in your midst, and you will be delivered into *the* hand of *the* enemy. When I have broken for you *the* staff of bread, then ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will return your bread by weight. Then you will eat and not be satisfied. But **if** (*'îm*) by this you will not listen to Me, but walk with Me in contrariness, then I will walk with you in a rage of contrariness, and I will chasten you – even I Myself – seven times according to your sins. And you will eat *the* flesh of your sons, and flesh of your daughters you will eat. And I will annihilate your high places and cut off your pillars, and I will appoint your corpses upon *the* corpses of your idols, and My soul will loathe you. And I will appoint your cities a ruin and devastate your holy places, and I will not smell your soothing odors. But I Myself will devastate the land, then your enemies that dwell in it will be appalled over it. And I will scatter you among nations and draw out a sword after you, and your land will become a waste, and your cities will become a

ruin. Then the land will be pleased with its sabbaths, all *the* days of its being devastated. When you *are* in *the* land of your enemies, then the land will rest and be pleased with its sabbaths. All *the* days of its being devastated it will rest – *for* when it rested not on your sabbaths, when you dwelt upon it. And *for* those who are left among you, I will even bring in weakness in their heart in their enemies' lands. And *the* sound of a driven leaf will pursue them, and they will flee a flight *as* of a sword. And they will fall when none *is* pursuing. And they will stumble each one upon his brother, as from before a sword when none *is* pursuing, and it will not come to pass for power to stand before your enemies. Then you will perish among *the* nations, and the land of your enemies will consume you. And those who are left over among you will rot away in their guilt in your enemies' lands. And even in *the* guilt of their fathers with them, they will rot away.

Forgiveness and Restoration:
But *if* they confess their guilt and their father's guilt in their unfaithfulness which they were unfaithful against Me, even which they walked with Me in contrariness, also I Myself walked with them in contrariness and brought them into *the* land of their enemies, **if perchance** (Heb. *'ôw*) then their uncircumcised heart is humbled, and then they accept their guilt, then I will remember My covenant *with* Abraham and I will remember the land.

Punishment for Disobedience:
But the land will be forsaken from them and will be pleased with its sabbaths in its being devastated from them.

Forgiveness and Restoration:
But *if* they accept their guilt because, even because they rejected My judgments and their soul loathed My statutes, then even also this: in their coming into *the* land of their enemies I will neither reject them nor loathe them to finish them off, to break My covenant with them, for I *am* Yahweh their Elohim. But I will remember for them *the* covenant of *the* first ones, whom I brought out from *the* land of Egypt in sight of *the* nations to become to them for Elohim. I *am* Yahweh.

I have made this extensive quote of Leviticus chapter 26 in order to lay out a pattern that is repeated continually in the OT prophetic writings that came after Moses'. There one will find interwoven statements of

1) Commandments to be obeyed
2) Accusations of disobedience
3) Threatened punishment for disobedience
4) Promises of forgiveness and restoration

Leviticus 26 is couched in conditional language – seven explicit "ifs" and one "if perchance", but note that some of the turns of behavior have an implied "*if*" in their meaning. Note how long and progressively threatening the great "Punishment" section of Leviticus 26 is. Do you think that might have been because Israel had already gotten off on the wrong foot with Yahweh – golden calf worship, constant murmurings in dissatisfaction, open rebellion against Moses, and refusal to take the land of Canaan when first commanded?

I make no apology for the lengthy quote above – its length is the norm for prophetic warnings. Typically, Yahweh did not use "sound-bites" to make His warnings, although the warning to Nineveh was an exception. In the following pages I will make extensive use of these long prophetic warnings. They are necessary to establish both the context and the extremity with which Israel constantly tested Yahweh.

It is also needful to point out that where the Hebrew text says **if** (*'îm*), the equivalent in the *LXX* is Gk. *ean* – the Greek hypothetical "if". This *ean* is often found contracted into Gk. *an* in certain expressions, where it has been ignored by many in their translations of NT texts. We shall explore the meaning of this important Gk. "particle" in a later chapter, **"This Generation" in Prophecy**.

In the prophetic writings of later OT prophets we will find accusations of specific disobedience with specific punishments threatened, rather than hypothetical disobedience. We will typically find the hypothetical only in some of the promises of forgiveness and restoration. So the changes in Yahweh's attitude in Leviticus 26 should be taken as a model of His dealing with His people Israel under the Mosaic covenant of Law.

The Stick and the Carrot

Here follows an example from the whole book of Isaiah, to show how this pattern works on a grand scale –

Accusation/ Condemnation of Wrongdoing	**Future Threats, or Punishments Already Inflicted**	**Eventual Blessing (M=Messianic)**	**Exhortations to Do Well, or to Repent**
1:3-4, 10-14, 21-23	1:5-8, 15, 20, 24, 28-31	1:9, 18-19, 25-27	1:16-17
	2:6-9, 10-22	2:2-4	2:5
	3:1-8, 11-14	3:10	
	4:4	4:1-6	
5:1-4, 7, 11-12, 18, 20-23	5:5, 8-11, 13-18, 19-30		
6:9-10	6:11-12	6:10, 13	6:10
	7:8, 17-25	7:10-16 (M)	
8:19-20	8:1-15, 17, 21-22		8:11
9:8-10	9:1, 11-21	9:2-7 (M)	
10:1-2	10:1, 3-6, 12, 16-19, 22, 24-25	10:20-34	
	11:4	11:1-16 (M)	
	12:1	12:1-6	
		14:1-4 (burden of Babylon)	
dooms of Babylon (ch.13-14), Moab (ch.15), Edom (ch.34), Damascus/Ethiopia/Egypt (chs.17-19), Dumah/Arabia (21:11-17), and Tyre (ch.23) have no stated consequences for Israel, except 19:24 (see below)			
		16:3-5	
	17:3-4		
		19:24 (burden of Egypt)	
	20:5-6		
	21:1-10		
22:13-14	22:1-11, 14-19, 25	22:20-24	22:12
		25:8-9	
26:10	26:11, 16-18, 20-21	26:1-6, 12, 15, 19	26:7-9
		27:2-12	
28:7-15	28:1-4, 13, 17-22	28:5-6, 16 (M)	28:22-29
29:9-13, 21-22	29:1-8, 10, 14-17,	29:18-19, 23-24	

The Stick and the Carrot

Accusation/ Condemnation of Wrongdoing	**Future Threats, or Punishments Already Inflicted**	**Eventual Blessing (M=Messianic)**	**Exhortations to Do Well, or to Repent**
	20		
30:1-2, 9-12, 15-16	30:3-8, 13-14, 16-17	29:15, 18-33	
31:1, 6	31:2-3	31:4-5, 7-9	31:6
	32:9-14	32:1-8, 15-20	
33:8	33:1, 7-12, 14	33:2-6, 15-24	33:13
		35:1-10	
		40:1-31	
		41:8-20	
42:17, 24	42:13-15, 22-25	42:1-9 (M), 16	42:18-21
43:22-23, 27	43:28	43:1-21, 25	26
44:9-20, 25		44:1-8, 21-24, 26-28 (Cyrus)	44:21
45:9-10, 16, 24		45:1-8 (Cyrus), 11-15, 17-25	
46:5-8,12		46:3-4, 13	46:8-12
	47:6	47:4	
48:1-8	48:10, 22	48:9, 17-21	48:11-18
		49:1-26	
50:1, 11	50:1,11	50:2-9 (M)	50:10
	51:17-22	51:3-5, 7-16, 22-23	51:1-2, 6, 17
53:5, 8		53:1-12 (M)	
	54:6-8	54:1-17	
55:8-9		55:3-5, 10-15	55:1-2, 6-7
56:9-12		56:1-2, 4-8	56:1-4
57:1, 3-13, 20	57:16-17, 21	57:2, 13, 15, 18-19	57:15
58:1-5		58:8-14	58:6-7, 10-11, 13
59:1-16	59:8, 11	59:16-21	
	60:10	60:1-22	
	61:2	61:1-11	
	62:4	62:1-12	
63:10	63:10, 17-19	63:1-9 (M – doom of Edom is a blessing for Israel), 11-16	
64:5-7	64:7-12	64:1-5	

Accusation/ Condemnation of Wrongdoing	**Future Threats, or Punishments Already Inflicted**	**Eventual Blessing (M=Messianic)**	**Exhortations to Do Well, or to Repent**
65:1-5, 11	65:6-7, 11-15	65:8-10, 13-25	
66:3-4, 16-18	66:4, 14-17, 24	66:1-2, 5-13-14, 19-23	

Note how the narrative weaves back and forth among the four categories that I have chosen to illustrate the Leviticus 26 principle in action. There are probably patterns to this weaving, although I have not searched for them. You can find the same paradigm at work in the other prophets, as well.

Urgency in Prophecy

Whether a prophet expressed a timeframe for his prophecy, or not, because the purpose of prophecy was corrective, it only makes sense that a prophet's warning was usually directed at his generation's sins and state of heart. Therefore, a prophetic doom had an implied "this will happen to you, if you keep on rejecting God". And a prophetic boon had an implied "these blessings will come upon you, if you are wholly obedient and return to Him". If a specific threat was mentioned, such as "the Assyrian" or "Nebuchadrezzar", and that nemesis had already been threatening the Nation, then doom could come immediately – like a dam that has developed cracks and might burst catastrophically at any moment.

Exceptions to this theme of urgency would include much of Daniel's prophecy. He was instructed –

> "But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book **until *the* time of *the* <u>end</u>** (Heb. *qêts*). Many will go here and there and increase the (their) knowledge."
>
> Dan.12:4

Seeing that the book of Daniel was not sealed in a secretive sense, but was published in the OT canon, we need to understand the sealing in some other sense. After an angel revealed even more to him in 12:7, Daniel asked for the meaning of the "after-end (Heb. *acharîyth*) of these" (v.8), probably referring to the vision being "for an appointed time (Heb. *môw`êd*), appointed times and a half" (v.7). But again he was instructed –

> "Go, Daniel, for the words *are* being shut up and sealed **until *the* time of *the* <u>end</u>** (Heb. *qêts*)." Dan.12:9

Verse 10 continues, "all of the wicked will not discern, but the insightful will discern." This was followed by even more revelation about timing in the after-end of this prophecy. Seeing that Daniel had already been told of a 490 year delay in his visions before their end, I believe the best interpretation of the "shutting up and sealing" was for Daniel and his successors to *preserve* his prophecy until the "end", when the insightful would perceive a more specific interpretation of those things.

Bible Times

There are many different types of time expression used by the OT prophets. Some are backward-looking, some forward-looking. Here is an attempt to catalog them, restricting the survey to the "major" and "minor" prophets, with a few exceptions from the books of Moses.

Times of old:

"*the* days of old" (lit. 'days of an age') – Isa.63:9, 11; Amo.9:11; Mic.5:1; 7:14: Mal.3:4
"the time (*`êth*) of the former" – Isa.9:1
"the former days" – Zec.8:11
"in former days" – Eze.38:17
"the former *things*" – Isa.41:22; 42:9; 48:3; 65:16, 17
"ancient days" (or "times", lit. 'days of the East') – Isa.23:7; 37:26; 51:9; Jer.46:26; Mic.7:20
"in your days" – Joe.1:2
"in those days" – Isa.38:1; Dan.10:2
"in days of your fathers" – Joe.1:2
"generations of old" (lit. 'generations of an age') – Isa.51:9
"before these days" – Zec.8:10

Times of long duration:

"from generation to generation" – Isa.34:10
"from generation to generation" *KJV*
(lit. 'until (or 'to') a generation and a generation') – Isa.13:20; 34:17; Jer.50:39; Lam.5:19; Joe.3:20
(lit. 'from a generation and a generation') – Dan.4:3
(lit. 'with a generation and a generation') – Dan.4:34
(lit. 'to a generation of generations') – Isa.51:8
"all day" "every day" "daily" (lit. 'all the day') – Isa.28:24; 51:13; 52:5; 65:2, 5; Jer.20:7, 8; Lam.1:13; 3:3, 14, 62; Hos.12:1
"forever" "continually" (lit. 'all the days') – Jer.31:36; 32:39; 33:18; 35:19

"My covenant of the day and My covenant of the night" – Jer.33:20
"My covenant by day and night" – Jer.33:25
"by day and night in their time" – Jer.33:20
"all the day and all the night" – Isa.62:6
"all the night" – Hos.7:6
"night and day" – Isa.27:3
"continually by day … all the night" – Isa.21:8
"continually, by day and night" – Isa.60:11
"in continuance by day" – Jer.15:9
"by day and night" – Jer.9:1; 16:13; Lam.2:18
"by day … night" – Jer.31:35
"night and by day" – Isa.34:10; Jer.14:17
"by day", "daily" (Heb. *yôwmâm*) – Isa.4:5,6; 21:8; 60:19; Eze.30:16
"every moment" (lit. 'for moments') – Isa.27:3; Eze.26:16; 32:10
"continually", "always" (Heb. *tâmîyd*) – Isa.21:8; 49:16; 51:13; 52:5; 58:11; 60:11; 62:6; 65:3; Jer.6:7; 52:33, 34; Eze.38:8; 39:14; 46:14, 15; Dan.8:11, 12, 13; 11:31; 12:11 ("the daily *sacrifice*"); Hos.12:6; Oba.1:16; Nah.3:19; Hab.1:17
"many days" – Jer.32:14 (fut.); 35:7 (fut.); 37:16 (pres.); Hos.3:3, 4 (fut.)
"for many days" – Eze.12:27 (fut.); Dan.8:26 (fut.)
"after many days" (lit. 'from days many') – Eze.38:8 (fut.)
"as the days of the tree *will be* days of My people" – Isa.65:22 (fut.)
"at *the* end of many days" (lit. 'from end of days many') – Jer.13:6
"seven months" – Eze.39:12
"from *the* end of seven months" – Eze.39:14
"one thousand two hundred and ninety days" – Dan.12:11
"one thousand three hundred thirty and five days" – Dan.12:12
"at *the* end of seven years" – Jer.34:14
"at *the* end of forty years" – Eze.29:13
"seventy years" – Isa.23:15; Jer.25:11, 12; 29:10; Dan.9:2
"these seventy years" – Zec.1:12; 7:5
"at *the* end of seventy years" – Isa.23:15, 17
"no end" – Isa.9:7
"every month" (lit. 'to a month') – Eze.47:12

"in a space of sixty and five years" – Isa.7:8
"ever", "never", "continuously", "to the end" (lit. 'for continuity', Heb. *l$_e$nêtsach*) – Isa.13:20; 25:8; 28:8; 33:20; 57:16; Jer.3:5; 50:39; Lam.5:20; Amo.1:11; 8:7; Hab.1:4
"perpetual" (lit. 'continuous', Heb. *nêtsach*) – Jer.8:5; 15:18
"everlasting" – *KJV* (lit. 'of an age' – Heb. *`ôwlâm*) – Isa.45:17; Eze.37:26
"forever" – *KJV* (lit. – 'until an age') – Isa.9:7; 32:14, 17; 34:17; 59:21; Jer.17:4; 35:6; 49:33; Eze.37:36; 28:19; 37:25; Mic.4:7; Zep.2:9 ("perpetual"); Mal.1:4
(lit. – 'for an age') – Isa.14:20 ("never"); 25:2 ("never"); 34:10; 40:8; 47:7; 51:6, 8; 57:16; 60:21; Jer.3:5, 12; 17:25; 31:40; 33:11; Lam.3:31; 5:19; Eze.26:21 ("never"); 37:25, 26, 28; 43:7, 9; Hos.2:19; Joe.2:26, 27 ("never"); 3:20; Oba.1:10; Jon.2:6; Mic.2:9; Zec.1:5
"forever and ever" – KJV (lit. – 'for continuity [Heb. *l$_e$`ad*], until [Heb. *`ad*] an age') – Isa.30:8
(lit. 'until an age of continuity') – Isa.45:17
(lit. 'from an age and until an age') – Jer.7:7; 25:5
(lit. 'for an age and continuity') – Dan.12:3; Mic.4:5
(lit. 'for continuity [Heb. *l$_e$nêtsach*] of continuities') – Isa.34:10

<u>Times of short duration</u>: (often expressing suddenness)

"*in* one day" – Isa.9:14
"in one day" – Isa.10:17; 47:9; 66:8; Zec.3:9
"*at* one stroke" – Isa.66:8
"a moment, in one day" – Isa.47:9
"within certain days" (lit. 'in days ones') – Dan.11:20
"for a little moment" – Isa.26:20
"for an insignificant moment" – Isa.54:7
"a moment", "*the* instant", "suddenly" – Isa.54:8; Jer.4:20; 18:7, 9; 49:19; 50:44

"hastens", "hastening" – Jer.48:16; Hab.1:6; Zep.1:14 ("…exceedingly"); Mal.3:5
"at *the* end of ten days" – Jer.42:7

<u>Present times</u>:

"your generation" – Jer.2:31
"generation of His wrath" (addressed by imperatives) – Jer.7:29
"near" – Isa.13:6; Jer.48:16; Eze.7:7 ("…the day of tumult")
"from near" – Eze.7:8
"near to come" – Isa.13:22 ("…is her time and her days will not be drawn out"); 56:1
"near *is the* day" – Eze.30:3
"near *is a* day for Yahweh" – Eze.30:3 (including "time [Heb. *`êth*] of nations")
"near *is the* day of Yahweh" – Joe.1:15; 3:14; Oba.1:15; Zep.1:7
"near *is* the great day of Yahweh" – Zep.1:14
"near and exceedingly quickly" – Zep.1:14
"for *is* coming *the* day of Yahweh, for *it is* near" – Joe.2:1
"the days draw near" – Eze.12:23
" you brought near your days, and you have come up to your years" – Eze.22:4
"they are about to come" (lit. 'they have drawn near to come') – Eze.36:8
"whose <u>day</u> has come, at a time of iniquity *at* an end" – Eze.21:25 (Heb. *yôwm*), 29 (Heb. *yôwmâm*)
"our end drew near, our days were filled, for our end had come" – Lam.4:18
"at a time of iniquity *at* an end" – Eze.35:5
"your end has come" – Jer.51:13
"the end has come" – Amo.8:2
"*the* end has come, the end upon *the* four corners of the land" – Eze.7:2
"now the end" – Eze.7:3
"*the* end has come, has come the end … behold, it *is* coming" – Eze.7:6
"has come day-time, *the* time of their visitation" – Jer.50:27
"has come your day, *the* time *that* I visit you" – Jer.50:30
"now" – Isa.1:21; 5:3, 5; 16:14; 28:22; 29:22 (2); 48:7, 16; 49:5, 19; 52:5; 64:8; Jer.2:18; 4:12; 7:13; 14:10; 18:11; 26:13; 27:6, 16; 29:27; 32:36; 37:20, 26; 40:4; 42:15, 22; 44:7; Eze.4:14; 7:8; 19:13; 23:43; 26:18;

39:25; 43:9; Dan.9:15, 17, 22; 10:11, 20; 11:2; Hos.2:7, 10; 4:16; 5:3, 7; 7:2; 8:8, 10, 13; 10:2, 3; 13:2; Joe.2:12; Amo.6:7; 7:16; Jon.4:3; Mic.4:9, 10, 11; 5:1, 4; 7:4, 10; Nah.1:13; Hag.1:5; 2:3, 4, 15; Zec.8:11; 9:8; Mal.1:9; 2:1; 3:15

"from now" – Isa.9:7; 48:6; 59:21; Jer.3:4; Dan.10:17; Hos.2:7; Mic.4:7

"today" (lit. 'the day') – Isa.38:19; Jer.1:10, 18; 34:15; 40:4; Eze.7:10; Zec.9:12

"at today", or "in the day" (lit. 'in the day') – Jer.42:19; Hos.4:5

"for today" (lit. 'for the day') – Jer.42:21

"until today" (lit. 'until the day') – Eze.20:31

"this day" – Isa.37:3; Jer.44:22; Eze.24:2

" that day" – Jer.30:7; 46:10; Zep.1:15

"until this day" – Isa.39:6; Jer.3:25; 7:25; 11:7; 25:3; 32:20, 31; 35:14; 36:2; 44:10; Eze.20:29

"from this day" – Hag.2:15 ("and upwards"), 18 ("and upwards"), 19

"this selfsame day" (lit. 'self, this day ') – Eze.2:3 ("until…"); 24:2 (2); 40:1

"in these days" – Zec.8:9, 15

"as *to*-day" – Isa.58:4

"as this day" – Isa.56:12; Jer.11:5; 25:18; 32:20; 44:6, 23; Dan.9:7, 15

"the day which *is* arriving" – Eze.7:12

"the time has come" – Eze.7:7, 12

many mentions of a given "month" within a given year – to fix a date

<u>Future times</u>:

"days over a year" – Isa.32:10 (near future)

"another generation" – Joe.1:3

"for a later day" (lit. 'for a day after') – Isa.30:8

"after many days" (lit. 'from many days') – Isa.24:22; Eze.38:8 ('from days many'); Zec.8:4 (present)

"**<u>behold</u>**, days *are* coming" (**formulaic**) – Isa.39:6; Jer.7:32; 9:25; 16:14; 19:6; 23:5, 7; 30:3; 31:27, 31, 38; 33:14; 48:12; 49:2; 51:47, 52; Amo.4:2; 8:11; 9:13 (19 occurrences)

"**<u>behold</u>**, *a* day *is* coming" (**formulaic**) – Zec.14:1

"**<u>behold</u>**, the day *is* coming" (**formulaic**) – Mal.4:1

"**behold**, it *is* coming" – Eze.30:9
"*the* day of His coming" – Mal.3:2
"in a day to come" – Eze.38:18
"in a day of His coming" – Eze.44:27
"from *that* day" (lit. 'from day') – Eze.48:35
"from that day and forward" – Eze.39:22
"because of the coming day" – Jer.47:4
"before *the* coming of *the* day of the Lord" (lit. 'before coming day of Yahweh') – Joe.2:31; Mal.4:5 (adds "…the great and the fearful")
"that day" (lit. 'the day') – Isa.10:32
"this day" – Eze.39:8
"in that day" (**formulaic**) – Isa.2:11, 17, 20; 3:7, 18; 4:1, 2; 5:30; 7:18, 20, 21, 23; 10:20, 27; 11:10, 11; 12:1, 4; 17:4, 7, 9; 19:16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24; 20:6; 22:8, 12, 20, 25; 23:15; 24:21; 25:9; 26:1; 27:1, 2, 12, 13; 28:5; 29:18; 30:23; 31:7; 52:6; Jer.4:9; 25:33; 30:8; 39:10 (past), 16, 17; 48:41; 49:22, 26; 50:30; Eze.20:6 (past); 23:38, 39 (both past); 24:26, 27; 29:21; 30:9; 38:10, 14, 18, 19; 39:11; 45:22; Hos.1:5; 2:18, 20, 23; Joe.3:18; Amo.2:16; 8:3, 9, 13; 9:11; Oba.1:8; Mic.2:4; 4:6; 5:9; Zep.1:9, 10; 3:11, 16; Hag.2:23; Zec.2:11; 3:10; 6:10; 9:16; 11:11 (past); 12:3, 4, 6, 8(2), 9, 11; 13:1, 2, 4; 14:4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21 (109 occurrences cited here, out of 208 total in OT)
"in those days" (lit. 'in the days the they' – **formulaic**) – **Jer.3:16, 18**; 5:18; 31:19; **33:15**, 16; **50:4, 20**; Eze.38:17; Joe.2:29; **3:1**; Zec.8:6, 23 (**bold** – coupled with "at that time")
"after those days" (lit. 'after the days the they' – **formulaic**) – Jer.31:33
"in the latter (Heb. *acharîyth*) days" (lit. 'in *the* after-end of the days' – **formulaic**) – Gen.49:1; Num.24:14; Deu.4:30; 31:29; Isa.2:2; Jer.23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39; Eze.38:16; Dan.2:28 (Aram.); 10:14; Hos.3:5; Mic.4:1 (14 occurrences)
"in the latter years" (lit. 'in *the* after-end of the years') – Eze.38:8
"at *the* end (Heb. *qêts*) of years" – Dan.11:6
"at *the* end of the time of years" – Dan.11:13
"at *the* time of *the* end" – Dan.11:40
"for *the* time of *the* end, the vision" – Dan.8:17
"for an appointed time (Heb. *môw`êd*), *the* end" – Dan.8:19

"*the* end with a flood, and until *the* end warfare" – Dan.9:26
"until *the* time of *the* end" (*LXX – heōs kairou sunteleias*) – Dan.11:35; 12:4, 9
"until when *the* end of the wonders?" – Dan.12:6
"to *the* end … to *the* end of the days" – Dan.12:9
"he will come up to his end" – Dan.11:45
"appointed time(s)" (Heb. *môw`êd*) – Jer.8:7; 46:17
"at an appointed time, *the* end" – Dan.8:19
"*the* end at an appointed time" – Dan.11:27
"at an appointed time" – Dan.11:29, 35
"*the* vision yet for an appointed time … at the end … it will not delay" – Hab.2:3
"until an appointed time and appointed times and a half appointed time" (Aram.) – Dan.7:25
"for an appointed time, appointed times and a half" – Dan.12:7
"for the distant times" – Eze.12:27
"at that time" (lit. 'at the time the she') – Isa.18:7; 20:2; 39:1; **Jer.3:17**; 4:11; 8:1; 31:1; **33:15**; **50:4, 20**; Dan.12:1; **Joe.3:1**; Amo.5:13; Mic.3:Zep.1:12; 3:19, 20 (**bold** – coupled with "in those days")
"until that time" – Dan.12:1
"your times" – Isa.33:6
"in the midst of years" – Hab.3:2 (enigmatic – did he mean 'present' or 'near future' times
"at *the* end of seven years" – Jer.34:14
"at *the* end of forty years" – Eze.29:13
"seventy years" – Isa.23:15; Jer.25:11, 12; 29:10; Dan.9:2
"at *the* end of seventy years" – Isa.23:15, 17
"seven seventies have been determined" – Dan.9:24
"once again – it *is* a little *while*" – Hag.2:6

Times of specific character: (mostly future)

Reprisal, Judgment

"day of *the* Lord" (lit. 'day for Yahweh of armies') – Isa.2:12
(lit. 'day for Yahweh') – Eze.30:3

(lit. 'day of Yahweh') – Isa.13:6, 9; Joe.1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amo.5:18 (2), 20; Oba.1:15 (adds "…over all the nations"); Zep.1:14b; Mal.4:5 (adds "…the great and the fearful")

(lit. 'in day of Yahweh') – Eze.13:5

"near *is the* day of *the* Lord ('Yahweh')" – Zep.1:7

"near *is* the great day of *the* Lord ('Yahweh')" – Zep.1:14a

"day of My being honored" – Eze.39:13

"a day of vengeance for Yahweh, a year of retributions" – Isa.34:8

"a day of vengeance for Elohim" – Isa.61:2

"a day of vengeance" – Isa.63:4

"a time of vengeance" – Jer.51:6

"a day of evil" – Jer.17:18

"in a day of evil" – Jer.17:17; 51:

"in a day of visitation" – Isa.10:3

"have come the days of visitation, have come the days of requital" – Hos.9:7

"in a time of their visitation" – Jer.51:18

"*the* year of their visitation" – Jer.11:23; 23:12; 48:44

"in a day of indignation" – Eze.22:24

"in a day of His burning anger" – Isa.13:13; Lam.1:12

"a day of anger of Yahweh" – Zep.2:2

"in *the* day of anger of Yahweh" – Zep.2:3

"in *the* time of Your anger" – Jer.18:23

"in a day of rebuke" – Hos.5:9

"in *the* day of *the* sacrifice of Yahweh" – Zep.1:8

"at *the* day appointed, and at *the* day of Yahweh's feast" – Hos.9:5

"in a day of slaughter" – Jer.12:3

"in a day of great slaughter" – Isa.30:25

"yet a little and will come the time of her harvest" – Jer.51:33

"as a day of His fighting in a day of battle" – Zec.14:3

"a day of tumult (Heb. *m$_e$hûwmâh*) and trampling (Heb. *m$_e$bûwşâh*) and confusion (Heb. *m$_e$bûwkâh*)" – Isa.22:5 (note the alliterative use of

these 3 synonyms – and cp. "waste and void", Heb. *tôhûw wâ-bôhûw*, in Gen.1:2)

"*the* day of their calamity" – Jer.46:21
"in *the* day of their calamity" – Jer.18:17; Oba.1:13
"in *the* day of his calamity" – Oba.1:13 (2)
"a day of distress and reproof and blasphemy, this day" – Isa.37:3 (present)
"in a day of distress" – Jer.16:19; Oba.1:12, 14; Nah.1:7
"for a day of distress" – Hab.3:16
"a day of fury that day, a day of straits and distress, a day of ruin and desolation, a day of obscurity and gloom, a day of cloud and thick cloud, a day of horn and war-alarm" – Zep.1:15-16
"in *the* day of their destruction" – Oba.1:12
"a day of clouds, a time of nations" – Eze.30:3
"has been darkened the day when I break there *the* yokes of Egypt" – Eze.30:18
"it will be dark upon the day" – Mic.3:6
"near the day of tumult ($m_ehûwmâh$)" – Eze.7:7
"for *the* day of My rising to plunder" – Zep.3:8
"in a day of your overthrow" – Eze.32:10
"in a day of his alienation" – Oba.1:12
"days of your mourning" – Isa.60:20
"woe to *the* day" – Eze.30:2
"in *the* day of Egypt" – Eze.30:9
"in *the* day of *the* coming of Gog" – Eze.38:18
"in distress of the times" – Dan.9:25
"time of the trouble for Jacob" – Jer.30:7
"its end as a bitter day" – Amo.8:10
"in a day of East wind" – Isa.27:8
"in a day of being made sick and of pain of being sick" – Isa.17:11
……

Blessing

"in your day of planting" – Isa.17:11
"in a day of Yahweh giving rest" – Isa.14:3
"in a day of Yahweh binding up *the* shattering of His people" – Isa.30:26

"in a day of salvation of My help" – Isa.49:8
"a year of My redeemed ones has come" – Isa.63:4
"since (lit. 'from') two days, in the third day He will raise us up" – Hos.6:2

There are many interesting matters to explore in the texts referenced above, but for this chapter on **Urgency in Prophecy**, I will principally choose from the "Times of short duration" and "Present times" lists.

Before venturing into some of these time distinctions, I need to explain about the singular word "day" (Heb. *yôwm*), which typically means a "season", or characteristic "times", as in "the **day** of the Lord". Prophetically, it seldom means a 24-hour period. This is the use of the singular word "day" as a collective noun. This may already be obvious to many, but I want make sure it is understood by all.

Some Urgent Prophecies

Here follow some prophecies that have an explicit urgency. Two that we have already looked at in previous chapters:

Jon.3:4 – 'Yet forty days and Nineveh *will be* overthrown!'

Isa.38:1 – Hezekiah's mortal illness ("put your house in order" meant death would visit "soon")

And these new ones –

Isaiah chapter 1 "Hear *the* word of Yahweh, rulers of Sodom. Listen to *the* law of our Elohim, people of Gomorrah." (v.10) "How the faithful city has become for a harlot! *Formerly* full of justice, righteousness lodged in it, but **now** (Heb. *`attâh* – the usual adverb "now") murderers." (v.21) "Your princes are rebellious and companions of thieves. Everyone *is* loving a bribe and pursuing a gift. They defend not an orphan, nor does a dispute of a widow come to them." (v.23) "Then I will turn back My hand against you and purge away as *with* the lye your dross and take aside all your alloy." (v.25) "And *the* shattering of those rebelling and sinners *will be* together, and those forsaking Yahweh will be finished off." (v.28).

NOTE: This was Isaiah's opening salvo against Judah and Jerusalem. The accusation and threat were addressed to the rulers and their people of that time, thus: "rulers of Sodom", "people of Gomorrah", and "**now** murderers" were how Isaiah addressed that generation. Also note how Rev.11:8 picks up this theme, referring to end-time Jerusalem as "spiritually Sodom". The "Sodom" link may point to this Isaiah-prophecy's ultimate, future fulfillment as described in the Revelation, although Isaiah's generation would not have foreseen such a postponement. The wicked circumstances of the Nation, and therefore the threat, were immediate in Isaiah's time. Now a great threat throughout Isaiah's prophetic career was Assyria. Assyria eventually came forward to besiege Jerusalem in Hezekiah's day, but their armies were defeated without a sword or arrow (Isa.37:33-37). Jerusalem was not "finished off" during Isaiah's whole time as a prophet, so his threats of punishment and captivity, as well as the promises of restoration were deferred to a later time.

> **Isa.5:1-7** "I will sing **now** (Heb. *nâ'*, which BibleWorks classifies as an "enclitic particle of urgency") to my beloved a song of my beloved regarding His vineyard. A vineyard came to pass for my beloved on a fat hill. And He dug about it and freed it from stones and He planted it with vines. Then He built a tower in its midst and also He hewed a winepress in it. So He waited for *it* to make grapes, but it made wild grapes. Then, **now** (Heb. *`attâh*), dwellers of Jerusalem and men of Judah, what *is there* to do yet for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why have I waited for *it* to make grapes, when it made wild grapes? But, **now** (*`attâh*), I reveal indeed what I will do to My vineyard, removing its hedge and bringing it to burning, breaking down its wall and bringing it to trampling. And I will appoint it a waste. It will neither be pruned nor hoed. And will come up thorns and thorn-bushes. And over the clouds I will command rains from *not* raining upon it. For *the* vineyard of Yahweh of armies is *the* house of Israel, and men of Judah a planting of His delight. And He waited for justice, but, **behold**, bloodshed – for righteousness, but, **behold**, an outcry." (certain pronouns capitalized per *NASB*, to indicate the speaker as Yahweh)

NOTE: This was addressed directly to those dwelling in Jerusalem and Judea in that day. The immediate threat of the destruction of Jerusalem was apparent in the parable of the vineyard, just as Jesus' use of a vineyard parable was in His day (see

Mar.12:1-9). Isaiah's generation, and Jesus' generation, each would have heard their parable with the same sense of immediacy. And note that, as in the threat of Isaiah chapter 1, the "vineyard" was not entirely destroyed in Isaiah's time. Although Sennacherib overran Judea when Hezekiah ruled, yet he did not take Jerusalem and his entire army was destroyed by Yahweh's hand. It was a great salvation for Jerusalem, and not a great destruction.

FURTHER: This example of a divine parable includes an explanation of the *meaning* of the parabolic object, "vineyard". So there is no need for guesswork here. I would add that any later references, in Isaiah or elsewhere, to an enigmatic "vineyard" could draw upon Isaiah 5:1-7 for its exposition. This would be using the important hermeneutic principle of "comparing spiritual *things* with spiritual *things*" (1 Cor.2:13).

> **Eze.7:1-12** "Then came *the* word of Yahweh to me, to say, 'And you, son of man, thus said Adonai ('my Lord') Yahweh to the land of Israel, "**An end! The end has come** upon the four corners of the land. **Now** (Heb. *`attâh*) **the end** *is* **upon you**, and I will send off My anger against you. And I will judge you according to your ways, and I will recompense upon you all your abominations. And My eye will not have compassion upon you, nor will I spare, for I will recompense upon you your ways and your abominations will come into your midst. Then you will know that I *am* Yahweh." Thus said Adonai Yahweh, "Evil, a single evil – **Behold**, **it *is* coming**. The coming around (*NKJV* "doom" – this Heb. idiom is like our vernacular 'payback') has come upon you, *who are* dwelling in the land. **The time has come, the day of tumult** *is* **near**, and not joy *upon the* hills. And **now** (*`attâh*) **from near** I will pour out My rage against you and I will spend My anger upon you. Then I will judge you according to your ways and I will recompense upon you all your abominations. And My eye will not pity, nor will I spare. I will recompense upon you according to your ways, and your abominations will come into your midst. Then you will know that I *am* Yahweh, striking. **Behold, the day! Behold, it** *is* **coming!** The **doom has gone out**; the staff has blossomed; the presumption has budded. The violence has risen up to a staff of wickedness. None of them, even none of their multitude, none of them, even none of eminence among them *will escape*. **The time has come. The day of the arrival has approached** …"'"

NOTE: This passage continues at some greater length. What I have excerpted, in addition to its many references to "the end" and its "nearness" and "coming" (present participle), repeats Yahweh's rage at His people's abominations. Also note the reference to the blossoming staff, which uses the same Heb. words as in Num.17:7-9 for Aaron's rod that budded – a sign and condemnation against the rebels in the camp. I believe no one would deny that the urgency of Ezekiel's prophecy here was quite to the point, because in Ezekiel's time Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed and Judah was taken captive to Babel. Zephaniah, another pre-exilic prophet, also declared, "**Near** is the great day of Yahweh, **near** and **exceedingly quickly**." (Zep.1:14) While there was an immediate aspect to these prophecies, Zephaniah's "day of Yahweh" has multiple fulfillments.

Urgency Within a Context – the Day of the Lord

I would complement these prophecies with Isaiah's much earlier prophecy of a "day of Yahweh", specifically as it applied to Babel.

> "A burden of Babel, which Isaiah son of Amoz saw. Upon a bare mountain lift a standard. Lift a voice to them. Wave a hand, that they may enter *the* gates of nobles. I have commanded to My consecrated ones – yea, I have called My mighty ones for My wrath – jubilant ones *in* My majesty. A sound of a crowd in *the* mountains. A likeness of many people. A sound of roaring of kingdoms of nations assembled together. Yahweh of armies *is* mustering an army *for* battle. They *are* coming from a distant land, from *the* end of the heavens – Yahweh and weapons of His indignation to destroy the whole land. Howl, for **near *is* a day of Yahweh**! As a ruin from Shaddai it comes. Therefore, all hands go limp, and every heart of man melts. Then they will be terrified. Pains and anguish will take hold; like bringing forth *to birth* they will writhe. Each to his fellow will be astounded. Their faces *will b*e faces of flushing. **Behold**, **a day of Yahweh is coming**, cruel and furious and of burning wrath, to appoint the land for a waste, and its sinners He will exterminate from it. For *the* stars of the heavens and their constellations will not shine forth their light. The sun grew dark in its coming out and *the* moon does not cause to shine its light. But I will appoint evil upon the world and upon the wicked *for* their iniquity. And I will put an end to pride of insolence, and I will bring low *the* majesty of *the* terrible.

> I will make a man more rare than pure gold and mankind more than gold of Ophir. Therefore I will cause heavens to quake, and the earth will shake from its place by *the* fury of Yahweh of armies and **in a <u>day of *the* burning of His anger</u>**. And it will come to pass like a hunted gazelle and like a sheep that is not gathered, each of them will turn to his *own* people and each of them will flee to his *own* land. Everyone who is found will be pierced, and everyone who is captured will fall by a sword. And their children they will dash to pieces before their eyes. Their houses will be plundered, and their wives will be violated. **<u>Behold</u>**, I am rousing against them *the* Medes, who value not silver – and gold, they delight not in it. And *their* bows will dash to pieces *the* young men, and fruit of a womb they will not pity, upon sons their eye will not look with compassion. And will come to pass Babel, <u>beauty of kingdoms, adornment of Chaldean excellence</u>, as Elohim's overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. It will not dwell **for a duration** (Heb. *nêtsach*) and it will not abide **for a generation**. And an Arab will not pitch his tent there, nor will they cause to lie down there *for* pasturing. But wild beasts will lie down there, and their houses will be full of jackals. And daughters of an ostrich will dwell there, and he-goats will skip about there. And jackals will answer in their palaces and serpents in *the* exquisite temples. And **<u>near to come *is* her time</u>, and <u>her days will not be drawn out</u>**." Isa.13:1-22

This prophecy against Babel is interesting for a number of features. It is described as "<u>near *is* a day of Yahweh</u>", "<u>near to come her time</u>" and "<u>her days will not be drawn out</u>" – so urgency is the keynote, and Isaiah might have expected it without much delay.

What is amazing here is that while Isaiah's hearers would have heard this as imminent, yet Assyria was the dominant empire of Mesopotamia at the time. Babylonia was subservient to Assyria until a joint campaign by Babylon and the Medes overthrew Nineveh in BC 612. Although Babylon sent an ambassador to Hezekiah during Isaiah's lifetime (Isa.39:1), Babylon's ascendancy as "<u>beauty of kingdoms, adornment of Chaldea's excellence</u>" came afterwards. Note the two "**<u>Behold</u>**" statements, meant to catch our attention –

a) a day of Yahweh, with darkening of sun, moon and stars, as in the similar prophecy of Joel (see below)

b) coming of the Medes to inflict a scorched earth destruction, likened to the incineration of Sodom and Gomorrah

This "day of the Lord" would jointly bring judgment upon Babel and blessing to Israel. That judgment will be so fierce that it is here likened to God's overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, which were consumed by fire from heaven and were never rebuilt. Part of the threat to Babel will come from the Medes (Isa.13:17, and Jer.51:11 agrees). Isaiah gave this urgent prophecy long before "the Medes and Persians" became the dominant force in the region. It would seem proper to interpret the urgency here within the frame of a future time, when it is about to be fulfilled. In effect, we are to zoom ahead in our thinking to "the day of the Lord", a time when this prophecy will unfold swiftly. In imagination we can visualize its urgency in that "day of *the* burning of His anger".

Under Cyrus' reign (began BC 542), Media and Persia became one nation in government and customs. Much earlier, during Isaiah's time, Samaria fell to the Assyrian empire (BC 722) and its inhabitants were dispersed into that empire, which included "the Medes" (2 Ki.17:6). Later, "Darius the Mede" succeeded the last native Babylonian ruler of Babel, Belshazzar (BC 539 – Dan.5:28, 31). Next, under Cyrus, the Medo-Persian empire conquered Babylonia – but the city of Babel opened its gates to Cyrus with much acclaim by its citizens, and no bloodshed. So, for all its tags of immediacy, Isaiah chapter 13 was not fulfilled in either Isaiah's or Daniel's times. Historically Babel has not been destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah, but it had gradually become a "ghost town" by AD 200. Although the prophecy of wild animal inhabitants did come to pass many centuries later, Babel's sudden obliteration must await a future fulfillment – see Revelation chapter 18 for more details. It hardly needs saying that Revelation18 has not been fulfilled yet, either. Also note that this must mean that "the day of the Lord" (Isa.13:6, 9; *LXX hē hēmera Kuriou*) and "the Lord's day" (Rev.1:10, *hē Kuriakē hēmera*) are twin expressions for the same day's series of events.

Besides Medes, "kingdoms of nations" are to come against Babel in this battle, while Yahweh visits upon the world's evil. These are indications of a wider war than just Medes (modern northern Iran) against Babylonians (modern southern Iraq). The "roaring of kingdoms of nations" against Babel in Isaiah chapter13 seems to fit the "ten horns" kingdoms of Revelation chapter 17, who destroy

"Babylon the Great" (Rev.17:12, 16). But this happened neither in Isaiah's nor in John's time, so it must still be future.

I will reinforce a point we should draw from Isaiah chapter 13 – its urgency is within the context of "the day of the Lord". The day of the Lord did not come in Isaiah's time, but it will be a most urgent time when it does eventually come. This is the same urgency that meets us in the Revelation, which from today's perspective looks like a book of dormant prophecies. When John recorded them (ca. AD 40), they were urgent for his generation, rather than dormant. They will become urgent again for some future generation.

In the early Genesis account of Abraham's advocacy, God condescended to spare Sodom and Gomorrah, if only ten righteous could be found in them. That was a pitifully small number, given that cities like Nineveh had a population of 120,000 men. If God was willing to defer punishment for the sake of a few righteous ones, it may explain the frequent deferrals of His threats against Israel. Isaiah's dire prophecies were a wake-up call, taken seriously by a few in Judah.

The "burden of Babel" in Isaiah chapter 13 extends into chapter 14 –

> "For Yahweh will have compassion on Jacob, and He will choose again Israel. Then He will give them rest upon their own ground. And the sojourners will be joined to them and they will attach themselves to *the* house of Jacob. Then peoples will take them and bring them into their own place, and *the* house of Israel will possess them upon *the* ground of Yahweh for servants and maid-servants. And it will come to pass *their* taking captive those who took them captive, and they will rule over those oppressing them. And it will come to pass in **a <u>day of Yahweh giving rest</u> to you** from your pain and from your turmoil and from your hard service which you served. Then you will lift up this proverb against *the* king of Babel, 'How ceased the oppressor, ceased the boisterousness!'" Isa.14:1-4

So, the "day of Yahweh" will be a day of wrath toward His enemies, particularly Babel, but also a "<u>day of Yahweh giving rest</u>" to Israel. Through the *LXX*, we can see this day of Yahweh giving "rest" is the fulfillment of the Greater Sabbath of Rest (Lev.23:3 – *LXX* Gk. *anapausis*). The "rest" for Israel spoken of in Heb.3:11 (and elsewhere in Hebrews) is the similar Gk. *katapausis* (both Gk. forms are used

in the *LXX* of Exo.35:2). Although Isaiah declared it to be near, it was postponed in his day and remains so to this day.

The Day of the Lord in Joel

Next, consider Joel and "the day of the Lord" (*KJV*). The whole prophecy of Joel is a complex mix of present and future misfortune. The first two chapters are largely concerned with a present famine and plague of locusts (1:4). The verbs in 1:4 are all in the perfect tense, and v.3 says to tell their children (presumably those too young to understand the current disaster and those yet to be born) and succeeding generations about it. Then 1:15 interjects –

> "**Alas** for *the* **day**, for **near** *is* a **day of Yahweh**, and even as a ruin from Shaddai it comes."

Did this bemoan the current plague and famine, or was a greater doom on the horizon? Whatever it meant, its tone was certainly urgent. But consider this: if it was "near", then it was not yet present, or in full force. Also consider that this is the only other text, besides Isa.13:6 cited earlier, that says "as a ruin from Shaddai it comes" (identical Heb. expressions). So Isaiah's burden of Babel is linked by its unique language to Joel's day of the Lord. And we saw "day of Yahweh" mentioned twice in Isaiah 13.

Joe.1:16 continues with a verb in the perfect tense – "**has** not the food **been cut off**", followed by more verbs in the perfect tense – four in v.17, three in v.18, two in v.19, two in v.20. These all seem to refer to what had happened from the current plague, and do not appear to be instances of the "prophetic past" (where a future prophetic event is viewed as if already accomplished, as explained by Rom.4:17). But then Joel 2:1 opens with –

> "Blast a horn in Zion, and shout a war-cry on My holy hill. Let all dwellers of the land quake, for *is* **coming a day of Yahweh**, for *it is* **near**." Joe.2:1

… and the passage continues …

> "A day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and heavy cloud, like dawn spreading over the mountains. A people great and numerous, like none *that* have come from the ancient time, nor after them will *any* be added *to them* for

> years of generations. A fire has consumed before them, and after them a flame blazes. As *the* garden of Eden is the land before it, and after it a wilderness of devastation. And also an escape has not come in regard to it. As *the* appearance of horses *is* their appearance, and like horses, thus they run." Joe.2:2-4

The rest of the description of chapter 2 seems to fit the current plague of locusts. But consider how this also resembles Rev.9:2-9. When the Abyss will be opened, the sun will be darkened by the smoke, while locusts fly out of the smoke. But John saw fantastic locusts, "the likenesses of the locusts, like horses prepared for battle" (9:7). Now compare Joe.2:6 "from before them peoples writhe", with Rev.9:5 "their torment as *the* torment of a scorpion whenever it may strike a man". In Joel's time the day of the Lord was "near", still future, and it seems it would be the capstone of their current misfortune of locusts. And while having something in common with that ongoing plague, it would also be fantastically different.

Since the day of judgment in Joel had nothing like it, before or after, it seems that the occasion of their current locust plague provided a platform to launch into the greater plagues of "the day of Yahweh", which itself threatened that generation with its urgency. The Joe.2:10 phrase "sun and moon grew dark, and stars removed their brightness" may indicate thick clouds of locusts in the air, while "day of Yahweh" is repeated in 2:11. The looked for response is in 2:12 – "But indeed, **now** (Heb. *`attâh*), – an utterance of Yahweh – turn back up to Me with your whole heart…", and this is after the example of Leviticus 26 again. Then in 2:13 "He *is* being sorry on account of the evil." And the divine remedy continues right up to 2:20 – "But the northerner I will remove from upon you", apparently indicating the provenance of the marauding locusts already there, and the military invaders whose threat was "near". Yahweh's restoration of agricultural plenty is assured right through 2:27, but then the narrative changes again –

> "But it will come to pass **afterwards**, thus – I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your old will dream dreams. Your young will see visions. And also upon the men-servants and upon the maid-servants **in those days** I will pour out My Spirit. And I will appoint wonders in *the* heavens and upon *the* earth – blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of *the* **day of Yahweh**, the great and the fearful. And it will come to

> pass that everyone who calls on *the* name of Yahweh will be rescued, for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem will come deliverance, as what Yahweh has said, even among the survivors whom Yahweh is calling." Joe.2:28-32

This "afterwards" aspect of the **day of Yahweh** is described with the same words "great" and "fearful" as the earlier **day of Yahweh** in 2:11, which rather flows from the "near" **day of Yahweh** in 2:1. This "afterwards" in 2:28 may merely mean toward the end of the **day of Yahweh**, which will unfold over some period of time, however swift it might be.

Peter under inspiration on the Great Pentecost of Acts 2 quoted Joel 2:28-32 to explain to his hearers what the pouring out of the Spirit was – "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." (Acts 2:16ff). But the part about the sun being turned to darkness and the moon to blood did not appear that day, nor as far as I can discern on any day since. And none of the horrific warfare of Joel's day of Yahweh had come before that outpouring of the Spirit. So most of Joel's prediction has been deferred. Acts 2 provided a partial fulfillment of but a small fragment of Joel.

But Joel's prophecy continued emphatically –

> "For, **behold**, **in those days and at that time**, when I turn back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to *the* Valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there, on account of My people, even My inheritance Israel, whom they scattered among nations and divided My land. And for My people they cast a lot, and they gave the boy for a harlot, while they sold the girl for wine that they might drink. But, indeed, what *are* you to Me, Tyre and Sidon and all the territory of Philistia – the recompense you *are* finishing against Me? But if you *are* requiting against Me, *with* **swift speed** I will turn back your recompense upon your own head. What silver and gold you have taken, and My desirable goods you brought into your temples. And you sold sons of Judah and sons of Jerusalem to *the* sons of the Greek, so that they be put far away from their borders. **Behold**, I am rousing them out of the places where you sold them, and I will return your recompense upon your own head. But I will sell your sons and your daughters to the hand of

> the sons of Judah, and they will sell them to Sabeans, to a nation far off, for Yahweh has spoken." Joe.3:1-8

The full-preterist, in his desire to see "the day of the Lord" as having been fulfilled at Jerusalem in AD 70, would need to allegorize Tyre, Sidon, Philistia and sons of the Greek. But can this be correct, without some hint or indication elsewhere in prophecy? There is no historic precedent for Tyre or Sidon (themselves often rival city-states in the past) as having conquered Jerusalem and having sold Jewish captives as slaves to the Greeks. Just look at the history of the region from the incursion of Alexander onwards, when the Greeks became predominant. Judea and Egypt did not resist Alexander, who also took Tyre after a long siege, *aided* by the Sidonians. Alexander's policy toward the Jews was favorable, as was that of his successors, the Seleucids of Syria (at least until Antiochus Epiphanes) and the Ptolemies of Egypt. So when did this conquest of Jerusalem and Judea by Phoenicia take place, and the sale of Judean slaves to the Greeks, and the final return of those captives to their homeland, and Judea's sale of Phoenician slaves to Sabeans (approximately modern Yemen)? You can get there historically only by distorting the prophecy with a host of allegories and speculations. It may be difficult in our times to imagine a return of slave trade in some of these lands, but Islam still condones slavery.

Then Joel continues –

> "Proclaim this among nations, 'Dedicate *for* battle; rouse the mighty men; let draw near, let go up all the men of battle. Beat your plowshares to swords, and your pruning knives to lances. Let the weak say, "Strong *am* I." Lend aid and come, <u>all the nations round-about</u>, and gather yourselves there. Cause to go down your strong ones, Yahweh. Let the nations be roused and <u>ascend to</u> the <u>Valley of Jehoshaphat</u>, for there I will sit to judge all the nations from round-about. Send a sickle, for *the* harvest has grown ripe. Come, go down, for the wine-press has filled. Wine-vats overflowed, for great *is* their wickedness. <u>Roarings, roarings in the valley of the threshing</u>, for **<u>near</u>** *is* a **<u>day of Yahweh</u>** in the valley of the threshing.'" Joe.3:9-14

This is the fifth mention of "<u>day of the Lord</u>" in Joel, and the third time it is said to be "<u>near</u>". This last mention includes a gathering and threshing in judgment of

"all the nations round-about" Judea. These nations surrounding Israel may coincide with the conspiracy of ten nations listed in Psalm 83, which list includes Tyre and the Philistines, two of the enemies named here in Joel.

The Valley of Jehoshaphat in Joel

The identification of this twice-mentioned Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joe.3:2,12) has been the subject of conjecture for centuries, and it does not appear to have been a well-established place-name. One reads in the royal history of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 17:10 that "dread of Yahweh came upon all the kingdoms of the land "round about Judea". In Joel's day of Yahweh, it will be just the opposite – no fear among those nations. While it is tempting to look for a valley that King Jehoshaphat might have given his name to, it may be more significant to view that future valley in terms of what the name "Jehoshaphat" means – "Yahweh will judge". So King Jehoshaphat's very name was prophetic of Yahweh's sitting in judgment of Israel's neighboring enemies. Seeing that the nations will "ascend to" (Heb. *'âlâh*) this valley, as one would ascend to Jerusalem, could this valley be an approach to Jerusalem? One would not normally associate "ascend" with "valley", unless he is coming up the valley to a height above it.

In Jehoshaphat's day a great invasion of Moab, Ammon and Edom (three additional nations listed in Psalm 83) was coming against Jerusalem, and a fearful Jehoshaphat prayed publicly before the people, "Elohim, will You not judge against them?" (2 Chr.20:12). Yahweh brought about a great slaughter of those enemies, and the spoil was so great that Judah named the spot "Valley of Blessing" ('Berachah'). Although this was also surely a valley of Yahweh's judging, will it be the "Valley of Jehoshaphat" indicated in Joel? The NT says God will gather the nations for judgment at "Armageddon" (Rev.16:14,16), which is the "Hill of Megiddo", overlooking the Valley of Megiddo, north of Jerusalem. Seeing that the specific threat in Joel includes Tyre and Sidon (both north of Israel), as well as the reference to "the northerner" in Joe.2:20, then the Valley of Megiddo seems to be a stronger candidate because of Rev.16:16.

But let us continue with Joel –

> "Sun and moon were dark, and stars removed their brightness. But Yahweh will roar from Zion, and He will give His voice from Jerusalem. Then heavens and earth will shake, but Yahweh will be a refuge for His people and protection for sons of Israel. Then you will know that I *am* Yahweh your Elohim dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem will become holy, and strangers will not pass through her again. And it will come to pass **in that day** the mountains will drip sweet wine, and the hills will flow milk, and all *the* streams of Judah will flow waters. And a spring from *the* house of Yahweh will flow out and will water the Wady of the Acacias. Egypt will become for a waste and Edom will become for a wilderness of waste, on account of violence *on the* sons of Judah, when they poured out innocent blood in their land. But Judah will remain for an age, and Jerusalem for generations. Then I will acquit their blood not *previously* acquitted. Then Yahweh *will be* dwelling in Zion." Joe.3:15-21

The Hebrew for "sun and moon were dark, and stars removed their brightness" repeats literally what was said of "day of Yahweh" earlier at Joe.2:10. But here at the end of Joel's prophecy, Yahweh comes roaring out of Zion against Judah's enemies, who themselves produced "roarings, roarings in the valley of the threshing" (3:14). Zion and Jerusalem thereafter will be holy to the Lord, and anyone who is unholy will not pass through her again. So "the day of the Lord" will resolve as a great day of salvation for Israel, and God will dwell afterward with His people in safety – "in Zion". Judah and Jerusalem will endure "for an age" and "for generations" afterwards. How can this be reconciled with the preterist view of "the day of the Lord" having reached its climax with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70? Yahweh going to battle for Jerusalem is a recurring theme in the OT prophecies, and I will have much more to explore on this subject in the chapter, **Yahweh Fighting the Nations – His Defense of Zion and Jerusalem**.

My main point in citing so much of Joel is the immediacy of many of his warnings. And it is also needful to look at large swaths of prophecy to understand the full context. There is one exceptional "afterwards" portion of Joel, which happens to be the only portion with a clear historical fulfillment, because Peter declared it so in Acts 2. Any attempt to match the remainder of Joel with historical events will meet with contradiction in some particulars. Now, is it our business as believers in God to contradict His word?

Some "Swiftly", "Suddenly" Texts in the OT

In addition to the "nearness" texts above, we need to examine a few "suddenness" texts. Isaiah chapter 66 culminates with one such –

> "A sound of uproar from *the* city! A voice from *the* temple – voice of Yahweh, making compensation – a recompense to His enemies. Before that she writhes, she gave birth. Before that pain comes to her, she even gives birth to a male *child*. Who has heard *anything* like this? Who has seen *anything* like these? Will *the* earth travail **in one day**, *as* if a nation be brought forth **in one stroke**? For *thus* Zion travailed, yea, she brought forth her sons. 'Shall I bring to birth and not bring forth?' – says Yahweh. 'Shall I *be* bringing forth and shut up *the womb*?' – says your Elohim." Isa.66:6-9

Expressions like "day of…(this or that)" were used to convey an appointed season for something to unfold. However, "in one day" is quite specific, and this should be understood as a day of 24 hours, or nearly so. Further, this "swift" meaning is confirmed by the corresponding expression "in one stroke".

The resurrection of Israel in Ezekiel chapter 37 and Daniel chapter 12 might be this birth of the Nation "in one day". But consider also, Jesus instructed Nicodemus about being born "from above (Gk. *anōthen*)", which is to be born "from water and spirit" (Joh.3:3-8). And would not a spiritual rebirth precede resurrection? Seeing that such a rebirth took place in Acts 2, in an early fulfillment of Joe.2:28-29, then a similar, future awakening of Israel seems the likeliest interpretation for Isaiah 66. The continuation of Isaiah 66 includes a rejoicing, peaceful and comforted Jerusalem (vv.10-14), and Yahweh's destruction of her enemies (vv.14-18). All of this agrees with Joel's "day of the Lord", but it stands in stark contrast with Jerusalem's AD 70 experience. The preterist interpretation completely misses it here.

The prophet Haggai, who helped rekindle the effort to finish building the second temple, had some urgent predictions also –

> "Therefore said Yahweh of armies, 'Yet it *is* **one little *while***, and I *am* causing to shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the ground. And I will cause

> to shake all the nations, and they will approach *the* desire of all the nations. Then I will fill this house with glory.' – said Yahweh of armies." Hag.2:6-7

Although the *NKJV* capitalizes "Desire" (Heb. *chemdâh*), implying that this is a reference to Messiah, it is without precedent in Scripture. The "desire of all the nations" matches rather "this house" in its immediate context.

The Heb. expression here for "the heavens and the earth" is exactly the same as in Gen.1:1, but here it is expanded to include "and the sea and the ground" – this fourfold expression for the creation is Biblically unique. The shaking of the creation is coupled with a shaking of the nations. The *LXX* translates this "I will shake the heaven and the earth" very similarly to the day of the Lord in Joe.3:16, in which "the heaven and the earth will be shaken". Then Heb.12:26 applies this shaking to a time still future –

> "Whose voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, 'Yet once I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.'"

The future blessing that the author of Hebrews expected to receive through all this was an "unshaken kingdom" (v.28). Hebrews was likely written toward the end of Acts, and it was still anticipating "the kingdom of God", that is, its fullness in the Millennium after the day of the Lord has passed.

Then Haggai continued with this contemporary forecast –

> "Say to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, 'I will shake the heavens and the earth. Then I will overturn *the* throne of kingdoms, and I will cause to be annihilated *the* strength of *the* kingdoms of the nations, and I will overturn chariots and those riding them, and horses and those riding them will go down, each by *the* sword of his brother. **On that day** – an utterance of Yahweh of armies – I will take you Zerubbabel son of Sh_ealtiel, My servant – an utterance of Yahweh – and I will appoint you as a signet-ring for I have chosen you – an utterance of Yahweh of armies.'" Hag.2:21-23

So the potential was for this governor of Judea, Zerubbabel, to become Yahweh's signet-ring – i.e., one who ruled with the authority of Yahweh. It would also be a time of great turmoil – a shaking of the established order, both of the creation and the kingdoms of men in it. Although the promise was held out to Zerubbabel in

Haggai's time, it was not fulfilled then. A later Zerubbabel will fulfill it in an unshaken kingdom, while that which can be shaken will be removed (Heb.12:27).

"Next"-ness, Suddenness, and Urgency in the NT

There is urgency in NT prophecy also, and I have seen much emphasis by preterists on such texts as –

> "For the Son of Man is about (Gk. *mellō*) to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will recompense to each according to his practice." Mat.16:27

Such a translation implies urgency. While this is a possible rendering of Gk. *mellō*, it does not consider some of the nuances of this Greek word. In Thayer, under definition 2., p. 396 ("joined to an infinitive"), we find:

a) to be on the point of doing
b) to intend, have in mind, think to
c) as in Greek writers from Homer down, of those things which will come to pass … by fixed necessity or divine appointment
d) in general, of what is sure to happen
e) to be on the point of doing without ever doing, i.e., to delay

Note that definitions a) and e) are almost exact opposites. While I strongly doubt that Jesus was using definition e), I also do not think He meant a) to the exclusion of b), c), and d), although this seems to be a dominant preterist interpretation. Was there some immediacy in His meaning? Yes, there was the potential for that – a generational immediacy, but provisional in nature (the implied provision was, as always, for Israel to respond repentantly). Please bear in mind that the idea of "next" is a potential meaning of *mellō*, as in this depiction of Jesus Christ –

> "up above every principality and authority and power and lordship and every name named, not only in this age but also in the coming (*mellō*) one (i.e., the next one)." Eph.1:21

There is no indication in Ephesians that the coming age is on the point of beginning – only that it will follow the present age. Similarly, the next thing on

Jesus' earthly agenda, where His covenant purposes were concerned, was to be (and will yet be) His coming back to earth in kingly glory.

None of the covenant prophecies foresaw the interruption which is called "the dispensation of the secret" (Eph.3:9, per the best Gk. mss.) – this was not revealed formerly to the sons of men (Eph.3:2-6). With the wisdom of hindsight one can see an allowance for such a gap in Israel's prophetic clock in the annual time-gap between Pentecost and Tabernacles, the time-gap between early and late harvests, and the time-gap indicated by the Lo-Ammi prophecies of Hosea 1:9-10 and 3:3-4. Of course none of Israel's prophecies revealed the non-covenant blessings indicated in Eph.3:2-6. Today we are living in a time of "No Covenant", in which "the nations" have come into their very own blessing, independent of Israel. Israel is no longer "first", as during the Acts period ("the Jew first" in Rom.1:16; 2:9, 10). And our hope is heavenly, not earthly. There is no dwelling securely in Jerusalem for "the body of Christ" – nor is New Jerusalem our hope. Our blessings are "up above" all that (Gk. *huperanō*, "far above" in *KJV* of Eph.1:21). But these heavenly matters have their own season for now – then God will resume His dealings with Israel.

Speed or Urgency in the Revelation?

A sense of urgency is also to be found in places in the Revelation, but I believe it is conveyed incorrectly in the *KJV* of its opening sentence –

> "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him to show His servants – things which must **shortly** take place." Rev.1:1

The English "shortly" really means the same as "soon". It translates the adverbial phrase *en tachei*, which is literally "with speed" or "swiftly". But an event can happen quickly, without necessarily being "soon" from one's present perspective. Elsewhere in the *KJV* book of Revelation, the similar adverb Gk. *tachu* is translated correctly as "quickly", as in these:

> "Repent; or else I will come unto thee **quickly** (*tachu*), and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." Rev.2:16

> "Behold, I come **quickly** (*tachu*): hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev.3:11
>
> "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must **shortly** (*en tachei*) be done. Behold, I come **quickly** (*tachu*): blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Rev 22:6-7 (note how this *KJV* text wants to have it both ways here)
>
> "And, behold, I come **quickly** (*tachu*); and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev 22:12
>
> "He which testifieth these things saith, 'Surely I come **quickly** (*tachu*).' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev 22:20

In all these texts the Gk. root *tach-* means "speedily", to describe the rapidity with which end-time events will unfold. Our derived English words "tachycardia" and "tachometer" relate to speed, not immediacy.

A sense of speed is also indicated by the *LXX* translations of some OT prophecies, using adjectival and adverbial variants of *tachu*. For example, these are texts that we have already examined –

> "And He will lift up a signal to the nations from far off, and He will hiss to them from the end of the earth. Then, **behold**, **quickly** (*LXX*, *tachu*) swiftly (*LXX*, *kouphōs*) He comes." Isa.5:26
>
> "And jackals will howl in the palaces, and dogs in *their* pleasant temples. And **near** to come is her (Babel's) time and her days **will not be prolonged**." Isa.13:22 (ambiguous as to which Heb. word is meant by the *LXX tachu*)
>
> "And, moreover, what *are* you to Me, Tyre and Sidon, all regions of Philistia? Are you repaying against Me a recompense? But if you are rendering against Me, swiftly (*LXX*, *oxeōs*), **speedily** (*LXX*, *tacheōs*) I will turn back your reprisal upon your own head." Joe.3:4
>
> "Near is the great day of Yahweh. Near and **hastening** (*LXX*, *tacheia*) greatly. *The* noise of *the* day of Yahweh *is* bitter. Mighty ones *are* giving a war-cry there." Zep.1:14

Note in the last text that "the great day of the Lord" is both "near" and "speedy" – we might put it in picturesque American idiom, "nearby and coming at you".

And to these examples I would also add –

> "And I will draw near to you for the judgment. Then I will come *as* a **swift** (*LXX*, *tachus*) witness against those practicing sorcery, and against those committing adultery, etc." Mal.3:5

So OT and NT prophecies speak with one voice as to the swiftness of judgment in the day of the Lord. These will be the "shortened" days Jesus spoke of in Mat.24:22.

In addition to their "swift" nature, those days are also described as being "near", that is, "soon". The adjective "near" and the verb "draw near" (Gk. *eggus, eggizō*, respectively) are both used to describe the end-time prophecies of the day of the Lord.

> "Howl, for **near** (*LXX*, *eggus*) *is the* day of Yahweh! As a destruction from Shaddai it comes." Isa.13:6

> "Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus said Adonai Yahweh, "Howl, **woe** for the day! For **near** (*LXX*, *eggus*) *is the* day, even **near** (*eggus*) *the* day for Yahweh. It will come *as* a day of clouds, a time of nations."'" Eze.30:2-3

> "**Alas** for the day! For **near** (*LXX*, *eggus*) *is the* day of Yahweh, and it will come as a destruction from Shaddai." Joe.1:15

> "Blow a horn in Zion, and shout a war-cry on My holy mountain! Let shake all those dwelling on the land, for *is* coming *the* day of Yahweh, for *it is* **near** (*LXX*, *eggus*)." Joe.2:1

NOTE: *LXX* substitutes *pareimi* ("is present", "is beside") for "coming" in Joe.2:1. *Pareimi* is the verb from which the noun *Parousia* derives – a somewhat shadowy reference to Jesus' *Parousia*, or regal "presence" on earth.

> "Roarings, roarings, in the valley of decision, for **near** (*LXX*, *eggus*) *is the* day of Yahweh in the valley of decision." Joe.3:14

> "**Hush**! From the presence of Adonai Yahweh, for **near** (*LXX*, *eggus*) *is the* day of Yahweh, for Yahweh has prepared a sacrifice; He has designated those He called." Zep.1:7

> "**Near** (*LXX*, *eggus*) *is the* great day of Yahweh, **near** (*LXX*, *eggus*) and hurrying greatly. *The* noise of *the* day of Yahweh *is* bitter. Mighty ones will be raising a war-cry there." Zep.1:14

If these OT prophecies of "the day of the Lord" were so urgent, yet deferred, then we can understand how similar NT prophecies have also been deferred. As I have already explained, they were spoken from a prophetic perspective of already being in the day ("in the moment", as we might visualize it).

> "Thus also you, when you might see all these things, know that it is **near** (Gk. *eggus*), at *the* doors." Mat.24:33

> Comment: In Matthew 24 Jesus was alerting His hearers about a conditional nearness – "when you might see all these things".

> "And you be patient. Strengthen your hearts, because the *Parousia* of the Lord **draws near** (Gk. *eggizō*)." Jam.5:8

> "But the end of all things **draws near** (Gk. *eggizō*). Therefore, be sound-minded and be sober in prayers." 1 Pet.4:7

> "Happy *is* him reading, and those hearing the words of the prophecy, and keeping those things written in it, for the season *is* **near** (Gk. *eggus*)." Rev.1:3

> "And he says to me, 'Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book, for the season is **near** (Gk. *eggus*).'" Rev.22:10

Now, if the OT "day of the Lord" was described as "near" and yet was deferred because conditions were not ripe for it – mainly the moral condition of Israel – then why not the NT "Lord's day"? And given that the required heavenly signs have not appeared, nor the great miracles by Satanic men, we have every reason to conclude that almost all of Matthew chapters 24-25 and all of Revelation have been deferred. I can discern only a single visible sign from heaven during the Acts period. That was at Paul's conversion – but he saw a great light and not darkness, which was Joel's heavenly sign.

And consider that only Daniel's last "seven" remains to be fulfilled, before the kingdom is established. And seven years certainly indicates nearness, whenever God may take up again His covenant plan for the earth. If one takes Daniel's "seventy sevens" as a prophetic unit, then whatever has intervened (like the dispensation of the secret) is not reckoned as part of the prophecy. Thus the final "seven" is not near for us. But it was near for the generation of the Acts-period, as it will be for the generation that follows the close of our dispensation.

"This Generation" in Prophecy

Let us now consider more NT prophecy, and its urgency for the generation of Israelites whom Jesus and His disciples spoke to. Although Jesus made a few exceptions to the following rule, He declared, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of *the* house of Israel" (Mat.15:24). And further, Rom.15:8 declares "Christ to have become minister of *the* circumcision for *the* truth of God". And Jesus repeatedly addressed "this generation" of His Israelite hearers with various warnings.

Overview

I will cover a wide range of related topics in this chapter. It seems wise to provide a roadmap of these topics in advance, so that this does not seem like a rambling discourse without a focus.

Heōs An texts – def. of the Gk. 'particle' *an*
text of Mat.24:34
text of Mat.16:28
text of Mat.5:18 – "all things may be fulfilled"
Mat.7:12 – "all things whatsoever you may desire" } Law
text of Mat.5:26
text of Mat.10:23 – may not finish cities of Israel
Mat.24:14 – gospel of the kingdom into the whole world
text of Mat.23:39 – 2nd Hosannas to the King

"this generation" texts – Mat.11:16-20
Mat.12:41
Mat.12:42
Mat.24:34
Mar.8:12
Mar.8:38
Luk.17:24-25

Full discussion of Matthew 24 – a. preterism's conclusions from Josephus' *Wars*
b. earthquakes in Revelation
c. the Abomination of Desolation, the coming prince (Dan.9), little horn and king of insolent face (Dan.8), willful king (Dan.11), king of Babel (Isa.14), prince of Tyre (Eze.28), the Man of Lawlessness (2 Th.2)
d. 'desolation' in Revelation
e. 'great tribulation', incl. Dan.12
f. suddenness and Noah's Flood
g. resurrection in Dan.12, Jer.30 – David
h. celestial darkness – OT & Rev.8
i. universality of the Sign of the Son of Man

Full discussion of Matthew 25:31-40 – the Age-abiding Fire & Gehenna

Interpreting the "*Heōs An*" Texts

As I have understood it, a principal line of preterist interpretation of prophecy goes like this –

- Jesus said He would return within a generation.
- Jesus is not a liar.
- Therefore, He must have returned already.

And the event that most closely coincides with this conclusion in their minds would be the "judgment" on Judea/Jerusalem around AD 70. So the argument is purely a deductive one. But for a deductive conclusion to be valid, the initial premise – Jesus said He would return within a generation – must also be correct.

I have seen much preterist emphasis on Jesus' Matthew 24 prophecies concerning the Temple destruction, the "Abomination of Desolation", His *Parousia*, and especially the conclusion –

> "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." *KJV*, Mat.24:34

But here is a failure to pay attention to what the word of God actually says in its smallest details. And details matter, especially in God's word. The remedy requires looking beyond favored English translations. One who leans upon the *KJV*-only, refusing to look more deeply into matters of language-based interpretation, is going to miss certain nuances. The *KJV* and other versions are grossly misleading in handling certain *qualified* prophecies.

Recall my warning about paying attention to language "particles" in the **Introduction**, and the chapters following it. Here is what Mat.24:34 says literally:

> "**Amen**, I say to you that this generation **may** by no means **pass by** (or 'pass away') **until perhaps** (Gk. *heōs an*) all these things **may come to pass**."

We have here two verbs in the subjunctive, or conditional mood. Consult Bullinger's *Lexicon* (p.835) for the literal translation of *heōs an* as "until perhaps". In this chapter I will be examining several more instances of this interesting combination, *heōs an*.

Thayer (p.33) defines *an* as a "particle indicating that something can or could occur on certain conditions, or by the combination of certain fortuitous causes." Thayer has an additional entry (p.34), which says, "contracted from *ean, if*; followed by the subjunctive." And the Thayer entry (p.162) for *ean* says, "a conditional particle (derived from *ei an*), which makes reference to time and to experience, introducing something future, but not determining, before the event, whether it is certainly to take place*; if, in case*." In the NT *heōs an* occurs 20 times and is always followed by a verb in the aorist subjunctive. There is always an aspect of conditionality to that aorist subjunctive activity, whether to its timing or some other circumstance. There is an implied *whosoever*, *howsoever*, or *whensoever* in these conditional expressions.

Another such statement is at Mat.16:28 –

> "Truly I say to you that there are some having stood here who **may** in no wise **taste** death **until perhaps** (*heōs an*) they **may see** the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

So what Jesus said in effect was that there was a possibility that some of His hearers *might* live to see His return and take up His kingdom. This, like so many Old Testament prophecies, was meant to stimulate a *moral response* – this was ever the real purpose of prophecy, not to demonstrate what a good predictor God is. Among believers, it should be an unshakeable tenet that God is omniscient. To what degree He sees fit to share His foreknowledge with his creatures is quite another matter. He has not written us blueprints of the future that can be checked by us beforehand for mathematical precision. Some prophecies are precise, while others are vague. God is looking for faith from those who profess to follow Him, faith in the face of opposition and contradiction. So He expresses Himself at times in ways that can be contradicted by the ignorant, the unbeliever, and the scoffer. He even allows such opposers to flourish, so that the hearts of His people can be proven (1 Thes.2:4). Will we still believe Him, even when we cannot fully explain what He has said about the future?

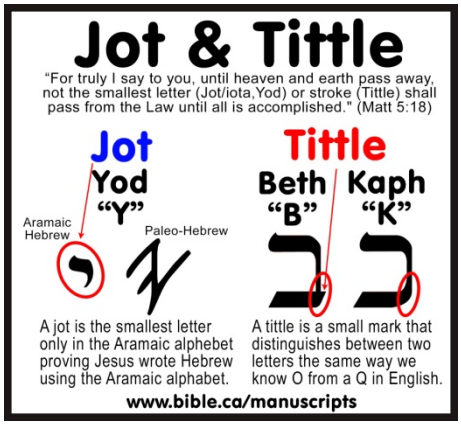
Another of the *heōs an* texts is here –

> "For truly I say to you, **<u>until perhaps</u>** (*heōs an*) the heaven and the earth **may pass away**, one *yôd* or one pen-stroke **may** by no means **pass away** from the law **<u>until perhaps</u>** (*heōs an*) <u>all things</u> **may come to pass**." Mat.5:18

This statement is couched in conditionality (3 subjunctives and 2 instances of *heōs an*), and also some generality. What did Jesus mean by "<u>all things</u>" (Gk. *panta*) here? – surely, all things in the law, or was that just part of what "all things" meant? Or did He mean "all prophecy"? And what are the meanings of the pen-strokes of the law? As to the latter, note that each letter in Heb. and Aram. script required a set of precise pen-strokes to distinguish certain letters.

Look at the example on the next page. If you have spent any time reading Hebrew in a small font, you will undoubtedly have mistaken a two-stroke *daleth* (ד) for a one-stroke *resh* (ר) on occasion. What Jesus seemed to me to be getting at is that some points of the law – perhaps very fine points, like these tiny differences of pen-stroke – may not be fulfilled prophetically. This *could* mean good news for Israel, considering that some parts of the law constituted a curse for Israel's

covenant-breaking – e.g., Deu.28:15-68. I suspect Jesus' declaration may mean even more than this.



The next occurrence of "all things", Gk. *panta*, is in Mat.7:12, and it may further complicate our understanding of Mat.5:18.

> "Therefore, all things **whatsoever** (Gk. *hosos ean*) **you may desire** that men may do for you, thus even you do (imperative mood) for them, for this is the law and the prophets." Mat.7:12

Luk.6:31 simplifies this a bit (omits reference to the law), but then the Lukan context adds other difficult statements, like not resisting violence or the theft of your goods (vv.29-30). This would seem to be part of the "all things" that constitute "the law and the prophets" for Israel. But consider that one man's "desire" might run quite a bit ahead of the literal law. Thus, the "all things…you may desire" of Mat.7:12 seems to open the door of the law very, very wide. But what is certain here is that whatever one wants *from* others, he should himself be doing *for* others – otherwise he is a self-centered hypocrite. And perhaps reflecting on this requirement would help curtail any outlandish desires directed toward others.

Jesus' sermon on the plain contains another *heōs an* text –

> "Truly I say to you, **you may** by no means **come out** from there (prison) **until perhaps** (*heōs an*) **you may pay** the last penny." Mat.5:26

Note: two more subjunctives with this "*heōs an*". The immediate context is full of harsh judgment for one's treatment of a brother – e.g., Gehenna (a criminal's end) for calling him "fool". These are severe judgments, and without forgiveness, not even a penny's worth. In what way did this become part of the "all things" of the law? Wouldn't the offended brother, in wanting to "do unto others" forgive the offender the penny? Well, maybe. And would not a brother who followed Jesus' teaching in His prayer "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Mat.6:12) be a hypocrite, if he failed to show a penny's worth of forgiveness? And how about "Judge not, lest **you may be judged**" (Mat.7:1, with another subjunctive).

These are some very "hard sayings" of Jesus when you begin putting them together, and it is no wonder that many were spoken in a conditional sense. They were meant to awaken possibilities, and provoke the people's thinking about what would be required to keep the law to perfection. And if no man could attain such perfection by his own efforts, then perhaps men should reflect on that personal defect with the greatest humility. Think about James and John, the proud Sons of Thunder, before Pentecost – even Jesus' closest associates needed shaking up, and shaping up, if they were ever going to become fit as judges of Israel.

I believe these teachings also convey some of the conditions under which Jesus might find His "lost sheep of the house of Israel" ready for His return and *Parousia* to take up His earthly kingdom with them. Obviously, they were not ready at His first sojourn with them.

Another *heōs an* text tracks closely with those previously cited –

> "But when they **may pursue** you in this city, flee into the other. For **amen**, I say to you, **you may** not by any means **finish** the cities of Israel **until perhaps** (*heōs an*) the Son of Man **may come**." Mat.10:23

Note here the three subjunctives, in addition to the *heōs an* phrase. This is another "maybe" situation. How would we take it, if we stripped out all the conditionality as an average translation might? Using preterist logic, we would have to deduce that Jesus must have returned well *before* the end of Acts, because logically it would not have taken the 40 years up to AD 70 to cover the cities of Israel. This is just applying more deductive reasoning, and overlooking language particles, as the preterist view does with these sayings of Jesus.

And how does Mat.10:23 compare with Mat.24:14?

> "And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed in the whole habitable world (in that day understood as the Roman Empire) as a witness to all the nations, and then will come the end."

Even if "all the nations" is limited to those of the Roman Empire of that time, how could such a vast territory be covered with the gospel message, while not all the cities of Israel would get to hear it before the end came? But note this difference: Mat.10:23 is full of contingency, while Mat.24:14 is definite. Even after receiving such instruction as Mat.24:14, the Twelve seem to have been in no great hurry to fulfill it. A beginning can be seen in Peter's Pentecost speech to Jews "from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5), but as for "the nations" in the sense of non-Jewish nationals, as late as Acts 10 Peter was resisting sharing the gospel with the devout Roman, Cornelius. The calling of Paul and Barnabas got closer to fulfilling Mat.24:14, while the Twelve concentrated on Jews of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria – and the diaspora Jews, many of whom would be visiting Jerusalem to keep the Feasts of the law. But the comparison of these two evangelistic texts still jars my sense of timing requirements. How could Paul and his colleagues have covered the Empire, while the Twelve, the Seventy (Luk.10:1) and other Jews could not finish covering the cities of Israel before Christ's return? I think that only the future can show how they will both be fulfilled. It may depend upon freedom of movement during the end-time, within Israel and outside Israel – or possibly the number of evangelists operating in each domain.

Another problematic *heōs an* text is Mat.23:39 –

> "For I say to you, you **may** in no wise **see** Me from now on, **<u>until perhaps</u>** (*heōs an*) you **may say**, '<u>Blessed *is* One Coming in the name of the Lord</u>.'"

This is another text full of contingency – two subjunctives with a *heōs an* expression. Then what were Jesus' hearers lacking? Previously at 21:8-9 "the very great multitude" had already proclaimed this very thing about Him, *verbatim*. But that had been an expression of mob enthusiasm, like the attempt to seize Him in order to make Him king (Joh.6:15). But if they followed not His teaching, how could they receive Him properly as King? Nor *might* they see Him again, until they got it right. When He does come, only a remnant (again) will have it right, for the

OT gives an indication of the size of this minority – possibly the "third" of Zec.13:8-9. As for not seeing Him again, there was an implied "as King" in that statement. So, in addition to the mob "Hosannas" of Mat.21:8-9 already received, there will be a future proclamation of Jesus Christ as King of Israel. This would need to be an open event, every bit as public as the first. Where is the evidence that this has happened already? The Scriptures are silent about it, and Josephus says nothing whatsoever about Israel's Messiah in his *Wars*.

"This Generation" Texts in the NT

Here is another problem to consider. Did not Jesus' prayer from the cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" apply also to the unbelieving leaders of Israel? I put it to you, that it must have applied *specifically* to them. What was there to forgive among Jesus' followers, except perhaps faint-heartedness – certainly not hard-heartedness, which belonged to His opposers. So, if Jesus pronounced terrible judgments on His enemies before the cross, these must have been *conditional* for "this generation", because of the implied contingency that was embedded in His prayer for forgiveness. In effect, His prophecies of doom meant: "if you keep it up, even after being forgiven your first crimes, here is what you can expect."

What other basis is there for an implied contingency in Jesus' condemnation of His enemies? Certainly, as I have pointed out in the previous chapter, **Conditionality in Prophecy**, the entire OT is based on a principle of contingent blessings and curses, and Jer.18:7-10 is God's clear statement of His own principle. And the illuminating example of Jonah's threat, "Yet forty days and Nineveh *will be* overthrown!" and its aftermath of Yahweh's mercy certainly shows the truth of this principle.

Jesus' condemnations of "<u>this generation</u>" are summed up in the following texts–

> "But to what shall I liken **<u>this generation</u>**? It is like children sitting in the market places calling to their companions … The Son of man came eating and drinking and they say, 'Behold a man, *who* is a glutton and a drunkard, friend of

tax-collectors and sinners.' … Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His works of power were done, because they did not repent."
Mat.11:16-20

"Men, Ninevites, will rise in the judgment with **this generation** and they will condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and, **behold**, a greater than Jonah *is* here." Mat.12:41

"The queen of the South will rise in the judgment with **this generation** and she will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and, **behold**, a greater than Solomon *is* here." Mat.12:42

"Snakes, offspring of vipers! How might you escape from the Judgment of the Gehenna? On account of this, **behold**, I am sending to you prophets and wise men and scribes – from them you will kill and crucify, and from them you will whip in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, in order that may come upon you all *the* righteous blood being poured out upon the earth from the blood of Abel the righteous until the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the Sanctuary and the altar. **Amen**, I say to you, 'All these things will come upon **this generation**.'" Mat.23:33-36

And we have already examined Mat.24 –

"**Amen**, I say to you, 'In no wise may **this generation** pass away until perhaps all these things may come to pass.'" Mat.24:34

"Then groaning in His spirit He said, 'Why does **this generation** seek a sign. Truly, I say to you that a sign will be given to **this generation**." Mar.8:12
(apparently He meant the 'sign of Jonah the prophet')

"For whoever may be ashamed of Me and My words in **this** adulterous and sinful **generation**, even the Son of Man will be ashamed of him, whenever He may come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." Mar.8:38

"For just as the lightning flashing from the under-part of the heaven shines up to the under-part of the heaven, even so will be the Son of Man in His day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by **this generation**."
Luk.17:24-25

Then Heb.3:9-10 uses the example of "that generation" of "your fathers", who provoked God in Sinai, as a warning to contemporary Jews to repent. Note how definite these statements are about "this generation" – all except for Mat.24:34, with its contingent "perhaps". In their appearance at the Judgment Seat, "this generation" that rejected Jesus, and kept on rejecting Him, will definitely be condemned. But in the matter of His *Parousia*, it was only *possible* that some contemporaries would live to witness it.

Although the warnings to "this generation" were dire in their consequences, the purpose of the warnings was corrective, just as the warnings of the OT prophets had been. There was ever the hope that the Nation would repent – and certainly some of them did. If the consequences of rejecting the word of the prophets was serious, how much more so the rejection of the words and works of the Greater Prophet – greater than Moses, greater than Solomon and Jonah.

A Discussion of Matthew Chapter 24

A large part of Jesus' prophecy affecting "this generation" is contained in Matthew chapters 24-25, which is one long monologue, as Mat.26:1 confirms with the statement: "when Jesus finished all these words". The section begins –

> "And having gone out, Jesus was departing from the Temple, and His disciples approached to point out to Him the buildings of the Temple. But answering, He said to them, 'Do you not see all these – **amen**, I say to you, in no wise may be left here stone upon stone which will not be torn down.' And He, sitting upon the Mount of the Olives, the disciples approached Him privately, saying, 'Tell us when these things will be, and what will be the sign (Gk. *sēmeion*) of Your presence (Gk. *Parousia*) and end-time (Gk. *Sunteleia*) of the age?'"
>
> Mat.24:1-3

Later, when they asked the risen Lord if He was ready to establish His kingdom (Acts 1:6), they were forgetful of this Matthew 24 lesson. They had not yet heard the Holy Spirit to remind them of all things (Joh.14:26). But important to note from above, there would be a "sign" of His *Parousia* and the *Sunteleia* ('grand conclusion') of the age.

Now for a sign to have significance, it must be witnessed. For example, the feeding of the five thousand (Joh.6:10) was perceived by the crowd as a "miracle" (*KJV*, v.14, but it was truly a "sign", Gk. *sēmeion*). And Joshua's long battle-day must have been a sign witnessed world-wide, but especially by the enemies of Israel (Jos.10:12-14). I will keep coming back to this "sign" aspect of the *Parousia*, because the Lord included quite a list of significant things to look for to confirm the sign.

One could make an argument, either for or against, whether the "stone upon stone" part of the prophecy has been fulfilled. The "wailing wall" in modern Jerusalem is the last visible remnant of Herod's Temple expansion, part of the retaining wall. Would the disciples' reference to "buildings of the Temple" have included this? I will let that detail pass as possibly an ambiguous point.

Matthew 24 continues –

> "And answering, Jesus said to them, 'See that no one may deceive you. For many will come by My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and they will deceive many.'" Mat.24:4-5

Where is the evidence that "many" false-christs have come and deceived both the mob and the faithful?

John wrote in his first epistle (Acts period) that "many antichrists have come" (1 Jn.2:18). How successful they may have been in their deception, John does not tell us. Contemporarily, Paul had declared that the Man of Lawlessness would not be unveiled until "a falling away ('apostasy') should come first" (2 Th.2:3) – this indicated that the expected wholesale deception of Christians was still future, at least as of the middle of Acts. And many saying "I am the Christ" did not happen in apostolic times. Further, John defined an antichrist as one who denies that Jesus is the Christ (1 Jn.2:22), not one who claims himself to be the Christ.

Did Josephus Say Anything Meaningful about the Sign of the *Parousia*?

Josephus' *Wars*, book VI, ch.V, para.3, is sometimes referred to and quoted by

preterists, and this account includes a certain man who went about Jerusalem proclaiming its doom. But he seems to me to have been every bit the lunatic, and not a prophet of God. If he was not sent by God, that would make him a false prophet. Although his forecast seemed to be correct, we should still question whether he was a prophet sent from God.

Then refer to the previous para.2 in *Wars*, to see Josephus' account of "a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants". These "tyrants" were the robber-barons who kept Jerusalem locked up during the Roman siege, so that its inhabitants, the majority of whom wanted to flee over to the Romans, could be fleeced and murdered with impunity. These "false prophets" were likely prophets for hire who could put on a good show of piety. Also, I find it amusing that the preterist Edward Stevens (in his foreword to James Stuart Russell's *Parousia*, 3rd Ed.) states "Scripture alone is our standard, not scripture plus history, tradition or anything else." Yet Stevens also goes on about the signs that Josephus recorded in book VI, ch.V, para.3 as having been seen before the Roman destruction of Jerusalem – "chariots in the skies" and other phenomena, including a sword-like comet. While Josephus does record such things as warnings to the Jews to "plainly foretell their future desolation", nowhere does he state in that chapter that he himself saw them. This was all hearsay on his part. If you read *Wars*, books II-VII in their entirety, you will get a clearer picture of the whole campaign, and Josephus' growing conviction of the futility of this war from the Jewish perspective. Josephus stated that God was against the Jews in this war, but he made no declaration such as "Yahweh said". If Josephus *self*-prophesied divine doom, would that not render him a false-prophet too? And if he was such a false-prophet, then why quote his testimony?

By his own account, Josephus had been sent from the Jerusalem elders as the military commander to prepare the cities of Galilee for the coming Roman invasion. When Vespasian's legions arrived, Josephus personally oversaw the defense of Jotapata. When that city fell, he was offered the right hand of security by the Romans. According to Josephus, the Romans were ever seeking means of avoiding casualties and shortening the war. They were pragmatists, and they used Josephus' services afterwards to persuade the robber-barons holding Jerusalem to give it up, and also accept the right hand of security. That was a ploy that failed. Nowhere, except in that one paragraph, does Josephus mention the chariots in the

skies phenomenon. It seems to have been reported to Josephus by someone from Jerusalem, else why did he not report sightings from Galilee, as he was preparing that province for war? Josephus was a personal participant of the war and peace negotiations, so he is a credible witness of many of the events he records. What he does not record is anyone claiming, "I am the Christ (Messiah)", and Jesus said that "many" would do so before His *Parousia*. If the "chariots in the skies" was any kind of sign, it might qualify as one of those "lying signs and wonders" of "the Lawless One (sing.), whom the Lord Jesus will abolish by the breath of His mouth and destroy by the shining forth of His *Parousia*" (2 Th.2:8-10). But the "chariots" vision did not include Messiah, or His kingly presence on earth, or the Lawless One being destroyed. All the preterist claims here fall far, far short of 2 Thessalonians 2 and Matthew 24.

Multi-National Warfare

> Matthew 24 continues –
>
> "But you are about to hear of wars and news of wars. See, *but* be not alarmed. For it must come to pass, but not yet is the end. For nation will be risen against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places." Mat.24:6-7

If we translate Mat.24:6 differently, to include "battles and news of battles", then this could be seen as applying to the Roman campaign against Galilee and Judea. But the "nation … against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" part of this prophecy takes in more than the Roman re-conquest of Judea. It aligns better with the multiple campaigns of the "king of the North" and "king of the South" in Daniel chapter 11 (probably meaning the power centers, Syria and Egypt), and "all the nations" (Joe.3:2,9,11-12; Hag.2:7), and "all flesh" (Isa.66:16), and "kingdoms of nations" (Isa.13:4; Hag.2:22), and "kings of the whole inhabited earth" (Rev.16:14) – as well as specific nations named in the day of the Lord prophecies of Isa.13:1,17 (Babel, Medes), Joe.3:4 (Tyre, Sidon, Philistia), Joe.3:19 (Egypt, Edom), Psa.83:5-8 (a ten-nation confederacy of Edom, Ishmael, Moab, Hagarenes, Gebal, Ammon, Amalek, Philistia, Tyre, Assyria), and Rev.17:12,16 (the "ten horns" confederacy against Babel). In addition to these, a great horde of nations

will come out of the North with Gog (Ezekiel 38-39). Some expositors have pointed out that for "wars and news of wars" to be significant, it would likely follow an extended period of peace. There seems to be wisdom in that viewpoint.

We have already seen how the locust plague and famine of Joel chapters 1-2 seem to include both a current and future devastations for Israel. The famine and war that accompanies the pale horse of Rev.6:8, affecting a fourth of the earth, would seem rather to fulfill the "various places" aspect of Mat.24:7. Josephus documented in *Wars* a great famine within Jerusalem, because the robber-barons would not yield to the Roman siege, but this hardly qualifies as "various places". Earthquakes were another sign of Christ's coming, and Luk.21:11 describes these earthquakes as "great", which would mean great damage from them.

Now see what the Revelation says about earthquakes –

> "And there came lightnings and noises and thunders, and there came **a great earthquake such as has not come since man came upon the earth – so mighty an earthquake, so great**. And the Great City came into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And Babylon the Great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." Rev.16:18-19

This greatest-ever earthquake would likely affect a whole region, at a minimum. A previous earthquake mentioned in Revelation is described thus –

> "And in that hour came a great earthquake, and the tenth of the city fell. And there were killed in the earthquake names of seven thousand men, and the rest became afraid and they gave glory to the God of the heaven." Rev.11:13

This unnamed city will be Jerusalem, as v.8 indicates. Josephus was Titus' personal emissary to the Jewish rebels during his siege of Jerusalem, and he does record a huge storm as occurring, accompanied by an earthquake (*Wars*, book IV, ch.4, para.5). Far from describing any storm or earthquake damage, Josephus' conclusion was –

> "These things were a manifest indication that some destruction was coming upon men, when the system of the world was put into this disorder; and any one

> would guess that these wonders foreshowed some grand calamities that were coming."

The "grand calamities" here were not natural disasters, but military destruction. From the time that Josephus gave up the fight in Galilee, he seemed intent to show that God was favoring the Romans over the Jews. According to him, this storm and earthquake were signs sent from God to dissuade further resistance by the Jews. He provides no corroboration of the damage prophesied by Rev.11:13. Josephus' storm and earthquake were not great calamities in themselves, but they were signs foreshadowing grand disasters that were coming. But why did Jesus mention "various places" in Matthew 24, unless He meant for that detail to be verified by His followers? Where is the preterist verification that these various earthquakes occurred during the Roman re-conquest of the Jewish provinces? Or that a tenth of Jerusalem fell? Or that cities of the nations fell from the mightiest earthquake ever suffered by man?

Persecution of Messianic Christians

The text of Matthew 24 continues –

> "But all these *are* a beginning of birth-pains." Mat.24:8

We have already considered the "birth-pains" of Babel (Isa.13:8) and of Israel (Isa.66:7) in the day of the Lord, so the famines and earthquakes Jesus spoke of will be but a prelude to their conclusion ("the end"). This "beginning of birth-pains" is NT prophecy, adding some details not found in OT prophecy.

> "Then they will deliver you to affliction and they will kill you, and you will be hated by all the nations **on account of My name**. And then many will be made to stumble, and they will deliver up one another, and they will hate one another." Mat.24:9-10

The nation being born in a day will be born into (and perhaps out of) adversity. "All the nations" hating Jewish followers of Jesus ("on account of My name") has never yet happened. Certainly those who rebelled against the Romans were not doing it in Jesus' name, and as I have mentioned before, the Romans were a single nation. Those marching under the Roman eagle, whatever their ethnic background

may have been, were representing Rome. In the millennia following AD 70, there have been many "Christian" nations that hated the Jews, and their excuse has been that they were the "Christ-killers". Can this constitute being hated on account of His name? No, the implication here is being hated for *belief* in Jesus' name, not for being His killers.

This same expression, "**on account of My name**", was part of Jesus' earlier prophecy of persecution of His followers by Jewish enemies –

> "**Behold**, I am sending you forth as sheep in *the* midst of wolves. Therefore, become prudent as the serpents and innocent as the doves. But take heed to men, for they will deliver you up to sanhedrins, and in their synagogues they will whip you. And before governors and also kings you will be led **on account of Me** for a witness to them and to the nations. But whenever they may deliver you up, you should not be anxious how or what you should speak, for it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak. For it is not you who *are* speaking, but the Spirit of your Father Who *is* speaking by you. Then brother will deliver up brother, and a father *his* child, and children will rise up against parents and put them to death. And you will be hated by all **on account of My name**, but one having held out to the end – this one will be saved. Then, whenever they may persecute you in this city, flee into the other. For **amen**, I say to you, you may in no wise complete the cities of Israel until perhaps the Son of Man may come." Mat.10:16-23

Yes, there were typical fulfillments of Matthew 10 during Acts. Because of a general persecution that arose in Jerusalem, there was a scattering of believers throughout Judea and Samaria, "except the apostles" (Acts 8:1). Even as late as the Jerusalem conference at Acts 15, to discuss the issue of whether Gentile believers should observe Mosaic Law, "the apostles and elders" were still there in Jerusalem. The persecutions of Matthew 10 will be "on account of My name" – you cannot explain them away by the Roman persecution of a Jewish nation who were predominantly non-Christian Jews.

And take note that in Matthew 10 the flight will be from city to city during this great evangelistic campaign. When the *final* phase of the end-time comes, the

times will become so dangerous that they must flee into the wilderness, leaving every possession behind (see below for more of Matthew 24).

False-Prophets – Great Signs and Wonders

Matthew 24 continues with –

> "And many false-prophets will arise, and they will deceive many. … Then, if any should say to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ', or 'there.' You should not believe *it*. For false-christs and false-prophets will be arisen, and they will provide great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the chosen ones. **Behold**, I have foretold *it* to you." Mat.24:11, 23-25

Josephus mentioned in passing, rather coincidentally, the false-prophets hired by the Jerusalem robber-barons to keep the general population from deserting to the Romans. He mentioned no signs, much less "great signs", performed by these fakers – nor did he mention anyone thinking Messiah (much less, messiahs) had come. Jesus emphasized this prophecy with a "**Behold!**", so we should take this foretelling of "great signs and wonders" very seriously. Now Paul was given to understand that "the Secret of Lawlessness is already at-work" (2 Th.2:7), to be followed afterwards by – "and then the Lawless One will be unveiled" (*apokaluptō*, v.8), "his *parousia* is according to the energizing of Satan, by all power and signs and false wonders" (v.9). So, Paul has provided a picture of the ultimate false-christ, the Antichrist. And the Apostle John declared that "many antichrists" (deniers of Jesus as the Christ) had come already (1 Jn.2:18, 22), so during the Acts period this prophecy of Christ had begun fulfillment. But the Lawless One (Antichrist, Beast of Revelation 13) is not named in the Bible. The False Prophet of Rev.13:13-14 will be a performer of "great signs" and a deceiver, so here the book of Revelation confirmed Jesus' Matthew 24 prophecy. If AD 70 was the fulfillment of all Israel's prophecies, then why cannot we positively identify the Revelation's Beast and False Prophet as historical figures during the Roman siege? Some have tried to identify the Beast as Nero (see **Appendix B: The Number of His Name**). But Nero was largely an absentee emperor in his last years – he was more interested in competing in the Greek games than ruling Rome. Also, the cruelest part of the Roman siege was the battle for Jerusalem, and Nero was dead before this began. Then were Vespasian or Titus the Beast? Can you

manipulate their names into a configuration totaling the required 666? Did either of them sit in the Sanctuary, pretending to be God (2 Th.2:4)?

The Abomination of Desolation

But to continue in Matthew 24 –

> "And on account of the multiplying of the lawlessness, the love of the many will be extinguished. But *the* one enduring to *the* end, this one will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed in the whole habitable world for a witness to all the nations, and then will come the end. Therefore, whenever you may see **the Abomination of Desolation**, which, having been spoken by Daniel the prophet, having stood in *the* holy place (let the one reading understand), then let those in Judea flee into the mountains. Let the one on the roof not descend to take away the things from his house. And the one in the field let not turn back to take his clothes." Mat.24:12-18

We are left in no doubts about "the Abomination of (the) Desolation" – it is not only very specific (two definite articles), but it is the one that "Daniel the prophet" spoke about. Also note Jesus' careful word of warning, "let the one reading understand". This same note of warning is found in the Markan version of this teaching, where "having stood where it ought not" replaces "having been spoken by Daniel the prophet". This amplifying point in Mar.13:14 makes clear that "the Abomination of Desolation" must stand where it is completely out-of-place – and since this discourse began with the destruction of the Temple, and Daniel's prophecy also deals with the Temple, we are meant to take notice that an abomination (such as the graven image of an idol) will stand in the Temple. When we have finished assembling all the clues, you will see that it is even worse than a mere abomination of a graven image. A further qualification is that upon seeing this Abomination, the faithful in Judea should flee instantly. But the great calamity in AD 70 was in Jerusalem, and not the whole province of Judea. As flight was not possible after the robber-barons locked Jerusalem's gates, you cannot credibly make the Roman eagle-emblem this Abomination – as some try to do. That makes Jesus out to be a deceiver, because men could not possibly have fled Jerusalem for the four months of the siege, *before* the Romans breached Jerusalem and entered the Temple. The Abomination of Desolation is still future.

The *LXX* at Dan.12:11 uses the precise Greek expression that is found at Mat.24:15 for "the Abomination of Desolation" – *to bdelugma tēs erēmōseōs*. However, the Hebrew translates slightly differently into English –

> "And from the time the continuously has been taken away, even to setting *up* **a desolating abomination**, days a thousand two hundred ninety." Dan.12:11

When did any abomination stand in the holy place for three and a half years? Since the siege lasted only four months, any Temple abomination (whether from the robber-barons or the Romans) would have been short-lived – then it would have been "cleansed" by the burning of the Temple itself. The duration of 1,290 days for this abomination is too specific to dismiss as hyperbole. Such details in prophecy are *meant* to be verified.

"The continuously" (Heb. *ha tâmîyd*, e.g., Lev.6:20) was an expression for the daily sacrifice that was to be offered continuously, day by day without ceasing. But what sort of thing could a "desolating abomination" be? The "desolating abomination" is also found at Dan.11:31, but here the *LXX* does not use the definite articles, while the Hebrew text does –

> "And arms from him will stand, and they will defile the holy *place*, the refuge. Then they will remove the continuously and set *up* **the desolating abomination**." Dan.11:31 (Heb. text)

Each chapter of Daniel's prophecy builds upon its previous chapters – and so it is with this mysterious expression, "desolating abomination". The revelations of Daniel 11 and 12 build upon those of Daniel 9.

> "Then after the sixty and two sevens *the* Anointed *One* will be cut off, and not His will be both the city and the holy place. And *the* ruler who is coming will bring to ruin *the* people, and its end *will be* by a flood. And until *the* end of war, **desolations** are being decided. And he will make strong a covenant for many one seven, and *at* half the seven he will make cease sacrifice and gift, and upon a wing of **abominations** *will be* a **desolating one**, and up to completion even a strict decision will be poured out upon *the* **desolating** *one*." Dan.9:26-27

These things are spoken of a "ruler who is coming" (in contrast with an "Anointed Ruler" in v.25), and his desolations seem to be the result of both his warfare on

"the people" and some "abominations" (plural here) placed in a "wing" of the Temple buildings. These abominations will be substituted for the legitimate sacrifices in the middle of his final seven years (apparently the duration of his covenant with Israel). While one could infer the Roman Titus as such a desolating ruler, where were his "desolating abominations" placed for three and a half years? And when did he make a seven-year covenant with the Jews?

Jews in the times of the Maccabees had to endure the abomination of an altar to Zeus placed by Antiochus Epiphanes upon the holy altar of sacrifice. Many in that day saw this as the fulfillment of Daniel's "desolating abomination". Indeed, if Jesus had not spoken of this abomination as yet future, it would be tempting to agree with them. Josephus in *Wars* repeatedly defended Titus as trying to preserve the Temple, not destroy it. Josephus further stated that the Romans wanted sacrifices to be offered there to the Jewish God on behalf of Caesar, offerings that would have been made by sons of Aaron, and not Roman priests. If Titus desecrated the Temple with abominations, Josephus has hushed it up. And if he did hush it up, his history would be so biased, how could we trust any of it?

This is not all that Daniel has to say on the subject –

> "Then out of the one of them went out a certain horn from insignificance. And it became exceedingly great toward the South and toward the East, and toward the Beautiful *Land* (because "Land" is explicit in 11:16, 41, it is implicit here). And it became great up to *the* army of the heavens, and it made fall *to* earth from the army and from the stars and it trampled them. Then up to *the* chief of the army he made himself great. And because of him the continuously has been raised up, and *the* place of his sanctuary will be thrown down. And an army will be given against the continuously in rebellion, and it will throw down truth *to the* earth, and it will do *this* and succeed. Then I heard one holy one speaking. Then said another holy one to a certain one who *was* speaking, 'Until when *will be* the vision of the continuously and **the desolating rebellion** to give both holy place and army for trampling?' And he said to me, 'Until evening-morning two thousand three hundred – then will be put right *the* holy *place*.'" Dan.8:9-14

From Daniel chapter 8 this "desolating rebellion" (*KJV* "transgression of desolation") has morphed into the "desolating abomination" of chapters 9, 11 and

12. The "rebellion" and "abomination" will be perpetrated by "the desolating one" of Daniel 9. All these texts are dealing with the same matter. Here in Daniel 8 are verbs with a feminine subject (to agree with the feminine noun, "horn", Heb. *qeren*) – these I have translated "it" in previous texts. But in one portion of this text, the verbs suddenly change to a masculine singular subject, indicating that "little horn" (*KJV*) is really a man.

The unusual expression "evening-morning" is unique to Daniel, and it seems to mean 24 hour days, as we would reckon them – complete days. But it has also been expressed in a way that makes it apply to the continuous burnt offerings and grain offerings that were made in both morning and evening per Exo.29:38-39 and Lev.6:20. Twenty three hundred days amounts to about 6.3 years by modern reckoning. This will be the time between the desecration of the Temple and its restoration and rededication. If you wish to name Titus as this "horn" in Daniel, then I have to ask, "Was the Temple restored and rededicated in AD 76?" Seeing that it was not, then "the Abomination of Desolation" was not set up in AD 70, nor at any other time since Jesus spoke. Jesus named Daniel in the matter of the Abomination of Desolation, and Daniel was quite specific in certain things relating to the daily sacrifice, its suspension, the Abomination, and the final cleansing of the Temple. If Daniel was mistaken in any of this, then so was Jesus for not correcting him. I view preterism as an attempt to correct these "mistakes" by Daniel and Jesus.

An adequate review of the prophecies of Daniel would require a book by itself. I have reserved more detail concerning some of his prophecy in **Appendix H: The Seventy Sevens**.

The Various Faces of a "King of Insolent Face"

Then Daniel chapter 8 continues –

> "Then he said, '**Behold**, I am revealing to you what will happen in *the* latter-end of the indignation, for *it is* for *the* appointed time *of the* end. The ram which you saw, *as* lord of the two horns *are* kings of Media and Persia. And the he-goat, the hairy *one*, *is* king of Greece. And the great horn which *is* between his eyes, he *is* the first king. Then the broken one, and four will stand instead of it.

> Four kingdoms will stand up out of *that* nation, but not in its strength. And in *the* latter-end of their kingdom, according to *the* filling up of the rebellious, a king of insolent face will stand up, and *he will be* understanding enigmas. And his strength will be mighty, but not by his own strength. And he will bring to ruin extraordinary things. And he will succeed and perform and bring to ruin mighty ones, even *the* people of *the* holy *ones*. And by his insight, he will even advance treachery by his hand. And in his heart he will make *himself* great, and he will bring to ruin many in *their* ease. Even against the Prince of princes he will stand, but by an end of (i.e., 'no') hand he will be broken. And *the* sight of the evening and the morning which was told, this *is* truth. Then you close up the vision, for *it is* for many days." Dan.8:19-26

All of this prophecy would be in the latter-days from Daniel's perspective. We in our time can see the rise of Darius the Mede, Cyrus the Persian, Alexander the Great, and the four principal generals who divided up the major part of Alexander's empire after his death. Then the text jumps far ahead to the "latter-end of their kingdom", after some unspecified time period. Most noteworthy here is the "king of insolent face", whose self-aggrandized heart even pits itself against "the Prince of princes", Whom I am interpreting as Messiah. It is also apparent that this king will be extremely cunning and ruthless. But like Sennacherib's army in Hezekiah's time, this one will be destroyed by a divine intervention. And note that his mighty strength will not be his own, but Satan's.

> This man exalting himself to the heavens is further described in Daniel 11, thus:
>
> "Then the king will do according to his desire, and he will exalt himself, even aggrandize himself above every god. And against *the* God of gods he will speak wondrous things. And he will succeed until *the* indignation has completed, for a strict decision has been made. And he will not discern concerning *the* god of his fathers, nor concerning *the* desire of women. Neither will he discern concerning every god, for above all he will aggrandize himself. But instead he will give honor to a god of strongholds, even to a god whom his fathers knew not. He will give honor with gold and with silver and with precious stones and with desirable *things*. Then he will make for fortresses of strongholds with a foreign god, which he will acknowledge. He will increase wealth and will cause them to rule among many, and he will divide land by price." Dan.11:36-39

Self-aggrandizement to the status of divinity, blaspheming the true God, honoring a "god of strongholds" – a foreign god which his fathers knew not, all connected with great wealth – these will be traits of this end-time king, who is also the Beast of Revelation chapter 13. His wealth has its reflection in the description of Babylon's wealth in Rev.18:3. For a time, Babylon will rule the Scarlet Beast (Rev.17:3-5), who is also simply "the Beast" of Revelation 13. So there will be a political connection between Babylon and the Beast. Does this description in its entirety fit a Roman emperor? Did Nero, Vespasian or Titus reverence a god whom his fathers knew not? Then how could they fulfill the prophecy of the Beast? Did the worship of the emperor as a demigod fulfill this? But everyone including the emperor knew that the emperor was a mere mortal. Did any of these men try to magnify himself above Jupiter and speak against him? That was not the manner of Roman emperor worship, who was acclaimed a demi-god. Part of an emperor's role was Pontifex Maximus, that is High Priest of Jupiter. For a Roman, Jupiter was "the god of his fathers".

Where else does the Bible speak of a human figure who exalts himself to the heavens? Previously, we touched upon Isaiah chapter 14, and "this proverb against *the* king of Babel" (v.4) continues here –

> "How you have fallen from *the* heavens, morning-star, son of dawn – cut off to the earth, conqueror over nations. And you said in your heart, 'The heavens I will ascend. From above stars of God I will exalt my throne, and I sat down on *the* mount of assembly on the sides of the North. I will ascend above *the* heights of cloud . I will make myself like to the Most High. Surely, to Sheol you will be brought down, to *the* sides of a pit. Those seeing you will stare at you. They will perceive, '*Is* this the man quaking the earth, shaking kingdoms, setting *the* world as the desert? And its cities he destroyed; his prisoners he did not open *the prison*-house *to*.' All kings of nations, all of them have lain in glory, each in his own house. But you are thrown from your grave as a loathsome sprout, a garment of *the* slain, pierced *with* a sword, going down to stones of a pit, as a trampled corpse. You will not be joined to them in burial, for you ruined your land, you killed your people. A seed of evil-doers will not be proclaimed for an age." Isa.14:12-20

The *KJV*, by translating "morning-star" as "Lucifer", has prejudiced the interpretation of this text as pertaining to Satan. And perhaps there is some application to Satan here, as in the dual text of Ezekiel chapter 28, which is first against the prince of Tyre, then the king of Tyre. That king of Tyre was also "the covering cherub of anointing" who had been in the garden of Eden. But this "king of Babel" of the proverb in Isaiah 14 will be brought down to Sheol (the grave). He will have a land which he ruins, and a people whom he kills. He is further described as a "seed of evil-doers" and "a trampled corpse". All of this is applicable to a man, a very self-aggrandizing man. The exaltation of his throne "above stars of God" fits well with Daniel's man, who will trample "the army of the heavens". But the self-inflated king of Daniel appears to fit better with the Beast, who will destroy Babel. If it were not for the thoroughgoing destruction of Babel (Rev.18:8), one could reason that the Beast will make himself the king of Babel after he overthrows that kingdom. But any such king would become a "king of ashes", and it would hardly seem worthwhile to claim that title.

Now some of the things Ezekiel spoke against the "prince of Tyre" are in perfect harmony with this picture of "the king of Babel", "little horn", and the Man of Lawlessness.

> "Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, 'Thus said Adonai Yahweh, "Because your heart was exalted and you said, 'I am god. I have sat in *the* seat of gods in *the* heart of *the* seas.' But you *are* man and not god, even though you have set your heart as a heart of gods. Behold, you *are* wiser than Daniel. Every hidden thing is not darkened to you."'" Eze.28:2-3

The remainder of the passage speaks of the prince of Tyre being slain and going down to the pit, in parallel with what was taken up in Isaiah's proverb against the king of Babel. His wisdom being greater than Daniel's invites us to compare this self-aggrandizing character with Daniel's prophecies.

Although Tyre is not Babel, it is entirely possible that a single individual is reflected in these diverse prophecies – "king of the North" in Daniel, and both Tyre and Babel are North of the Beautiful Land (i.e., Israel). Could the prince of Tyre and king of Babel be the same person? Of course they could, through the machinations of regional political intrigue. There is today a single language

(Arabic), and a single culture (Islamic) dominating this whole region. But we are still left with that conflicting piece of prophecy concerning the Beast. So it seems there will be more than one individual claiming the worship of men in those days. Perhaps their divine masquerades form the basis for the fatal conflict between the Beast and the king of Babel in the end-times.

Without mentioning "the Abomination of Desolation" specifically, Paul also discusses this end-time religious deception and deceiver.

> "But we entreat you, brothers, concerning the *Parousia* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering with Him, for you not to be shaken quickly from the mind, nor to be troubled, whether by spirit or by word or by epistle, as from us, as though the day of the Lord has come. No one should deceive you in any way at all, because if the apostasy should not come first, then *neither* should be unveiled (Gk. *apokaluptō*) the Man of Lawlessness, the Son of Destruction, the one opposing and exalting himself above all which is being called God or object of worship, so that he might sit in the Sanctuary of God, displaying himself that he is God. Do you not remember that, being with you, I told you these things? But now you know that which is restraining, from his unveiling (*apokaluptō*) in its own season. For the Secret of Lawlessness is already at-work, only He *is* holding back now until He should come out of *the* midst. And then will be unveiled (*apokaluptō*) the Lawless One – whom the Lord Jesus will take away by the breath of His mouth and will destroy by the shining forth of His *Parousia* – the *parousia* of whom (i.e., the Lawless One) is after the energizing of Satan, by every power and signs and wonders of *the* lie, and by every deception of unrighteousness to those who *are* perishing, instead of them to receive the love of the truth for them to be saved. And on account of this, God will send them an energizing of deception for them to believe the lie, so that all who believed not the truth, but took pleasure in the injustice might be judged."
>
> 2 Th.2:1-12

By the way, when Paul went on about how he "knew a man in Christ fourteen years ago" (2 Cor.12:2), the visions he was boasting in were his own – not John's Revelation (*Apokalupsis*), as some have supposed. Paul was also gifted with prophetic visions, and the 2 Thessalonians 2 text above helps round out the picture

given by Daniel, Jesus and John concerning the Antichrist-Beast and his deceptions.

Both Antichrist and Christ will have an "unveiling" (*apokaluptō*) and "royal presence" (*parousia*). Antichrist will not be unveiled until "the apostasy should come first" – this indicates a seduction of believers. Satan will energize works of power, signs and wonders through his man during the second half of the final "seven" of years, in mockery of Jesus Christ giving such demonstrations during his three and a half year ministry on earth. Satan's purpose is that men should believe "the lie", even as Christ desires men to acclaim "the truth". Paul takes this unveiling of "the Man of Lawlessness" a step further than others, by showing his pretense of sitting in the Sanctuary as if he were God Himself. This shows "the Man of Lawlessness" to be "the Desolating Abomination", with his curtailing of Mosaic sacrificial services in the Temple, and instituting the worship of himself. No such individual has strutted into the Temple since Paul wrote to the Thessalonians (mid-Acts), so this prophecy remains unfulfilled today. So the demi-god king of Babel seems to be a prelude to the demi-god Beast who will destroy him, and wage war with Christ upon His return (Rev.19:19).

Why Is He the "Desolating" Abomination?

The word for "desolating" in Daniel (participial form of Heb. verb *shâmam*) can have both a physical and a mental meaning. It's physical aspect would relate to the "armies" and the "trampling" that Dan.8:9-13 attributes to "a horn from insignificance". On the other hand, the word can also mean "appalling" or "horrifying", and this would be the mental effect on those viewing Antichrist's *parousia* in the Sanctuary as the greatest of all sacrileges. How often have you heard the expression, "I was devastated" to express mental shock? It seems that both aspects of *shâmam* will apply to this "transgression of desolation". Daniel also said this horn will cast truth to the earth (8:12), while Paul declared the Man of Lawlessness will delude men to believe "the Lie" (2 Th.2:11).

Working through the Gk. of the *LXX*, "desolating" and "desolation" translate the verb *erēmoō* and noun *erēmōsis*. The verb form means to "desolate", "devastate" and even "depopulate", and is used by John in these texts –

> "And the ten horns which you saw, and the Beast, these will hate the whore, and they will make her **devastated** and naked, and they will eat her flesh and burn her up with fire. For God put in their hearts to perform His purpose, and to make a single purpose, and to give their kingdom to the Beast, until the words of God will be completed." Rev.17:16-17

> "Because in one hour **was devastated** so much wealth. And every shipmaster, and everyone sailing to *the* place, and sailors, and as many as work the sea, stood from afar and cried out, seeing the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What *is* like the great city?' And they threw dust upon their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the Great City! In her, all who *are* having the ships in the sea grew rich from her worth, because in one hour she **was devastated**." Rev.18:17-19

These devastating actions will all be directed toward "Babylon the Great", and we have already seen in the proverb against the king of Babel, that he, too, will make "the world as the **wilderness** (*LXX*, related noun *erēmos*), and destroy its cities" (Isa.14:17). So it appears that the ten kings under obligation to "the Scarlet Beast" will deliver a payback to the king of Babel. "Babylon the Great" in Revelation will likely be a political entity headquartered in Babylon City, as well as a religious-economic system making the world drunk. Besides the devastation of Babylon, the Beast will also make war with the saints (Rev.13:7), who will ultimately flee "into the **wilderness** (*erēmos*)" (Rev.12:6). These will be the two main objects of devastation to the Abomination of Desolation, although there will likely be others.

Much destruction in various quarters of the world are indicated. As Jesus put it – "wars and news of wars". Also, the destruction of Babylon will come suddenly "in one hour". This is probably not a literal "one hour", but should be understood as comparable to the "one hour" in which the ten horns share authority with the Beast (Rev.17:12). "Not very long" seems to be the meaning.

But specifically, whenever has the Man of Lawlessness set his throne in the Sanctuary, broken a seven year covenant with the Jews, suspended Mosaic sacrifices, declared himself to be God, and proved it to those he deluded with works of power, signs and wonders? Certainly neither Nero, nor Titus, nor any Jew of those times did these things. And destruction of a great blasphemer by the

brightness of Jesus' *Parousia* is also historically unidentifiable. Therefore, all these things lie in the future for God's Overcomers – i.e., Jews faithful to the New Covenant.

We have been given the truth of Scripture and multiple clues concerning this "abomination". But we can find no reliable verification of them having yet occurred according to Scripture or secular history. One time marker that Paul did set in 2 Thessalonians was that, by mid-Acts, most of "the day of the Lord" prophecies remained unfulfilled. Only the beginning of Joel's day of the Lord prophecy at Joe.2:28-32 can be reliably confirmed.

The Great Tribulation and Second Exodus

We are still considering what Jesus was telling His disciples in Matthew 24 –

"But **woe** to those having *a baby* in *the* womb and those nursing in those days. But pray that your flight may not come in winter, nor on a sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation (Gk. *thlipsis*), such as has not come from *the* beginning of *the* world until the present – no, neither might *it* come. And except those days were shortened, all flesh would perhaps (Gk. *an*) not be saved, but on account of the chosen ones, those days will be shortened. Then, if any should say to you, 'Behold, here *is* the Christ' or 'there', you should not believe *it*. For there will be arisen false-christs and false-prophets, and they will give great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even the chosen ones. **Behold**, I have foretold *it* to you. Therefore, if they should say to you, 'Behold, he is in the desert', you should not go out, 'Behold, in the hidden places', you should not believe. For just as the lightning comes out from the east and shines up to the west, thus will be the *Parousia* of the Son of Man. Wherever the corpse may be, there the eagles will be gathered. But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then will shine the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then will mourn all the tribes of the earth, and they will see the Son of Man coming upon the clouds of the heaven with power and much glory. And He will send His angels with a great trumpet-call, and they will gather up His chosen ones from the four winds, from ends of heavens up to ends of them." Mat.24:19-31

Recall that the sitting of "the Abomination of Desolation" was to be a signal for faithful Jews of Judea to flee. But this was impossible during the Roman siege of Jerusalem, because according to Josephus the robber-barons kept constant guard of the city gates to hinder anyone from fleeing to the Romans. And the Romans tried repeatedly, through their emissary Josephus, to get the besieged city to give up the fight.

Jesus also said His *Parousia* would be as hidden as the lightning, and as silent as a trumpet-blast. You may not see or even smell a corpse, but at a distance you can see the sign of one by the circling of the carrion-birds in the sky. If His *Parousia* has already happened, there should be plenty of credible testimony about it. A time of great tribulation is to be expected, greater than any before it. Does the Jerusalem siege in AD 70 really qualify as this? Hardly. Nebuchadrezzar's depopulation of Judea was more devastating. Consider that after Vespasian and Titus quelled the revolt, there were still sufficient Jews left in the Judean provinces that within 65 years another rebellion was possible – the bar Kochba revolt in AD 135. However, after Nebuchadrezzar had destroyed Jerusalem and taken captives, there was no serious warfare on the part of Judea (2 Kings 25).

This "great tribulation", unparalleled "since world's beginning", should be read in the proper context – Jesus was warning faithful Israelites to flee when the right signs appeared. It will be their greatest trial ever.

Further, the "shining forth" of His *Parousia*, with trumpet-blast, and the angelic collection of His chosen ones from one end of heaven to the other, indicate a world-wide phenomenon (at least the "habitable world" of the Roman Empire, if AD 70 were the date). This would require that observers world-wide would have recorded something about it.

Jesus also made this comparison between Noah's times and the suddenness of His Parousia –

> "For just as the days of Noah, so will be the *Parousia* of the Son of Man. For as *there* were in the days before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah went into the ark, and they did not comprehend until the flood came and removed all *of them*, so also will be the *Parousia* of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken

> along and one left behind. Two *will be* grinding at the mill; one will be taken along and one left behind. Therefore, watch, because you know not what day your Lord comes." Mat.24:37-42

Jesus' point here was the unexpected suddenness of both events – Flood and *Parousia*. Therefore, Watch! But there are other comparisons we might make. The great Flood of Noah's day was worldwide, and Jesus' *Parousia* will be likewise. It seems unlikely that Israel's "great tribulation" will be as great a calamity for the world, as the Flood in Noah's day – but it will be the greatest calamity to hit Israel. Noah's flood left its mark all over the world. Its eight survivors propagated their story to become over 230 flood legends throughout the peoples of the earth (*In the Beginning*, p.47). Why should a single hear-say reference to "chariots in skies" by a single author, Josephus, in his seven books constituting *Wars*, be sufficient to mark such a world-wide event as Christ's *Parousia*? Does this sound reasonable to you?

By the way, the common interpretation of the Rapturists that the "one taken along" is a "chosen one", being gathered by the angels, seems to have it all wrong. A man or woman who heeded Jesus' warning to watch, and to flee, would be neither in the field nor at the mill for very long. However, the "one taken along" does appear to be one who flees into the desert and is preserved of God – the gathering by angels comes later, at the end of those "shortened days" of the tribulation period.

Concerning this "tribulation" (Gk. *thlipsis*) that will engulf Israel in "last days", it illuminates what prophets of old had said about it –

> "And at that time will stand up Michael, the great prince, who *is* standing over *the* sons of <u>your people</u>. And will come a **time of distress** (*LXX*, Gk. *thlipsis*) which has not come since <u>becoming a nation</u> until that time. And at that time your people will be delivered, everyone who *is* found, written in the book. And many sleeping *in the* ground of dust will awaken, some to age-abiding life, some to reproaches to age-abiding abhorrence." Dan.12:1-2

Because the "<u>becoming a nation</u>" relates to "<u>your people</u>", this limits the period of this unparalleled "distress" to the history of Daniel's people. This will also be a time of resurrection, and it seems likely that those resurrected to "age-abiding

abhorrence" will not share the body of glory that the resurrected Lord Jesus has now. We do have records of raising the dead at Mat.27:52-53 ("many") and Acts 9:40; 20:9, but should we not expect some record of the dead rising at the terminal event of Daniel 12 – if it occurred around AD 70?

And Jeremiah was not silent about this time –

> "And these *are* the words that Yahweh spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus said Yahweh, 'We have heard a voice of trembling, of terror and not of peace. Ask, now, and see if a male *is* bringing forth. Why have I seen every young man, his hands upon his loins, like her bringing forth, and all faces are turned to pallor? **Woe**, for great *is* that day! Above any like it. Even a **time** of that **distress** to Jacob, but he will be saved from it. Then it will come to pass in that day – an utterance of Yahweh of armies – I will break *the* yoke from over your neck, and I will tear away your chains, and foreigners will not enslave him again. But they will serve Yahweh their Elohim, and David their king, whom **I will raise up** for them.'" Jer.30:4-9

"Time of distress" (Heb. *êth tsârâh*) above is the same Heb. phrase used in Dan.12:1. Also, note again the metaphor of "bringing forth" to birth – could this birth metaphor be a prelude to the Nation being born in a day (Isa.66:8)? And note the part that raising up plays both here and in Dan.12:1. While there is no "ground of dust" specificity in the Jeremiah text, a resurrection is indicated, because David was long dead when Jeremiah prophesied. With this literal raising of David for rulership, Eze.37:23-25 agrees, stating it twice for emphasis. Overcomers taking part in the former resurrection are described thus, "they will reign with Him a thousand years" (Rev.20:6). Why would we not expect David to be among those "raised to age-biding life" (Dan.12:2) to reign with Christ during the Millennium?

Some will prefer to read "Son of David" into the "David" of Jer.30:9 and Eze.37:23, 24, but this seems to neglect an obvious truth about the literal David's future role. Fourteen times in Matthew-Mark-Luke, Jesus is addressed or referred to as "Son of David", indicating His royal lineage. John, Romans and 2 Timothy each refer to Him once as "seed of David", indicating the same royal lineage. In John's vision at Rev.22:16, Jesus declared Himself to be "Root and Offspring of David". As David's Offspring, He was "Son of David". As David's Root, He was

the One Who chose David to replace Saul, and He established with him an age-abiding covenant to secure his dynasty (2 Sam.7:8-16; Isa.55:3; Acts 13:34). Every simple reference to "David" in the Bible is literally that shepherd-king of old. Jesus is "Son of David", "Seed of David", "Root of David", and "Offspring of David", but never simply "David".

Celestial Phenomena

> Going back to Matthew 24, there is more that should strike a familiar note –
>
> "But immediately after the tribulation (Gk. *thlipsis*) of those days, the sun will be darkened and the moon not give its light, and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." Mat.24:29

So we are told this sequence – the tribulation of the Jewish nation (for the last half of Daniel's final "seven" of years), then a heavenly darkening, then "the sign of the Son of Man in the heaven". (Mat.24:30). The darkening of heavenly objects should be familiar, as we have read about that previously in Isa.13:10; Joe.2:2, 10, 31; 3:15 and Zep.1:15. To these we could add –

> "And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. And the stars of the heaven fell into the earth as a fig-tree casts its immature figs, being shaken by a great wind. And the heaven had been separated as a scroll being rolled, and <u>every mountain and island</u> were shaken out of their places." Rev.6:12-14

We could question whether this atmospheric darkening of the heavenly objects will be local, regional, or global. But "<u>every mountain and island</u>" makes this a widespread phenomenon.

And we might ask a similar question about "the sign of the Son of Man". Seeing that this sign will flash from one end of heaven to the other, it could be from horizon to horizon in a limited region. But I will take my cue here from the effect of that sign – "**all the tribes of the earth** will mourn" (or "beat the breast" – Mat.24:30), a statement repeated at Rev.1:7, which reads –

> "Behold, He comes with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him. And **all the tribes of the earth** will mourn over Him. Yes, **Amen**."

The Gk. of the phrase in bold above is the *LXX* rendering here –

> "And I will bless those blessing you, and those cursing you I will curse. And will be blessed in you **all the tribes of the earth**." Gen.12:3 (from *LXX*)

God's call to, and covenant with Abram was to bring world-wide blessing. Abram's seed were to provide a bulwark against a world sliding into idolatry. The same phrase is also repeated here –

> "And it will be that as many, if they should go not up from **all the tribes of the earth** into Jerusalem, to worship the King Lord Almighty, then these will not have *blessing* added to them." *LXX* translation of Zec.14:17

At a minimum, Zechariah would have to be understood as "all the nations who *were* coming up against Jerusalem" (v.16) to war against it. And if Yahweh "will become King over all the earth" (v.9) in that day, will there be any exceptions from nations or tribes anywhere? He also said through Zechariah, "I will gather **all the nations** to Jerusalem to the battle" (v.2), and "Behold a day is coming for Yahweh" (v.1) – i.e., "the day of the Lord". All indications are that "the sign of the Son of Man" will be of worldwide significance.

Army of the Heavens

We have looked at Dan.8:10 previously and noted how a horn from insignificance "became great, up to *the* army of the heavens" – here and elsewhere the Heb. for "army of heavens" is rendered by Gk. *dunamis ouranou* ("power of heaven") in the *LXX*. Therefore, the shakeup of "the powers of the heavens" in Mat.24:29 is linked to Daniel, and also to the Revelation –

> "And his tail (Dragon's) dragged the third of **the stars of the heaven** and cast them into the earth." Rev.12:4

So, the "army of the heavens" which the Horn casts to earth are also called the "stars", which Satan will drag down. But consider that the dragged stars in

Revelation are fallen angels. And Rev.12:4 gives us an indication that their number is a third of those presently in the heavens. Whether these evil angels were included in the "thousands of thousands" and "myriads of myriads" cited in Dan.7:10 and Rev.5:11 cannot be determined. I take these scriptures literally, as I do elsewhere when large numbers are cited – like the 12,000 from each tribe of Israel (Rev.7:1-8). Both Thayer (p.419) and Moulton and Milligan (p.419) suggest that "myriads of myriads" is a metaphor for innumerable, but that is importing a later sense into an earlier expression. The angels of the Daniel and Revelation reckonings must be in excess of 200,000,000. Then the third cast to earth will be in excess of either 100,000,000 or 67,000,000, depending on their exclusion from, or inclusion in the two hundred million figure. And we do not know how many will be loosed from the Abyss by Abaddon. Needless to say, it will be a mighty evil unleashed upon the earth during the Great Tribulation. Rev.12:12 very appropriately declares "Woe" to the earth after this demonic invasion.

As already noted, "the star fallen from the heaven to the earth", with "the key of the pit of the Abyss", will open the Abyss to "the spirits in prison" and their demon-king Abaddon (Rev.9:1-2; 1 Pet.3:19). The angelic warfare depicted in Rev.12:7-9 provides even more detail about the shaking of the powers of the heavens. The fact that Little Horn will have the power, which is Satan's power, to cast demons from heaven to earth shows that the dragon, indeed, has "given to him his power and his throne and great authority" (Rev.13:2). Note that the return of Christ with His angelic army to battle the Beast comes late in the Revelation account (Rev.19:19-21). Only after this can the earth become fully at peace. So the return of Christ, and His *Parousia*, will have warfare as its first objective. Then come judgments, including those of the nations, which begin at Mat.25:31.

A Discussion of Matthew 25:31-40

Jesus' Olivet prophecy of Matthew 24, after the insertion of two "Watch!" parables (the Ten Virgins, and the Talents – and see chapter **Parable as Prophecy**), resumes here –

> "But when the Son of Man should <u>come in His glory</u>, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit upon the throne of His glory. And will be gathered together before Him <u>all the nations</u>, and He will separate them from one

> another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He will put, indeed, the sheep on His right, but the goats on *His* left. Then will the King say to those on His right, 'Come, the blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from *the* overthrow of *the* world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat. I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink. I was a foreigner, and you gathered with Me, naked and you threw *clothing* around Me. I was sickly and you looked Me up. I was in prison, and you came to Me.' Then they will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungering and fed You, or thirsting and gave drink? And when did we see You a foreigner and gathered together with You, or naked and threw *clothing* around? And when did we see You being sickly or in prison, and came to You?' Then the King answering, will say to them, '**Amen**, I say to you, with whatsoever you did to one of these, the least of My brothers, you did to Me.'" Mat.25:31-40

My first point here is the opening, Jesus "coming in His glory". This picks up from 24:30, and "the sign of the Son of Man" "coming upon the clouds of the heaven with power and great glory". Since He is said to have come, this will be His *Parousia* (an early part of it) and His kingly presence on earth – not to be confused with His current sitting at the Father' right "in the heavenlies" (Eph.1:20).

Next, note that this will be a judgment of "all the nations". Israelites who were delivered up to tribulation and "hated by all the nations" (Mat.24:9) will have been "witnesses to all the nations" (Mat.24:14) – even as the Twelve were instructed to "disciple all the nations" (Mat.28:19). Because Jesus would be considered a Jewish "foreigner" by these nations, then the expression "all the nations" must exclude Israel itself. Jesus' "brothers" will be His faithful from among the Jews just before "the end". The King's judgment of these nations seems to have nothing to do with their belief in Him as a result of His "brothers" preaching the gospel of the kingdom, but rather with their treatment of the "brothers" themselves. So, this will be a works-based judgment, just like the Great White Throne at another end-of-age (Rev.20:11-12). With "all the nations" hating the "brothers" in that day of tribulation, it will require some courage to go against the spirit of the times and show compassion for the Jews. It seems likely that Gentiles who believe the witness of these "brothers" would deal kindly with *all* Jews – even to "the least" of them. But let us allow for the possibility that other Gentiles, perhaps not having

heard this gospel but having justice in their hearts, would also deal with them humanely from the heart.

I cut the Matthew 25 text short where I did, because the King's word to the "goat" nations will largely be the opposite of His word to the "sheep" nations. What the "goats" will inherit is described thus –

> "Then He will say, even to those on *the* left, 'Get away from Me, cursed ones, into the Age-abiding Fire, which *is* having been prepared for the devil and his angels.' … And these will go away into age-abiding pruning, but the righteous into age-abiding life." Mat.25:41,46

Looking for other usages of "the Age-abiding Fire" (Gk. *to pur to aiōnion*), we find only one – Mat.10:8, where it will be the judgment for not cutting off an offending hand or foot. Not plucking out one's offending eye will yield a similar result: being cast "into the Gehenna of Fire" (Mat.18:9, Gk. *eis tēn geennan tou puros*). So "the Age-abiding Fire" is the same as "the Gehenna of Fire" on the basis of this parallelism (Mat.18:8-9). The equivalent text of Mar.9:47-48 adds "and the fire is not quenched". The sense of this is that the fires in the Jerusalem garbage dump (in the "Valley of the Sons of Hinnom", shortened to Heb. "*Gei Hinnom*", and thence contracted to Gk. "Gehenna") would burn continuously. This was also the place where the corpses of executed criminals were thrown, and it would have been where Jesus' body ended up, had not Joseph of Arimathea taken measures to prevent that (Mat.27:57-60). Because of the various activities of the sheep and goat nations toward "the brothers", it seems likely that the judgment of them depicted in Matthew 25 is universal. And because it is unlikely that the full population of goat nations could fit into this small valley on the south slope of Jerusalem, Jesus must have been using "Gehenna" in an abstract sense for the disposition of the "goat" nations. This is similar to the Scripture usage of Hebrew *Sheol* and Greek *Hades* for "the Grave" as an abstraction.

Also, "the Age-abiding Fire" can be understood in a couple of senses. A fundamental meaning of Gk. *aiōn*, an "age" (Heb. *ôwlâm*), is a man's lifetime (Thayer's definition 1., p.19). But seeing that the coming kingdom was also "the age to come" (Mat.12:32), it seems more probable that "age-abiding" means

throughout the kingdom age. I will have more to say about "the Age-abiding Fire" in the section below on **Two Kinds of Resurrection**.

Summing Up

I have ranged far and wide in this chapter, because there are so many interconnected puzzle-pieces. So let me sum up some major points here:

- Paul specified a prelude to Christ's *Parousia* – "the apostasy first" and the unveiling of "the Man of Lawlessness", sitting in the Sanctuary, pretending to be God (2 Th. 2:3-4). If the *Parousia* is past, then where are the witnesses to the mass apostasy of Jewish Christians and a man enthroning himself in the Temple, as if it were his own house?

- This "Man of Lawlessness" will do "works of power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thes.2:9), just as "the false prophet" will do them (Rev.13:11-15) to deceive the kings of "the whole habitable world" – Gk. *hē oikoumenē holē* (Rev.16:13-14). These will hardly be mere mind-tricks. Making fire come down out of heaven into the earth before men means there will be witnesses. This is described in Revelation 13 as one of the false prophet's "great signs" (Gk. *sēmeia megala*), so it must be witnessed to have significance. If Christ has come already, then who witnessed these signs? His coming "as a thief" has to do with its unexpectedness, as the Flood example teaches, and not with any surreptitious visit on His part.

- The "Great Tribulation" will be the greatest affliction that Israel has ever seen. Nebuchadrezzar's defeat of Israel seems to have been greater than that of Vespasian/Titus, so an even greater affliction than theirs must be yet to come.

- Christ's *Parousia* will be as hidden as the lightning, and as silent as a trumpet-blast. "Every eye will see Him" when He comes (Rev.1:7). There would have been lots of witnesses, if it had happened already. One hear-say sentence about chariots in the skies in Josephus' *Wars* is not credible enough evidence.

- At His *Parousia* "all the tribes of the earth" will strike (the breast) on account of Him (Rev.1:7). Whenever has this world-wide mourning happened?

- At Daniel's "time of the end" will come a resurrection of the just (Dan.12:1-4), who will "shine". With this Mat.13:43 agrees – "then the just will shine as the sun…". By their shining, such resurrected ones could hardly have been overlooked if they had appeared in AD 70, even as Moses had to hide his shining face, because his glowing appearance spooked the Israelites. The Two Witnesses of Rev.11:3-12 will have power to bring plagues on Jerusalem for three and a half years – plagues as monumental as Moses and Aaron brought against Egypt. After the death of the Two Witnesses at the hand of the Beast, "those dwelling upon the earth" (9 occs. in Revelation – *Number*, p.235) will make merry over their corpses. But the witnesses will rise after three and a half days and ascend into the clouds, to the fear of all who see them. Again, where were the witnesses to all these events, if they were past?

- And remember that, on the basis of Jer.18:7-10, God will rescind His judgments concerning kingdoms, for good or for bad, based on their moral responses to His messages through the prophets.

The greater part of this chapter has dealt with the great *Sunteleia* prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 24, and its affiliated texts in Daniel, 2 Thessalonians, Revelation and elsewhere. At times, Jesus spoke His prophecy with *possibilities* as to "this generation".

Partial and Deferred Fulfillments

Prophetic Types in the Mosaic Feasts

The annual feasts of the Mosaic calendar were all prophetic types of greater events to unfold later. This is not a fanciful interpretation, because the Scripture explains the prophetic meaning of the early feasts: Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits and Pentecost. However, in respect of what they typified, the "end-time" (*Sunteleia*) feasts have yet to achieve fulfillment.

Before the Exodus from Egypt the first Passover lambs were slain, and their blood redeemed Israel from the death plague of the firstborn. About a millennium and a half later, Jesus Christ became "the Lamb of God, Who is taking away the sin of the world" (Joh.1:29), and He was declared by Paul to be "Christ our Passover" (1 Cor.5:7). Thus Jesus redeemed a "festal gathering and assembly of firstborn" (Heb.12:23). And He was also the Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits (Joh.6:33; 1 Cor. 15:20, 23). The first Pentecost came 50 days after the Exodus, when Israel confirmed their part of the covenant at the foot of Sinai. Correspondingly, 50 days after Jesus' Passover offering on the cross, there came an outpouring of the Spirit on the Apostles at the Greater Pentecost of Acts 2. This initiated the New Covenant for those thus blessed.

Pentecost is as far as the types of the feasts have been fulfilled. The Tabernacles triad (Trumpets, Day of Atonements, Shelters) are awaiting an end-time (*Sunteleia*) fulfillment. Why has the Greater Tabernacles been so long delayed? Because the prophetic clock was stopped sometime after the end of the Acts chronicle. Note that right up to the end of Acts, Paul was still preaching to "the Jew first" (Rom.1:16; Acts 28:17) and his gospel was "the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:16-20) – i.e., the Jewish kingdom hope. Sometime after the book of Acts ended, a new revelation was given to Paul. It was not given to Luke, or he would have recorded it in Acts, which cuts off abruptly at two years of Paul's house-arrest. That new revelation concerned a "super-heavenly" (Gk. *epouranios*) hope for the nations apart from Israel –

> "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us by every spiritual blessing **in the <u>super-heavenlies</u>** (Gk. *en tois epouraniois*) by Christ." Eph.1:3
>
> "**the nations** to be joint-heirs and joint-bodies and joint-sharers of the promise by Christ Jesus" Eph.3:6

This was an interruption of God's covenant-plan for Israel and the earth. But it was also the institution of His prior plan to restore the super-heavenlies ("over-heavenlies", "above-heavenlies" and "upper-heavenlies" are also possible translations). It was not the subject of any previous revelation, until revealed to Paul, as a new regime called "the **dispensation** (Gk. *oikonomia*) of the secret" (Eph.3:9). Our calling today also has its battle, but not with earthly powers like Israel's battles. Our warfare is with "principalities and powers **in the super-heavenlies**" (Eph.3:10; 6:12). This plan of God existed "before the overthrow (*KJV*, 'foundation') of the world", at which time we were chosen and predestined for our calling (Eph.1:4-5). What appears to be an interruption from Israel's perspective can also be viewed as God waiting until a time of His own choosing to reveal a cherished, earlier plan for a part of His creation.

We do not know the exact time when those "two years" at the end of Acts finished (Acts 28:30). I would surmise that such a notable Christian "ringleader" as Paul would hardly have been freed, if it was after Nero instigated his terror against Roman Christians in AD 64. And Paul was freed, as his later letters, 1 Timothy and Titus, indicate. I would estimate the end of Acts around the year AD 62, a full six years before Vespasian and Titus began their Judean campaign.

Just as God had previously "given up" on the nations (Rom.1:24, 26, 28), when He was dealing so intimately with Israel, now He has set aside the nation Israel as "the Sons of Rebellion" (Eph.2:2; 5:6; Col.3:6). With God having removed His protection from Israel, could anything other than calamity result for that nation?

Where the preterists and I differ is over the *final end* of the Jews. I do not believe that God is done with the Jews as His earthly favorites. He is just doing something else, something even better in my opinion, during the present times. And when He has finished calling our full number into the body of Christ, and completed His demonstration of wisdom through us (Eph.3:10), He will bring us

into heavenly glory with Christ (Col.3:1-4). I expect this turn of dispensation from heavenly back to earthly to be abrupt, and possibly as quiet as its beginning was. The prophecies toward Israel reflect a swift onset of "the day of the Lord", and a speedy conclusion of the last "seven" of Daniel 9. However, it is possible there will be something of an interlude, leading up to the final "seven". In the later chapter **Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?**, I discuss Otis Sellers' concept of a pre-millennial kingdom.

I have already noted several "day of Yahweh" prophecies, many of which were told with urgency for the prophet's generation. But they have not been fulfilled. Joel declared five times that he was prophesying "the day of Yahweh", but only the outpouring of the Spirit (Joe.2:28; Acts 2:16-18) has been confirmed as fulfilled. The heavenly signs and wonders of Joel (multiple times), Isa.13:10; Mat.24:29 and Rev.8:12; 9:2 have not appeared, nor have the "works of power and signs and lying wonders" of the Lawless One (2 Th.2:8-9) and "the False Prophet" (Rev.13:13-15). All these prophecies have been deferred during the current dispensation, with even greater delay than the 490 year deferral that was revealed to the prophet Daniel.

Scourges of Babel and Assyria Delayed

By and large "day of the Lord" prophecies have been delayed, humanly speaking. One aspect of Joel's day of the Lord began fulfillment at Acts 2, but was cut off at Acts 28 from that small start. In addition to most of the book of Joel, and Isaiah chapters 13-14 – all of which we have previously examined at length – there are also these unfulfilled prophecies –

> "Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus said Adonai Yahweh, "Howl! **Woe** to the day!" For **near** *is the* day, even **near** a day to Yahweh, a day of cloud – a time of nations it comes.'" Eze.30:2-3

Ezekiel chapter 30 prophesies doom principally on the nation Egypt, but also "Ethiopia, Libya, Lydia, all the mingled people, Chub, and the men of the lands who are allied" (*NKJV*, v.5). The devastation is described in quite some detail against various cities and regions of Egypt. And the agent of their downfall was to have been Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babel (vv.10, 24-25), while the sitting Pharaoh was not named.

An even more elaborate account of this doom of Egypt is in Jeremiah chapter 46, which begins with a prophecy "against the nations" (v.1), like Ezekiel 30:2 "a time of nations". Then follows an historical account of the clash between Pharaoh-necho and Nebuchadrezzar at Carchemish (v.2), on the upper Euphrates (BC 605). This is recounted with perfect tense verbs in the Heb., and dated during the reign of Jehoiakim. Later, in BC 601, the Babylonian Chronicle tells how Nebuchadrezzar led an expedition against Egypt, but the bloodbath was so severe, that he withdrew to Babel and never returned (the location of battle was not specified). So the second historical contest between Babel and Egypt was a stand-off – this appears to have been the battle that Jeremiah anticipated, but it did not fully unfold. Like in Eze.30:5, the Ethiopians, Libyans and Lydians will be confederate with Egypt (Jer.46:9). And like Ezekiel, Jeremiah proclaimed this to be – "And that day is to Adonai Yahweh of armies, a day of revenge, to avenge Himself out on His enemies." (Jer.46:10) In other words, the day of the Lord is depicted here. Egyptian cities are named and wholesale destruction is forecast. Nebuchadrezzar is twice named as the agent of destruction (Jer.46:13, 26), and although "Pharaoh" is mentioned again (Jer.46:17, $25_{\text{-twice}}$), he is not named.

The latter part of the Jeremiah 46 account differs from historical events because it depicts Egypt invading "the north country by the river Euphrates" and "Gilead" (vv.10-11). This seems to be a repeat of the earlier Carchemish adventure, and not a campaign of Nebuchadrezzar against Egypt. One could view Jeremiah 46 and Ezekiel 30 as having been fulfilled typically, but not to the letter. There is no record of a Babylonian invasion of Egypt resulting in the wholesale destruction of Egyptian cities and regions. In fact, when Nebuchadrezzar was besieging Jerusalem and Pharaoh came up with his armies, the Chaldeans withdrew, not wanting to fight them (Jer.37:5, 11).

Some commentators have noted from the frequent mentions of Nebuchadrezzar's name (with 7 variant spellings – 91 occs.), that there are both an historical Nebuchadrezzar and an apocalyptic-prophetic Nebuchadrezzar. I would suggest that, except for Jer.46:2, these references to Nebuchadrezzar in Jeremiah 46 and Ezekiel 30 are all apocalyptic – a future king of Babylon with visions of grandeur must be involved. Old memories linger on, and even in our times the Iraqi despot, Saddam Hussein, liked to depict himself as a latter-day Nebuchadrezzar. Later kings taking the name of a predecessor is not without

precedent – just look how Imperial Rome institutionalized the name "Caesar" from its first emperor, Julius. I have previously spoken of a correlation between Daniel's "king of the North" and "king of the South" with Syria and Egypt, a correlation that seems likely based on the "four beasts" representing the four generals who divided up Alexander's empire (Dan.7:17). But in view of all the confederacies gripping the Middle East, from ancient times right up to the present, a northern alliance between Syria and Mesopotamia may be indicated by some of the prophecies. For many centuries the Ottoman Empire included both Syria and Mesopotamia, so such an alliance is not unthinkable.

Isa.61:2 – When Is the "Day of Vengeance"?

Partial fulfillments seem to be the norm for Messianic prophecies. For example, Jesus applied part of Isa.61:1-2 to Himself contemporaneously –

> "And was handed to Him *the* book of the prophet Isaiah, and having unrolled the book He found the place where it was written, '*The* Spirit of *the* Lord *is* upon Me, on account of which He anointed Me to evangelize *the* poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to *the* blind; to send the downtrodden in release, to proclaim an **acceptable year** of *the* Lord …' Then having rolled up the book, having given *it* back to the attendant, He sat. And all the eyes in the synagogue were looking intently at Him. And He began to say to them, 'Today has been fulfilled this scripture in your ears.'"
>
> Luk.4:17-21

But this was only a partial quotation and fulfillment, because Isa.61:2 continues –

> "… and a **day of vengeance** for our Elohim."

What began with Christ's earthly ministry at Nazareth, and continued by way of the Twelve through Acts, was the "**acceptable year** (Heb. *sh$_e$nath-râtsôwn*, *hapax*) for Yahweh". A "**day of vengeance** (Heb. *yôwm nâqâm*) for Elohim" is mentioned explicitly here, as well as in Isaiah 34:8; 63:4, and it is alluded to in the other prophets. This "day of vengeance" has been deferred. I will have more to say on Isa.34:8 and 63:4 in the later chapter, **Christ in the Old Testament, and the New**.

Pointing toward the "day of vengeance", we could add an oft-cited NT quote from Isaiah –

> "And He said, 'Go and speak to this people, "Hear surely, but you will not perceive. And see surely, but you will not recognize. Make fat the heart of this people, and make heavy their ears, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and their heart perceive, and he turns back, and he heals for himself." Isa.6:9-10

First, note that this was an early commission to Isaiah, to give to his generation of Judah. It applied immediately. But can we see much difference in succeeding generations of the Jews? It seems to have applied continuously throughout the rest of the OT with, perhaps, a few brilliant exceptions during the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah. This Isaiah text had very specific applications in the NT, where it was cited on three occasions when the Jews rejected the gospel –

- In response to the Pharisees' condemning Jesus for casting out devils by the power of Beelzebub (Mat.12:24), Jesus uttered a series of judgments against them. After this He began to teach in enigmatic parables (Mat.13:3). When His disciples questioned this change in His preaching technique, Jesus' answer was that it was not given to them (outsiders) to recognize "the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens" (Mat.13:11), and He cited Isa.6:9-10 to attest it.

- Then, after the raising of Lazarus, when many still refused to believe, John records that Jesus hid Himself. John cites Isa.6:9-10 as the reason for their blindness (Joh.12:36-40).

- The last occasion was when Paul, as a prisoner, went "to the Jew first" in Rome. When the Jews of the synagogue could not agree on the truth of Paul's sermon, he pronounced Isa.6:9-10 as his summation against the dissenters (Acts 28:25-27).

This condemnation by Isaiah began eight centuries before Christ, and it was needful to be repeated several times. This prophecy seemed to play a role like the Mosaic promises in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 – a continual plea to turn back and be healed. But the Acts 28 drama with Paul in the Roman synagogue was a breaking point.

When Will Immanuel Come?

There are more Messianic texts of interest to be found in Isaiah –

"Therefore, Adonai Himself will give to you a sign, '**Behold**, the young woman is pregnant and bringing forth a son, and she will call his name Immanuel (Heb. *`îmmânûw·êl*). Curds and honey he will eat, to perceive, to reject the bad, and to choose the good. For before the child knows to reject the bad and to choose the good, the land which you abhor will be abandoned by both her kings. Yahweh will bring in *the* king of Assyria upon you, and upon your people and upon your father's house days which have not come since *the* day of separating Ephraim away from Judah." Isa.7:14-17

The text after v.17 continues to threaten invasion by Assyria and Egypt. The two kingdoms abandoned by their kings would be Syria and Samaria. This birth-sign was forced upon Ahaz, king of Judah, because of his adamant refusal to ask for the sign that was offered to him by Yahweh (any sign he desired). Note that the sign given to Ahaz must have been fulfilled in its first part, at least – the birth of a child named Immanuel. Without that child, the "sign" would have had no significance to him. The prophecy was that within perhaps 4-5 years (before the child knew good and evil), the Assyrian "razor" would shave Judah's enemies, the alliance of Syria and Samaria. But further, Yahweh would summon Egypt and Assyria against Judah (v.18). How much of this was fulfilled in the allotted time? Only this much – Tiglath-pileser invaded Syria and slew king Rezin. He also invaded the Northern kingdom, but Hoshea assassinated Pekah, reigned in his place, paid the Assyrian tribute (2 Ki.15:27-30), and thus avoided the destruction of Samaria. So an empty throne in Samaria, and an Egypto-Assyrian alliance on Judean soil did not take place. Eventually, the Northern kingdom was overthrown and de-populated by Assyria, but the prophesied Egypto-Assyrian battle with Judea did not take place at any time. Whether the sequence of wars between "the king of the North" and "the king of the South" in Daniel chapter 11 refers to any of this as a future conflict remains to be seen. I mention this because "the North" likely points to Syria as one of the rivals, while Assyria is another nation entirely. No single text contains all the details of a prophecy, so we must test the texts against one another, like puzzle-pieces, to find the larger picture.

Isaiah 7:14 has an application to Jesus' Incarnation, but only that verse, not what follows. Here is how the NT applies it –

> "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was thus. His mother Mary having been betrothed to Joseph, before their coming together, she was found being pregnant by *the* Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being just and not wanting to expose her, purposed to send her away secretly. But as he thought these things, **behold**, an angel of *the* Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying. 'Joseph, son of David, fear not to receive Mary your wife, for that *which is* in her is begotten by *the* Holy Spirit. And she will bear a son and call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.' And all this has happened so that might be fulfilled that spoken by *the* Lord through the prophet, saying, '**Behold**, the virgin will be pregnant and bear a son, and they will call His name Immanuel,' which is being interpreted 'With-us-God'." Mat.1:18-23

Note that the quoted portion in Matthew is verbatim from the *LXX*, except that "you will call" in Isaiah becomes "they will call" in Matthew. The "young woman" (Heb. *`almâh*) of Isaiah's Hebrew original, an inclusive word, was translated to the more distinct "virginal young woman" (Gk. *parthenos*) of the *LXX* and NT. Of its nine occurrences in the OT, *`almâh* is rendered *parthenos* only here by the *LXX*, a seeming anticipation of its NT application to Mary.

Also, note the difference in Matthew 1 that Mary was to call His name "Jesus", while the fulfillment of Isaiah has "them" calling His name "Immanuel". Nowhere else in the NT is this name applied to Jesus. This is a singular use of the name, and it begs the question, "When will they call His name Immanuel?" The name Jesus is used over 900 times in the NT, but Immanuel only once – in His birth narrative, even before His birth. How can we explain this disparity, since both names are applied to the Christ? Is it possible that the name Immanuel has a future unrealized significance? A possible connection is in Rev.21:3 –

> "And I heard a great voice from the heaven, saying, '**Behold**, the dwelling (lit. 'tent') of God *is* with the men, and He will dwell with them. And they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them."

If the personal pronouns here were converted from 3rd person to 1st person perspective, we would have two instances of "God … with us", the essential

meaning of "Immanuel". Revelation 21 deals with New Jerusalem, so the heavenly city may be where the name Immanuel will find its ultimate fulfillment.

For the sake of context, the Isaiah treatment of Immanuel continues –

> "And therefore, **behold**, Adonai *is* bringing up over them the waters of the River, the mighty and the plentiful, the king of Assyria and all his glory, and he will go up over all his channels and go over all his banks. And he will cut through upon Judah. He will overflow and pass through. He will reach up to the neck. And a stretching of his wings will become a filling of the breadth of your land, Immanuel (Heb. *`îmmânûw·êl*)." Isa.8:7-8

So the threat of Assyria continued in Isaiah, with Assyria's king depicted as the flooding of the Euphrates and also the winged bull emblem that Assyrian kings likened themselves to. Now there was a *typical* Assyrian "flood" in Hezekiah's time, and Yahweh alone destroyed their army of 185,000. Jerusalem was spared once again. We have already examined "the burden of Babel" in the day of the Lord in Isaiah chapters 13-14. That prophecy cannot have been fulfilled because Babel was not destroyed in ancient times, like Sodom and Gomorrah, never to be occupied again (13:19-22). The text speaks against both "the king of Babel" (14:4) and also "the Assyrian" (14:25) without any clear transition in the text to separate them. So it seems the final phase of "the day of the Lord" will include an Assyrian enemy. It also appears that the faithful Israel of that day will identify themselves with the name "Immanuel" and will lean upon "God with us" for their salvation.

There is a final Immanuel text in Isaiah, although it is typically not translated as such –

> "Break apart, you peoples, and be shattered. And listen, all you distant lands. Gird yourselves, but be shattered. Devise a plan, but it will be frustrated. Speak a word, but it will not stand, for with us *is* God (Heb. *`îmmânûw êl*)." Isa.8:9-10

This continues the previous text against Assyria, who apparently will come with an alliance of "peoples". Here the Masoretes withheld the dot (· *nîqqûd*) between the words, so as to convey their inherent meaning, rather than the symbolic name given to the birth-sign child. But all such punctuation was just Masoretic

interpretation, because more ancient manuscripts, like the Great Isaiah Scroll (ca. BC 125), have neither punctuation nor vowel pointing. And the Great Isaiah Scroll shows no space between the words in Isa.8:10, so the translation above could be rendered by the *name* Immanuel. My principal point from these Immanuel texts is the prominence of an overflowing Assyria and his devastations of Samaria and Judea. But these have not been fulfilled to the letter, so an ultimate fulfillment must be future.

When Will the Government Be Upon His Shoulder?

Another Messianic text, also in Isaiah, is found at 9:6 –

> "For a Child has been born to us, a Son has been given to us. And the dominion will come to pass upon His shoulder, and He has called His name Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Continuity, Prince of Peace."

Although this text begins with verbs in the perfect tense ("has been born", "has been given", "has called"), there is nothing to suggest the birth of another sign-son. These appear to be grammatical instances of the prophetic past. However, the dominion upon His shoulder is declared futuristically ("will come to pass").

And note that my translation in Isa.9:6 "He has called" is accurate (instead of the *KJV,* "His name will be called"). The subject "He" is somewhat ambiguous, and the nearest antecedent is likewise – "He lightly esteemed", then "He honored" the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali (Isa.9:1). I have inferred that the One Who did this light esteeming, honoring, and then calling was Yahweh Himself. The four-fold title is what God has called this Son. But what we have not yet seen is the fulfillment of this title and "the dominion" (*KJV,* 'the government') being exercised by Jesus Christ. "The dominion" would have been understood by Isaiah's hearers as the kingship of Judah. While Jesus was declared "Son of David" by the crowd at Mat.21:9 with many Hosannas, He did not occupy Herod's throne, or any other throne on earth. That part of Isa.9:6 has been deferred.

Of the four Messianic titles in Isa.9:6, whether in Heb. or the *LXX*, I could find only a single parallel, and that is in Isa.10:21 –

> "A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob to ***the* mighty God**."

Looking at the context of Isaiah chapter 10 – first we have "**Woe**! Assyria, rod of My anger" (v.5) – Assyria will become Yahweh's scourge of Zion and Jerusalem (vv.11-12). Then afterwards, He will punish Assyria and restore Israel (vv.15-25). As I have already pointed out, Assyria never took Jerusalem captive, so there has been no one to restore from this captivity (yet). All this has been deferred to a future "day of the Lord" and a future "remnant of Jacob". Israel's return to "the mighty God" indicates a return to the Son Who was born in a stable, to Whom the Father gave this title.

The birth of prophetically-named children is a keynote of Isaiah chapters 7-9, and in the middle of this section of prophecy is 8:18 –

> "Behold, I and the boys whom Yahweh has given to me **for signs and for omens** in Israel…"

I have omitted a review of the birth of Maher-shalal-hash-baz ("swift-booty – speedy-prey") in Isa.8:1-4, because a Messianic connection was not clear to me – but it is possible there is one. This second boy has in common with Immanuel that before he is old enough to cry "my father and my mother", Assyria would plunder Damascus. Both symbolic births signified a short period of years before the Assyrian scourge would appear. But the scourge against Judah did not appear in Isaiah's time in all the details here specified.

This has been but a small sampling of partial and deferred prophecies. Keeping this sample small has avoided making the book overly repetitious. Surely, one of the great prophetic deferments was the extension of Jeremiah's 70 years of captivity into the "seventy sevens" of Daniel 9. The next chapter, **"Mystery, Babylon the Great"**, takes note of even more of these partial and deferred prophecies. And a later chapter, **Christ in the Old Testament, and the New**, has many more Messianic prophecies that were partial fulfillments of much larger, and more complex prophecies.

“Mystery, Babylon the Great”

The Foundations of the City

To fully understand the role of Babylon in Revelation, we need to start back at the founding of the city Babel. But first let me offer some words of explanation. Greek *mustērion* (neuter noun) means “secret” – i.e., something hidden, but not necessarily inscrutable or unsolvable, as our word “mystery” might suggest. Therefore, I have typically translated it “secret” throughout this study. In Rev.17:5 the adjective “Great” is feminine, agreeing with Babylon. So it is “Babylon the Great” that is the subject of this secret, and not a “Great Secret” concerning Babylon. The English title might be read ambiguously, just by moving the comma (there was no punctuation in the early Gk. mss.). But the Greek form of this expression is unambiguous.

Nimrod’s kingdom began with Babel (Gen.10:10), and it was there that Nimrod (his name means “he rebelled for himself”) led a rebellion of peoples to erect a tower whose top was “among the heavens”. This was the place where men began worshiping the heavenly host (Gen.11:1-9), and it was here that God began to give up the nations (Rom.1:18-26). Not long afterward He made His covenants with Abraham, then Isaac, Jacob and Israel as a bulwark against man’s idolatries. Since the time after the Flood, ancient Babel (“Babylon” in anglicized Gk.) had been a root of idolatry. It is also where man endeavored to make “a name” for himself – i.e., to declare his independence from the living God. The Genesis account says that construction on Babel ceased, when God dispersed the nations from there (Gen.11:8). We might conclude that the people who remained “in the land of Shinar” resumed building the city at some point. But an alternative might be that Yahweh’s dispersion of the post-Flood peoples from that place left it abandoned and forgotten.

Babel does not appear again in Scriptural history until the fall of Samaria. At that time the king of Assyria brought in nationals from various regions, including from Babel, to displace the native population (2 Ki. 17:24). Isaiah reveals something of the Babel of his day –

> "Behold, land of Chaldeans. This people became not. Assyria founded it for dessert beasts (or 'desert-dwellers'). They set up its towers; they raised up its palaces. He brought it to ruin." Isa.23:13

In the table of nations (Genesis10) there is mention of Asshur (Assyria) but not the Chaldeans (*Kasdîym*). Nimrod built Babel "in the land of Shinar", and out of that land went Asshur to build Nineveh and other cities. According to the translation above, Asshur, or his descendant, built cities in the land of the *Kasdîym*. Although Babel is not mentioned, due to the frequent association between Babel and the *Kasdîym* this translation of Isa.23:13 suggests that the modern Babel of Nebuchadrezzar was founded by Assyria. But for an alternate translation, see **Appendix J: Isaiah 13-14 – A more Detailed Analysis**. The secular view of history is that both the Assyrian and the Babylonian identities arose from the crumbling of the older Akkadian empire. To assert that Assyria founded Babylonia is likely incorrect. Their relationship to each other over many centuries was complex.

Assyria dominated Mesopotamia until BC 612, when an alliance of Babel and Media overthrew Nineveh, the last stronghold of the old Assyrian power. Thereafter, Babel became the ruling "northern" empire for several generations.

Nebuchadrezzar, a King of Kings

Babel's king Nebuchadrezzar was the strong leader who took Judea into captivity, and destroyed Jerusalem and the first Temple. As I have already pointed out, there seem to be two Nebuchadrezzars, the historic and the apocalyptic-prophetic. The historic king was thrice-declared by Yahweh to be "My servant" (Jer.25:9; 27:6; 43:10), and to him was given a great dominion –

> "I made the earth, the man, and the cattle which *are* upon the surface of the earth, by My great power and by My outstretched arm. And I give it to whomever it pleased in My sight. And now I have given **all these lands** into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babel, **My servant**, and even the living ones of the field I have given to him to serve him. Then all the nations will serve him and his son and his son's son, until *the* time of his land comes – even him. Then

> many nations and great kings will serve him. And it will come to pass, the nation and the kingdom that will not serve him, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babel, and who will not put his neck under *the* yoke of *the* king of Babel – by the sword and by the famine and by the pestilence, I will visit upon that nation – an utterance of Yahweh – until My finishing them *off* by his hand." Jer.27:5-8

"All these lands" included the kingdoms of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon (Jer.27:3), but a previous list of nations that God would punish through Nebuchadrezzar was even more inclusive – "all these nations round about", and that included the other regional power center, Egypt (Jer.25:9-27). But Egypt never came under the historic Nebuchadrezzar's power. After the battle of Carchemish, when Egypt came to Assyria's aid in Mesopotamia, Nebuchadrezzar did lead an expedition against Egypt. That invasion was repelled with such carnage to both armies, that a stalemate prevailed between these nations afterwards.

So Jeremiah chapter 25 was not fulfilled to the letter – only typically. Then a later prophecy of Jeremiah against Egypt, and Judeans who fled there after the murder of their Babylonian governor, was not fulfilled in any sense.

> "And say to them, 'Thus said Yahweh of armies, Elohim of Israel "**Behold**, I am sending, and I will take hold of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babel, **My servant**, and I will appoint his throne from above these stones (placed next to Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes) which I have hidden. And he will spread out his pavilion over them. And he comes and causes to strike down *the* land of Egypt, who *are* for death to death, and who *are* for captivity to captivity, and who *are* for sword to sword." Jer.43:10-11

Historic Nebuchadrezzar neither conquered Egypt, nor enthroned himself next to Pharaoh's house, although the potential for fulfillment was there in his time. So all of these prophecies leave the way open for a future Nebuchadrezzar, who will fulfill them to the letter.

I have pointed out in a previous chapter, **"This Generation" in Prophecy**, how each chapter in the book of Daniel builds upon previous chapters. It all begins with Nebuchadrezzar's dream-image, when Daniel's prophetic career began. Noteworthy with this dream is that upon waking, Nebuchadrezzar could not remember it and demanded that his astrologers tell him both the dream and its

meaning. This remarkable circumstance rather cut off Nebuchadrezzar from the prophetic vision that he originally saw, and which Daniel applied to him. In a sense the dream both applied and did not apply to Nebuchadrezzar, because it has multiple interpretations – a complicated vision, indeed.

The First Secret of Babel

Leading up to Daniel's audience before Nebuchadrezzar, the language used is enlightening –

> "… and to seek compassions from before the God of the heavens concerning this **secret** (Aram. *râz*, *LXX mustērion*), that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of *the* wise *ones* of Babel. Then was revealed the **secret** to Daniel in the vision that night; then Daniel blessed the God of the heavens."
>
> Dan.2:18-19

I am proposing that "Mystery, Babylon" (*KJV*, Rev.17:5), or more accurately "Secret, Babylon" began with this dream-secret given to Nebuchadrezzar, then revealed and interpreted by Daniel. Doubtless, you will recall the image of his dream:

> "Yet there is God in the heavens revealing **secrets**, and He has made known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what will happen **in the latter days**. Your dream and vision of your head upon your bed were this –
>
> You, the king, were looking – it came to pass and **behold**, one **great** (*LXX*, *megalē*, as in Rev.17:5 "Babylon the **Great**") image! That **great** image and its extraordinary brightness *were* rising up before you, and its appearance *was* frightening. That image's head, that *was* fine gold. Its breast and arms, that *were* silver. Its belly and hips, that *were* bronze. Its legs, that *were* iron. And its feet, *made* out of what *is* iron and out of what *is* pottery. And *as* you were watching, it came to pass until which *time* a stone was cut, which *was* not by hands. And it struck the image upon the feet, which *were* the iron and the pottery, and it pulverized them. By then, were pulverized together the iron, the pottery, the bronze, the silver and the gold, and it became like chaff from a threshing-floor of summer. And the wind carried them away, and all trace was

> not found as to them. Then the stone which struck the image became a great mountain, and it filled the whole earth. This *is* the dream, and its interpretation we tell before the king. You, the king, *are* **king of kings**, whom the God of the heavens has given to you the kingdom, the might and the strength and the glory. And in all places where sons of man are living, the animals of the field and the birds of the skies He has given into your hand. And He has made you ruler over all of them. You *are* that head, which *is* the gold."
>
> Dan.2:28, 31-38

Note that as far back as chapter 2, in the time of Daniel's youth, he was prophesying about "the latter days". Also noteworthy here is the extent of the dominion that was given to this "king of kings". Besides rulership over men, he was appointed dominion over the animal creation, like Adam's dominion. The rest of the image, being of inferior metals and even ceramic pottery, was interpreted as being inferior kingdoms that were to follow Nebuchadnezzar's (Dan.2:39-43). The summation comes with God establishing His own kingdom –

> "And **in the days which *are of* those kings**, the God of the heavens will set up a kingdom which *is* for *the* age. It will not perish, and the kingdom will not be left for another people. It will pulverize and annihilate all these kingdoms, and it will stand for *the* age." Dan.2:44

This kingdom of "the God of the heavens" will be Christ's kingdom. "It will not perish" in the usual sense of being conquered, but it will end insofar that the Son will hand it over to the Father (1 Cor.15:24). This kingdom with Christ as King will last "for *the* age", but not "forever", as so many English translations have it.

Later chapters of Daniel identify some of the inferior kingdoms of Daniel 2 with the changes in empire that affected the people of Israel. The silver related to Cyrus, his two arms being "the Medes and the Persians", the two major ethnic groups who formed Cyrus' kingdom. The brass is associated with Alexander, who conquered and absorbed the Persian empire into his own (Dan.11:2-4). But why the two hips of bronze? At Alexander's death, his empire was divided among his five chief generals, but in the years that followed, this evolved into the two power centers of Syria (ruled by the Seleucid dynasty) and Egypt (ruled by the Ptolemies). After this is where most interpreters go astray. Chronologically, Rome

became the next power to rule Syria, Palestine and Egypt, but the Roman acquisition did not reach as far as Alexander's eastern conquests. Above all, Rome was a western, European power – although it extended into some eastern provinces that had been ruled by the Greeks. Today, we may entertain a sense of the Romans exhibiting iron-like traits, but we could apply that "iron" character to any empire that holds itself together by force. Egypt is referred to as an "iron furnace" (Jer.11:4) because of its forcible enslavement of Israel.

Other commentators have noted how the Seleucid-Ptolemaic dichotomy of the bronze hips merges right into the iron legs without any physical break. Thus Daniel chapter 11 begins by speaking of a continuation of the Persian hegemony, followed by the Greek, and a break-up of that empire to the four winds. From 11:5 onward begins a description of intrigues between a "king of the North" and a "king of the South" – these are the iron legs of Nebuchadnezzar's dream-image. Some have tried to identify the specific exploits of these two kings with the Seleucid-Ptolemaic rivalries, but the explanations fall short in the details. And some have wanted to see "the Abomination of Desolation" as a device of the Seleucid ruler Antiochus Epiphanes. The apocryphal 1 Maccabees describes Antiochus Epiphanes as stirring up idolatries throughout his domain, such that apostate Jews "set up an abomination of desolation upon the altar" (1 Mac.1:54). Now all the deeds of Seleucid and Ptolemaic monarchs may be types for the greater conflict to come – a rehearsal, as it were. Further, Jesus showed "the Abomination of Desolation" was still future (Mat.24:15), so Antiochus Epiphanes cannot have been its originator.

Further, a Roman interpretation of the iron legs has this serious shortfall – during Israel's prophetic times Rome was not a twofold dominion, such as the Persian was and the Greek came to be in time. And even as the feet support the legs, and the legs the hips, and the hips the belly, and the belly the chest, and the chest the head, the implications of this, in addition to its being "<u>one great image</u>" (Dan.2:31), are that one geographical region is the subject dominion of all these. And I would offer this additional interpretation of the image-vision of Nebuchadnezzar. Just as Nebuchadnezzar did not fulfill to the letter the far-flung domain that was given to him – notably, he did not conquer Egypt, and the utter devastations of Egypt depicted in Jeremiah chapter 46 did not take place – I am led to believe that the whole image will receive a second fulfillment, yet future. This

would begin with the apocalyptic-prophetic Nebuchadrezzar that I have alluded to previously. It must also apply to the chest of silver, because the historical Cyrus did not destroy Babel as predicted, like God's overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa.13:19). Babylon's gates and bars were not cut before Cyrus entered the city (Isa.45:1-2), but the city threw open its gates to welcome him. The first conquests of Alexander were in the Persian-held Asia Minor, and what do we find in Revelation? The whole book is addressed as a letter to seven assemblies in western Asia Minor, and one of their cities (Pergamos) is where "the throne of Satan" is – perhaps a red-flag to indicate the provenance of his man, the Beast. And what role will the Aegean isle Patmos (Rev.1:9) play in the final drama of world kingdoms? Whatever that role, the Greek belly of the image also has an end-time role, it would seem.

And what is one to make of "And **in the days which *are of* those kings**" in Dan.2:44? The immediate sense of that phrase is that the ultimate kings represented by the image-vision will be ruling contemporaneously, and they will be destroyed together by "the stone", which is also "the Rock", Christ. Thus, the image had both an historical interpretation, covering the seventy years of Jer.25:11-12 and the four hundred ninety years of Dan.9:24, as well as an end-time interpretation, falling into the final seven years before the Messianic kingdom destroys the vestiges of all those other kingdoms. The single destructive act of Messiah against the "<u>one great image</u>" speaks to a manifold, simultaneous destruction of all of them.

The Burden of Babel in Isaiah

Isaiah chapter 47 adds to the burden of Babel, which Isaiah had pronounced earlier in chapters 13-14. Here are some features of chapter 47 concerning Babel –

- Seated on the ground, instead of a throne (v.1)
- Now a slave-girl at a millstone, shamefully unclad (vv.2-3)
- No longer called "lady of kingdoms" (v.5)
- Once given to pleasures (v.8)
- Boastful in knowing loss of neither husband nor children (v.8)
- But widowhood and loss of children will come "in a moment, in one day" (v.9)

- These losses will come as punishment for sorceries and enchantments (v.9)
- Babel will not see her end coming; it will come suddenly, as a surprise (v.11)
- The astrologers and their ilk will not escape the flame (vv.13-14)
- Her merchants will wander away (v.15) – some commentators have identified this loss of merchants as her "widowhood", and "loss of children" as the destruction of her citizens

But none of these things happened when the city welcomed Cyrus through its gates. As I mentioned earlier, the ancient Babel that historic Nebuchadrezzar ruled just faded away, and it had become a ghost town by AD 200 – abandoned, but not destroyed by flame. Not only did her merchants wander away, but so did her "children". And note this difference also, at the end of the "seventy years" both Babel and "the land of the Chaldeans" were to become "desolations of an age" (Jer.25:12). Such an emptied state did eventually befall the city Babel. But this emptying occurred about seven hundred years later, and not seventy. And an emptying did not apply generally to the land of the Chaldeans. So this was very much a partial fulfillment, with the greater part deferred to a future time.

Another reference to Babel in Isaiah is rather shrouded in obscurity. The text begins "the burden of the wilderness of the sea" (*KJV*), and it continues "as whirlwinds from the Negev to cut through the desert, it comes from a feared land" (Isa.21:1). I have chosen to translate Heb. *negeb* ("south") as the proper noun, because the only other reference to "wilderness of the sea" is in Exo.13:18, and an association with the Sinai desert seems to be the meaning here in Isaiah. Isaiah called this burden a "distressing vision", the only such declaration in Scripture, and in it the "faithless deals faithlessly, and the waster wastes". Elam and Media are told to go up and besiege, but we are not told where (21:2). However, "going up" is often used of the ascent to Jerusalem, so this is a possibility. A pain like birth-pangs overcame Isaiah in his fear (21:3-4). Then he was commanded in his vision to set a watchtower, from which he saw chariots pulled first by a pair of horses, then a donkey and finally a camel. Verse 8 is also enigmatic, for he cried, "A lion upon the watch-tower, my Lord." This lion may signify an attacker of Israel, and specifically Babel (as in Jer.50:17; 51:38). The next sight Isaiah sees from the watchtower is a two-horse chariot, from which comes the report, "Fell, fell Babel, and all the idols of her gods He smashed to the ground." (21:9). Then Isaiah likens

his intended hearer to "my threshing and son of my threshing-floor" (21:10), where threshing is often used as a metaphor by Yahweh for his judgments of peoples. Also note the "threshing-floor" link to the final outcome of the dream-image in Dan.2:35. There are so many unique words and phrases used in this brief text of Isaiah 21 that make it very difficult to draw parallels to other prophecies. Could its full import be reserved for those Israelites for whom this "distressing vision" will become reality? However, there is an obvious parallel here with "Mystery, Babylon the Great" (*KJV*) –

> "And he (another angel out of the heaven) cried with a mighty voice, saying, 'Fell, fell Babylon the Great. And it became a habitation of demons, and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean bird, and a prison of every unclean and hated beast." Rev.18:2

Not only does this Revelation text repeat Isa.21:9, but it alludes to the wasted state of Babel depicted in the day of the Lord in Isa.13:21 – when Babel will become inhabited by wild beasts, owls, ostriches and he-goats (possible allusion to the "demons" of Lev.17:7). There are even more of these parallels between OT prophecies against Babel and the book of Revelation. The obvious conclusion from these is that many OT prophecies were deferred from an imminent fulfillment in those ancient times. As of John's writing the Revelation (ca. AD 40), they still awaited their final fulfillment.

We have already examined Jeremiah chapters 25 and 27 for background on how God put into Nebuchadrezzar's hand to bring many nations into servitude, and to destroy those who resisted him. But "the time of his land" was to have been seventy years only. Then Babel would serve "many nations and great kings" (Jer.27:7). This latter "service" portion of prophecy seems to have been fulfilled with Babel's domination by Medo-Persia, then Greece, Parthia and Rome. The utter destruction prophecy has not happened yet.

More OT Prophecy Concerning Babel: Jeremiah 50-51

Jeremiah chapters 50-51 contain an extensive prophecy against Babel, as did Isaiah chapters 13-14, which had been declared much earlier. The discussion in this

section touches the high points, as it were, but a more detailed treatment can be found at **Appendix K: Jeremiah 50-51 – A More Detailed Analysis.** This Jeremiah text opens with –

> "The word which Yahweh spoke toward Babel, toward *the* land of Chaldeans, by *the* hand of Jeremiah the prophet. Announce among the nations and make them hear. Even raise a standard. Make them hear – do not keep *it* hidden. Say, 'Has been captured Babel. Has been shamed Bel. Has been shattered Merodak. Have been shamed her idols. Have been shattered her images. Truly has gone up against her a nation **out of <u>that North</u>**. It will appoint her land for a horror. And no dweller will come to pass in her from mankind. And from a wild animal they are displaced – they depart. In those days and in that time,' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'sons of Israel will go, and sons of Judah to go together. And weeping they will go, and Yahweh their Elohim they will seek. Zion they will ask *the* way to, here their faces *turned*. 'Come and let us join ourselves to Yahweh *by* a covenant of an age. It will not be forgotten.'" Jer.50:1-5

Cyrus' policy toward conquered peoples was relatively benign – he left their religion and customs alone. When he subjugated Chaldea, she did not become a horror, nor were her idols smashed. And conquest coming out of "<u>that North</u>" (lit. translation, and *hapax*), might apply to Darius the Mede (Dan.5:31), because Media was to the Northeast of Babel. But then dominion came from Cyrus the Persian, and Persia was to the Southeast of Babel. An historic fulfillment does not quite match "<u>that North</u>". So what will this Northern threat be, and when will it materialize? I will explore this Northern connection further toward the end of this chapter, and in the next chapter, **Where Does Gog of the Land of Magog Fit?** The two houses of Israel and Judah joining together in their quest for help, to make their way back to their homeland, will be a mournful journey. It may be connected with the Greater Day of Atonement, that will nearly complete the prophetic Calendar of Feasts contained in Mosaic Law (see previous section, **Prophetic Types in the Mosaic Feasts**).

> But Jeremiah 50 continues –
>
> "<u>My people</u> have become straying sheep. Those pasturing them have caused them to stray. *The* rebellious have led them astray *on the* mountains. From

> mountain to hill they have gone. They have forgotten their resting-place. All those finding them have consumed them, and their enemies said, 'We have not been guilty, because they have sinned against Yahweh, Abode of justice, and Hope of their fathers, Yahweh.' Wander from *the* midst of Babel, and from *the* land of Chaldea you have gone forth. And become as rams before a flock. For, **behold**, I will stir up and bring up against Babel an assembly of great nations **from a northern land**. And they will set up a battle order against her. From there she will be captured. His arrows *will be* as a mighty one having success. None will return emptily. And Chaldeans will become plunder. All plundering her will be satisfied – an utterance of Yahweh. Because you rejoice, because you exult, plunderers of My heritage, because you have sprung about as a threshing heifer, and you neigh as the stallions, your mother has been deeply ashamed. *The* one bearing you has been ashamed. **Behold**, *the* last of nations *will be* a wilderness, dry country, and desert. Because of *the* anger of Yahweh, she will not dwell, but she will become a devastation, all of her. Everyone passing by Babel will be horrified, and will hiss because of all her wounds. Set in battle order against Babel all around. All bending a bow shoot at her, take no pity toward *the* arrow, because she has sinned toward Yahweh. Shout a war-cry against her all around. She has given her hand. Her towers have collapsed. Her walls have been demolished, because she *is* a vengeance of Yahweh. Take vengeance upon her. As what she has done, do to her. Cut off *the* sower from Babel, and one holding a sickle in time of harvest. From before the oppressing sword, each will turn toward his own people, and each will flee to his own land. A scattered lamb is Israel. Lions dispersed *him*. First the king of Assyria consumed him, then this latter Nebuchadrezzar king of Babel gnawed on him. Therefore, thus said Yahweh of armies, Elohim of Israel, '**Behold**, I am calling to account *the* king of Babel, and to his land, as whom I have called to account *the* king of Assyria.'" Jer.50:6-18

Note again the threat to Babel from the North, an army that surrounds and destroys her without pity, turning her into a desert. This agrees with the utter destruction prophesied by Isaiah chapters 13-14, and it will render her "last of nations" (or 'least of nations' per *NKJV*; Heb. *'acharîyth gôwyîm*, *hapax*, *LXX*, *eschatē ethnōn*, *hapax*).

Yahweh's people are commanded to "wander" out of Babel, and these expatriates will take the lead ("rams before a flock") in a great return of widely dispersed Israelites to their homeland. That seems to be the sense of the "rams" simile concerning the return of these Chaldean Jews. Also, the sense of their departing is a voluntary one, and that rather agrees with this later prophecy toward the Jews of Babylon –

> "'Come out of her, My people, lest you might share in her sins, and lest you might receive from her plagues…" Rev.18:4

However, others will be fleeing Babel – "each will turn toward his own people, and each will flee to his own land". Because Babel will one day become a great commercial center, many from other nations will be attracted to sojourn there. That flight must come when the Northern attack is imminent, so the "Come out" command to "My people" must precede that. Note that none of this prophecy has been fulfilled yet. Although this section of Jeremiah 50 ends with an historical allusion to the "lions" who "gnawed on" the lamb Israel, it is a complex prophecy. First it was Assyria, then "this latter Nebuchadrezzar". Given that captive Israel were unable to wander out of Babel under the first Nebuchadrezzar, and no northern threat has ever turned Babel into a desert, the ultimate solution of this prophecy cannot be historic, but must be future.

To continue in Jeremiah 50 –

> "And I will bring back Israel to his pasturage, and he will graze the Carmel *hills* and Bashan. And on Mount Ephraim and Gilead his soul will be satisfied. In those days and at that time – an utterance of Yahweh – one will seek for *the* **guilt of Israel, but it *is* not, and sins of Judah, but they are not found**, for I will pardon toward those whom I am leaving *as a remnant*. Go up against **the land of Merathaim**, against it, and toward those inhabiting Pekod. Kill and devote to destruction after them – an utterance of Yahweh – and do according to all that I have commanded you. A sound of combat *is* in the land, and a great crushing. **How** has **the hammer of the whole earth** been cut off and broken! **How** Babel has become for a horror among *the* nations! I have laid a snare for you, and you have even been caught, Babel, and you did not observe *it*. You have been found, even captured, because you opposed yourself against Yahweh.

Yahweh has opened His storehouse, and He has brought out implements of His curse, for it *is* a work for Adonai Yahweh of armies in *the* land of Chaldeans. Go up against her from the farthest boundary. Open her granaries. Heap her up as rubble, and devote her to destruction. There will not come to her a remnant. Kill all her bullocks. Let them go down to the slaughter. **Woe** against them, for their day has come, *the* time of their visitation. *The* voice of **those fleeing** and fugitives from *the* land of Babel to declare in Zion a recompense of Yahweh our Elohim, a recompense of His temple. Summon to Babel archers, all those drawing a bow. Encamp against her all around. Let none come to escape. Repay her according to her work, according to all that she has done, do to her, for she has acted proudly toward Yahweh, toward the Holy One of Israel. Therefore, her young men will fall in her plazas, and all her men of war will perish in that day – an utterance of Yahweh. **Behold**, I *am* against you arrogant one – an utterance of Adonai Yahweh of armies – for your day has come, *the* time *that* I have visited you. And the arrogant will stumble and fall, and none will raise him up. And I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it will consume all around him. Thus said Yahweh of armies, 'Sons of Israel *were* oppressed, even together with sons of Judah. And all taking them captive took hold upon them. They refused to release *them*. The One Redeeming them *is* strong. Yahweh of armies *is* His name. He will surely dispute their case, so as **to give rest to the land**, and to shake up those inhabiting Babel.' A sword *is* against Chaldeans – an utterance of Yahweh – and toward those inhabiting Babel, and toward her princes, and toward her wise ones. A sword *is* toward the diviners, and they will act foolishly. A sword *is* toward her mighty ones, and they will be terrified. A sword *is* toward their horses and toward their chariots and toward all the mixed people who *are* in her midst, and they will become as women. A sword is toward her storehouses, and they will be plundered. Drought *is* toward her waters, and they will dry up, for she is a land of idols, and they run madly upon the horrors. Therefore wild animals with jackals will dwell *there*, and daughters of an ostrich will dwell in her. And she will not dwell continuously, for a duration, and she will not inhabit for generations. As Elohim's overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and her neighbors – an utterance of Yahweh – no man will dwell there, nor son of man sojourn in her. **Behold**, a people *is* coming **from *the* North**, even a great nation and many kings will be raised from the sides of the earth. They will take hold of bow and spear. They *are* cruel and

> have not compassion. Their voice roars like the sea, and they ride upon horses. Set in battle order as a man for the combat, he *is* against you, daughter of Babel. *The* king of Babel has heard *the* report of them, and his hands slacken. Distress has seized him, anguish as the one giving birth. **Behold**, he goes up like a lion from the height of the Jordan toward an ever-flowing abode, for I will stop their running out from over her. And whom *am* I selecting against her? I seek, for who *is* like Me, and who will summon Me, and who is this shepherd who will stand up before Me? Therefore, hear *the* counsel of Yahweh, which He has planned toward Babel, and His plans which He has intended toward *the* land of Chaldeans. Surely He will drag off the least of the flock. Surely He will make desolate *their* pasturage against them. From *the* sound *that* Babel has been seized, the earth has been shaken. And a cry for help has been heard among the nations." Jer.50:19-46

Just look at that unique title of Babel, "the hammer of the whole earth". Jer.23:29 likens Yahweh's word to a hammer, but no nation is called a hammer in the Bible, except here. Seeing that there was a stand-off in the final confrontation between Babel and Egypt during Nebuchadrezzar's reign, Babel cannot have been "the hammer of the whole earth" in his time. This title for Babel awaits future fulfillment. At that time a multitude of kings and nations will swing down from the North to break "the hammer" of Babel. This destruction comes suddenly, because "you have even been caught, Babel, and you did not observe *it*." And note again it will be a destruction as thorough as God's "overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah" – this repeats the threat of Isa.13:19 toward Babel.

This text also makes a command to attack a unique symbolic "land of Merathaim" – i.e., "land of dual rebellions". Some expositors interpret this of historical Babel's double captivity of Israel. I would suggest that its true meaning is future, and it relates to another, future Babylon in rebellion against God.

Israel's status before Yahweh has now changed. Their return to their homeland is a flight here ("oppressed", "captive" and in need of "release"), not the voluntary wandering of Jer.50:4-8. The "guilt of Israel" and "sins of Judah … are not found". Yahweh will "give rest to the land". None of this applied to the return of the people under Ezra and Nehemiah. Certainly when Jesus later walked among them, He did not find them without guilt. This flight from oppression must follow the earlier

wandering out as "rams before the flock". These differences suggest to me the passage of a period of time as the events of chapter 50 unfold.

This prophetic word against Babel continues through chapter 51 –

"Thus said Yahweh, '**Behold**, I am stirring up against Babel, even toward those dwelling at Leb-Qamai a ruinous wind. And I will let loose on Babel foreigners, and they will winnow her and lay waste her land, for they will come against her from all around in a day of evil. Toward *her* let the archer draw the bow, and toward *her* let him raise himself in his armor. Take not compassion toward young men. Devote to destruction her whole army. Then will fall *the* slain in *the* land of Chaldeans, and the pierced in her streets. For Israel is not a widower, nor Judah, from his Elohim, from Yahweh of armies, for their land was full of guilt from *the* Holy One of Israel. **Flee from *the* midst of Babel, and each one save his life**. Perish not by her offense, for it *is* a time of recompense for Yahweh. That reprisal He *is* requiting to her. A **cup of gold *is* Babel** in *the* hand of Yahweh; **she *is* making drunk the whole earth**. From her wine drank nations. Therefore nations run madly. **Suddenly has fallen Babel**, and has been broken. Howl over her. Take balm for her pain. Perhaps she will be healed. We would have healed Babel, but she has not been healed. Abandon her and let us go, each to his own land, for her judgment has reached to the heavens, and it has been raised up to *the* clouds. **Yahweh has set forth our righteousness**. Come and let us be counted in Zion, a work of Yahweh our Elohim." Jer.51:1-11

Here again is a flight from Babel, then a repatriation "in Zion". This rather reinforces statements in chapter 50. Babel turns here from having a drunken, maddening influence over "the whole earth" to "suddenly" falling. Babel will fall because of "her offense", while Yahweh works righteousness in His people. Note how "her judgment has reached to the heavens, and it has been raised up to *the* clouds". This rather suggests the judgment of the great whore in Rev.17:1 and the smoke which the shipmasters will see rising from her destruction (Rev.18:18).

"Sharpen the arrows. Fill the shields. Yahweh has stirred up *th*e **spirit of *the* kings of Media**, for His plan against Babel *is* to ruin her, and it *is* a requital of Yahweh, a requital for His temple. Toward *the* walls of Babel raise up a

> standard. Make strong the watch. Install *the* watchers. Prepare *the* ambushes, for Yahweh both planned and performed what He spoke toward those inhabiting Babel. She dwelling upon many waters, **great in treasures**, her end has come, a cubit of your profit. Yahweh of armies has sworn to Himself by His soul, 'That surely I have filled you with man like the locust, and I will shout a war-cry over you.' He made *the* earth by His power, establishing *the* world by His wisdom. And by His understanding He stretched out *the* heavens. To give His voice – an agitation of waters in the heavens, and He raises up mists from *the* ends of *the* earth. He made lightnings for the rain, and He brought out *the* wind from His storehouses. Every man is stupid, apart from knowledge. Every smith is put to shame from *his* image, for his molten-image *is* a lie, and *there is* no breath in them. They *are* nothingness, a work of mockery. In a time of their visitation, they will perish. *The* share of Jacob *is* not like these, for *He is* One making all these, and *the* staff of His inheritance, Yahweh of armies *is* His name. You are a club to me, <u>implements of war</u>, and <u>by you I will smash nations, and by you I will ruin kingdoms</u>, and by you I will smash horse and rider, and by you I will smash chariot and rider, and by you I will smash man and woman, and by you I will smash old and young, and by you I will smash young man and virgin, and by you I will smash shepherd and flock, and by you I will smash a serf and his team, and by you I will smash governors and officials. And I will repay to Babel and all inhabiting Chaldea, *for* all their evil which they have done in your sight – an utterance of Yahweh." Jer.51:12-24

What begins with Yahweh stirring up "<u>kings of Media</u>" to punish Babel, ends with Jacob as His "<u>implements of war</u>" against unspecified nations and kingdoms – "<u>by you I will smash nations, and by you I will ruin kingdoms</u>". There seems to be a whole world at war here, and not just against Babel. Earlier in this text Yahweh told Israel ("My people") to wander out of Babel – then they were told to flee to Zion. Now those same people have become Yahweh's war-club against nations and kingdoms. The parallels that come to my mind are –

1. Israel repelling an Assyrian invasion, then taking the assault to the Assyrian homeland (Mic.5:5-9, more on this in the chapter **Christ in the Old Testament, and the New**).

2. The horde of armies invading with Gog (Eze.38:2-9, more on this in the chapter **Where Does Gog of the Land of Magog Fit?**).

3. The muster of the 144,000 (Rev.7:1-8, more on this in the section **Then Who Are the 144,000?**).

Although there are a great many prophecies declaring how God will punish Israel by their enemies, yet there are some stand-out texts like these and Jer.51:19-24 portraying a righteous Israel implementing His warfare against the nations. These texts all have the flavor of "day of the Lord" in them. And similar to them, the Overcomer in the Millennium will wield an iron staff with which to smash nations, should the occasion arise (Rev.2:26-27; 12:5; Psa.2:9).

> "**Behold**, I *am* toward you, **mountain of the destroyer** – an utterance of Yahweh – **the one destroying the whole earth**, and I will stretch out My hand against you, and I will roll you down from the rocks, and I will appoint you for a **mountain of burning**. And they will not take from you a stone for a corner nor a stone for a foundation, for you will become desolations of an age – an utterance of Yahweh. Lift up a standard in the land. Blow a ram's-horn among the nations. Dedicate nations against her. Proclaim against her kingdoms of **Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz**. Commission a commander against her. Bring up *the* **horse like *the* bristling locust**. Dedicate against her nations, with **kings of Media**, with her governors and with all her officials, and with the whole land of his dominion. And the land has quaked and writhed, for have stood up against Babel plans of Yahweh, to appoint *the* land of Babel for a horror, apart from no one dwelling *there*. Mighty men of Babel have stopped doing battle. They have remained in the strongholds. Their strength has dried up. They have become like women. **They have set on fire her dwellings. Her gate-bars have been broken**. Runner runs to meet runner, and messenger to meet messenger, to declare to *the* king of Babel that his city has been captured from *every* border. And the fords have been seized, and the outworks they have burned with the fire. And the men of war have been terrified. For thus said Yahweh of armies, Elohim of Israel, '*The* daughter of Babel is like a threshing-floor, *at the* time He has tread her. Yet a little *while* and will come to her the time of the harvest.' Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babel, has consumed us, has drained us. He has left us a vessel of emptiness. He has swallowed us like the sea-serpent. He

has filled his belly with my ornaments. He has washed us off. ‘My violence and my flesh *be* upon Babel,’ a dweller of Zion will say. ‘And my blood *be* upon those inhabiting Chaldea,’ Jerusalem will say. Therefore, thus said Yahweh, ‘**Behold**, I *am* disputing your case, and I will avenge your vengeance. And I will dry up her sea, and make dry her spring. **And Babel will become for heaps, a dwelling of jackals, a horror and a whistling, apart from anyone dwelling *there***. They will roar together like the lions. They have growled like cubs of lions. In their heating up I will appoint their feasts, and I will make them drunk so that they rejoice. And they will sleep a sleep of an age and not awaken.’ – an utterance of Yahweh. I will bring them down as lambs to slaughtering, like rams with he-goats. **How** has Sheshak been captured, and **the praise of the whole earth** been seized! **How** has Babel become for a horror among *the* nations! The sea has gone up over Babel. She has been covered by *the* turmoil of its waves. Her cities have become for a horror, a waterless land and a desert. *The* land is not inhabited by all, and it is not inhabited by a son of man. And I will visit against Bel in Babel, and I will bring out what is swallowed from his mouth. And nations will not stream toward him any longer, but *the* **wall of Babel has fallen**. Go out from *the* midst of her My people, and save yourself, each one, his life from *the* wrath of *the* anger of Yahweh. And lest your heart be timid, and you fear according to the report which *is* being heard in the land, and will come in the year the report, then afterwards in the year the report, even violence in the land, and ruler against ruler. Therefore, **behold**, days *are* coming, that I will visit upon *the* idols of Babel. Her whole land will be ashamed, and all her pierced will fall in her midst. Then heavens and earth, and all that *is* in them, will shout against Babel, for **from *the* North** will come to her the wasters – an utterance of Yahweh. Even as Babel *caused* to fall *the* pierced of Israel, so for Babel have fallen *the* **pierced of the whole earth**. Go, fugitives from *the* sword. Stand not still. Remember Yahweh from afar, and let Jerusalem go up upon your heart. We have been ashamed, because we heard scorn. Disgrace has covered our faces, for foreigners have come upon *the* sanctuary of *the* house of Yahweh. Therefore, **behold**, days *are* coming – an utterance of Yahweh – that I will visit upon her idols, and upon all her land the pierced will groan. Though Babel goes up to the heavens, and though she make inaccessible *the* height of her strength, from beside Me wasters will come to her – an utterance of Yahweh. A voice of a cry from Babel, and a great crushing out

> of *the* land of Chaldeans. Because Yahweh *is* wasting Babel, and He will destroy from her *the* loud voice, and her waves will roar like many waters. *The* uproar of their voice has been given, for a waster *is* coming against her, against Babel. And her mighty ones are captured. Their bows have been dismayed. For God of reprisals *is* Yahweh. He will surely repay. And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise ones, her governors, and her rulers, and her mighty ones. And they will sleep a sleep of an age and not awaken – an utterance of the King, Yahweh of armies *is* His name. Thus said Yahweh of armies, '**The wide city-walls of Babel *are* to be laid bare, and her high gates by the fire will be burned**. And people will toil by sufficiency *for* emptiness. And peoples by a little sufficiency will even grow tired.'" Jer.51:25-58

Again, Yahweh commands His people "go out from the midst of her", and "go, fugitives from the sword … let Jerusalem go up upon your heart". This brings to 6 the number of exodus warnings to Israel in these two chapters. Note the ancient reference to the notorious tower of Babel – "though Babel goes up to the heavens". This links the Babel of Jeremiah 50-51 to the ancient city of Nimrod. And if there were any doubt about identifying this city with Jerusalem, the repeated calls to Israel to return there show that Jerusalem is decidedly *not* Babel.

Summing up Jeremiah 50-51

Yahweh has waxed eloquent in Jeremiah chapters 50-51, an extensive passage full of repeated thoughts:

- "the whole earth" is involved with latter-day Babel
  - "the hammer of the whole earth" (50:23) is a title of Babel, but it has never applied historically, because Egypt was a glaring exclusion – Nebuchadrezzar defeated Egypt at Carchemish, but his later expedition toward the Egyptian homeland was a fiasco
  - "making drunk the whole earth" (51:7) – something intoxicating will come out of Babel to seduce the earth

- "destroying the whole earth" (51:25) – parallels the hammer metaphor above

- "the praise of the whole earth" (51:41) – parallels the intoxicating seduction above

- "the pierced of the whole earth" (51:49) will fall in Babel – but no such thing happened from Jeremiah's time up to the present. This implies a massive, bloody battle to topple Babel once and for all.

- Babel is addressed by Yahweh, first as "the mountain of destruction" because of her destruction of the whole earth. But Yahweh will render her "a mountain of burning" (51:25) in His destruction of the city. Mountain was often used as a metaphor for "kingdom" in the OT – see especially its application to God's kingdom at Dan.2:35.

- Babel and her mighty men will be captured (50:2, 9, 24; 51:31, 41, 56) – but Babel fell to the Persians in BC 539 without bloodshed or captives. So, yes, the city was captured, but the details of Jeremiah 50-51 were not fulfilled at that time. At best, that historic event may be seen as a partial fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecies.

- Her walls and gates will be destroyed (50:15; 51:30, 44, 58) – this did not happen under Cyrus' conquest or afterwards – deferred fulfillment.

- Her idols and images will be smashed; Bel and Marduk shamed (50:2, 38; 51:17-18, 44, 47, 52) – this did not happen under Cyrus' conquest or afterwards. Cyrus left Babylonian religion and customs alone. In the centuries following, as Babel declined economically, it continued as a prominent religious center – deferred fulfillment.

- Threats –

    - from Media (51:11, 28 || also Isa.13:17) – no threat from an independent Media occurred after these prophecies in Jeremiah. Although "Darius the Mede" (Dan.5:30-31) took over the government of Babel after the death of its last Babylonian

monarch, Belshazzar, Darius was said to legislate "according to the laws of the Medes and Persians" (Dan.6:8). Thus had begun the "silver" Medo-Persian empire. At best, this threat was fulfilled only typically in post-Jeremiah times.

- from the North (50:3, 9, 41; 51:48) – this was the direction of the earlier Assyrian threat, but Assyria had ceased as a threat after their defeat by Babel in BC 612. This is a totally deferred prophecy. Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz are named (51:27) and they were North of Mesopotamia in the Caucasus region.

- "among the nations" – a diverse relationship with Babel will exist

  – nations appear to be either allies or adversaries

  - "declare <u>among the nations</u>" that "Babel has been captured" (50:2)
  - "Babel has become for a horror <u>among *the* nations</u>" (50:23)
  - "a cry for help has been heard <u>among the nations</u>" at the capture of Babel (50:46)
  - "blow a ram's-horn <u>among the nations</u> against her" (51:27)
  - "Babel has become for a horror <u>among *the* nations</u>" (51:41)

- Babel's destruction complete
  - suddenly (51:8; 50:24)
  - a desolation, a waste (50:13, 22-23; 51:29, 37, 43, 54, 62)
  - devote to utter destruction (50:21, 26; 51:3)
  - a sword, Heb. *chereb* – used 5 times below against –
    - against Chaldeans (50:35)
    - toward dwellers of Babel (50:35)

- toward her princes (50:35)
- toward her wise ones (50:35)
- toward the diviners (50:36)
- toward her mighty ones (50:36)
- toward his horses (50:37)
- toward his chariots (50:37)
- toward all the mixed people (50:37)
- toward her storehouses (50:37)
- drought, Heb. *chôreb*, toward her waters (50:38)

- a fire kindled –
  - to consume all around (50:32)
  - to burn her dwellings (51:30)
  - to burn her high gates (51:58)
- like Sodom and Gomorrah (50:40 and cp. 51:9) || also Isa.13:19
- a desert (50:12; 51:43)
- no man dwelling there (50:3, 13, 39-40; 51:2, 26, 29, 37, 43, 62) || also Isa.13:20; 14:22
- only wild animals, jackals, and ostriches remain (50:39; 51:37) || also Isa.13:21-22; 14:23
- hordes, like locusts will overwhelm (51:14, 27)

- Babel's foreign dwellers to escape

- Jews were first commanded to wander out as "he-goats" (50:4-8); then Israel was commanded to flee (51:5-6, 45, 50) – this implies two separate groups departing Babel before her destruction. Then there will be those fleeing into Zion (50:28), whom Yahweh will bring back (50:19). None of this happened after the 70 years captivity. Part of the great return of Israel's dispersion pictured here will be from many nations, with the lead ("he-goats") coming from Babel's Jewish remnant. Also a flight to escape Babel has not happened in the past – in Cyrus' time, it was merely a peaceful return of freed captives. We have already seen parallels between OT prophecies of Babel, and the Babylon of NT Revelation, and I will be adding to these shortly. Those who interpret the Babylon of Revelation as a code-word for Jerusalem are left with the conundrum of Jews escaping "Jerusalem", for a flight to Zion.

- also "in these days, and at that time" will come the Greater Jubilee – universal pardon for Israel's sins (50:20) – this was certainly not the case with the return of the people under Ezra-Nehemiah.

- Man and cattle will wander away (50:3), and everyone will flee to his own land (50:16; 51:9) || also Isa.13:14

- Babel's fall will be pay-back

  - for her insolence against Yahweh (50:29, 31-32)

  - her iniquity repaid (51:6)

  - for the evil they will do in Zion (51:24)

  - "*the* vengeance of His temple" (50:28; 51:11) – on the face of it, this was Nebuchadrezzar's act of destruction, but there will be a future desecration also. This must apply before the Beast and his confederacy destroy Babylon (Rev.17:16-17). Also, this implies to me a future Babylonian desecration of the Temple, but not its destruction. Will the Beast be received as a savior and guarantor of Jewish religion after his destruction of Babylon?

- "God of recompenses" "He will surely repay" {fig. *Polyptōton*, *Figures*, p.267} (51:56) – the repaying of Babel is emphatic here

- Although Nebuchadrezzar was called "My servant" in Jer.25:9 in bringing about the destruction of nations, including Judah, the conclusion after 70 years would include Yahweh's visitation of Babel for her iniquity (25:12). Because it is clear that Babel's fall will mostly be future (as seen on many points in Jeremiah chapters 50-51), then the bullet-points above were only partially fulfilled after Jeremiah's "70 years" prophecy.

- Drunkenness – a madness leading to destruction

  - first Yahweh will use Babel to intoxicate the nations (51:7)

  - then He will make Babel drunk also (51:39, 57)

  - this is in accord with Jeremiah's earlier instruction to make many nations drink wine from a cup – beginning with Israel and her neighbors, ending with Babel (Jer.25:15-29)

  - as I have repeated throughout this work, Babel was not destroyed at the end of the 70 years, and neither were other nations drinking from Jeremiah's cup (notably Egypt)

- Israel will become Yahweh's club, to **smash** (9 occs., the number of judgment) –

  - nations (51:20) (and to ruin kingdoms)

  - horse and rider (51:21)

  - chariot and rider (51:21)

  - man and woman (51:22)

  - old and young (51:22)

  - young man and virgin (51:22)

- shepherd and flock (51:23)
- peasant and team (of oxen) (51:23)
- governors and rulers (51:23)

As for the aspect of Babel's destruction coming from a Northern invasion, four times in Jeremiah 50-51 Babel's destruction is described as coming out of the North –

- For has gone up against her a nation <u>from that North</u>. It will appoint her for a horror. (50:3)
- For, behold, I *am* stirring up and bringing against Babel an assembly of great nations <u>from *the* land of the North</u>. (50:9)
- Behold, a people *is* coming <u>from the North</u>. And a great nation and many kings will be stirred up <u>from *the* ends of *the* earth</u>. (50:41)
- Then will shout against Babel heavens and earth and all that *is* in them, for <u>from the North</u> will come to her the devastators. (51:48)

The direction of this threat is very emphatic in its first occurrence – lit. "that North" – perhaps in English "that *very* North" would capture the meaning better. The conquerors are described with a variety of subjects – "a nation", "an assembly of great nations", "a people", "a great nation and many kings", and "the devastators". There is a suggestion here of an alliance of nations, under the lead of one nation. Besides coming from a northward direction, the threat is described as coming from the "ends" or "sides" (Heb. *yarkâth*, a dual noun related to *yârêk*, "hips") of the earth. Perhaps "from the North, near and far" should be the understanding – or possibly "from the North, left and right". It is the dual structure of this noun that has yielded its translation as "sides", just as each of us has a right side and a left side. What I picture from this "hips" metaphor is a threat from many points out of the North – it seems to describe an area, rather than a single compass point. And with that picture, a specific threat seems to agree –

- Lift up a standard in the land. Blow a ram's-horn among the nations. Set apart nations against her. Proclaim against her kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz. Appoint against her a commander. (51:27)

Ararat has generally been associated with Armenia, especially the region around Lake Van. These are the Urartu people of Assyrian records. The Minni have been associated with the Mannai people, believed to have been situated in the north Persian region. Ashkenaz was listed in the table of nations (Gen.10:3) as a grandson of Japheth. This nation is depicted in Baker's Bible Atlas (Map 3) as inhabiting both sides of the Caucasus Mountains. This yields yet another understanding of the "hips" ("sides") of the North from a Babylonian perspective. For comparison, the Romans viewed their Northward lands in two great divisions – the Transalpine (other side of the Alps) and the Cisalpine (near side of the Alps). There may be an analogy here with the Caucasus Mountains – that is, both "sides" of that northern mountain range.

The other specific threat to Babel is from "the Medes" (Isa.13:17), or "the kings of the Medes" (Jer.51:11, 28). There are various ways to understand the plural "kings". They could include co-regents, high government officials (51:28 includes "governors" and "rulers", and this may explain a plural of majesty for "kings"), or perhaps Media as a geographic region, covering multiple city states. The contexts of these texts all speak of a great overthrow ("as Sodom and Gomorrah", Isa.13:19), which Darius the Mede did not execute against Babel in his time. Note also from Baker's Bible Atlas (Map 3) that Media is both North and Northeast of Babel, so we have four named threats from the North. Refer to **Appendix K: Jeremiah 50-51 – A More Detailed Analysis** for more analysis of this extensive prophecy.

Revelation *Adds* to the OT Burden of Babel

For the final prophecy against Babel (Babylon) we turn to the book of Revelation. A prelude is contained in chapter 14 –

> "And another angel, a second, followed, saying, '**Fell, fell Babylon** the Great, who from the wine of the wrath of her fornication gave drink to all the nations.'" Rev.14:18

The first part of this saying "fell, fell Babel" is what we have already seen for the Heb. of Isa.21:9. And Jer.51:8 comes close to this with "Suddenly fell Babel." Thus, Revelation is a continuation of these OT prophecies. And the OT

consistently depicts Babel as an enemy of Israel, so we should *not* accept "Babylon" in Revelation as a code word for "Jerusalem". Now Jerusalem does have its metaphors in the Revelation, where it is called "the great city which is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified" (Rev.11:8). No "secret" or "mystery" there.

More detail about Babylon's fall follows in Revelation chapters 16- 18 –

> "And the great city came into three parts (from the greatest of all earthquakes, v.18), and the cities of the nations fell. Then Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her **the cup** of the wine of the wrath of His anger." Rev.16:19

Many nations were to drink from **the cup** that Jeremiah was instructed to give them, to signify their judgment and destruction – beginning at Jerusalem, and ending at Babel (Jeremiah chapter 25).

There are two cups in Revelation, and they are opposites. The **cup of God's wrath** mentioned at Rev.14:10 will be a punishment for those who worship the beast and his image. The other cup will be administered by Babylon –

> "And the woman <u>was clothed with</u> (Gk. *periballō*) purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a **golden cup** in her hand, being full of abominations and the uncleannesses of her fornication." Rev.17:4

The exact nature of her abominations is not detailed, but the extremity of them is noted –

> "And upon her forehead a name *has been* written, 'Secret, Babylon the Great, the Mother of the Prostitutes, and of the Abominations of the Earth.'" Rev.17:5

This points back to the founding of Babel by Nimrod, as the fountainhead of man's pride, rebellion and idolatries. Prostitution, adultery and abomination are terms used consistently in the OT for man's idolatries. Thus "the Abomination of Desolation" (Dan.11:31; Mat.24:15) is to be understood as an idol – the image of the Beast, which the False Prophet will animate and put in the Temple for men to

worship (Rev.13:14-15). This abomination will out-do even "the Mother … of the abominations of the earth." That is, the Beast will do Babylon one better.

The cup wielded by Babylon in Rev.14:7 is the same cup that Yahweh will use through her to madden and intoxicate the nations (Jer.51:7). Another mention of God's cup of judgment comes in the final chapter on Babylon –

> "And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, '**Fell, fell Babylon** the Great and became a home of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean bird, and a prison of every unclean and hated beast. For all the nations **have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication**, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth became rich by the power of her luxury.' And I heard another voice from the heaven, saying, '**Come out of her, My people**, lest you might share in her sins, and lest you might receive from her plagues, because her sins have joined up to the heaven, and God remembered her iniquities. Give back to her even as she gave, and double the doubling according to her works. In **the cup which she mixed**, mix double to her.'" Rev.18:2-6

These cups are all metaphors for judgments being meted out. So Babylon is to be paid double for her evil works. Her fall, with the result that only demons and unclean beasts will dwell in her place, merely repeats what Isaiah had prophesied many centuries before (Isa.13:19-22). This call, "Come out of her, My people", repeats the earlier warning of Jer.51:45, "Come out from the midst of her, My people".

The career of Babylon before her fall should be taken note of –

> "And there came one of the seven angels, who had the seven bowls, and he spoke with me, saying, 'Come. I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute, who *is* sitting upon **many waters**...'" Rev.17:1

A key to understanding Babylon's rule ("sitting upon") of "many waters" is contained in the Psalms –

> "Send Your hand from above. Rescue me and deliver me from **many waters**, from the hand of the son of the foreigner." Psa.144:7

"Many waters" means "troubles" here, but specifically persecution by foreigners. But more on this below in Rev.17:15, where "the waters" were expounded to John by an angel. Revelation 17 continues –

> "… with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and those inhabiting the earth were made drunk with the wine of her prostitution.' Then he carried me away into a wilderness in spirit, and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet beast, being full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." Rev.17:2-3

Confusion over the "Ten Horns"

The "ten horns" recalls what Daniel saw in his dream that included four beasts, and from the fourth beast grew ten horns, and finally a Little Horn "came up between them." Daniel was given this interpretation of his dream –

> "Thus He said, 'The fourth beast, it will become the fourth kingdom upon the earth, which will differ from all the kingdoms. And it will consume the whole earth, and trample it, and smash it. And the **ten horns** out of the kingdom *ar*e **ten kings** *who* will arise, and another will arise after them. And he will differ from the former *ones*, even he will bring down three kings. And he will speak words against the Highest, and he will wear out the holy ones of the Most High. And he will seek to violate appointed times and law. And it will be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time.'" Dan.7:23-25

I infer that this later prophecy of Daniel builds upon his earlier interpretation of Nebuchadrezzar's dream image. The lower extremity of that image, and its weak point, were the feet and toes of mixed iron and pottery, "partly strong and partly fragile" (*NKJV*, Dan.2:42). The ten toes of the image seem to match these ten horns. The four beasts arising from the sea in Daniel chapter 7 are contemporaneous kingdoms. Recall how I said earlier that I expect a reappearance of the kingdoms of Nebuchadrezzar's dream-image during the final "seven". The four beasts of Daniel 7 would answer to the gold, silver, bronze and iron kingdoms.

The fact that Little Horn arises from the ten horns and uproots three of them (v.8) makes at least three of those horns his contemporaries. Little Horn will

subdue three of the original ten kings (7:24), the remainder being seven (they could be past or present kings). The number seven aligns better with the seven heads of the Beast of Revelation (which are not contemporaneous). On the other hand, the ten horns of the Beast in Revelation are said to "receive authority as kings one hour with the Beast" (Rev.17:12). Thus these latter ten horns are allies of that Beast very briefly, but he is not said in Revelation to come from among them or to uproot three of them. We need to be careful with the details that we have, although we could wish for even more detail to take the guesswork out of interpreting these strange visions.

And so the "ten horns" of the Scarlet Beast of Revelation are said to be kings, and the "seven heads" are seven kingdoms. Another description of the Beast confirms this interpretation –

> "And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the holy ones, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And having seen her, I wondered a great wonder. And the angel said to me, 'Why did you wonder? I will tell you the secret of the woman, and the Beast who carries her, the one having the seven heads and the ten horns. The Beast which you saw was, and is not, and is coming to ascend from the Abyss, and he goes into destruction. And those dwelling upon the earth will be astonished, whose name has not been written in the Book of Life since *the* overthrow of *the* world, who *are* seeing the Beast that was and is not and will be present. Here *is* the mind, the one having wisdom. The seven heads are **seven mountains** where the woman sits upon them, and there are **seven kings**. The five fell, the one is, the other has not yet come. And whenever he may come, he must continue a short *time*. And the Beast who was and is not, even he is *the* eighth and is out of the seven, and he goes away into destruction. And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom. But they receive authority as kings one hour with the Beast. These have one intention, and they give their power and authority to the Beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with Him *are* called and chosen and faithful.'" Rev.17:6-14

There is much to consider here. Babylon will rule over ("sit upon") seven kings. From the time perspective of John's vision, the "ten horns" have not yet taken

power, so there is a time division between the two sets of kings. At the current “present” in John’s vision, Babylon is ruling over the seven-headed Beast. There is no great secret to “the seven mountains” yielding seven kings. Remember back to Nebuchadrezzar’s dream vision of Daniel chapter 2, and how the destroying rock becomes a great mountain filling the whole earth. The whole image dealt with kingdoms, and the great mountain will be Messiah’s kingdom replacing them. How anyone could miss this common OT metaphor (also in Psa.30:7; Isa.2:2; Jer.51:25) and try to match seven literal mountains with a specific city is rather incredible.

To understand the sequence of the first “seven kings”, it would be helpful to understand a “kingdom” here as the “reign” (or ‘kingship’) of a single king. Since “five fell”, the “one is” must be the sixth in succession. Then “the other” who had not yet come would be the seventh. The Beast himself will be the “eighth and is out of the seven”, meaning that his reign will repeat one of the seven before him. Because he “was and is not”, that would indicate that one of the five who fell will return. Since the Beast is elsewhere described as recovering from a fatal wound (Rev.13:3, 12), the fallen five must be dead, but one of them will rise in a mock resurrection. And because the Beast “will be present”, as well as “is not”, from John’s current perspective, that would be a reference to the demonic spirit Apollyon, who will “ascend from the Abyss” to animate the corpse of one of the five. This will be the mock incarnation.

If the previous discussion seems complicated, remember the ten horns of Daniel 7? With Little Horn they number eleven, but he uproots three of them leaving eight. Although the Beast is the eighth of the “seven heads” in Revelation 17, the heads here are successive, while the horns of Daniel 7 appear to be contemporaneous. This paints a rather complex picture to try and unravel the identity of Little Horn/Beast. No wonder the faithful reader is given the number of his name, 666, to identify him by. And see **Appendix B: The Number of His Name**.

The explanation of Secret Babylon continues –

> “And he says to me, ‘**The waters** which you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples and crowds, even nations and tongues.’” Rev.17:15

So, in addition to the kingdom of the Beast, Babylon will hold sway over many others before being destroyed.

> "And the ten horns which you saw and the Beast, these will hate the prostitute and will make her wasted and naked, and they will eat her flesh and burn her down with fire. For God put in their hearts to perform His purpose, and to make one purpose, and to give their kingdom to the Beast until the words of God will be completed. And the woman whom you saw is the great city, the one having a kingdom ('reign') over the kings of the earth." Rev.17:16-18

Here we see the Scarlet Beast and a league of ten kings turn on Babylon and destroy her. Her rulership over them up to this turnabout would appear to have been an uneasy one. Babylon's "reign over the kings of the earth" would make her ruler a "king of kings", like historic Nebuchadrezzar. And note that the ten horns of Revelation 17 have "one purpose" with the Beast, while the ten horns of Daniel 7 includes at least three rivals to Little Horn, who are destroyed by him. These are two different sets of ten kings.

The Wealth of "the Great City Babylon"

Now continuing Revelation chapter 18, we find the conclusion of what God has spoken against Babylon –

> "As many *ways as* she glorified herself and lived sensually, by so great *a measure* give her torment and grief, because she says in her heart, 'I sit *as* a queen, and I am not a widow, and I should in no wise see grief.' Therefore, in one day will come her plagues, death and grief and famine, and she will be burned down with fire, because strong *is* the Lord God Who judges her. And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived sensually with her, will weep and beat *the breast* for her, when they may see the smoke of her burning, having stood from afar on account of the fear of her torment, saying, 'Woe, woe, the Great City Babylon, the Mighty City, because in one hour your judgment has come.' And the merchants of the earth will weep and grieve for her, because no one buys their cargo no longer, cargo of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls, and of linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every citron wood and every ivory vessel and every vessel of most precious

wood and copper and iron and marble, and cinnamon and amomum and incense and perfume and frankincense, and wine and oil and flour and wheat, and cattle and sheep and horses and carriages, and bodies and souls of men. And your fruit of the desire of the soul went away from you, and all the luxuries and the splendid things passed away from you, and you will no longer find them in no wise. The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand from afar on account of the fear of her torment, weeping and grieving, saying, 'Woe, woe, the Great City, which put on (Gk. *periballō*) linen and purple and scarlet, and was gilded with gold and precious stones and pearls, because in one hour was desolated so great a wealth.' And every shipmaster and everyone sailing to a place and sailors and as many as work the sea, stood from afar, and cried, seeing the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What *is* like the Great City?' And they threw dust upon their heads, and they cried, weeping and grieving, saying, 'Woe, woe, the Great City in which grew rich all those having the ships in the sea by her prosperity, because in one hour she was wasted.' Rejoice over her, heaven – and the holy ones and the apostles and the prophets – because God exacted your judgment from her. And one strong angel took up a stone, like a great millstone, and he threw *it* into the sea, saying, 'Thus with violence will be thrown down Babylon the great city, and in no wise will it be found any longer.' And a sound of harpists and musicians and flutists and trumpeters should in no wise be heard in you any longer, and a sound of a mill should in no wise be heard in you any longer. And a light of a lamp should in no wise shine in you any longer, and a voice of bridegroom and bride should in no wise be heard in you any longer, because your merchants were the great ones of the earth, because by your sorcery were deceived all the nations. And in her was found blood of prophets and holy ones, and all those murdered upon the earth. After these things, I heard like a great voice of a crowd of many in the heaven, saying, 'Alleluia. The salvation and the glory and the power of our God, because true and righteous *are* His judgments, because He judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her prostitution, and He avenged the blood of His servants *shed* by her hand.' And they spoke a second time, 'Alleluia, and her smoke ascends for the ages of the ages.'" Rev.18:7-19:3

This description of the fall of Babylon is true to OT prophecies. "In no wise will it be found any longer" is what we would expect of a destruction "as when

God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah" (*KJV*, Isa.13:19). From the lengthy list of lost merchandise at the destruction of Babylon, we can conclude that hers will be ostensibly a mercantile fornication with the nations. Their idolatry of gold and silver objects will be the love of money. There is a hint of this abomination in Zechariah –

> "And the angel who was speaking with me went out and said to me, 'Lift up, I pray, your eyes and see what this *is* which *is* going forth.' And I said, 'What *is* it?' And he said, 'This *is* the ephah going forth.' Then he said, 'This *is* their appearance in the whole earth.' And **behold**, a cover of lead *was* lifted up, and this *is* one woman sitting in *the* midst of the ephah. Then he said, 'This *is* the Wickedness.' And he threw her down into *the* midst of the ephah, and he threw down *the* stone of the lead upon its mouth. Then I lifted my eyes and looked and **behold**, two women *were* coming out and wind *was* in their wings. And their wings *were* like *the* wings of the stork. Then they lifted the ephah between the earth and the heavens. And I said to the angel who *was* speaking with me, 'Where *are* they taking the ephah?' Then he said to me, 'To build for it a house in the land of Shinar. And it is prepared and set there upon her pedestal.'"
>
> Zec.5:5-11

The ephah was a principal unit of measure, and the greater wealth in those agrarian times was stores of agricultural products. The woman within the ephah represents Babylon ("in the land of Shinar"), the mother of harlots. The house and pedestal will be the enshrinement, the deification of the goddess of commerce in Babylon. This picture is not difficult to visualize in view of our modern materialistic world.

Summation: Comparing OT and Revelation

We have surveyed so much concerning Babylon, that it may prove helpful to summarize some key points in a table –

OT Texts	Revelation
Relation to: "many waters"	
"dwelling upon many waters" Jer.51:13	"sitting upon many waters" Rev.17:1

OT Texts	Revelation
"her waves like many waters" Jer.51:55	"the waters…where the prostitute sits" Rev.17:15
Babel making drunk the earth	
"Babel is a cup of gold in the hand of Yahweh, making drunk the whole earth" Jer.51:7	"and those inhabiting the earth were made drunk by the wine of her prostitution" Rev.17:2 "having a golden cup in her hand, being full of abominations and the uncleannesses of her prostitution" Rev.17:4 "all the nations have drunk from the wine of the wrath of her prostitution, and the kings of the earth prostituted with her" Rev.18:3
Yahweh making drunk	
"Take the cup of the wine, this rage, from My hand, and you will cause him to drink – all the nations whom I *am* sending you to them. And they will drink and vomit and go mad from the sword which I *am* sending among them." Jer.25:15-16 "I will make them drunk so that they triumph, and they will sleep a sleep of an age and not awaken" Jer.51:39 "And I will make drunk her princes and her wise ones and her governors and her officials and her mighty ones, and they will sleep a sleep of an age and not awaken" Jer.51:57	"and he himself will drink from the wine of the wrath of God, which has been mixed undiluted in the cup of His anger" Rev.14:10 "Babylon the Great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the wrath of His anger" Rev.16:19
Sorceries	
"in their full measure, they have come upon you because of *the* abundance of your sorceries,	"by your witchcraft all the nations were deceived" Rev.18:23

OT Texts	Revelation
because of the full power of your spells mightily" Isa.47:9 "stand now by your spells and by the abundance of your sorceries, which you have labored in from your youth" Isa.47:12	
Riches, luxury	
"luxurious one" Isa.47:8 "your merchants from your youth, each has wandered off to his region" Isa.47:15 "dwelling upon many waters, great in treasures" Jer.51:13 The woman inside the ephah, taken to the land of Shinar to build it a house (of worship) Zec.5:6-11	"the merchants of the earth became rich from the power of her luxury" Rev.18:3 "as much as she glorified herself and lived luxuriously" Rev.18:7 "the kings of the earth who were prostituting with her and were living luxuriously" Rev.18:9 Lament of the merchants and shipmasters, with a list of the luxuries which made them rich – Rev.18:11-19
Not a widow	
"I will not sit a widow, I will not know bereavement … in one day, bereavement and widowhood" Isa.47:8-9	"I sit a queen and am not a widow, and I should in no wise see mourning" Rev.18:7
Pride, arrogance	
"I will put a stop to *the* pride of arrogance, and *the* loftiness of the violent I will bring down" Isa.13:11 "your loftiness has been brought down to Sheol" Isa.14:11 "she has acted proudly toward Yahweh" Jer.50:29 "I *am* against you, insolent one"	"as much as she glorified herself" Rev.18:7

OT Texts	Revelation
Jer.50:31 "*the* insolent will stumble and fall, and there will not *be any* to raise *him*" Jer.50:32	
Threats	
From the North- "has come up against her a nation from that North" Jer.50:3 "I will stir up and bring up against Babel, an assembly of great nations from *the* land of *the* North" Jer.50:9 "a people will come in from *the* North, even a great nation and many kings will be stirred up from *the* sides of *the* earth" Jer.50:41 "from *the* North will come to her the devastators" Jer.51:48 From the Medes – "I am stirring up against them *the* Medes" Isa.13:17 "Yahweh has stirred up *the* spirit of *th*e kings of *the* Medes, for His plan *is* against Babel to bring her to ruin" Jer.51:11 "separate against her nations with kings of Medes, with her governors and with all her counselors, and all the land of his dominion" Jer.51:28 From Ararat, Minni & Ashkenaz – Jer.51:27	From a coalition – "and the ten horns which you saw, and the Beast, these will hate the prostitute and make her devastated and naked, and they will eat her flesh and burn her down with fire" Rev.17:16
Flight to escape	
"each will turn to his own people, and each will flee to his own land"	"come out of her My people, lest you might share in her sins, and lest you

OT Texts	Revelation
Isa.13:14 "from the face of the oppressing sword, each will turn to his own people, and each will flee to his own land" Jer.50:16 "a voice of those fleeing, and fugitives from *the* land of Babel" Jer.50:28 "flee from *the* midst of Babel, and everyone save his life. Do not be devastated by her guilt" Jer.51:6 "abandon her, and each one walk to his own land" Jer.51:9 "fugitives of a sword, walk away – let Jerusalem ascend upon your heart" Jer.51:50	might receive of her plagues" Rev.18:4
Suddenness, swiftness	
"will come to you these two things in a moment, in one day, bereavement and widowhood" Isa.47:9 "you will not know where to look … and has come upon you suddenly a devastation; you will not perceive *it*" Isa.47:11 "Babel, and you did not perceive it" Jer.50:24 "suddenly fell Babel, and has been smashed" Jer.51:8	"her plagues will come in one day" Rev.18:8 "in one hour your judgment came" Rev.18:10 "in one hour was wasted such great wealth" Rev.18:17 "in one hour she was wasted" Rev.18:19
A fall	
"fell, fell Babel" Isa.21:9 "suddenly fell Babel, and has been smashed" Jer.51:8	"fell, fell Babylon the Great" Rev.14:8 "fell, fell Babylon the Great" Rev.18:2

OT Texts	Revelation
Waste, desert, uninhabited	
"bind a stone to it and throw it into *the* midst of *the* Euphrates … thus will Babel sink and not rise" Jer.51:63-64 "to destroy the whole land" Isa.13:5 "as destruction from Shaddai it will come" Isa.13:6 "to appoint the land for a waste" Isa.13:9 "it will not be inhabited for lastingness, nor will it be dwelt in for generations" Isa.13:20 "I will cut off from Babel name and remnant, offspring and descendent" Isa.14:22 "I will appoint it for wastes of an age" Jer.25:12 "to appoint her land for a waste" Jer.50:3 "last of nations will be a wilderness, parched and a desert" Jer.50:12 "she will not be inhabited, but will become altogether a waste" Jer.50:13 "waste and devote to destruction after them" Jer.50:21 "cast her up like heaps, and devote her to destruction – let her not become for a remnant" Jer.50:26 "she will not be inhabited again for lastingness, nor will she be inhabited for generations" Jer.50:39 "surely He will desolate upon their	"a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea … with violence Babylon, the great city, will be thrown down, and in no wise might it be found again" Rev.18:21 "and a sound … might in no wise be heard in you again … might in no wise be found in you again … might in no wise be heard in you again" Rev.18:22 "might in no wise shine in you again … might in no wise be heard in you again" Rev.18:23 "her smoke ascends for the ages of the ages" Rev.19:3

OT Texts	Revelation
dwelling" Jer.50:45 "they wasted her land" Jer.51:2 "devote to destruction her whole army" Jer.51:3 "they will not take from you a stone for a corner, and a stone for a foundation" Jer.51:26 "to appoint *the* land of Babel for a waste, with no one inhabiting" Jer.51:29 "Babel will become for a heap … no one inhabiting" Jer.51:37 "her cities became for a waste, a land of dryness and desert, a land not inhabited by every man, and every son of man does not pass through *it*" Jer.51:43 "great shattering from *the* land of Chaldeans" Jer.51:54 "Yahweh *is* devastating Babel" Jer.51:55 "to cut it off, for none to come into it … it will become a waste of an age" Jer.51:62	
Burned down	
"they have become as chaff – fire has burned them – they will not deliver themselves from *the* hand of *the* flame" Isa.47:14 "I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it will consume all around him" Jer.50:32 "I will set you for a mountain of	"they will burn her down with fire" Rev.17:16 "she will be burned down with fire" Rev.18:8 "when they should see the smoke of her burning" Rev.18:9 "seeing the smoke of her burning" Rev.18:18

OT Texts	Revelation
burning" Jer.51:25 "they set on fire her dwellings" Jer.51:30 "the outworks they have burned" Jer.51:32 "the high gates will be burned with the fire … by enough fire" Jer.51:58	
Naked	
"remove your veil, strip *the* skirt, uncover *the* thigh … your nakedness will be uncovered" Isa.47:2-3	"they will hate the prostitute and make her a waste and naked" Rev.17:16
Haunt of beasts & demons	
"will lie down there wild animals, and their houses will be full of owls, and will dwell there daughters of an ostrich, and he-goats (demons) will dance there" Isa.13:21 "hyenas will howl in their palaces, and jackals in their delightful temples" Isa.13:22 "I will set it for a possession of *the* porcupine" Isa.14:23 "will dwell *there* wild animals with jackals …will dwell in her daughters of an ostrich" Jer.50:39 "a dwelling of jackals" Jer.51:37	"became a dwelling of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit and a prison of every unclean bird and a prison of every unclean and hated beast" Rev.18:2
Cries of "Woe!"	
"Woe to them!" Jer.50:27 "woe against Babylon all around"	"Woe, woe the Great City Babylon" Rev.18:10

OT Texts	Revelation
Jer.51:2 (*LXX*)	"Woe, woe the Great City" Rev.18:16 "Woe, woe the Great City" Rev.18:19

Certainly the OT distinguishes Judah from their enemy Babylon. This is especially apparent in Jer.25:18-26 where nations were to drink from Yahweh's cup of wrath, beginning at Jerusalem and ending with Sheshak, another name for Babel. The parallels between OT Babel and Babylon of the Revelation are strong – even the expression "fell, fell Babylon" is virtually the same in Rev.14:18 and 18:2, as it is in Isa.21:9. It can only be imaginative fancy that invents "Jerusalem" from "Babylon" in Revelation.

Old Jerusalem is mentioned obliquely five times in Revelation. In Rev.11:2 it is "the Holy City", in 11:8 "the great city which is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified", then in 11:13 "the tenth of the city fell". It is also simply "the city" in 14:20. Then finally, in Rev.20:9 it is "the beloved city". "Babylon" is mentioned by name six times in Revelation, and six is man's number in his fallen, rebellious and helpless state (*Number*, p.150). At the beginning of Babel under the rebel Nimrod, man wished to make a name for himself. This arrogant spirit will reach its zenith in the new Babylon the Great. Babylon's sway over many nations – her "sorcery" – will be like ancient Babel's allure to the nations of men, before God drove them into dispersion. Whole chapters in the OT speak in great detail of the doom of Babel (Isaiah 13-14, 21, 47; Jeremiah 50-51) and the salvation of His people Israel from it. Most of that detail remains unfulfilled and has been deferred to a latter-day. Or is it your view that the OT is not the word of God, and can be dismissed as irrelevant?

Where Does Gog of the Land of Magog Fit?

The Secret of Gog

I have chosen another extensive portion of prophecy here, because two whole chapters of Ezekiel cover the invasion of Gog and its aftermath. This long text yields much to consider, so please bear with the following discussion.

Could there be an association between the prophecies of the destruction of Babel and another prophecy given from Israel's perspective – Ezekiel's lengthy prophecy against Gog? Before quoting the text, let me first point out that no historical threat to the land of Israel has ever come from a man named Gog, nor from any of the Northern lands he is said to lead into battle. This is an unfulfilled prophecy, without question. Why did Ezekiel have *so much* to say about him and his horde? Gog's role in Israel's end-time would seem to be as pivotal as Babylon's.

> "Then came *the* word of Yahweh to me to say, 'Set your face toward Gog, of *the* land of Magog, chief of Rosh, Meshek and Tubal, and prophesy against him and say, "Thus said Adonai Yahweh, '**Behold**, I *am* against you, Gog, chief of Rosh, Meshek and Tubal. And I will bring you back and put hooks in your jaws, and I will bring out with you even all your army, horses and riders, all perfectly clothed, a great convocation, barb and shield, all of them taking hold of swords, Persia, Sudan and Libya with them, all of them *with* shield and helmet, Gomer and all its armies, *th*e house of Togarmah of ***the* sides of *the* North** and all its armies – many peoples with you. Prepare yourself and make ready, you and the whole assembly assembled in front of you, and become for a guard to them.
>
> After **many days** you will be visited. In ***the* after-end of the years** you will come to a land brought back from *the* sword, gathered together from many peoples upon *the* mountains of Israel, which had become for a continual waste. And she has been brought out from peoples, and all of them will dwell in safety. Then you will go up as the storm. You will go in as the cloud to cover the land.

> And there will come, you and all your armies and many peoples with you.' Thus said Adonai Yahweh, 'And it will come to pass in that day, matters will rise up upon your heart and you will invent a plan of evil. And you will say, "I will go up against a land of open country. I will go in to the quiet ones, dwelling in safety, all of them dwelling without wall or bar, and no gates for them, to plunder a plunder and to spoil a spoil, to bring back your hand upon *the* wastes *that are* inhabited, and to a people gathered from nations, having acquired gain and property, dwelling upon the center of the land." Sheba and Dedan and buyers of Tarshish and all their young lions will say to you, "*Are* you coming to plunder a plunder? Have you assembled your assembly to spoil a spoil, to carry away silver and gold, to take gain and property, to plunder a great plunder? Therefore, prophesy, son of man, and say to Gog, 'Thus said Adonai Yahweh, "Will you not know in that day, when My people Israel dwell in safety? Then you will come from your place, **from *the* sides of *the* North**, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding horses, a great assembly and numerous army. And you will go up against My people Israel, like the cloud to cover the land. It will come to pass in ***the* after-end of the days**. And I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may recognize Me, when I have hallowed Myself by you to their eyes, Gog."""" Eze.38:1-16

This prophecy is similar to most of Daniel, in that it addresses "*the* after-end of the years", even "*the* after-end of the days". It also depicts an Israel having recovered from war, that will become "a land of open country" before Gog's invasion. The scene in Israel is one of quietude, safety, and no defenses. This is indeed unusual, in view of past history and our experience today. The implication is that this invasion will be a surprise attack. These texts summarize the prelude to the attack –

- Israel "returned from *the* sword" Eze.38:8
- "gathered together from many peoples upon *the* mountains of Israel, which had become for a continual waste" Eze.38:8
- "she has been brought out from peoples, and all of them will dwell in safety" Eze.38:8

- "I will go up against a land of open country. I will go in to the quiet ones, dwelling in safety, all of them dwelling without wall or bar, and no gates for them" Eze.38:11

- " to bring back your hand upon *the* wastes *that are* inhabited, and to a people gathered from nations, having acquired gain and property, dwelling upon the center of the land" Eze.38:12

- "Will you not know in that day, when My people Israel dwell in safety?" Eze.38:14

A time of Israel's dwelling without walls and bars seems unprecedented. It indicates a period of prolonged peace, or perhaps a shorter period of peace with an exaggerated complacency about it. The latter could be a result of the seven-year covenant that "a coming ruler will make with many" in Israel (Dan.9:25-26). Since the beginning of their history in Palestine, when did Israel's homeland ever experience such peace? I have already pointed out how Jesus' prophecy of "wars and rumors of wars" makes the best sense against a backdrop of extended peace. Some may be inclined to associate this period of peace with the Millennium, and Gog's invasion as coming after it (per Rev.20:7-9). But Israel's recognition of Yahweh as their God (Eze.39:7), and His pouring out His spirit (Eze.39:29), can hardly be delayed until the end of those thousand years. What will Israel be doing *in* the Millennium, if not fulfilling their national destiny as Yahweh's kingdom of priests (Exo.19:5-6)? The Gog mentioned in Revelation 20 will be another person entirely, a second Gog.

The Identity of Gog

The text continues –

"Thus said Adonai Yahweh, '*Are* you he that I spoke about in former days by *the* hand of My servants, prophets of Israel, who *were* prophesying in those days, *th*e years to bring you against them?

And it will come to pass at that time, in a day of Gog going in against the ground of Israel – an utterance of Adonai Yahweh – *that* My anger will go up in

> My face. And in My jealousy and in *the* fire of My rage, will there not come in that day a great quaking upon *the* ground of Israel? And will quake from My presence fish of the sea, and birds of the heavens, and wild animals of the open country, and all the swarmers which *are* swarming upon the ground and all the men who *are* upon *the* surface of the ground. And the mountains will be thrown down, and the steep places will fall, and every wall will fall to the earth. And I will call to every mountain a sword against him – an utterance of Adonai Yahweh – the sword of each will come upon his brother. And I will judge with him by plague and by blood, and rain *will be* flooding. And stones of hail, fire and sulphur I will rain upon him, and upon his armies, and upon many peoples who *are* with him. And I will make Myself great and consecrate Myself, and I will make Myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I *am* Yahweh.'" Eze.38:17-23

A riddle of Ezekiel chapters 38-39 is 38:17 – "Are you he whom I spoke of in former days by *the* hand of My servant-prophets of Israel, who were prophesying in those days, the years for bringing you in against them?" There is no other reference to Gog in the OT. So my thought is that some unspecific threat against Israel by the earlier prophets may be the explanation for this divine question. Remember Jacob's enigmatic prophecies to his sons in Genesis chapter 49, which are to be "in the last days" (49:1)? Or perhaps it is a web of clues embedded in riddled statements of other prophets. Possibly Moses' song in Deuteronomy 32 may contain part of the answer.

Chiefly, the identification of Gog is his being from the land of Magog, and a leader of Rosh, Meshek and Tubal (38:2, 3; 39:1). Note that Gog is not formally titled as "king", "chief", "prince", or "military commander" of Magog itself. The *LXX* here reads, "make firm your face against Gog **and** the land of Magog" – this would make Magog one of the warring parties.

Magog is found in the table of nations, and he was a son of Japheth (Gen.10:2), along with Tubal and Meshek. So Gog will lead these related peoples on his expedition into Israel. Gog himself may be, or may not be an ethnic Magogian, but he will be "from" their land. Baker's Bible Atlas (Map 3) shows where these peoples may have settled after Yahweh confused the languages of men. All these had homelands north of Israel. Eze.38:6 adds Gomer and Togarmah from the

"sides of the North" as part of the invasion, along with "many peoples". Gomer was another son of Japheth, and Togarmah was a son of Gomer (Gen.10:3). "Sides of the North" are mentioned 3 times in this text (Eze.38:6, 15; 39:2) as the origin of the invasion. Elsewhere, we find this same term in the "proverb against the king of Babel" (Isa.14:4), who will desire to "sit (or dwell) upon a mountain of meeting in *the* sides of the North" (Isa.14:13). Recalling that the metaphor "mountain" means a kingdom, it appears from Isa.14:13 that the king of Babel will want to dominate either –

a) one of these northern nations, or

b) the "meeting" or confederacy of all these nations.

This may indicate that Gog's invasion of Israel follows immediately after an invasion of Babel (four times in Jeremiah chapters 50-51 Babel's attackers are said to be "from the North" and once "from the sides of the earth").

I must admit my frustration in trying to match Gog to other texts, with clues as to his identity. As a prophet, Ezekiel was given some unique things to reveal to Israel. BDB (p.155) says in its entry for "Gog" (Heb. *gôwg*) that its root is unknown. But a nearby entry (p.156) is *gôwy* ("nation"). And the two chapters we are examining here in Ezekiel have nine occurrences for *gôwy*, and nine for *gôwg*. Nine is the number of judgment (*Number*, p.235), and with the many nations following Gog to invade Israel, all will come under divine judgment. Can this matching number of occurrences be just a coincidence? And note how the Heb. words differ by a single letter.

Another word related to the same Heb. root behind *gôwy* (root *g-v-h*, גוה) is *g$_e$vîyyâh*, "corpse", and this is another suggestive connection for his name. Given the need for cleansing of the land after the battle, this derivation of the name Gog is even more weighty. Also suggestive of this cemetery of Gog's horde is Jer.31:40 with its "whole valley of the corpses and the ashes", although this text uses Heb. *peger* for "corpse".

It is also possible that the name Gog could be an *onomatopoeia* or simply a play on words, suggesting a contraction of something like "Goi-goi", that is, a "nation-nation" – in effect a super-nation. Looking for an English parallel, I found the

onomatopoeia word “gaggle”, which derives from the sound made by a flock of geese. Perhaps with some relevance, “gaggle of geese” sounds a bit like “Gog of Magog” – could the Hebrew words be meant to represent a noisy multitude of nations? Now compare the word “barbaric”. It is traceable to the ancient Greek notion that non-Greeks were uncivilized – Greeks called them “*barbaroi*”. Note the doubling of the syllable “*bar*”. It was somewhat like calling them “babbling babblers”, because they could not speak Greek. Since the day God confused the languages of the nations at Babel, each nation has tended to view the others as uncivilized babblers. As an assembly of many nations, Hamon-Gog (‘multitude of Gog’) may sound very much like babblers even from within their own ranks.

Then again Gog may simply be a shortened form of Magog. Or Magog may be a contraction of “from Gog” (Heb. *min* “from”, shortened and prefixed as *ma*-). The latter explanation would make Gog both a person and a land. If that sounds strange, then consider that the land of Israel was taken from God’s name for Jacob. And it was also thus with many neighboring nations, like Edom, Moab and Ammon. These national labels began as men’s names.

Although the end of Revelation is dealing with another invading group entirely, it is enlightening that Rev.20:8 refers to the attackers of “the beloved city” as “the (neuter sing.) Gog and Magog”, as though identifying a mob by its character. The U.S. did something similar during WWII, by identifying themselves and their confederates as “the Allies”, and their enemies as “the Axis”. The same syntactic construction is used in the Greek for other groups. For example the *LXX* has literally “the Sodom and Gomorrah” (Gen.14:11), and the much larger ethnic group “The Canaanites and Hittites and Amorites, etc.” (Exo.3:8). Perhaps “Gog” and “Magog”, in addition to being an alliterative pair, will become a means of labeling the opposition with a demeaning name. Just keep in mind that the details of Ezekiel 38-39 require a pre-millennial “Gog of the land of Magog”. The post-millennial “the Gog and Magog” seems to be using the names from Ezekiel as an epithet for the new mob that will come to ransack Jerusalem. There will likely be similarities between these two multitudes as to their great numbers, national diversity, degree of disorganization due to language differences, their unity of purpose, and their ultimate destruction (one by swords of nations, the other by fire from heaven).

Note how Gog's invasion is said to accompany a great quaking (Eze.38:19-20), while so great an earthquake will contribute to Babel's downfall (Rev.16:18-21 below). Also, "stones of hail" will rain upon Gog (Eze.38:22), while at the first trumpet, hail will be part of God's weaponry against the earth (Rev.8:7). Then even more hail –

> "And I saw coming out of the mouth of the Dragon, and out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the False Prophet, three unclean spirits, like frogs. For they are spirits of demons, working signs, which go out over the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. (**Behold**, I come as a thief. Happy is the one watching, and keeping his garments, lest he may walk naked, and they may see his shame.) And He assembled them into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-magedon. And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came out a loud voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, 'It has come.' And there came lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there came a great earthquake, such as came not since came man upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so large. And the Great City came into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And Babylon the great was remembered before of God, to give her the cup of the wine of the wrath of his anger. And every island fled, and mountains were not found. And great hail, as weight of a talent, descends out of the heaven upon the men; and the men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because the plague of it is very great." Rev.16:13-21

Although mentioning Babylon's remembrance ('judgment'), this text is principally about the judgment of "the kings of the whole world" at Har-magedon in Israel. The "great hail, as weight of a talent" is a common point with the Ezekiel 38 judgment of Gog and his multitudes. Note that Revelation does not disclose the identity of these kings, or the nations they will lead into battle. But the unclean spirit coming from the Beast could align with the ten-nation alliance of the Beast, who will be of "one mind" with him (Rev.17:12-13). Their assemblage at the Hill of Megiddo makes this an attack upon Israel. The cup of God's wrath will likely be given to Babylon before this invasion of Israel. This comes at the pouring of the seventh bowl, which will be the last of "the last plagues" (Rev.15:1), before the return of Christ.

Evidently a rivalry will exist between Babel and the Northern Alliance of Magog. In addition to the nations said to be from "the sides of the North", Persia, Sudan and Libya will be confederate with Gog. The indications are an attack upon Israel from multiple directions, Persia being to the East of Israel, and Sudan and Libya to the South ("from *the* sides of the earth"). Notable by their absence, we do not find Egypt or Syria listed as allies in this Gog-led confederacy. In view of the multiple adventures of "king of the North" and "king of the South" in Daniel chapter 11, it is possible that Syria ("king of the North") and Egypt ("king of the South") will be exhausted from their previous battles with each other (e.g., Dan.11:40-42).

Tubal, Meshek and Togarmah are also mentioned prophetically with a long list of trading nations in the lament against Tyre in Ezekiel chapter 27. That prophecy, which begins at chapter 26, is still future, because historically Nebuchadrezzar did not scour Tyre as a bare rock, per Eze.26:7,14. Chapter 26 concludes with a picture of utter desolation for Tyre – "you have been sought, but will not be found again for an age" (26:21). Nebuchadrezzar's campaign against Tyre appears not to have succeeded (Eze.29:18), so this must be another deferred prophecy. Centuries later it was Alexander who destroyed Tyre, but the city recovered rapidly and came under Ptolemaic rule after Alexander's death.

Who or What is "Rosh"?

Although I have transliterated the word "Rosh" in previous texts (as does the *NKJV*), implying it is a proper noun, a possibly better translation is based on the meaning of this Hebrew word – "head", "top", or "chief". The *KJV* treats it as an adjective modifying "prince" – i.e., "<u>chief</u> prince". While there is some merit to this translation "chief prince", the syntax would also allow these words to be nouns of apposition as in these examples –

"the leaders, <u>heads</u> over thousands" Num.10:4

"the leaders, <u>heads</u> of fathers" Num.36:1

So in Ezekiel we could treat them as nouns of apposition by hyphenating them – "leader-head of Meshek and Tubal". If the combination seems redundant, that redundancy gives the term emphasis – this will be no ordinary leader.

But another credible translation of the Hebrew could be "prince of Rosh ('Head'), of Meshek, and of Tubal" (following the *NKJV*). This is a case of choosing your own preference. I know this will disappoint those who favor identifying "Rosh" with the Russians, but such an etymology is not found in Russian language, Russian history or in any ancient writing. Nor is there a "Rosh" to be found in the table of nations. But I hesitate to rule out Russia, considering modern allegiances between Russia and various Middle Eastern countries, notably Iran, who are descended in part from "the Medes".

The *LXX* scribes transliterated the Hebrew "Rosh" into the Greek, as "*Rōs*", an indeclinable noun (i.e., it has no case, so it *could* be identified as a genitive, as the *NKJV* interprets it). Why the *LXX* translator chose to transliterate *Rōs* is not explained. Oh, and the tribal chief Benjamin had a son by that name, so such a personal name is not unthinkable.

Another Distant Prophecy

God will visit Gog "after **many days**" (Eze.38:8), indicating that judgment would come upon them in a distant future, from Ezekiel's personal perspective. Where else do we find prophecies of "many days"? Daniel was instructed to "close the vision, for *it is* for **many days**" (Dan.8:26). And with Daniel's end-time prophecies, we might also compare this one –

> "And said Yahweh to me, 'Again go, love a woman beloved of a friend and committing adultery, like Yahweh loving *the* sons of Israel, and they turn to other gods, and *are* loving raisin-cakes of grapes.' Then I purchased her to me with fifteen shekels of silver, and a homer and a measure of barley. And I said to her, '**Many days** you will abide for me. You will not be faithless, and you will not come to another. And so I *will be* toward you. 'For **many days** *the* sons of Israel will abide – no king, no prince, no sacrifice, no Asherah, no ephod and idols.'" Hos.3:1-4

This lack of sacrifice and ephod *could* be attributed to the destruction of the Temple in AD 70. The lack of king and prince is somewhat ambiguous, as the Roman puppet kings could either be included or excluded from this reckoning. Asherah poles and idols seem not to have returned with the Israelites coming back from Babel. Despite these timing differences, the time without a Temple and sacrifice has a very definite period, and has been 1,953 years to the present, and still counting. Thus, the whole period of "the dispensation of the secret" (Eph.3:9) would seem to cover this "many days" condition of Israel – with the understanding that "the secret" of Ephesians was not revealed in Hosea, or anywhere else in the Scriptures prior to the end of Acts. This was the topic of Paul's second ministry (per Acts 26:16, last clause).

Note that the time "after many days" is synonymous with "in the after-end of the years" in Eze.38:8. While the latter phrase is unique to Ezekiel here, "the after-end" and "the after-end of the days" are prominent in Daniel (8:19; 10:14; 12:8), and the second of these phrases is found also in Eze.38:16. All these texts in Ezekiel, Daniel and Hosea are pointing toward the end-time (*Sunteleia*), after God takes Israel again as "My people" (Heb. *Ammi* – Hos.1:9-10).

There really seem to be two returns from captivity in Ezekiel chapters 38-39 – because at the end of the prophecy Israel is depicted as then being faithful to Yahweh, and returned from captivity. This seems rather to coincide with the two exoduses from Babylon noted previously, one peaceful (Jer.50:4-8), but the second in haste (Jer.50:28; 51:50). Gog's invasion against a land at rest and villages without walls (Eze.38:11) indicates a preliminary time without "wars and rumors of wars" (prelude to Mat.24:6) and the suddenness of his adventure.

The 200,000,000

A stunning feature of this Ezekiel text is the vastness of the armies coming against Israel. They are described in such terms as –

- "all your army" "all of them, a great assembly" Eze.38:4
- "Gomer and all his armies" "Togarmah and all his armies, many peoples with you" Eze.38:6

- "the whole assembly which *is* assembled in front of you" Eze.38:7
- "Then you will go up as the storm. You will go in as the cloud. You will come to cover the land, you and all your armies and many peoples with you." Eze.38:9
- "Then you will come in from your place **from *the* sides of *the* North**, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding horses, a great assembly and numerous army." Eze.38:15
- "as the cloud to cover the land" Eze.38:16
- "and I will cause to rain upon him and upon his armies and upon many peoples who *are* with him" Eze.38:22
- "You will fall upon *the* mountains of Israel, you and all your armies and peoples who *are* with you" Eze.39:4
- Israel will burn the weapons of their enemies for seven years, instead of firewood gathered from the field Eze.39:9-10
- Burial of the fallen enemy will take seven months Eze.39:12-14

Such a great horde as described in Ezekiel 38-39 could correspond to the army of 200,000,000 –

> "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. And were released the four angels who have been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, <u>to kill the third of men</u>. And the number of the armies of the <u>cavalry</u> was **<u>two myriads of myriads</u>**. I heard the number of them." Rev.9:14-16

Note here that the number pertains to cavalry, and from the description of the "horses" in 9:17-19, they appear to include mechanized or armored divisions, which are the "<u>cavalry</u>" of today's armies. Here is some correspondence with Eze.38:5, "all of them riding horses". Some expositors, such as E.W. Bullinger (*The Revelation*, p. 331), interpret this huge army as angelic, but the text is ambiguous. It is also reasonable to interpret that the four angels released from the

Euphrates will stir up the militaristic zeal of men, as will the unclean spirits from the Dragon, Beast and False Prophet. And it is possible that "Gog, *the* chief-prince" will himself be influenced by a demonic prince, like those Michael struggled with (Dan.10:13). Although the Hebrew words differ, Michael himself is called a "chief prince", so it may be worth remembering that there are both angelic and human "principalities and powers".

If the angels released from the Euphrates are "to kill the third of men", which men does this refer to? Let us assume each angel stirred up an army of like proportion (200,000,000 cavalry), and each such army killed as many of their enemy as their own number (one-for-one), and then again just as many unarmed civilians. And assuming God destroyed each such army, the total number of dead would be 2.4 billion. If this were "the third of men" on earth, it would imply a world population of 6.2 billion, not greatly different from today's estimate of 8 billion. And this is reckoning only the cavalry – would there not be an infantry also? Allowing for additional casualties from the "famines, pestilences and earthquakes in various places" (Mat.24:7), then the forecast of Rev.9:14-16 seems quite credible, and literal, and that the "third of men" would be reckoned worldwide. But will the "two myriads of myriads" be part of the Hamon-Gog of Eze.39:11,15? Possibly. The next section may provide more insights to connect the prophecies of Ezekiel and Revelation.

The Ten Horns of Revelation 17

What about the ten kings who share power with the Beast in the great upset of Babylon? Could there be a connection with the Gog-led alliance? A curious fact about Revelation is that it names no nations except Babylon. The most detail it gives is to speak of "the kings of the east", who will pass over the parched Euphrates on their way to Har-magedon (Rev.16:12,16). If we count Rosh as a kingdom, there seem to be eleven kingdoms named in the Ezekiel text.

Kingdoms of:	Ezekiel 38-39 (vs. Israel)	Isaiah 13-14 (vs. Babel)
1.	Magog	
2.	Rosh	
3.	Meshech	

4.	Tubal	
5.	Persia (a king of the east)	
6.	Sudan	
7.	Libya	
8.	Togarmah	
9.	Sheba, or	Media (a king of the east)
10.	Dedan, or	Assyria (and vs. Israel)
11.	Tarshish	

However, there is ambiguity concerning the last three (grayed out), who seem to be merely questioning Gog's motive in the attack upon Israel. And Rosh as a nation is also dubious.

Now recall the burden of Babel in another long text, Isaiah chapters 13-14. There it is called "the day of the Lord" (Isa.13:6, 9). I have earlier made the correlation between Babel wanting to "sit on the mountain of meeting in the sides of the North" (Isa.14:13) with her sitting upon (i.e., ruling over) Gog's super-nation alliance. The Isaiah text also mentions "a tumultuous noise of kingdoms of nations" (*KJV*, Isa.13:4) coming to destroy Babel. There are two attacking nations mentioned by name in the burden of Babel – Medes (Isa.13:17), and in 14:25 towards the end of the burden it mentions breaking "Asshur in My land". Assyria is not depicted coming against Babel, but against Israel. However, by reason of its inclusion in the burden of Babel, Assyria could be the tenth horn. This would make the Medes the ninth horn of Revelation 17. Yes, there is ambiguity in putting these clues together. It is possible that the "Ten Horns" who attack Babylon could be augmented or decremented by other nations in a further attack upon Israel. Ezekiel 38-39 is a long text with a unified theme, as are Isaiah 13-14, Jeremiah 50-51 and Revelation 17-18. And there appear to be points of intersection among these, like the "Ten Horns".

Note that Jeremiah 50-51 names only four nations from "that North" that will attack Babel (not Israel) –

1. Media
2. Ararat
3. Minni

4. Ashkenaz

Of these, only Media appears on the Isaiah list, but the origin of Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz in the Caucasus region suggests an overlap with some of the "nations" of the Ezekiel list.

A text that has been associated with the ten toes of Nebuchadrezzar's dream image is Psalm 83, which lists these adversaries of Israel –

1. Edom
2. Ishmael
3. Hagarenes
4. Gebal
5. Ammon
6. Amalek
7. Philistia
8. Tyre
9. Assyria
10. Midian

It is singular that there is only one match between the Isaiah 13-14 list and Psalm 83 – i.e., Assyria. Remember that I have given reasons in the earlier chapter **"Mystery" Babylon the Great** why the ten horns of Revelation 17 differ from the ten horns of Daniel 7:24. We must be careful in assembling all the facts, before drawing our conclusions. One thing does seem evident in these lists: the Ezekiel/Isaiah lists seems to include distant countries, and the Psalm 83 list contains near neighbors of Israel with the exception of Assyria (and perhaps Ishmael). But then, is it not conceivable that when the distant Gog coalition invades Israel, many of Israel's neighbors may decide to take advantage of the situation? Their incentive might be revenge, or perhaps they would be lured by the treasures that Gog hopes to get. An Israel without walls or bars implies peace with her neighbors, so revenge for past wrongs seems unlikely. Two notable omissions from the Ezekiel 38-39 and Psalm 83 lists are Israel's ancient enemies, Syria and Egypt, the "king of the North" and "king of the South" of Daniel 11. It is possible these two will become so worn down by their own wars, that they will not be

inclined toward further military escapades when Gog shows up in the neighborhood.

It is difficult to be precise in many of these identifications of the future enemies of Babylon and those of Israel. Bible study is largely a work of collation and comparison. Perhaps you can find better points of comparison than I have been able to.

An Angelic Prince as Leader?

There is a suggestion that an angelic super-prince might "lead" Gog's super-national alliance, based on this *LXX* text –

> "When the Most High was dividing nations, like He divided sons of Adam, He set territories of nations according to *the* number of **angels of God**."
>
> Deu.32:8 (*LXX*)

Of course, this may not be correct, because the Masoretic Hebrew reads "sons of Israel" instead of "angels of God". There has been debate over the correct reading here, with the majority of commentators supporting the Masoretic Text, perhaps with the view that it is a sort of Hebrew "Received Text". But the oldest extant Masoretic manuscript was the result of centuries of consolidation and standardization. An even older witness than our oldest Masoretic (tenth cent. AD) and Septuagint (fifth cent. AD) mss. are Qumran fragments, which most likely predated AD 70. Some of these support the *LXX*, with a few going even further with a "sons of God" reading. I found *Deuteronomy 32:8 and The Sons of God* an interesting monograph on the textual problem. But examine the *LXX* version of Deu.32:43 –

> "Rejoice, heavens, together with Him, and worship Him, all **sons of God**…"

This rather corroborates the Qumran-fragment reading of "sons of God" in Deu.32:8. For more background on the MT generally, I recommend as a general reference *The Text of the Old Testament*.

Given the martial effect of the angelic release from the Euphrates (Rev.9:14-15), and the unclean spirits from the mouths of the Dragon, Beast and False

Prophet (Rev.16:13-14), the angelic powers will not be dormant during these end-time wars. Just as Israel has their angelic prince Michael, who is their help (Dan.10:13; 12:1), so the other nations have their angelic/demonic helpers like "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" (Dan.10:13).

The Clean-up

The text continues with the defeat of Gog's armies, and the cleansing of the battlefield, which will become a national cleansing for Israel –

> "And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and you say, 'Thus says Adonai Yahweh, "**Behold**, I *am* against you, chief of Rosh, Meshek and Tubal. And I will turn you back and lead you and bring you up **from *the* sides of *the* North**, and I will bring you upon *the* mountains of Israel. And I will strike *the* bow from your left hand, and I will make fall *the* arrows from your right hand. You will fall upon *the* mountains of Israel, you and all your armies and all *the* peoples who *are* with you. I will give you for food to *the* bird of prey of every bird and wing, and wild animal of the open country. You will fall upon the face of the open country, for I have spoken" – an utterance of Adonai Yahweh. "And I will send a fire upon Magog and upon those dwelling upon the coasts in safety. Then they will recognize that I *am* Yahweh. Then I will make known My holy name in *the* midst of My people Israel, and I will not let be profaned again My holy name. And the nations will know that I *am* Yahweh, the Holy One among Israel.
>
> **Behold**, it *is* coming and will be brought to pass" – an utterance of Adonai Yahweh – "the day which I spoke. And those inhabiting *the* cities of Israel will go out, and will kindle and burn *the* weapons, both shields and barbs, bows and arrows, and staff of *the* hand and spear. And they will burn *them* with fire seven years. And they will not lift wood from the open field, nor gather from the forests, for they will burn with fire from *the* armor, and they will plunder those plundering them and spoil those spoiling them" – an utterance of Adonai Yahweh.

"And it will come to pass in that day, I will give to Gog places of burial there in Israel, the valley of those passing through, east of the sea, blocking those who *ar*e passing through. And they will bury there Gog and all his crowd. And they will proclaim *it* Valley of Hamon-Gog ('multitude of Gog'). And *the* house of Israel will bury them in order to clean the land – seven months. And all the people of the land will bury, and it will become to them for renown, a day of My being glorified" – an utterance of Adonai Yahweh. "And men will be continually separated, passing through the land, burying those who passed through, the remnant upon the face of the land, to clean it. Until the end of seven months they will search. Then those passing through will pass through the land, and *if* he will see a bone of a man and he will build beside *it* a landmark, until they have buried the burial toward the Valley of Hamon-Gog. And also *the* name of *the* city *will be* Hamonah, and they will clean the land."

And you, son of man' – thus said Adonai Yahweh, 'Say to *the* bird of every wing, and to every wild animal of the open country, "Come, be gathered from all around upon My sacrifice which I *am* sacrificing for you, a great sacrifice upon *the* mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood. You will eat *the* flesh of mighty ones, and you will drink *the* blood of the chiefs of the earth, men of power, rams and he-goats, bulls, fatlings of Bashan. And you will eat fat to satisfaction, and you will drink blood to drunkenness, from My sacrifice which I *am* sacrificing for you. Then you will be satisfied upon My table *with* horse and chariot, *with the* mighty one and every man of war"' – an utterance of Adonai Yahweh.

'And I will set My glory among the nations, and all the nations will see what I have done, and My hand which I have put upon them. Then *the* house of Israel will recognize that I *am* Yahweh their Elohim from that day and onward. And the nations will recognize that by their sin *the* house of Israel went away, concerning which they were unfaithful by Me, and I hid My face from them, and I gave them into the hand of their enemies, and they fell by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their rebellions I have dealt with them, and I hid My face from them.' Therefore, thus said Adonai Yahweh, 'Now I will bring back the captivity of Jacob and have compassion on *the* whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for *the* name of My holiness. And

> they will remove their reproach, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful with Me, in their dwelling upon the ground in safety, and none made them tremble, in My bringing them back from the peoples, and I will gather them together from *the* lands of their enemies. And I will be consecrated among them before the eyes of many nations. Then they will recognize that I *am* Yahweh their Elohim in My exiling them to the nations. But I will gather them again upon their ground, and I will not leave any of them there any longer. And I will not hide My face from them any longer, when I have poured out My spirit upon the house of Israel' – an utterance of Adonai Yahweh." Eze.39:1-29

This latter-half of the Ezekiel text concerning Gog opens rather like the first half – "prophesy against Gog, and you say, 'Thus says Adonai Yahweh, "**Behold**, I *am* against you, chief of Rosh, Meshek and Tubal" (cp. vv.1-2). The two halves cover the advance of Gog, then his defeat. The second half includes an extensive description of the purging of the land from the corpses of Gog's multitudes. If the chapters of this prophecy flow chronologically, then another dispersion of Israel will have taken place at the beginning of Gog's invasion. But mastering a chronological understanding of prophecy is often the greatest challenge, and especially so regarding patch-work visions such as Revelation. I will deal with that subject at some length in the section, **Overview of the Revelation: Timing and Tense**.

Here is another lexical parallel that I found interesting. Ezekiel described the sacrificial meal of Gog's mob thus – "You will eat *the* flesh of mighty ones, and you will drink *the* blood of the chiefs of the earth, men of power, rams and he-goats, bulls, fatlings of Bashan." (Eze.39:18). Note that "ram", "he-goat" and "bull" were metaphors for mighty men – they also figured in the Mosaic sacrifices, which is another metaphor Yahweh used here ("My sacrifice", "My table" – Eze.39:17,19,20) for His slaughter of these men.

Why "fatlings of Bashan"? Bashan was an ancient kingdom, whose King Og (Heb. *`ôwg*) was a post-flood giant (Deu.3:11). These giants were the fruit of a joining of angels and women (Gen.6:2). And note that Og's name differs from Gog by one letter, an *ayin* (ע) in place of a *gimel* (ג). A land attack from the North would likely come through the ancient Bashan, like Vespasian's route to start his campaign against Judah. In Eze.39:18 "fatlings of Bashan" is a unique expression,

one of those *hapax* occurrences that I believe are meant to catch our attention. Does this text lead us to make comparisons between Og and Gog? Og's kingdom was destroyed with no survivors. The same fate awaits Gog's mob. Og was a seed of mankind and angel-kind. Might Gog have a similar mix of seeds in him? Perhaps Gog himself will be demon-possessed by one of the unclean spirits called forth by the Dragon, Beast or False Prophet (Rev.16:13-14).

The following is speculative, but credible. Gog will invade from the North. His route will take him past Babel, a rival state. Satan will give his power and throne to "the Beast" of Rev.13:2-4. The reason the world will wonder after the Beast is because he will be killed but rise again. If Satan had true power to raise the dead, he would likely have done so already. This will be a travesty of resurrection, that is, Satanic possession of the Beast's corpse. The Woman, Babylon, dominates the Beast in Rev.17:3, but the Beast turns on her and destroys her in Rev.17:16. Specifically it will be "the ten horns" (that is, powers) who share power with the Beast "one hour" (Rev.17:12) who will destroy Babylon. It is possible that the Gog of Ezekiel chapters 38-39 fills in some details that are sparse in Revelation 17. Yes, Gog could be allied with the Beast, and his reasons for destroying Babel would be –

1) to overturn Babel's domination of kingdoms,
2) to take plunder, and
3) to resupply his great armies before advancing upon Israel.

Under the seduction of Babel's riches, the world by and large will be seeking after this wealth. The picture I am painting is one of a world that is "fat and happy", and largely at peace. It is this backdrop that makes "wars and rumors of wars" so significant in the Olivet discourse. I suggest that Gog may be the one who upsets this balance of power. But I would not go so far as to identify him as the Beast of Revelation 13. For Israel to accept the Beast as their (presumed) Messiah, he must have a Jewish background, and likely orthodox Jewish at that. Credentials as a son of David might also be required of him. And for Israel to accept the False-Prophet as a prophet, he must also be Jewish.

Where Does Gog of the Land of Magog Fit?

At the final restoration of Israel, as depicted in Ezekiel chapter 39, Yahweh will pour out His spirit upon them. This is precisely what we saw earlier in Joe.2:28-29, which had a preliminary fulfillment in Acts chapter 2.

Has preterism identified an historic fulfillment of Gog's massive invasion of Israel? Or has God rescinded what He spoke in Ezekiel chapters 38-39? This is a broad and coherent section of prophecy. Is it credible to you that God has "superseded" so much of His prophetic word? Does God cross His fingers, when He utters such solemn prophecies?

It is true that some of Ezekiel's unfulfilled prophecy concerning a future Temple was spoken conjecturally, using the Heb. hypothetical particle *'îm* ('if') in Eze.43:11. An *'îm* does appear in the Gog prophecy, but it is the interrogative use of that particle – "will there not come in that day a great quaking upon the ground of Israel?" (Eze.38:19). I can perceive no sense of contingency whatever in Yahweh's rescue of Israel from Hamon-Gog. And since no events in Israel's history even remotely resemble this prophecy, I conclude that it must be entirely future.

Yahweh Fighting the Nations – His Defense of Zion and Jerusalem

From the very beginning that Yahweh called forth a people to serve Him, He had to defend them. After the great upset of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea, Moses sang a song in which he extolled Yahweh thus –

"Yahweh *is* a man (Heb. *'îysh*) of war. Yahweh *is* His name." Exo.15:3

This may seem a strange way of describing God, but *'îysh* is literally a 'male' (or 'husband') and is a reference to His male-ness, not His human-ness. In those days, all fit males of a certain age were subject to conscription for war. Moses was acknowledging Yahweh as leading their battle, the way a human general would lead.

The World at War

The material creation has been at war since before Adam was created, when "waste and emptiness" (Gen.1:2, Heb. *tôhûw wa-bôhûw*) entered in, and became by-words of the earthly creation. "Lord of hosts" in the *KJV* sounds rather innocuous, like a king with the multitude of his followers. But I have chosen throughout this book to translate the title literally, "Yahweh of armies". "Armies" is Heb. *ts$_e$bâ'ôwth*, which derives from *tsâbâ'*, which is both a noun meaning "army", "war" and "warfare", and a verb meaning "wage war" (BDB, p.839). "Yahweh of armies" is found 259 times as a divine title in the OT. Although the first occurrence of the title is at 1 Sam.1:3, an earlier reference to this name is implied in this Exodus text –

"went out all *the* armies of Yahweh from *the* land of Egypt" Exo.12:41

Thus, in part, "Yahweh of armies" is a reference to His leading Israel as a great implement of His warfare. Israel was deployed in military ranks throughout their Sinai sojourn (Numbers chapter 2).

In contrast, the first occurrence of *tsâbâ'* in Gen.2:1 says –

> "And were completed the heavens and the earth, and all *the* **host** (*tsâbâ'*) of them."

This could mean simply that they were an ordered creation, even as an army is a battle-ordered grouping. But I also infer this nuance: that God viewed His renewed creation as a battleground. Psalm 103 ends with a heavenly praise, an exhortation for angels to bless Yahweh (v.20) – "all His **armies**, serving Him, doing His pleasure" (v.21). So His "armies" included heavenly regiments, as well as earthly. Indeed, Yahweh was seen in heavenly travel, riding upon a cherub (2 Sam.22:11; Psa.18:10), to assist David fighting his enemies (Psa.18:3). One role of the angelic cherub (Heb. *k$_e$rûwb*) was to wield a sword (Heb. *chereb*), as in Gen.3:24. Note how the Hebrew words for cherub and sword are phonetically similar – that is, alliterative. Both angels and Israel served at times as Yahweh's sword.

Yahweh's Capital City

A theme that recurs throughout the OT prophets is Yahweh dwelling among Israel. Integral with His dwelling among them was His protection of them, coming to the defense of Zion and Jerusalem and saving them from attacking nations round-about. Here are some examples –

> "For David said, 'Yahweh Elohim of Israel has settled His people, and **He dwells in Jerusalem <u>continuously for *the* age</u>**.'" 1 Chr.23:25

This was spoken by David before his death, after God had given the people rest from their numerous enemies. Now "<u>continuously for the age</u>" is literally "<u>up until for the age</u>", using a <u>double</u> <u>preposition</u> for emphasis. How long that age might be was not specified, but David before his death also instructed Solomon, thus –

> "so that Yahweh may establish His word which He spoke to me, to say, '**If** (Heb. *'îm*) your sons will keep their way, to walk before Me in truth, with their whole heart and with their whole life,' to say, 'there will not be cut off concerning you a man from upon *the* throne of Israel.'" 1 Ki.2:4

Retrospectively, king Saul's dynasty had been relatively short – and it was cut off. Would David's dynasty fare any better? That was conditional upon the faithful walk of David's heirs to his throne. There were times when all hope seemed lost –

> "Then Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz, prayed concerning this, and cried out to the heavens. And Yahweh sent an angel, and he destroyed every mighty one of power, and *the* leader and *the* commander in *the* camp of *the* king of Assyria. So he returned shamefaced to his own land. Then he went into *the* house of his gods, and *some* of those coming forth from his own body fell on him there with *the* sword. So **Yahweh saved** Hezekiah and those inhabiting **Jerusalem**, from *the* hand of Sennacherib, king of Assyria and from *the* hand of all. And He guided them from round-about."
>
> 2 Chr.32:20-22

Hezekiah was a faithful servant, and he guided the nation faithfully, so Yahweh was gracious and sent a miraculous deliverance. Thus we have this historic fulfillment of the covenant with David. It goes without saying that the sovereign city, Jerusalem, is where David's heirs must reign.

Many view the Psalms as either laudatory or hortatory, and indeed they are all of that. But they are also prophetic, as this example shows –

> "Song of the steps. Those trusting in Yahweh *are* like **Mount Zion** – it will **not** be **tottered for *the* age**. It **remains**. **Jerusalem** *with* hills round-about concerning it, even **Yahweh *is* round-about concerning His people, from now and until *the* age**." Psa.125:1-2

Yahweh's protection in this Psalm is portrayed as continuous. Of course we know that Yahweh made a covenant to choose Jerusalem as His special place on earth to meet with men – His earthly capital city.

> "And I passed over you (**Jerusalem** from v.3) and I saw you, and **Behold**, your time *was* a time of love. So I spread out My wing (or 'skirt') over you, and I covered your nakedness. I even swore to you and came into covenant with you – an utterance of Adonai Yahweh – and you became Mine." Eze.16:8

So, Jerusalem was an elect meeting-place, even as Israel were an elect people – both chosen by the sovereignty of God. Yahweh's covenant with Jerusalem was in effect a marriage covenant. But He did not marry the rock and wood of Jerusalem's infrastructure – He married her people. Her begetting was from Canaan (16:3), the source of her abominations (16:2). Where Jerusalem and Zion are referred to with

a pronoun, pronominal suffix, adjective, or participle, they use a Hebrew feminine singular form (typically not translated in our English versions as such) to signify "her" unique marriage relationship with Yahweh – He has married no other. As we shall see further on, Zion and Jerusalem are used interchangeably with each other, and with the people dwelling there.

> "From the day that I brought out My people from *the* land of Egypt, I chose no city from all *the* tribes of Israel to build a house, **My name to come there**. And I chose no man to become prince over My people Israel. But **I chose Jerusalem, My name to come there**, and I chose David to become over My people Israel" 2 Chr.6:5-6

"My name to come there" indicates that Jerusalem became the seat of Yahweh's authority, His regnal city. These were not just temporary arrangements, as this next passage shows –

> "And he (Manasseh) even builds altars in *the* house of Yahweh, *of* which He said, '**In Jerusalem** will come **My name for *the* age**'" … "He even placed an image, the statue which he made, in the house of Elohim, which Elohim had said to David and to Solomon his son, 'In this house, even in **Jerusalem which I chose** from all *the* tribes of Israel I will put **My name for *the* age**.'"
>
> 2 Chr.33:4, 7

Interestingly, Manasseh's abominations stood in the holy place where they "ought not" (as in Mar.13:14). That a final abomination, the animated image put there by the False Prophet in the end-time, has been called "desolating", "devastating", or "appalling" speaks to the monstrosity of the False Prophet's blasphemy. We know from the historical texts that Manasseh repented and became a good king in his last years. Despite Manasseh's earlier abominations, Yahweh did not cut short His mercies toward him or Jerusalem, but He continued His name there for a while longer. Although Yahweh would put "My name for the age" in Jerusalem, this does not mean "forever", as some translations would have it. If Revelation chapter 21 is chronologically ordered, then old Jerusalem, as part of the former earth, will pass away (Rev.21:1) and be replaced by the New Jerusalem (Rev.21:2). But there are some time ambiguities in the Revelation, a topic I will explore in the section, **Overview of the Revelation: Timing & Tense**.

Similar statements of choosing Jerusalem, putting His name there, and dwelling in Jerusalem are plentiful –

> "And Yahweh Elohim of their fathers sent against them by *the* hand of His messengers – rising and sending – because He took pity upon His people and upon **His dwelling**." 2 Chr.36:15

> "And the God Who **made dwell His name there**, may He destroy every king and people who sends his hand to violate, to destroy this house of God which *is* **in Jerusalem**. I, Darius, appoint a decree – may it be done eagerly." Ezr.6:12

Darius' word was here incorporated into God's word. We can only wonder what Darius thought about Nebuchadrezzar, who had destroyed the first "house of God".

> "and to bring silver and gold which the king and his advisers offered willingly to *the* God of Israel, Who in **Jerusalem** *is* **His dwelling**." Ezr.7:15

> "Blessed *be* Yahweh **from Zion**, **inhabiting Jerusalem**. Praise Yah!" Psa.135:21

> "And I will wait for Yahweh, Who *is* hiding His face from *the* house of Jacob, and I will seek for Him. **Behold**, I and the children whom Yahweh gave to me, for signs and for wonders in Israel, together from Yahweh of armies, Who *is* **dwelling in Mount Zion**." Isa.8:17-18

"The children whom Yahweh gave to me" were Isaiah's sign-sons, Immanuel and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Isa.7:14; 8:1-3). And note that Yahweh could both dwell in Mount Zion, and yet hide His face from Israel. Hiding His face did not mean His total abandonment of Israel. We might liken this to our expression "the silent treatment".

> "Then the moon will be humiliated and the sun ashamed, when **Yahweh of armies has reigned in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem**, and before His elders, a Glory." Isa.24:23

Apparently there will be a difference between Yahweh dwelling in and Yahweh reigning in Jerusalem. This will become a fabulous sign in Jerusalem one day, when Yahweh's glory there outshines sun and moon.

> "Return, rebellious sons – an utterance of Yahweh – for I have married (or 'ruled over') you. And I will take you, <u>one from a city and two from a clan</u>, and I will bring you **to Zion**. And I will give to you shepherds according to My heart, and they will pasture you *with* knowledge and understanding. And it will come to pass that you will multiply and bear fruit in the land in these days. – an utterance of Yahweh. They will not say again, 'Ark of *the* covenant of Yahweh', and it will not go up upon *the* heart, and they will not remember it, nor will they seek *it*, nor will it be made again. At that time, they will call **Jerusalem, throne of Yahweh**, and they will gather to her <u>all the nations</u>, **to the name of Yahweh, to Jerusalem**. And they will not walk again afterwards in the hardness of their evil heart." Jer.3:14-17

The above texts from Isaiah chapters 8 and 24, and Jeremiah chapter 3 will fulfill Israel's national destiny as a priestly nation (Exo.19:6). And note that it will be selective toward Israel ("<u>one from a city and two from a clan</u>"), but plenary to the nations ("<u>all the nations</u>"). Note how Jerusalem will become the *world* capital in this future day.

Also, the ark of the covenant, with its stone tablets of the law, will not even be remembered in those days. That is a far cry from today, when the typical orthodox synagogue has its "ark" closet for storing the Torah scrolls. Those days must be future to us now. Note the contrast with Jerusalem as Yahweh's throne – contrasted with the ark, which stood below the figures of cherubs, upon which Yahweh was enthroned in old covenant relation to Israel.

> "Therefore, on account of you, **<u>Zion</u>** <u>will be plowed *as* an open field, and **Jerusalem** will become a heap</u>, and the mountain of the House for a height, a forest. But it will come to pass **<u>in *the* after-end of the days</u>**, will come ***the* mountain of *the* house of Yahweh being established in *the* top of the mountains**, and itself will be raised from *the* hills. And peoples will flow over it. And many nations will come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to *the* **mountain of Yahweh**, and to *the* house of Elohim of Jacob. And He will teach us from His ways, that we should walk on His ground.' For **out of Zion** will go forth *the* law, and the word of Yahweh **from Jerusalem**. Then He will judge between many peoples, and He will requite toward strong nations from afar. And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into

> pruning knives. Nation will not raise a sword toward a nation, and they will not learn warfare again. But they will sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one will terrify *them*, for *the* mouth of Yahweh of armies has spoken *it*. Although all peoples walk each in *the* name of his god, but we will walk in *the* name of Yahweh our Elohim **for an age and continuously**. In that day – an utterance of Yahweh – I will gather the lame, and the outcast I will assemble – even whom I have injured. And I will appoint the lame for a remnant, and the cast out one for a mighty nation. So **Yahweh will reign** over them **in Mount Zion**, from now and **until an age**. And you, Tower of Eder, hill of *the* **daughter of Zion**, toward you it will come, even will come **the former dominion**, a **kingdom for the daughter of Jerusalem**. Now, for what do you shout a shouting? *That* the king *is* not among you? Has your counselor perished? For anguish has taken hold of you like the birth-pang. Be in labor and bring forth, **daughter of Zion**, as one bearing, for now you will go out from town and dwell in the open field. And you will go as far as Babel, there you will be rescued, there Yahweh will redeem you from *the* palm of your enemies. And now <u>many nations have united against you</u>, who *are* saying, 'Let her be defiled, and let our eyes look upon **Zion**.' But they have not known *the* thoughts of Yahweh, nor have they been able to discern His counsel, for He has gathered them up like the sheaves of a threshing-floor. **<u>Arise and thresh</u>, <u>daughter of Zion</u>**, for your <u>horn</u> I will appoint *as* <u>iron</u>, and your <u>hooves</u> I will appoint as <u>bronze</u>. And you will pulverize <u>many peoples</u>, and I will devote to Yahweh <u>their unjust gain and their wealth</u> to the Lord (Heb. *Adôwn*) of the whole earth."
>
> Mic.3:12-4:13

This text is loaded with interesting points. Jerusalem being "<u>plowed</u>" was commemorated on ancient Roman coins (ca. AD 130-132), commemorating the founding of a new Roman city on the site, Aelia Capitolina. This plowing was a political statement on the Romans' part. The city had not been completely destroyed in AD 70, but it was destroyed again during the Bar Kochba revolt of AD 132-136 – this second destruction is what the numismatic plowing referred to.

Then note the change described in Micah to come "<u>in the after-end of the days</u>" – another prophecy of a distant future (more distant than AD 132). At that time the mountain of Yahweh's house will be raised and established above all mountains (i.e., His kingdom above all kingdoms). A great peace will fall upon all peoples

and nations. Yahweh will collect His remnant again and **He will reign in Zion**. Before this, Israel will have labored to bring forth a son (cp. Rev.12:4) even as they are forced out of their land, and into Babel again. This did not happen in historic times. There was no national, spiritual re-birth after the destruction of the first Temple. "Many nations have united against you" indicates multiple threats, and historic Nebuchadrezzar did not fulfill this part either. Then there is the command to Israel as "daughter of Zion", to "arise and thresh". Recall that threshing is a Biblical metaphor for judging and rebuking. Did Israel ever accomplish such a judging since their ancient release from captivity in Babel under Cyrus? Note that Israel's "horn" (power) and "hooves" in Micah are described in terms of "iron" and "bronze", the very words spoken against their "power" in the curse of Lev.26:19.

"Their unjust gain and their wealth" of "many peoples" has a better alignment with the wealth of latter-day Babylon and the kings of the earth in the Revelation, than with any historic circumstance. And whenever have the nations flowed into Jerusalem to hear the law, the word of Yahweh? A few devout ones, yes – but I envision great masses of proselytes in this future flow toward Jerusalem. And note the sequence in the Micah text – punishment first (destruction and dispersion), then restoration (reigning and judging). Prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem are as numerous as those of its ultimate restoration, after being punished.

We also find the following texts about Yahweh fighting for and saving Jerusalem –

> "So Yahweh **rescued** Hezekiah and **those inhabiting Jerusalem** from *the* hand of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and from the hand of all. And He guided them from round-about." 2 Chr.32:22

Note the contrast between "hand of all" threatening from round-about, and Yahweh guiding "from round-about". Is there any question as to Whose hand will prevail in the end?

> "The word which Isaiah son of Amoz saw **concerning** Judah and **Jerusalem**. And it will come to pass in **the after-end of the days**, will become established *the* **mount of *the* house of Yahweh** in the top of the mountains. And it *is* raised up from *the* hills, and will flow into it all the nations. And many peoples will go

> and say, 'Come and let us ascend to *the* **mountain of Yahweh**, to *the* house of Elohim of Jacob. And He will instruct us out of His ways, and we will walk in His paths,' for **from Zion will go forth *the* law**, and *the* **word of Yahweh from Jerusalem**. And He will judge between the nations, and He will reprove many peoples. And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning knives. Nation will not lift up toward nation a sword, nor will they learn again warfare." Isa.2:1-4

This Isaiah text repeats many of the thoughts cited previously in Micah chapter 4. Except for David's latter reign, and the first part of Solomon's reign, when has such a condition of peace and enlightenment ever been found in Jerusalem? And whenever have the nations flowed into Jerusalem to hear Yahweh's laws and reproofs? The queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon was a prefigurement of the nations seeking enlightenment in Jerusalem, but she pre-dated Isaiah. So this Isaiah prophecy is for a much later time ("the after-end of the days"), and it must still be future.

> "As birds flying, thus Yahweh of armies **will enclose upon Jerusalem** – to **enclose** He will even **rescue**, to **spare** He will even **deliver**. Return, sons of Israel, to Him Whom they deepened an apostasy. For in that day a man will reject his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which they made according to your hands – a sin. Then will Assyria fall by a sword, not *of* man. And a sword, not of mankind, will consume him. And he will flee from before a sword, and his young men will come to servitude. And he will pass by his stronghold from terror, and his princes will be unsettled from banners. – an utterance of Yahweh of armies, **Whose flame *is* in Zion**, and **His furnace *is* in Jerusalem**."
>
> Isa.31:5-9

This cannot apply precisely to Yahweh's rescue in Hezekiah's day, because at that time no Assyrian "young men came into servitude" – this aspect must be future. The rescue in Hezekiah's day may be viewed as a partial, typical fulfillment. Jerusalem as the place of Yahweh's "furnace" (or 'oven') is a unique description here, but it invites certain comparisons. Yahweh spoke of possessing those who feared Him "for the day when I *am* making *My* peculiar property (*KJV*, 'jewels')" … "for, **behold**, the day is coming, burning as a **furnace**" (Mal.3:17; 4:1). The furnace in Malachi is for the proud and disobedient among Israel, but neither will

the attacking nations be exempt from its flame. The mighty purging that will come in "the day of the Lord" will purify Jerusalem and the Land for those Israelites who serve Him in truth – for those written in His "book of remembrance" (Mal.3:16). Even so, "His furnace in Jerusalem" in Isaiah chapter 31 means that a latter-day Assyria will fall in Jerusalem. And recall that the "proverb against the king of Babel" in the day of the Lord was also addressed to Assyria (Isa.14:4, 25), "to break the Assyrian in My land, and upon My mountains I will trample him".

> "See **Zion**, town of our **appointed *place***. Your eyes will look at **Jerusalem**, a **secure dwelling**, a tent – it will not be taken down, nor will its pegs be pulled up **for lastingness**, and all its cords will not be pulled loose. For surely **there** mighty Yahweh *will be* for us a place of rivers, streams *with* broad banks, no boat by oars will go *there*, and a mighty ship will not pass through it. For Yahweh our judge, Yahweh our scribe, Yahweh our king, **He Himself will rescue us**." Isa.33:20-22

One could reason that this security, this rescue by Yahweh, had multiple past fulfillments, like the rescue from Sennacherib in Isaiah chapter 37. Sennacherib presented himself as such a "mighty ship" to pass through Jerusalem. However, when I find unique descriptions of situations prophesied thus, I have to take special notice of these singularities. In this text, "see Zion" ("see" Heb. imper. of *châzâh*, that is really see, as in a focused "vision", *châzôwn*) and "town of our appointed *place*" occur only here. Also the depiction of Jerusalem as a tent, with its pegs and cords, is unique. This tent metaphor, for all its stated durableness, implies a limited duration for earthly Jerusalem. Even as the "tent of witness" was replaced by Solomon's more permanent Temple structure, so the seat of earthly government will eventually shift from earthly Jerusalem to "the city having the foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Heb.11:10; Rev.21:1-2).

Also unique are the divine titles "Yahweh our judge", "Yahweh our scribe" and "Yahweh our king". These singular expressions mark the text as unique and not generic – I infer from them that the "secure dwelling" here described will have a unique future security.

Another prophecy of Israel's restoration from captivity, and then dwelling in wholeness is found in Jeremiah –

> "But you should not fear, My servant Jacob, nor be terrified, Israel, for, **behold**, **I *am* rescuing** you from far off, and your offspring from the land of their captivity. And **Jacob will return and be at peace, and untroubled, and none frightening *him***. You should not fear, My servant Jacob – an utterance of Yahweh – for I *am* with you, for **I will cause annihilation upon all the nations who scattered you thither**. But with you I will not make an annihilation, but I will discipline you for the judgment. And I will surely not leave you unpunished." Jer.46:27-28

Note how this return from captivity is described here – Israel will finally "be at peace and untroubled", but not before discipline and punishment have been administered. Contrast that peace with Daniel's description of Israel's return from Babel, when Jerusalem's walls would be rebuilt "even in *the* oppression of the times" (Dan.9:25; *KJV* "even in troublous times"). That return from Babel was the last great historic return of the Jews (except for modern times). In fact, from the times of the Greek and Roman empires, the Jews became ever more dispersed. And since the destruction of Herod's Temple, there was less reason in the following centuries for pious Jews to be attracted to Jerusalem. They could practice a modified form of Judaism anywhere in the world, as they had done in Babel. So the upshot of Jeremiah chapter 46 must be that this return of Israel, and their being at peace and untroubled, has not happened yet.

Ezekiel's Vision of Temple and City

Nothing like Ezekiel's vision of chapters 40-48 was ever established after Israel's return from Babel. Take note especially that Ezekiel saw Yahweh returning to His dwelling in this Temple vision –

> "Then he led me to the gate, a gate which *is* turned *the* way of the East. And, **behold**, *the* glory of *the* Elohim of Israel coming from the way of the East. And His voice *was* like a voice of many waters, and **the land was brightened by His glory**. And *it was* like *th*e sight of the vision which I saw – like the vision which I saw in my coming to ruin the city. *The* visions *were* like the vision which I saw at River Chebar, and I fell to my face. And *the* glory of Yahweh went into the house *by* way of a gate, which faces *the* way of the East. Then the Spirit lifted me and brought me into the inner court, and, **behold**, *the* glory of

> Yahweh filled the house. And I heard speaking to me from the house, and a Man came standing beside me. And He said to me, 'Son of man, *this is the* **place of My throne**, and *the* **place of *the* soles of My feet**, **where I inhabit there in *the* midst of *the* sons of Israel for an age**. And they, house of Israel, will not defile again My holy name, nor their kings by their prostitution, nor by corpses of their kings *on* their high places. In their putting their threshold with My threshold, and their doorpost beside My doorpost, and the wall between Me and them, but they defile My holy name by their abominations which they did, and I finished them off in My anger. Now, let them send away their prostitution, and corpses of their kings, away from Me. Then **I will dwell in their midst for an age**. You, son of man, declare to *the* house of Israel **the house**. Then they will be ashamed from their iniquities, and they will measure *the* pattern. And **if** (Heb. particle '*îm*) they have been ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the house and its arrangement, and its exits and its entrances, and its whole design and all its statutes, and all its plans and all its laws. And write *it* in their sight, that they might keep its whole design and all its statutes, and they will perform them.'" Eze.43:1-11

Note the manner of the return of Yahweh's *shekinah* – "the land was brightened by His glory". Yahweh's return to His house will be a visible, public event, just like His presence in the Sinai wanderings.

But note especially the conditional "**if**" in the last verse. None of the restoration described at length in chapters 40-48 was fulfilled in the days of Ezra-Nehemiah, because of that "**if**". Thus, Peter, preaching at Herod's Temple in Acts 3:20-21 spoke of the return of Christ and "times of restoration of all things". The *shekinah* did not dwell in Herod's Temple, nor had a descendant of David ruled Israel since the pre-captivity King Zedekiah. This lengthy Ezekiel prophecy awaits a future fulfillment. Yahweh's House in this vision is still future – and its "age" will be the "coming age" of the Millennium.

We need to recognize that the sacrifice of Christ has intervened since Ezekiel's time, and He brought to perfection all who believe in His name. Therefore, some of the "statutes" and "laws" of this future Temple, as described by Ezekiel, have been superseded, but there may still be application for many of the gifts and offerings. There is no more need for the sin offering, since Christ offered Himself

(Heb.10:11-18). Thus the laws of the "sin offering" and the "trespass offering" (Eze.40:39; 42:13; 43:19, 21, 22, 25; 44:27, 29; 45:17, 19, 22, 23, 25; 46:20) have been fulfilled in Christ and have passed away (Heb.8:13). For those nations who survive the end-time judgment to go into the Millennium, their thank offerings and vow offerings will be brought to Jerusalem to Yahweh's House for mediatory giving by Israelites, the priestly nation. Seeing that sin and death (at an early age for sinners – Isa.65:20) will continue, it appears that the millennial punishment for grievous sin will be death. For less serious faults divine forgiveness will abound. The basis for that forgiveness will certainly be grace on God's part, but will He not require a penitent heart as a condition of such graciousness? New Covenant forgiveness of Israel was another matter entirely. It involved an elect nation who received God's graciousness without asking for it. We should not try to transpose those covenant conditions to the nations during the Millennium, because they will have come under a new dispensation. Neither will this be the current "dispensation of the grace of God" (Eph.3:2) that has so enriched the nations in our times.

Jesus Christ will "pasture them with an iron staff" (Rev.19:15). The iron character of that staff indicates a certain harshness and rigidity, but will there be no mercy for the nations whatsoever? If mercy will continue, then what will be its basis? Sure, the sovereignty of God will determine the subjects of His mercy, but will a sinner have no recourse to that mercy on his own initiative? Is not one of the goals of the millennial age to test and train the hearts of men apart from the influence of Satan? I do not perceive the Millennium as an age of wrath on God's part. And there has always been a scale of divine punishment that distinguishes between a slip of the foot and a rebellious attitude. David's foot slipped in some serious ways, yet even under the covenant of law he found mercy. Thus, I believe the nations will find mercy when their foot slips. Perhaps there will continue to be a sin-offering of sorts – a bloodless offering, like works of humility, prayer and fasting, and gifts of adornment for the house of God.

Keep in mind that Ezekiel's restoration vision was given to contemporary Israel as an exhortation to be ready for the Restoration after their 70-year captivity at Babel – this was the promise of the kingdom at that time. It was said of their "prince" that he would personally offer "the sin offering…and the burnt offering" (Eze.45:17) both "for himself and for all the people of the land" (Eze.45:22). Thus, the prince and the people of this prophecy would have been in flesh and blood and

still needing to cover sin according to Mosaic rites. This is the "might have been" condition, had the prophecy been fulfilled under Ezra.

Most of Daniel's "latter days" visions had not been revealed to him yet, when Ezekiel saw the vision of Temple and City. Meanwhile, Ezekiel was preparing Israel to be ready to serve with "the whole heart" and "the whole life", but when the time finally came, they were not ready. So part of Ezekiel's vision has been superseded and may not be fulfilled in all its original detail. Those who teach that God is done with the Jewish covenants permanently, must see what this does to the whole vision of Ezekiel chapters 40-48 – it nullifies it in its entirety. Are we free to "blot out" with impunity great sections of the OT, such as Ezekiel 40-48?

What should we make of Peter's sermon concerning "the restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21)? "All things" included the restoration of the Davidic dynasty, which had been interrupted for five centuries. But what about God's covenant with Jerusalem, as the place where He put His name, the place of "His throne" where the "soles of His feet" were to rest? Peter's "all things" must include a restored Temple in which the restored *shekinah* glory will dwell ("he dwelled" is the Heb. *shâkan* – Eze.43:7).

If Peter's "restoration of all things" has been fulfilled, then we must infer that Yahweh's *shekinah* entered Herod's Temple before its destruction. Is there any evidence for it? Also, note how Ezekiel's vision of the departing Glory (chapter 10) is followed by the returning Glory (chapter 43). Condemnation and punishment precede restoration and reward – this is the oft-repeated pattern of the prophets.

These concluding chapters of Ezekiel are, perhaps, only the most prominent, specific texts dealing with God's choice of a place on earth to meet with men. There are others, which deal specifically with forgiveness and restoration –

> "For we *were* slaves, but our Elohim did not abandon us in our slavery. But He stretched out kindness upon us before *the* kings of Persia, to give to us **preservation**, to **exalt *the* house of our Elohim**, and to **restore its ruins** – even to give us a **wall in Judah and in Jerusalem**." Ezr.9:9

The above is an example of historic fulfillment, and it sets a pattern that will be repeated.

> "Be gracious in **Your favor with Zion**; **build up *the* walls of Jerusalem**."
> Psa.51:18

David's prayer to God in Psalm 51 for His graciousness to Zion and Jerusalem follows a long confession of his sins, along with his plea for God to create in him a clean heart and a stable spirit. This plea looked forward prophetically to the "new covenant" of Jeremiah chapter 31, and "new heart" and "new spirit" of Eze.36:25-27. That heart and spirit will characterize the Israel who possesses the restored City and Temple.

The Peace of Jerusalem

David, in another Song of the Steps, instructed his readers to…

> "Pray for **the peace of Jerusalem**. May those loving you be at ease. May **peace** come within your ramparts, ease within your palaces. On account of my brothers and my friends, I say now, '**Peace** *be* in her.' On account of *the* house of Yahweh our Elohim, I will seek good for you." Psa.122:6-9

The Hebrew concept of "peace" (*shâlôwm*) is one of perfect soundness. It includes "security", "confidence" and "prosperity", and not merely lack of warfare.

The Psalms speak further of Yahweh's goodwill toward the City –

> "Yahweh *is* **building Jerusalem**. He assembles *the* outcasts of Israel. The healing for a breaking heart, and binding up for their wounds." Psa.147:2-3

The divine assembling of pariah Israel goes hand-in-hand with this "building" program. And Psalm 147 continues –

> "Praise Yahweh, **Jerusalem**. Extol your Elohim, **Zion**. For He **has strengthened *the* bars of your gates.** He has blessed your sons within you. He *is* setting your borders *at* **peace**. *The* best of wheat will satisfy you." Psa.147:12-14

This unattributed Psalm reads similarly to David's Psalm 51. Although David's reign saw peace at its very end, it was not at peace earlier, when he sinned with Bathsheba. And there was no assembling of outcasts in the latter reign of David, or

the entire reign of Solomon, while the kingdom was at peace. Victims of war and forced dispersion seem to be the best way to interpret these "outcasts" of Psalm 147. Since the return from the Babylonian captivity, Israel has never been at peace with her neighbors. So this must either be a state of future blessedness, or a false promise on God's part.

> "And it will come to pass **in that day**, Yahweh will beat out ('thresh') from *the* channel of the River (i.e., 'Euphrates') up to the wady of Egypt. And you will be gathered up one by one, sons of Israel. And it will come to pass **in that day**, it will be blown with a great horn, and there will come those perishing in *the* land of Assyria, and those scattered in *the* land of Egypt. And they will subject themselves to Yahweh **in the holy mountain in Jerusalem**." Isa.27:12-13

Of first note, the Euphrates and the wady of Egypt were ancient covenant boundaries given to Abram (Gen.15:18). Israel had attained these boundaries under David and Solomon, but subsequent kings lost territory. "In that day" is given twice here for emphasis, and it was introduced contextually by Isa.27:1 –

> "**In that day**, Yahweh will visit with the hard and the great and the mighty sword upon Leviathan the fleeing serpent, and upon Leviathan the twisting serpent. And He will kill the sea-serpent which *is* in the sea." Isa.27:1

The use of "in that day" in vv.12-13 shows a continuation of the prophetic day from v.1 and onward. "Leviathan" and "serpent" are sometimes used as epithets for Satan, even as he was depicted as "serpent" (Heb. *nâchâsh*) in Eden. But is that the meaning of "Leviathan" here? Yahweh's use of "the hard and the great and the mighty sword" (*hapax*) upon Leviathan is noteworthy for this singularly expressive weapon. If this were merely the ferocious sea-beast that Yahweh challenged Job concerning (all of Job chapter 41), then why such a death? BDB p. 531 suggests that Leviathan is figurative for Egypt, based on Psa.74:14. But Psalm 74 decries the destruction and desecration of the Sanctuary, which would make Babel, not Egypt, the villain of the piece. Or will Egypt participate in a future desecration?

The *killing* of the "sea-serpent" (Heb. *tanîyn*) "in that day" may indicate another Satanic figure, possibly the Beast's destruction in "the Lake of Fire" (Rev.19:20). But timing is often glossed over in these summary prophecies. The visiting with the sword and the killing may both apply to Satan, but at different times. See also

Appendix I: The Latter-Day Leviathan, where I draw out the analysis of various cryptic titles and names.

Just as God has not yet locked up Satan for the thousand years, neither has He gathered "those perishing in the land of Assyria" and "those scattered in the land of Egypt". Subsequent to this prophecy by Isaiah, Babel conquered and absorbed Assyria, so there is some justification in co-identifying these two states. But historically, Israel were not *perishing* in Babel, else the response to Darius' invitation for all to return would not have been so feeble. A return to Jerusalem in Darius' day meant hardship and toil, while Israel were enjoying a relatively easy life of assimilation in Babel. Also, there has been no second exodus from Egypt, since Isaiah's prophecy. All these details await a future day.

> "And therefore Yahweh will wait to be gracious to you. And therefore He will be exalted to have compassion on you. For Elohim of justice *is* Yahweh. Happy *are* all waiting for Him. For *the* people **in Zion will dwell in Jerusalem**. You will surely not weep. He will surely be gracious to you **at *the* voice of your crying out**. According to His hearing, He has answered you." Isa.30:18-19

Whenever has an Israel without tears dwelt happily in Jerusalem? Certainly not since the reigns of David and Solomon. Could this text have been fulfilled at the Jews' crying out in Jerusalem in AD 70? Hardly. No, everything here points to events still future.

> "'Comfort, comfort My people,' says your Elohim. Speak over *the* **heart of Jerusalem** and proclaim to her that her warfare has been fulfilled, that her punishment has been accepted. For she has received from *the* hand of Yahweh double because of all her sins. A voice calling in the wilderness, 'Make clear *the* way of Yahweh; make straight in the desert a highway for our Elohim. Every valley will be lifted up, and every mountain and hill will become low. And the bumpy ground will become for a level place, and the rough places for a plain. And the glory of Yahweh will be revealed, and they will see *it*, all flesh altogether.' For *the* mouth of Yahweh has spoken. A voice *is* saying 'Call.' And it says, 'What will I cry?' All the flesh *is* grass, and all its kindness *is* as *the* flower of the open field. *The* grass dried up, *the* flower withered, because *the* wind of Yahweh has blown upon it. Surely the people *is* grass. Grass has dried

> up, flower has withered, but *the* word of our Elohim stands for an age. Go up a high mountain to bring news, **Zion**; raise up with the power of your voice bringing news, **Jerusalem**. Raise *it* up, fear not. Say to *the* cities of Judah, '**Behold**, your Elohim.' **Behold**, Lord Yahweh comes with strength, and His arm *is* ruling for Him. **Behold**, His reward *is* with Him, and His work *is* before Him. According to shepherding His flock, He will shepherd by His arm. He will gather up lambs, and He will lift them into His bosom. He will lead along the nursing ones." Isa.40:1-11

The voice of comfort and an end of warfare is a prophecy of the Greater Jubilee to come. This is a salvation and reward message, and not the Roman devastations of AD 70 and AD 135. It is punctuated with three nearly consecutive **Behold**s. Although "a voice calling in the wilderness" was applied to John the Baptist in all four Gospel accounts, that was another partial fulfillment of prophecy, like the example of Isa.61:2 cited previously concerning "the acceptable year". Although the OT Masoretic text uses "all flesh" 44 times, only here do we find the emphatic "all flesh altogether". It marks off the singular event of Yahweh revealing His glory to the whole earth. I would equate this with "the Son of Man coming in His glory" (Mat.25:31), and Him "in the revelation of His glory" (1 Pet.4:13).

> "Awaken, awaken, put on strength, **Zion**. Don garments of ornament, **Jerusalem, the holy city**, for *there* will not keep on coming in among you again an uncircumcised or unclean one. Shake yourself free from *the* dust. Stand, **captive Jerusalem**; loose yourselves *from the* chains of your neck, **captive daughter of Zion**. For thus said Yahweh, 'Without cause you were sold, but not with money you will be redeemed.' For thus said the Lord Yahweh, 'My people went down *to* Egypt in the former *time* to sojourn there, and Assyria has oppressed them in *the* end. But now what *is* this to Me here – an utterance of Yahweh – for My people has been taken without cause. The one ruling him howls – an utterance of Yahweh – and continually, every day, My name is being reviled. Therefore, My people will know My name. Therefore, **in that day**, that I *am* Himself the One saying, '**Behold**, how lovely *there* have been upon the hills the feet of those bringing news, proclaiming **peace**, bringing news of good, proclaiming salvation', saying to **Zion**, 'Your **Elohim has reigned**.' They have lifted up a voice of those keeping watch. They shout with a voice altogether, for they will **see eye to eye** when Yahweh returns **to Zion**.

> Break forth, shout together, **you ruins of Jerusalem**, for Yahweh has comforted His people. He **has redeemed Jerusalem**. Yahweh has **bared** His holy arm **to *the* eyes** of all the nations. All *the* extremities of *the* earth **will see the salvation of our Elohim**." Isa.52:1-10

Was this "salvation" the return of Israel from the Babylonian captivity? How could that be, when so few of them made the effort to return? Did Yahweh return to Zion, with that return of Israel? Shades of this text may be seen in Israel's return under Ezra and Nehemiah, but not the fullness of it. The extent of this salvation includes a global witness to it – "all the nations" and "all the extremities of the earth." Yahweh returning to Zion (with His visible *shekinah*) and **reigning in Zion** are integral with this salvation. Note that seeing "eye to eye" will not be man-to-man, but man-to-Yahweh, as in the first occurrence of this expression –

> "And they will speak to those inhabiting this land (i.e., the Egyptians will inform the Canaanites). They have heard that You, Yahweh, *are* in *the* midst of this people, Who **have been seen eye to eye** – You, Yahweh. And Your cloud *is* standing over them, and with a pillar of cloud You *are* going before them by day, and with a pillar of fire *at* night." Num.14:14

As visible as were the pillars by which Yahweh revealed Himself in Sinai, just as visible will be Yahweh's baring His arm in saving Israel in the end. This will be both visible to the eye and global in its visibility. This was Isaiah's way of saying "as the lightning flashing" (Luk.17:24), in addition to "and every eye will see Him" (Rev.1:7). By what feat of imagination can preterism claim that such a one-ness with Yahweh was achieved in the rubble of AD 70 Jerusalem? Can truth be stood on its head, and still be truth?

Jerusalem, by Other Names Known

> Isaiah chapter 62 contains some truth not found elsewhere in the Bible –
>
> "For the sake of **Zion** I will not be silent, and for the sake of **Jerusalem** I will not be quiet, until her righteousness ('justice') comes forth as the daylight, and **her salvation** burns as a lamp. And nations will see your righteousness ('justice'), and all kings your glory. And you will be called a new name, which

the mouth of Yahweh will specify. And you will become a crown of ornament by *the* hand of Yahweh, and a turban of kingship by *the* palm of your Elohim. It will not be said to you again, '**Abandoned**', and to your land it will not be said again, '**Devastation**', for you will be called '**Hephzibah**' (lit. 'My delight *is* in her') and your land '**Beulah**' ('Married'), for Yahweh has delighted in you and your land will be married. For *as* a young man marries a virgin, your sons will marry you. And *as* rejoicing of a bridegroom over a bride, your Elohim will rejoice over you. Upon your walls, **Jerusalem**, I have appointed guards. All the day and all the night continually they will not be silent. The one summoning Yahweh, *there is* no rest for you. And give not rest to Him until He founds, even until **He sets Jerusalem a praise in the land**. Yahweh has sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength, 'Surely, I will *not* give your grain again *as* food for your enemies. And surely, sons of a foreigner will not drink wine which you toiled over, for those gathering it will eat it, and they will praise Yahweh, and those gathering it will drink it in My holy courts.' Pass through, pass by the gates, clear the way of the people. Lay out, lay out the highway. Clear out *the* stone. Raise an ensign over the peoples. **Behold**, Yahweh has proclaimed to the end of the earth (or, 'land'), 'Say to *the* **daughter of Zion**, "**Behold**, **your salvation is coming**. **Behold**, His reward *is* with Him, and His recompense before Him."' And they will call them 'the holy people, redeemed of Yahweh'. And you will be called '**Cared about, a city not abandoned**.'" Isa.62:1-12

The picture throughout this chapter is one of restoration blessing – no cloud darkens the sky here. This is one of only a few (ten) statements in which Yahweh swore by Himself. In places, these oaths were put into colorful extensions of "Himself", such as "by My life" in Jer.51:23 and Amo.6:8, or "by My holiness" in Psa.89:35 and Amo.4:4, and "by My great name" in Jer.44:26. Here in Isa.62:8 the form of His oath of promise is unique – "by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength". If God's arm can fail, then this oath might fail.

Also the names by which Jerusalem and her people will be called are both colorful and unique. No longer to be called "Abandoned" and "Devastation", the new names "Hephzibah" and "Beulah" will apply. I know of no instance when either of these names came into widespread use for Israel or Jerusalem historically. So the use of these names differs a little from the name Immanuel, which Mat.1:23

points to as applying to the birth of Jesus. Thus Hephzibah and Beulah will apply to a future restoration of Israel, and this is backed by a strenuous oath from Yahweh. Has He relented that oath? I refuse to believe such a thing of the God Whose "strong arm" cannot be resisted.

Millennial Jerusalem, a Rejoicing

The next Isaiah text repeats some of the above concerning receiving the fruit of one's toil. But it also distinguishes between the undeserving and those deserving the promise of blessing. Just preceding it, Isa.65:1-8 is full of condemnation against "a rebellious people" (v.2, *KJV*), then it continues from v.9 –

> "But I will bring forth a seed from Jacob, and from Judah one inheriting My mountains. And My chosen will inherit it, and My servants will dwell there. And the Sharon (lit. 'the Plain') will become for pasturage of a flock, and Valley of Achor for a resting-place of cattle – for My people who have cared about Me. But you are those abandoning Yahweh, those forgetting **My holy mountain**, those setting a table for this Good-Luck (Heb. *Gad*, a Syrian god), and those filling a drink for this Fate (Heb. *Me'nîy*, an Assyrian god). And I will count you for the Sword, and all of you will collapse to the Slaughter. Because I called and you answered not; I spoke and you listened not, but did the Evil in My sight, and chose what I did not delight in. Therefore, thus said Adonai Yahweh, '**Behold**, My servants will eat, but you will be hungry. **Behold**, My servants will drink, but you will be thirsty. **Behold**, My servants will rejoice, but you will be ashamed. **Behold**, My servants will sing out from good of heart, but you will cry out from anguish of heart, and from crushing of spirit you will howl. And you will leave your name for a curse to My chosen ones, and Adonai Yahweh will kill you, but to His servants He will call another name, which the one blessing himself in the land, will bless himself by Elohim truly. And the one swearing in the land will swear by Elohim truly, because the former distresses have been forgotten, and because they have been hidden from My eyes. For, **behold**, I create new heavens and new earth, and the former will not be remembered, nor come up upon *the* heart. For **if** (*'îm*) *I do*, be glad and rejoice continuously *for* what I *am* creating. For, **behold**, **I *am* creating Jerusalem a rejoicing**, and her people an exultation. And **I will rejoice in**

> **Jerusalem** and exult in My people. And not again will be heard in her a voice of weeping and voice of outcry. There will not come from there a babe of days, and an old one who is not filling up his days, for the youth will die *as* a son of a hundred years, and the sinner, a son of a hundred years, will be called 'cursed'. And they will build houses and inhabit *them,* and they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They will not build and another inhabit. They will not plant and another eat. For as *the* days of the tree, *so will be the* days of My people. And My chosen ones will use thoroughly the product of their hands. They will not toil for the Vanity, and they will not bring forth for the Terror, for these will be a seed blessed of Yahweh, and their descendants with them. And it will come to pass, before they call, even I will answer. While these *are* speaking, even I will hear. Wolf and lamb will graze as one, and a lion will eat fodder like an ox. And a serpent *will have* dust *as* food. They will neither harm nor spoil **in all My holy mountain**, said Yahweh." Isa.65:9-25

This text begins with a chosen seed inheriting "My mountains" (i.e., land of Israel), and it ends with an idyllic scene "in all My holy mountain" (like the "great mountain" in Dan.2:35, this is the kingdom of God on earth). Six "beholds" punctuate this text. Four of them are in near succession, contrasting rewards and punishments. There will be a winnowing out of unworthy ones at the beginning – compare what John the Baptist said of Jesus' winnowing "fan" (Mat.3:11-12). "Sons of the kingdom" will inherit the kingdom, while the "sons of the wicked one" will be cast out (Mat.13:37-43) into the Outer Darkness where there will be the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth (Mat.8:11-12). Toil for fruits of the earth will continue, but servitude and payment of tribute to the foreigner will not. Use of earthly fruits was suggested by Jesus, in His depiction of kingdom blessing as a *reclining at table* (Gk. *anaklinō*) with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Mat.8:11). The picture one visualizes is one of feasting. Jesus promised the Twelve that they would "eat and drink at My table in My kingdom" (Luk.22:29-30), and His new covenant blessing included that He would no longer "drink of this fruit of the vine … until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Mat.26:29).

But we must take note of some distinctions with regard to earthly blessings. The Twelve, and certainly Abraham, were Overcomers expecting to inherit the kingdom – this meant no more "flesh and blood" but resurrection for them (1

Cor.15:50). But the servants entering the "new heavens and new earth" and "Jerusalem a rejoicing" of Isaiah 65 will have days "as *the* days of the tree" – a long, but limited length of life.

A return to the lifetimes before the Great Flood, and peace in the animal kingdom, are remarkable features of this time of blessing. It marks off the pre-Flood period and the millennial period as book-ends for "this age" in which we now live. Building, planting, and even raising families are at the heart of this picture, so life will continue in the flesh for many. Apparently resurrection life will be for a very choice group, and these will share a resurrection body like unto Christ's glorious body. And perhaps this comparison may be appropriate – whereas angels ("sons of God") mingled with men unlawfully before the Flood (Jud.1:6), in the replay of these times with Satan locked up, the "sons of God" among flesh and blood men will be the Lord's resurrected ones, His Overcomers.

The re-modeling of creation during the Millennium includes "new heavens and new earth" and "Jerusalem a rejoicing". Peter described a great destruction in the heavens and earth in the "day of the Lord" (2 Pet.3:10-13), but we need to distinguish the re-working of the creation at the start of "the age to come" (*NKJV* – Mar.10:30) from that which occurs after the Millennium and Great White Throne (Rev.21:1). "Voice of weeping and voice of outcry" will not be found in the creation of "Jerusalem a rejoicing". Is the Jerusalem of AD 70 in any way identifiable with this? Were Jerusalemites in that evil day endowed with the long life of "the days of the tree"? Did lion and ox eat grass together? Was one dying at one hundred years of age called a "youth" and "cursed"? This picture of a youth dying at one hundred years of age is in harmony with there being "no more sacrifice for sins" for a believing Israelite (*KJV*, Heb.10:26), as Ananias and Sapphira discovered when lifetimes were shorter (Acts 5). If such a one will be called "cursed", then a short life will be punishment for serious wrongdoing, like lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:4, 9).

Some will be inclined to dismiss these "new heavens and new earth" as being somehow true without the need to take them literally. But be careful here. There have always been scoffers who would make the word of God "of none effect" (Mat.15:6). The new heavens and earth should be taken in the context of Gen.1:1, which tells of God making the old heavens and earth.

Nation Born – a One-Day Wonder

The celebration of this re-created Jerusalem continues into Isaiah chapter 66, along with Yahweh's rescue mission –

> "Hear the word of Yahweh, those trembling toward His word. Your brothers hating you, excluding you on account of My name, said, 'Let Yahweh be honored, and we will look upon your gladness.' But these will be ashamed. A sound of uproar from *the* city! A **voice from *the* temple** – voice of Yahweh, making compensation – a recompense to His enemies. Before that she writhes, she gave birth. Before that pain comes to her, she even gives birth to a male *child*. Who has heard *anything* like this? Who has seen *anything* like these? Will *the* earth travail in one day, *as* if **a nation be brought forth in one stroke**? For *thus* **Zion travailed, yea, she brought forth her sons**. 'Shall I bring to birth and not bring forth?' – says Yahweh. 'Shall I *be* bringing forth and shut up *the womb*?' – says your Elohim. **Rejoice with Jerusalem and exult in her**, all *of you* loving her. Rejoice a joy with her all *of you* mourning on account of her. So that you may nurse and be satisfied with *the* breast of her consolations, that you may drain out and take delight from *the* fullness of her abundance. For thus said Yahweh, '**Behold**, I *am* extending to her **peace** like a river, and *the* abundance of nations like an overflowing wady. Then you will nurse; you will be carried upon *her* side and be fondled upon *her* knees. Like one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you, and **you will be comforted in Jerusalem**. Then you will see *it* and your heart will rejoice, and your bones will sprout like grass. And *the* hand of Yahweh will be known with His servants, and He will be indignant with His enemies. For, **behold**, Yahweh will come in with fire, and as a whirlwind *are* His chariots, to bring back His rage with anger and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by sword Yahweh *is* judging with all flesh, and *the* slain of Yahweh will become numerous. Those consecrating themselves and those purifying themselves into the gardens, after one *another* in the midst, eating *the* flesh of the pig and the unclean thing and the mouse, together they will come to an end – an utterance of Yahweh. And I *know* their works and their thoughts, coming in to gather all the nations and the tongues. Then they will come and will see My glory. And I will put among them a sign, and I will send from among *the* escaped ones to the

> nations, Tarshish, Pul and Lud, those drawing a bow, Tubal and Greece, the distant coasts who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory, and they will declare My glory among nations. And **they will bring in all your brothers from all the nations**, an offering to Yahweh, on horses and on chariots and in litters and on mules and on camels, **up to My holy mountain Jerusalem** – said Yahweh – as when sons of Israel bring in the gift in a clean vessel *to the* house of Yahweh. And also from them I will take priests, Levites – said Yahweh. For as the new heavens and the new earth which I *am* making *are* standing before Me' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'so will your seed and your name stand.'"
>
> Isa.66:5-22

Note the religious enmity between brothers calling on Yahweh, yet some will be hating the true sons and firstborn, on account of His name. There will be a stark difference at this time between the true sons ("the wheat", "the good seed" in Mat.13:24-30), and those merely claiming their rights as sons of Abraham ("the tares").

This chapter was a fantastic summing up of Isaiah's prophetic career. The "abundance of nations" coming into Jerusalem at that future time may resemble the nations bringing their "glory" (Heb. *kâbôwd* and Gk. *doxa* can also mean "weight" or "abundance") into New Jerusalem (Rev.21:24). But we must not confuse the post-millennial "new heaven and new earth" (Rev.21:1) with "the new heavens and the new earth" of Isaiah 66, else we would delay Israel's national, spiritual birth until that post-millennial time. So this must be old Jerusalem receiving the abundance of nations.

This Jerusalem identity issue raises further questions. Will New Jerusalem appear to men when the Millennium begins? We can only speculate as to *when* New Jerusalem has been, or will be created. Perhaps it exists today – waiting. The nature of the Millennium is described in a few short verses in Rev.20:2-7, and there is not much to compare with OT parallels. But it would seem natural that the nations' access to New Jerusalem must wait for its descent to earth, an event that appears to come after the thousand years (Rev.21:2, 10, 24-27). I will make some chronological observations on the Revelation in subsequent chapters. The timing issues are not as cut-and-dried as some expositors have led us to believe.

Yahweh's voice will be heard from the Temple – a voice declaring retribution to His enemies. Although "voice of Yahweh" occurs 49 times in the OT, "voice from the Temple" is unique to Isaiah 66 – here in connection with recompensing His enemies. However, a "voice from the (heavenly) Temple" occurs in the NT in Rev.16:1, 17, and this will be heard just before the return of Christ to earth, in connection with judgments in the earth. Everything in Isaiah chapter 66 can be satisfied, or must be satisfied, by a millennial interpretation. As "a nation (to) be brought forth in one stroke", the newborn nation will be nursed with this "abundance of nations (*hapax*)" that they will bring into old Jerusalem from the start of the Millennium. It seems remarkable that old Jerusalem figures so little in the Revelation, until one realizes that Revelation is addressed to Overcomers – those who will inherit New Jerusalem.

For the last time (eleventh occ.) a "sign" is mentioned by Isaiah, this one will be Yahweh's sending escaped Jews to the nations to declare His glory among them. This will be an early fulfillment of Exo.19:6 – "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation", a promise given only to Israel. The response of the nations will be to bring the dispersed of Israel **back to Jerusalem** as an offering to Yahweh. Central to Isaiah 66 is **the importance of Jerusalem** as the location of final blessings. I would ask those who hold a preterist view of prophecy, "When was this sign fulfilled?" Signs were given by God so that men might test whether He has fulfilled His word. A sign must be *seen* to have significance. When was this sign *ever* seen in the history of mankind?

"Peace Like a River" Flowing into Jerusalem

Yahweh extending **to Jerusalem** "peace like a river" is a rare simile, found in Isa.66:12 and elsewhere only in Isa.48:18 –

> "If only you listened to My commandment! Then your **peace** would have come **like the river**, and your **righteousness** like waves of the sea."

The similes of "river" and "waves of the sea" are put for the continuous abundance of peace and righteousness ('justice') in the land of Israel. The Hebrew word for peace, *shâlôwm*, means more than just a lack of open warfare. As I mentioned earlier, it conveys "soundness", "completeness" and "harmoniousness" in one's

life and society. The first mention of this "peace" in Isaiah also includes "righteousness" (Heb. *tsedeq*, which can also convey the sense of "justice"), and these are the hallmarks of Messiah, accomplished by Yahweh of armies –

> "For a Child has been born to us, a Son has been given to us. And the dominion will come upon His shoulder, and He will call His name – Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Enduring Father, Prince of **Peace**. For the increase of the dominion and for **peace** *there is* no end (or 'boundary'), upon *the* throne of David and upon His kingdom, to prepare it and to strengthen *it* in judgment and in **righteousness**, from now until an age. A zeal of Yahweh of armies will do this." Isa.9:6-7

The peace of Jerusalem is celebrated again in Isaiah chapter 26, although the city is not mentioned by name there –

> "In that day, this song will be sung in *the* land of Judah, 'He sets a **city of strength** for salvation – walls and bulwark.' Open the gates and let a **righteous** ('just') nation go in, keeping faithfulness. His intention is supported. You guard **peace**, **peace** (*KJV*, "perfect peace"). For in You is confidence." Isa.26:1-3

This "city of strength" (Heb. *`îyr `ôz*) is a unique expression and stands in contrast with the "exalted town" of v.5, which Yahweh will bring into the dust. It is not difficult to see both expressions applying to Jerusalem, but at different times – restoration, yes, but first punishment.

The city "**Jerusalem**" is again unnamed in Isa.1:21-28 below, although the vision of Isaiah at 1:1 is what he saw "concerning Judah and **Jerusalem**". In the text below, the "city" is made equal to "**Zion**" –

> "How she became a harlot, a *once* **faithful town**. Full of judgment, **righteousness** ('justice') will dwell in her – but now murderers. Your silver became dross. Your drink is diluted with the waters. Your chiefs *are* being stubborn and companions of thieves. Each one loves a bribe and pursues rewards. An orphan they defend not, and *the* dispute of a widow comes not to them. Therefore – an utterance of Lord Yahweh of armies, *the* Mighty One of Israel – '**Hah**, I am sorry because of My adversaries, and I avenge Myself because of My enemies. And I have brought back My hand over you, and I have

refined like the purity your dross, and I have taken away all your alloys. And I have brought back your judges as at *the* first, and your advisors as in *the* beginning. After this, you will be called *the* **righteous** ('just') **city**, a **faithful town**. **Zion** will be ransomed with judgment, and those returning to her with **righteousness** ('justice'). And *the* crushing of rebels and sinners *will be* together. And those abandoning Yahweh will be finished off.'" Isa.1:21-28

Whenever did Yahweh remove the "dross" and "alloys" from Israel, blessing the righteous in a restored Jerusalem, and destroying the rebels? Jerusalem, once a "faithful town", now turned harlot, will be purged to become a "faithful town" again – even to be called the "righteous city". Did the Roman purge in AD 70 bring about such a righteous city, a people purified of their dross?

Next consider Isaiah chapter 32 –

"**Behold** (Heb. *hên*), for *the* sake of **righteousness** ('justice') a king will reign, and rulers will rule for judgment. And each will become as a hiding place from *the* wind and a refuge from a downpour, as canals of waters in a waterless place, as a shadow of a great cliff in a weary land. And seeing eyes will not look away, and hearing ears will listen. And a hasty heart will consider to perceive, and a tongue of stammerers will hasten to speak clearly. A fool will no longer be called 'generous', nor will a scoundrel be named 'noble'. For a fool will speak folly, and his heart will perform harm, to practice godlessness, and to speak error toward Yahweh, to make empty a hungry soul, and he will deprive a thirsty one *his* drink. And a schemer – his schemes *are* evil. He devises plots to destroy *the* poor with words of a lie, even when *the* needy speaks justice. But a generous one has planned generous things, and he stands upon generous things. Arise, *you* women at ease. Hear my voice, *you* unsuspecting daughters. Hear my words. *In* days beyond a year, the unsuspecting will tremble, for a vintage has failed, a gathering will not come. Shudder, *you* at ease. Tremble, *you* unsuspecting. Strip off and lay bare and gird up *the* loins. They *are* beating upon *the* breasts, concerning fields of beauty, concerning a vine bearing fruit. Upon *the* ground of My people a thorn-bush, a brier will come up, for upon all houses of joy of a jubilant **town**, for *the* palace has been abandoned. *The* bustle of a **city** has departed. Hill and watch-tower have gone into a cave (i.e., 'into hiding') until an age, a joy of wild donkeys, a

> pasture of flocks – until *the* Spirit from on high will be poured out upon us, and a wilderness will become for the orchard, and an orchard for the forest. Then judgment will settle in the wilderness, and in the orchard **righteousness** ('justice') will dwell. And the work of the **righteousness** ('justice') will become **peace**, and the service of the **righteousness** ('justice') to have quiet, even security until an age. And My people will dwell in an abode of **peace**, even in dwellings of confidence, even in resting places at ease." Isa.32:1-18

While there is no specific mention of Jerusalem here, the "bustle of a city" must certainly include the capital city. This prophecy is like a few others, in that the text starts off with the end-state of a righteous government. It includes the eyes, ears and heart that were found lacking in Isa.6:9-10. This will be the final outcome of blessing. Then the narrative flashes back to the earlier state of a corrupt society, who stand truth and justice on their head. Then follows punishment – a land abandoned to thorns, and emptied of its people. And then comes the restoration of land and people, after an outpouring of the Spirit, and in the end, a condition of peace with security. Did this outpouring of the Spirit occur at Acts 2? How could that be, when nothing else matches Acts-period conditions? During Acts, King Agrippa reigned after a fashion, but he was a puppet of Rome, a figurehead. And while Agrippa may have been a Jew, he was also of Herod's line – that is, an Edomite. He was no son of David. So then, did a just king and righteous rulers reign during Acts? When have all these events fallen out in the past, as described here? If they have not, then they must be future – or else God has rescinded His promises. But, either "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom.11:29, *NKJV*), including these OT promises, or we cannot put our trust in any Biblical promise. Remember, God may withdraw a promise from any given generation, but the promise is sure to some future generation – in His own good time He will give His gifts. To believe anything else is to ascribe to Satan the victory in his contest over the chosen people. That puts preterism in the same category as "eternal hellfire" doctrine, which declares in effect – "Satan wins".

And how about the restoration of agriculture that is to follow the pouring out of God's Spirit? Yes, that is a work of His Spirit, even as His Spirit hovering over the deep was the prelude to His six days of physical creation (Gen.1:2 ff.). Instead of plenty, Judea suffered famine during the Acts (Acts 11:28-29). Well then, were

orchards more fruitful in the days just before the Roman re-conquest of Judea? If this cornucopia is taken as a past event, when did it happen?

Now zoom ahead almost two millennia. The Land has become agriculturally plentiful in modern times, but this should not be affirmed as a direct act of God during this dispensation of His silence. Compare the pouring out of His Spirit in Acts 2, which was decidedly a manifest act of God. There were thousands of witnesses, as Luke makes clear (Acts 2:41). But there was no boon to agriculture from the Spirit during the whole Acts period.

And what about "an abode of peace", "dwellings of confidence", and "resting places at ease" – can any of these be identified with Israel at any time since the days when Isaiah spoke them?

And the reign of the righteous King? Paul was heralding the kingdom of God right to the end of Acts (28:20, 31). But this must have been a herald of future blessings, for if Christ had already been manifestly reigning in Jerusalem, it would have become common knowledge even as far as Rome.

Prosperity Coming into Jerusalem

This state of peace with righteousness is further illumined by Isaiah chapter 60:

> "Get up, shine, for your daybreak has come, and *the* glory of Yahweh has shone upon you. For, **behold**, the darkness covers *the* earth and heavy cloud *the* peoples. But upon you Yahweh will shine, and His glory will appear over you. And nations will come to your daylight, and kings to the shining of your sunrise. Lift your eyes round-about, and see *that* all of them have assembled. They have come to you, your sons from afar do come, and your daughters will be nursed upon *the* hip. Then you will see and be radiant and tremble and your heart open wide, for *the* abundance of *the* sea will be turned upon you. Wealth of nations will come to you. An abundance of camels will cover you, young camels of Midian and Ephah. All from Sheba will come. They will carry gold and frankincense, and praises of Yahweh they will proclaim. *The* whole flock of Kedar will be gathered to you. Leaders of Nebaioth will wait upon you. They will bring up for acceptance *to* My altar, and the house of My beauty I will

> beautify. Who *are* these as the clouds fly away, and as the doves toward their windows? Surely the coastlands will wait for Me, and ships of Tarshish at the head, to bring your sons from afar, their silver and gold with them, for *the* name of Yahweh your Elohim, and for the Holy One of Israel, because He has beautified you. And sons of a foreigner will build **your walls,** and their kings will wait upon you, for in My wrath I struck you down, but in My acceptance I had compassion on you. Then **your gates** will be open continually. Day and night they will not be shut for wealth of nations to be brought into you, and their kings leading. For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish, and those nations will certainly dry up. The wealth of Lebanon will come into you, cypress, elm and box tree together, to beautify *the* **place of My sanctuary**, and *the* place of My feet I will honor. And *will be* going to you those afflicting *your* sons. Then they will bow down upon the soles of your feet, all those spurning you. And they will call you '**city of Yahweh**, **Zion of the Holy One of Israel**'." Isa.60:1-14

Up to this point in the text, "you" and "your" have appeared thirty times, all but one of which were feminine singular forms. These twenty-nine all agree with the feminine noun "city" (Heb. *`îyr*, v.14). Let us recapitulate all that is said of this city –

- glory of Yahweh has shone upon *her* (2)
- glory of Yahweh will appear over *her*
- nations will be drawn to *her* daylight
- kings will be drawn to *her* shining sunrise
- *her* eyes will look about and see the great assemblage of nations and kings
- along with these nations, *her* sons and daughters have returned
- seeing, shining, trembling with open heart, the abundance of the sea comes into *her*
- wealth of nations will come to *her* (2)
- caravan of camels will cover *her*
- flocks of Kedar will be gathered into *her*
- leaders of Nebaioth will wait upon *her*
- ships of Tarshish will bring *her* sons (we saw this previously in Isa.66:19-20)

- Yahweh is *her* Elohim
- The Holy One of Israel has beautified *her*
- foreigners will build *her* walls
- kings will wait upon *her*
- Yahweh struck *her* down in His wrath
- then in His acceptance, He had compassion on *her*
- *her* gates will be open continually, night and day
- any nation and kingdom which will not serve *her* will perish
- the wealth of Lebanon will come into *her*
- those who once afflicted *her* will bow down to the soles of *her* feet and humble themselves to *her*
- *she* will be called "city of Yahweh, Zion of the Holy One of Israel"

This is already a very stunning list from just 14 verses, but the blessing on Jerusalem just keeps continuing through another long text –

> "Instead of your becoming abandoned and hated, so no one *was* passing through you, then I will appoint you for an exaltation of an age, a rejoicing of generations. And you will suck *the* milk of nations, and *the* breast of kings you will nurse. And you will know that I, Yahweh, *am* your Savior and your Redeemer, Strong One of Jacob. Instead of the copper, I will bring gold, and instead of the iron, I will bring silver, and instead of the wood, copper, and instead of the stone, iron. And I will appoint your administration *as* **peace**, and your governors as **righteousness** ('justice'). Violence will not be heard again in your land, *nor* destruction and collapse within your borders. But you will call **your walls** 'Salvation', and **your gates** 'Praise'. No longer will come to you the sun for daylight by day. The moon will not give light to you. But Yahweh will become to you for a light of an age, and your Elohim for your beauty. Your sun will no longer go down ('go away'), nor your moon be taken away, for Yahweh will become to you for a light of an age, and *the* days of your mourning will be finished. And your people – all will be **righteous** ('just') for an age. They will inherit *the* land, a sprout of His planting, a work of My hands to glorify Myself. The insignificant one will become for the thousand, and the smallest one for a mighty nation. I, Yahweh, will hasten it in its time." Isa.60:15-22

"You" and "your" appear another twenty times in this latter part of Isaiah chapter 60, all in the feminine singular, again applying to "the city of Yahweh" – that is, Jerusalem. Also note how "the city of Yahweh" is also called Zion – that is, 'Jerusalem' and 'Zion' are used interchangeably for Yahweh's city.

Yahweh becoming to them "a light of an age" resembles the New Jerusalem (Rev.21:23). But New Jerusalem's gates will be named for the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev.21:12), while here in Isaiah chapter 60 they are all called "Praise". Further, if Nehemiah's reconstruction of the city followed the pattern of the pre-captivity city (i.e., Isaiah's Jerusalem), there were only 10 gates (Neh.3) in old Jerusalem, and not the 12 of New Jerusalem. Today's Jerusalem, whose walls date from the sixteenth century, has only 8 gates. It is feasible that future reconstruction of Jerusalem's walls might yield a different number of gates.

"The insignificant one" becoming "for the thousand" is like what Joshua promised the nation in one of his farewell addresses (Jos.23:10). Such exploits in war are reminiscent of David, but who since David has had his "tens of thousands"? At times, since Isaiah prophesied, Yahweh gave victory to Israelites in battle, but not like a Gideon, a Samson, or a David. "Sprout of His planting" is a unique construction in Isa. 60:21, but it is reminiscent of Isa.11:1 –

> "And a branch will come out from *the* stem of Jesse, and a **sprout** from his root will bear fruit."

On the face of it, the branch and sprout of Jesse would have been David, but Isaiah's vision was futuristic. Isa.11:10 and Rom.15:12 make clear that this particular "Sprout" is Messiah. But the "sprout of His planting" in Isaiah 60 is the firstborn, inheriting Israel.

Jerusalem as "Throne of Yahweh"

Jeremiah chapter 3 opens with a long condemnation of Israel's and Judah's "adultery", and the justice of Yahweh's divorcing them utterly, as a man would. Then the text breaks into a call to repentance and a promise of restoration –

> "Go and proclaim these words northward and say, 'Return apostate Israel – an utterance of Yahweh – I will not let My anger (lit. 'face') fall upon you, for I

> *am* kind – an utterance of Yahweh – I will not keep *anger* for an age. Only realize your guilt, that you have rebelled against Yahweh your Elohim, and have scattered your ways to the foreigners under every leafy tree. But you have not listened upon My voice – an utterance of Yahweh. Return, you apostate sons – an utterance of Yahweh – for I have ruled over (or 'married') you. And I will take you, one from a city and two from a clan, and I will bring you to **Zion**. And I will give to you shepherds according to My heart, and they will shepherd you *with* knowledge and prudence (Heb. *shâkal*). And it will come to pass that you will become numerous, and you will become fruitful in the land in these days – an utterance of Yahweh. No longer will they say, "ark of *the* covenant of Yahweh", and it will not go up upon *the* heart, nor will they remember *it*, nor will they seek *it*, nor will it be made again. At that time, they will call **Jerusalem** "**Throne of Yahweh**", and all the nations will be gathered to it, to *the* name of Yahweh to **Jerusalem**. And they will no longer walk after the stubbornness of their evil hearts. In these days *the* house of Judah will walk beside *the* house of Israel, and they will come together from *the* land of *the* North upon the land which I caused your fathers to inherit.'" Jer.3:12-18

Jerusalem being called "Throne of Yahweh" is an amplification of Solomon's "throne of Yahweh" (1 Chr.29:23), showing how much more glorious "these days" will be above Solomon's glory-days. Of course, "a greater than Solomon" (Mat.12:42) came to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mat.10:6) in the person of Jesus. If Israel had embraced Him as their Shepherd, then the kingdom would have been restored according to the visions of Isaiah, Jeremiah and the other prophets. But that kingdom glory has been delayed, and Christ has yet to sit upon His earthly throne.

Judah and Israel returning "from the land of the North" might be considered as fulfilled with the return from Babylon under Cyrus' edict. But, at that time, were they no longer walking "after the stubbornness of their evil hearts"? If that were so, then Jesus would have found a ready audience for His preaching. When did the houses of Judah and Israel ever walk together? In Jesus' day, the Samaritans had their own land, temple, and version of the Torah. The Samaritans were decidedly at odds with the "Jews" and were not walking together with them.

Although the returners to Zion "in these days" will be taken "one from a city and two from a clan" (i.e., few in number), they will also become "numerous" and "fruitful" after the return. Texts like this, with its emphasis on material blessings, have led Bible teachers such as Otis Sellers ("Sorting Prophetic Material", Otis Q. Sellers, #SS33, p.22) to conclude that there will first come a pre-millennial kingdom of 500 to 700 years duration before the final "seven" of Daniel 9:26-27 (a period of testing), after which Jesus Christ will return personally in His earthly *Parousia* (i.e., 'official presence'). I will have more to say about this in the chapter **Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?**

Shepherds shepherding with knowledge and "prudence" seems to relate to "the wise" (Heb. *shâkal*) of Dan.12:3, who will turn many to righteousness. This appears to be after the deliverance of those written in the book (Dan.12:1), and after a resurrection (Dan.12:2). These shepherds, taken from the Overcomers addressed in the Revelation, will help fulfill Israel's millennial role.

A King – "Yahweh Our Righteousness"

Jeremiah chapter 23 also deals with shepherds, but some of them were not according to Yahweh's heart –

> "'Alas, shepherds *are* destroying and scattering *the* flock of My pasturage' – an utterance of Yahweh. Therefore, now said Yahweh Elohim of Israel against the shepherds, those pasturing My people, 'You have scattered My flock, and dispersed them, and have not cared for them. **Behold**, I *am* visiting against you *the* evil of your deeds' – an utterance of Yahweh. 'And I will assemble *the* remnant of My flock from all the lands where I have scattered them there. And I will bring them back upon their pasturage, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. And I will raise over them shepherds, and they will pasture them. And they will fear no longer, nor be terrified, nor be missing' – an utterance of Yahweh. '**Behold**, days *are* coming' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'and I will raise to David a Sprout of **righteousness** ('justice'), and a **King will reign** and prosper, and He will execute judgment and **righteousness** ('justice') in the land. In His days **Judah will be saved,** and Israel will dwell according to safety. And this *is* His name which they will call Him – "**Yahweh our Righteousness**" ('Justice'). Therefore, **behold**, days *are* coming' – an utterance of Yahweh –

> ‘and they will no longer say, “Life of Yahweh, Who brought up *the* sons of Israel from *the* land of Egypt,” because rather *they will say*, “Life of Yahweh, Who brought up and brought in seed of *the* house of Israel from a northward land and from all the lands where I scattered them there.” And they will dwell upon their own ground.’” Jer.23:1-8

First note that this short text contains three divine exclamation points (**behold**), and two of them are loaded with promise, saying “**behold**, days are coming”. While this text is not specifically about Jerusalem, it is the promise of a King, Who is both a son of David and Yahweh Himself – i.e., Messianic. And where else can a king of Israel, and especially Yahweh, reign except in the regal city, Jerusalem? This cannot mean Christ at His incarnation or His ascension, because He neither reigned, nor executed “judgment and justice in the land” as the King-Judge will (Mat.25:31). Nor was Judah saved, nor did Israel dwell safely at those times. And here is another negative – during the Gospels and Acts period, Israel were not being gathered “from a northward land” and “all the lands where I scattered them” to “dwell upon their own ground”. Nothing like this cluster of events happened historically, so it must be future. All the blessings here are physical. Even the King executing “judgment and justice in the land” is what we wish our earthly governments would give us today.

There are some who believe that these prophecies have begun to be fulfilled in modern times, because so many Jews have returned to Israel’s “own ground”. But such a view fails to “rightly divide the word of the truth” (2 Tim.2:15). God is not dealing with the covenant nation Israel in the current “dispensation of the grace of God” (Eph.3:2). Today’s gathering in the Land is man’s gathering. And those calling themselves Jews are still very much scattered throughout the world.

Jerusalem – “Yahweh Our Righteousness”

Jeremiah chapter 33 has many elements in common with Jer.23:1-8, but chapter 33 adds even more emphatic declarations of Yahweh –

> “And *there* came a word of Yahweh to Jeremiah a second *time*, when he *was* still imprisoned in *the* court of the guardhouse, to say, ‘Thus said Yahweh making **it**, Yahweh forming **it** to prepare **it** (Yahweh *is* His name), “Call to Me,

and I would answer you, and I would declare to you great and incomprehensible things that you have not known." For thus said Yahweh, Elohim of Israel, regarding *the* houses of **this city** and regarding *the* houses of *the* kings of Judah, those torn down against the siege-mound and against the sword, "They *are* coming to fight with the Chaldeans, and to fill *it* up with the corpses of man, which I have destroyed in My anger and in My rage, even whom I have hidden My face from **this city**, because of all their wickedness. **Behold**, I *am* raising up to recovery and healing. And I will heal them and reveal to them **abundance of peace** and truth. And I will bring back *the* captivity of Judah and *the* captivity of Israel. And I will rebuild them as in the former *time*. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity which they sinned toward Me. And I will forgive all which they sinned toward Me, and which they rebelled against Me. And it will become to Me for a name of joy, and for praise and for beauty to all nations of the earth, which will hear all the goodness which I *am* doing with them. And they will tremble and quake concerning all the goodness and concerning **all the peace** which I *am* doing for it." Thus said Yahweh, "Again will be heard in this place, which you say –'waste, it *is* without man and without cattle' – in *the* cities of Judah and in *the* streets of **Jerusalem**, the deserted, without man and without inhabitant and without cattle – a voice of joy and voice of gladness, voice of bridegroom and voice of bride, voice of those saying, 'Praise Yahweh of armies, for Yahweh *is* good, for His kindness *is* for an age'. They *are* bringing in thank-offerings *into* the house of Yahweh. For I will bring back *the* captivity of the land, as in the former *time*", said Yahweh. Thus said Yahweh of armies, "Again will come into this place – the desolate, without man and even to cattle – and in all its cities, a pasturage of shepherds causing *their* flock to lie down *there*. In *the* cities of the mountain, in *the* cities of the lowland, and in *the* cities of the Negev (or 'south'), and in *the* land of Benjamin, and in round-about Jerusalem, and in *the* cities of Judah, again *the* flock will pass by against *the* hand of one counting *them*," said Yahweh. "**Behold**, days *are* coming – an utterance of Yahweh – when I will raise up the good word which I spoke to *the* house of Israel, and concerning *the* house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will make sprout to David a Sprout of **righteousness** ('justice'). And He will perform judgment and **righteousness** ('justice') in the land. In those days **Judah will be saved** and **Jerusalem will dwell with safety**, and this is what He will call her, '**Yahweh our Righteousness ('Justice')**'". For thus said Yahweh,

> "*There* will not be cut off to David a man sitting upon *the* throne of *the* house of Israel. And to the priests, the Levites, there will not be cut off a man from before Me, offering an offering, and sacrificing gifts, and making sacrifice all the days."' And came the word of Yahweh to Jeremiah to say, 'Thus said Yahweh, "If you could break My covenant of the day and My covenant of the night, to come daytime and nighttime in their season, even so might My covenant be broken with David My servant, from coming to pass for a son reigning upon his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers, which *as* armies of the heavens are not counted, and sand of the sea is not measured, so will I multiply *the* seed of David My servant, and the Levites ministering to Me."' And *there* came a word of Yahweh to Jeremiah, to say, 'Have you not considered what this people have spoken, to say, "The two clans which Yahweh selected, by Him, even He rejected them." And they disdain My people from becoming a nation before them. Thus said Yahweh, 'If My covenant *is* not by day and night, *and* I have not appointed statutes of heavens and earth, even so I might reject *the* seed of Jacob and David My servant, from taking from his seed those ruling in regard to *the* seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will bring back their captivity, and I will have compassion on them.'" Jer.33:1-26

One great similarity between Jer.23:1-8 and Jeremiah chapter 33 is also a difference. These are the only two occurrences of "Yahweh our Righteousness" (Heb. *Yahweh Tsîdqênûw*). In chapter 23 the name applies to the King, a Sprout of David, but in chapter 33 it is a name of Jerusalem. You have to discern the gender of independent pronouns and pronominal suffixes in order to interpret the English ambiguities of the "King" section in chapter 23. The pronouns are masculine to agree with the masculine noun King (Heb. *melek*). Sprout (Heb. *tsemach*) is also a masculine noun, but that is another descriptor for this King.

Chapter 33 opens with ambiguous statements about Yahweh making, forming and preparing "it" (feminine singular). We have to suspend judgment about "it" until v.4, where we find the first feminine noun, "city" (Heb. *`îyr*). "This city" (Jerusalem, where Jeremiah was imprisoned) is mentioned again in v.5 as the object of Yahweh's anger and rage. Then in v.9 it is "all the peace I am doing for it". "Cities" (plural) are mentioned several times – also Jerusalem, in v.13. Then 33:15 mentions for David a sprouting of the Sprout, Who will perform judgment and justice again – very similarly to 23:5. There follows in v.16 "this is what he

(i.e., 'Judah') will call her, 'Yahweh our Righteousness'". The "her" shows this will be a name of Jerusalem, even as it will be a name of David's Sprout, per 23:5-6. Both King and City will share one of those unique divine names – Yahweh-Tsîdqênûw ("Yahweh our Righteousness").

And note how God affirmed concerning His covenants with Jacob, David and Levi – as unbreakable as His covenants with day and night. While the Davidic covenant reached its fulfillment in Christ as the Son of David, Christ was a high priest after the order of Melchisedek and not of Levi. These Levitic and Davidic covenants were built upon the Abrahamic and Mosiac covenants for their foundation. And concerning the covenants, Yahweh declared He would keep them "to a thousand generations" – and He spoke this word of His covenant endurance three times for emphasis (Deu.7:9-12; 1 Chr.16:15-18; Psa.105:8-11). The common point in these three texts is giving the land to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's offspring as their inheritance.

But how long are a thousand generations? I have often wondered what significance God has built into the precession of the equinoxes – the 26,000 year cycle of the earth's wobble upon its axis. The stars are "for signs and seasons" (Gen.1:14), and the seasonal shift of the stars follows this 26,000 year cycle. A 26-year length may be God's yardstick for a generation. And after "a thousand generations" from Abraham, God may have another plan to implement for the heavens and the earth. Well, the "thousand generations" is Scriptural, while the cycle of precession is my own conjecture about it. However, one thing is clear. Yahweh commanded His covenants with Israel for a very long period. Then how say some that He cut short His word at AD 70? At that time the covenant with Abraham was only about 2,000 years old. If God was done with His covenant with Abraham at AD 70, that would make a generation about 2 years in length. Has God forgotten how to count? Does He mean what He says, or has man been putting *other* words in His mouth?

The Davidic covenant was fulfilled in Christ, although it was temporarily interrupted around the end of the Acts period. But it is only in abeyance since then, not "broken". The Levitic covenant is separate from Israel becoming the "kingdom of priests" (Exo.19:6), that God intended for the Nation from the start. The promise of a priestly kingdom had a shadowy beginning during Acts (the "royal

priesthood" of 1 Pet.2:9) when a remnant of Israel believed the gospel. One of the Levitic priestly roles was to teach Yahweh's judgments and laws to the people (Deu.33:8-10). When Israel will have fully attained the kingdom of priests, then the law will flow out of Jerusalem to the nations. Do not confuse these "nations" with the believers from the nations during Acts. Their apostle, Paul, helped secure for them freedom from Mosaic Law. These Acts period non-Israelites were part of a chosen company, a wild olive graft (Rom.11:17), who will share the blessings of Israel in the New Jerusalem. The nations of flesh and blood entering the Millennium will be quite another group altogether. Their previous background will have been one of "darkness" (Isa.60:2). Because Israel has been given such unbreakable covenants as these, can anyone seriously believe that God is done with the Jews? Have day and night ceased?

Blessings of Zion

Isaiah chapter 49 is another declaration of Yahweh that He will deliver Israel mightily –

> "Listen to me, you isles, and pay attention, you peoples from far off. Yahweh has called me from *the* womb, from *the* inward parts of my mother He has brought my name into remembrance. And He has set my mouth as a sharp sword. In *the* shadow of His hand He has hidden me, and He has set me for a select arrow. In His quiver He has concealed me. And He said to me, 'You *are* My servant, Israel, whom by you I will glorify Myself.' Then I said, 'For vanity I have toiled. For confusion and vapor I have spent my strength.' But indeed, my judgment *is* with Yahweh, and my reward with my Elohim. And now said Yahweh, fashioning me from *the* womb for a servant to Him, to bring back Jacob to Him – though Israel is not *now* gathered to Him. But I have become honored in *the* eyes of Yahweh, and my Elohim has become my strength. And He said, 'It has become too trifling *for* you to become to Me a servant to raise up *the* tribes of Jacob, and *the* preserved ones of Israel to bring back. But I will appoint you for a light of nations, to become My salvation up to the ends of the earth.' Thus said Yahweh, Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to a despised soul, to a hated nation, to a servant of rulers, 'Kings will see and rise up. Princes also will prostrate themselves, on account of Yahweh Who *is* faithful, *the* Holy One

of Israel, and He has chosen you.' Thus said Yahweh, 'In a time of acceptance I have heard you, and **in a day of salvation I have helped you**. And I have kept you and I have given you for a covenant of people, **to raise up *the* land**, **to cause to inherit desolated inheritances**, to say to *the* imprisoned "Go out", to *those* who *are* in darkness "Reveal yourselves". Along roads they will graze, and upon all bare heights *will be* their pasturage. They will neither hunger nor thirst. Neither will strike them burning heat and sun, for the One having compassion toward them will lead them, even upon springs of water He will guide them. And I will set each of My mountains for a way, and My highways will be elevated. **Behold**, these will come from far off. And, **behold**, these from north and from west, and these from *the* land of Syenites. Ring out, you heavens, and rejoice, you earth. Burst forth, you mountains, a ringing cry, for **Yahweh has consoled His people**, and He has compassion on His poor.' But **Zion** said, 'Yahweh has abandoned me, and my Lord has forgotten me.' Will a woman forget her nursling, not to have compassion on *the* son of her womb? Yea, these might forget, but I will not forget you. **Behold** (Heb. *hên*), **I have inscribed you upon *My* palms**. **Your walls are in My view continuously**. Your sons have hastened *to you*. Your overthrowers and those wasting you will go out from you. Lift your eyes around and see. All of them have gathered. They have come to you. 'I *am* living – an utterance of Yahweh – for all of them as an ornament you will put on, and you will bind them as a bride *does*. For your wastes and your desolations and *the* land of your ruin, that now is too restricted for your dwelling, and those swallowing you down will become distant. *The* sons of your bereavement will speak yet in your ears, 'The place has become *too* narrow for me. Draw near to me that I may dwell.' Then you will say in your heart, 'Who has begotten these for me? And I am bereaved and barren, removed and turned aside. And these, who has raised *them*? Behold (*hên*), I have been left alone, by myself. These, where *have* they *come from*?' Thus said Lord Yahweh, '**Behold**, I will lift up My hand toward nations, and toward peoples I will raise an ensign. And they will bring in your sons in *the* bosom, and your daughters upon *the* shoulder will be carried. And kings will become those supporting you, and their princesses will nurse you. Noses *to the* earth, they will come to you, and *the* dust of your feet they will lick. Then you will know that I *am* Yahweh Whom they will not be ashamed of, those waiting for Me.' Will a prey take from a strong one? Or a captive of a righteous one,

> will he escape? For thus said Yahweh, 'Yea, a captive of a mighty one will take away, and a prey of a terrible one will escape. And **with your adversary I will strive**, and **with your sons I will deliver**. And I will feed those oppressing you *with* their own flesh, and as sweet wine their own blood they will become drunk *with*. And all flesh will know that I *am* Yahweh, **your Savior** and **your Redeemer**, Mighty One of Jacob." Isa.49:1-26

This is another lengthy passage, full of remarkable promises for Israel and Zion. It is emphasized with four divine **beholds**. The whole message is addressed as a warning to the nations (49:1). The "me" perspective of the first two verses applied to Isaiah as a representative of Israel –

- He called *me* from the womb
- brought *my* name into remembrance
- set *my* mouth as a sharp sword (cp. Christ in Rev.19:15)
- hidden *me* in the shadow of His hand
- set *me* for a select arrow
- concealed *me* in His quiver

Then follows "He said to me", a dialogue between Yahweh and Isaiah, with even more remarkable things spoken of either Isaiah or Israel (the line between these two is sometimes blurred):

of Isaiah –

- to bring Jacob back to Him
- to become honored, strengthened by Yahweh Elohim
- as Yahweh's servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob
- to bring back those preserved of Israel
- appointed for a light of nations
- to become (i.e., 'declare') His salvation to the ends of the earth (the *LXX* of this text was applied by Paul to himself in Acts 13:47)

of Israel –

- I will glorify Myself by you
- kings, princes will honor Yahweh and His chosen ones

- heard in a time of acceptance, helped in a day of salvation
- given for a covenant of people
- release of imprisoned ones, obscure ones become “light”
- no longer hunger, thirst or oppressive heat
- mountains become roads, highways raised up
- regathered from North and West
- His people consoled, His poor compassionated

At verse 14, **Zion** enters the conversation, claiming Yahweh had abandoned and forgotten “her” (feminine pronouns and adjectives are the norm in reference to **Zion**). From v.14 to the end of chapter 49 “you” and “your” occur 30 times, all feminine singular – as well as 4 adjectives and participles in the feminine singular. Verses 15-26 are Yahweh’s response to **Zion**.

of **Zion** –

- Yahweh will not forget *you*
- I have inscribed *you* upon My palms
- *your* walls are in My sight continually
- *your* overthrowers and those wasting *you* will go out from *you*
- lift *your* eyes around and see … they have come to *you*
- *you* will don all of them as an ornament, *you* will bind them like a bride does
- *your* waste and *your* desolations and the land of *your* ruin are now too narrow for *your* dwelling
- those swallowing *you* down will become far away
- the sons of *your* bereavement will speak yet in *your* ears
- *you* will say in *your* heart, ‘Who has begotten these for me?’
- they will bring in *your* sons in their bosom, and *your* daughters upon their shoulder
- kings will support *you*, and their princesses will nurse *you*
- they will come to *you* bowed to the earth, and the dust of *your* feet they will lick
- *you* will know that I am Yahweh
- with *your* adversary I will strive, and with *your* sons I will deliver
- I will feed those oppressing *you* with their own flesh

- I am Yahweh, *your* Savior and *your* Redeemer

Note that elsewhere, Isa.42:6 also cites giving a "light of nations" and a "covenant of people", but there in a Messianic context (Mat.12:20 applied the "bruised reed" of 42:3 to Christ). Paul applied the "light of nations" and more of Isa.49:6 to himself and Barnabas in Acts 13:47. The *NKJV* implies that Isaiah chapter 49 is also Messianic, by its use of capital letters. But it is really small-'m' messianic, in the sense that the servants of Jesus also had their anointing (1 Joh.2:20, 27), required for their "holy priesthood" (1 Pet.2:5).

How City and Temple Are Portrayed in Zechariah

Zechariah prophesied of Yahweh's saving Jerusalem, and afterward His benevolence to the nations through the mediation of Israel –

> "And I raised my eyes and looked. And, **behold**, a man, and in his hand a line of measurement. Then I said, 'Where *are* you going?' And he said to me, 'To measure **Jerusalem**, to see as to what *is* her width, and as to what her length.' And, behold, the angel who *was* talking with me *was* going out, and another angel *was* going out to meet him. And he said to him, 'Run. Speak to this lad to say, "**Jerusalem** will be inhabited *as* open country, by reason of multitude of man and cattle in her midst."' 'And I will become for her' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'a wall of fire round-about, and I will become for glory in her midst. **Hah**, **hah**, and flee from *the* land of the North – an utterance of Yahweh – for as the four winds of the heavens I have spread you out' – an utterance of Yahweh. '**Hah**, **Zion**, save yourself, dwelling with *the* daughter of Babel.' For thus said Yahweh of armies, 'After abundance (or 'glory') He sent me to the nations plundering you. For the one touching upon you is touching upon the eyeball of My eye. For, **behold**, I *am* wielding My hand over them, and they will become plunder to their slaves. Then you will know that Yahweh of armies has sent me. Shout and rejoice, **daughter of Zion**, for, **behold**, I *am* coming, and I will dwell in your midst.' – an utterance of Yahweh. 'And many nations will be joined to Yahweh in that day. And they will become to Me for a people, and I will dwell in your (fem. sing.) midst. Then you (fem. sing.) will know that Yahweh of armies has sent me to you (fem. sing.). Then Yahweh will inherit

> Judah, His share upon the holy ground, and He will again make choice upon **Jerusalem**. **Hush**, all flesh before Yahweh, for He is stirred up from His holy dwelling.'" Zec.2:1-13

The vision begins with a blessed state in which Jerusalem is overflowing with men and cattle. Yahweh for a "wall of fire" (*hapax*) round-about will be their security, instead of stone walls. Then the vision flashes back to a scattered and subservient state. Scattered as the four winds, Zion is told to flee from the North, and to save herself from Babel – these statements cover the same ground, because Babel was north of Israel. This echoes the warning we have already seen in Jer.51:6. Then Yahweh warns the nations plundering them that they are touching the very eyeball (*KJV* "apple") of His eye (i.e., getting far too close). But "many nations" will become joined to Him, as well. Then the narrative turns to rejoicing for the restoration of Zion – I have noted parenthetically the feminine singular pronouns to indicate where Zion is being addressed. The text ends with this state of blessing, Yahweh dwelling in their midst, and that will be His end for Jerusalem and Zion.

> Zechariah also said this about the final blessing of Jerusalem –
>
> "Thus said Yahweh of armies, 'I am jealous for **Zion** a great jealousy, and *with* a great anger I am jealous for her.' Thus said Yahweh, 'I have gone back to **Zion** and will dwell in *the* midst of **Jerusalem**. And **Jerusalem** will be called "the city of truth, and mountain of Yahweh of armies, **the holy mountain**."' Thus said Yahweh of armies, 'Again will dwell old men and old women in *the* plazas of **Jerusalem**, and each his staff in his hand from many days (i.e., 'great age'). And the plazas of the city will be filled with boys and girls, playing in her plazas.' Thus said Yahweh of armies, 'Because it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be marvelous in My eyes?' – an utterance of Yahweh of armies. Thus said Yahweh of armies, '**Behold**, I *am* saving My people from a land of *the* east and from a land of the entering of the sun (i.e., 'west'). Then I will bring them back, and they will dwell in *the* midst of **Jerusalem**. And they will become to Me for a people, and I will become to them for Elohim, in truth and in **righteousness** ('justice')." **…** Thus said Yahweh of armies, 'Peoples will yet go in, and dwellers of many cities. And dwellers of one *city* will walk to another, to say, "Surely let us walk to pray before Yahweh, even to seek Yahweh of armies. I myself will go also."

> And many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek Yahweh of armies in **Jerusalem**, even to pray before Yahweh.' Thus said Yahweh of armies, 'In those days, when ten men of all languages of the nations will seize, even seize upon *the* sleeve of a Judean man, to say, "Let us walk with you, for we have heard Elohim *is* with you." Zec.8:2-8, 20-23

What is unique to this text? For one thing, Jerusalem being called "the city of truth" (*hapax*). Whenever has Jerusalem qualified as this in the time since Zechariah? "Mountain of Yahweh of armies" is also unique, but "the holy mountain" is also found in Isa.27:13 and Jer.31:23, both of which share with Zechariah 8 the context of a returning remnant. The most vulnerable of society, old and young, will thrive in Jerusalem "in those days". They will be saved from east and west (unique to this text), whereas Zechariah 2 urged them to flee from the north. Their becoming "to Me for a people" hearkens back to a Mosaic promise that we already saw in Lev.26:12. It also reverses an historically earlier pronouncement that "you *are* not My people", connected with the sign-son given to Hosea – "Lo-Ammi" (Hos.1:9). This Lo-Ammi state of Israel has been identified with various periods of "the people", when they fell out of favor with God, and especially with the current "dispensation of the secret" (Eph.3:9). I must hasten again to add that "the secret" of this dispensation has nothing to do with God declaring "Lo-Ammi" to Israel, but rather that He has used this hiatus to reveal His ancient hidden plan for calling faithful men to populate the heavenlies. This is not the New Jerusalem, but is even "up above" (Gk. *huperanō*) that, where Christ is now currently seated (Eph.1:20-21).

In Zechariah 8 the scene is completely of the earth. Nations will eagerly seek the God of truth and justice, even picturesquely mobbing Jewish men and grabbing their sleeves for an escort to meet with God (Elohim). The joining of the nations to the nation Israel, to bring them back from captivity **to Jerusalem** (and cp. Isa.66:20) has no historic precedent. Whenever did this happen in the past? There was a restoration of the nation at Jerusalem under Cyrus, but he represented one nation. The Companion Bible (p.1280) dates Cyrus' decree sixteen years before Zechariah began to prophesy, so none of his future visions can apply to the historical return from Babel. Although Cyrus had invited all willing Israelites to leave Babel, only a small remnant did – and there is no record of other nationals attaching themselves to Israelites in the manner described by Zechariah 8 or Isaiah

66. The return depicted in Zechariah and Isaiah will either be a future fulfillment, or it is a promise that God has rescinded. Which of these conclusions do you find the more credible?

The next citation from Zechariah 9 resembles what we saw in Isa.61:1-2, a partial fulfillment at Christ's incarnation, with part deferred until His return from heaven –

> "Rejoice greatly, daughter of **Zion**. Shout, daughter of **Jerusalem**. **Behold**, your King comes to you. He *is* **righteous** ('just') and saving, lowly and riding upon a donkey, and upon a colt, son of a female donkey. And I will cut off *the* chariot from Ephraim, and *the* horse from Jerusalem. And *the* bow of battle will be cut off, and He will **speak peace** to nations. And His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from *the* river up to *the* end of land." Zec.9:9-10

The *LXX* of the first part of this is paraphrased in Mat.21:5 and Joh.12:15 as applying to Jesus' "triumphal entry" to Jerusalem. But at that time Jesus did not cut off the implements of worldwide warfare, nor did He reign over greater Israel. The beating of swords into plowshares, as we have seen elsewhere, is reserved for a future time.

Wailing in Jerusalem – Looking upon the Pierced One

Zechariah 12 continues the prophet's visions –

> "**Behold**, I Myself *am* appointing **Jerusalem** a cup of reeling to all the peoples round-about. And, moreover, against Judah they will come in siege, against **Jerusalem**. And it will happen in that day, **I will appoint Jerusalem a stone of burden to all the peoples**. All bearing her as a burden will surely be cut, and will be gathered against her all the nations of the earth. In that day – an utterance of Yahweh – I will strike every horse with bewilderment, and its rider with madness. And upon *the* house of Judah I will open My eyes, but every horse of the peoples I will strike with blindness. And *the* chiefs of Judah will say in their heart, 'My strength *is those* inhabiting **Jerusalem,** by Yahweh of armies their Elohim.' In that day I will appoint *the* chiefs of Judah as an oven over wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf. And they will consume upon *the*

> right and upon *the* left all the peoples round-about. But **Jerusalem** will dwell again – her foundations in **Jerusalem**. And Yahweh will save *the* tents of Judah at first, so that *the* beauty of *the* house of David and *the* beauty of those inhabiting **Jerusalem** will not become greater than Judah. In that day Yahweh will defend on behalf of those inhabiting **Jerusalem**. And the tottering one among them will become in that day like David, and *the* house of David like Elohim, like an angel of Yahweh before them. And it will come to pass in that day, I will seek to annihilate all the nations who *are* coming against **Jerusalem**. And I will pour out upon *the* house of David and upon those inhabiting **Jerusalem** a spirit of favor and supplications. Then they will look to Me Whom they pierced, and they will wail over Him as a wailing over the solitary one. And they will show bitterness over Him as showing bitterness over the firstborn. In that day the wailing will become great in **Jerusalem**, like *the* wailing of Hadad-Rimmon in *the* valley of Megiddo. And the land will wail, every family separately, family of *the* house of David separately and their wives separately, family of *the* house of Nathan separately and their wives separately, family of *the* house of Levi separately and their wives separately, family of Shimei separately and their wives separately, all the families that remain every family separately and their wives separately. In that day a fountain will come to pass being opened for *the* house of David and for those inhabiting **Jerusalem**, for sin and for impurity. And it will come to pass in that day – an utterance of Yahweh of armies – I will cause to be cut down the names of the idols from the land, and they will not be remembered again. And also the prophets and the unclean spirits I will cause to pass from the land." Zec.12:2-13:2

Note first that the formulaic "in that day" occurs nine times in this lengthy passage, which extends into the start of chapter 13 – nine being the number of judgment (*Number*, p.235). Jerusalem's relation to "all the peoples round-about", "all the peoples", and "all the nations of the earth" will be one of conflict – "siege" in v.2. But Jerusalem will be unconquerable "in that day" – she will be a "cup of reeling" (*hapax*) and a "stone of burden" (*hapax*). Recall that the earlier prophet Jeremiah was instructed to make many nations drink from Yahweh's cup, from Jerusalem to Babel ('Sheshak') (Jer.25:14-28), causing them to fall in drunkenness (v.17). But in Zechariah 12 the cup is Jerusalem herself, causing her siege-nations to fall in "madness". Also, note this turnabout – Jerusalem will have gathered against her

"all the nations of the earth", whereas part of the promise to Abraham and Isaac was for them to bring blessing upon "all the nations of the earth" (Gen.18:18; 22:18; 26:4). From this dual use of the phrase, it appears that the end-time attacker (Gog?) will have a nearly universal influence in his national alliances. Therefore, a great purging of the nations will be required before the blessing of Abraham comes to them.

Joh.19:37 applied the phrase "they will look toward Him Whom they pierced" to the scene at Calvary (Joh.19:37 follows the Heb., and not the *LXX* of Zec.12:10). Moreover, in John's Gospel there was only a spirit of envy and spite in the Jewish onlookers (19:15, 21). Thus, the "spirit of favor and supplications" (*hapax*) in Zechariah 12 has had neither precedent, nor fulfillment. Joh.19:37 was a typical fulfillment only, with the greater part yet to come.

The wailing that will follow the pouring out of that spirit will apply to Jerusalem only, as they look to "Me (Yahweh) Whom they pierced". But John also makes this future connection –

> "**Behold**, He comes with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will wail over Him. Yes, **Amen**." Rev.1:7

Will the wailing of "all the tribes of the earth" come from a different spirit than the spirit poured out upon Jerusalem? Will it be from "a spirit of favor and supplications", or merely a "woe is me" spirit? Seeing that the returning Lord will strike the nations, then rule them with an iron staff (Rev.19:15), it must be the latter. However, ultimately, blessing for "all the tribes of the earth" was a component of the promises to Abraham and Jacob (*LXX* of Gen.12:3; 28:14). As the nations become instructed from the law flowing out of Jerusalem during the Millennium, they will come to appreciate this blessing.

A fountain in Jerusalem "for sin and impurity" is right out of the Law of Moses (Num.19:9). This shows that there will be an Israel in the flesh, who are still capable of sins of ignorance (Lev.4:2), and the unavoidable impurities connected with life in the flesh. Deliberate sins of rebellion will not be cleanable in this fountain, but will merit the shortened life of Isa.65:10.

Neither prophet nor demon will be found in Israel "in that day". When has such a condition existed in the past? In Israel's current Lo-Ammi state there is no prophet among them, surely, but is there any evidence that demons have been imprisoned during these times of "the dispensation of the grace of God"? Certainly Paul, after this latter stewardship was given to him, warned of "deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" in later seasons (1 Tim.4:1). One of the great blessings of the Millennium will be that the demons who have so bedeviled mankind since Adam's fall will be gone. Satan's kingdom will not compete with God's kingdom for those thousand years. The idols will be gone too, but they always were just a demonic delusion (1 Cor. 10:19-20).

Return to the Mount of Olives

Now for the finale of Zechariah's prophecy –

"**Behold**, a day *is* coming for Yahweh, and He will divide your spoil in your midst. And I will gather all the nations against **Jerusalem** to battle. Then the city will be captured, and the houses will be plundered, and the wives will be violated. And half the city will go out in exile, but a remnant of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then Yahweh will go out and wage war upon those nations, as a day of His waging war in a day of battle. And His feet will stand in that day **upon the Mount of Olives**, which *is* upon *the* side of **Jerusalem** from *the* east. And **the Mount of Olives** will be cleft down *the* middle, east and seaward, *making* an exceedingly great valley. And half the mountain will move north, and half south. Then you will flee *by* the valley of My mountain, for *the* valley of *the* mountains will approach to Azal. And you will flee as when you fled from before the earthquake in *the* days of Uzziah king of Judah. And Yahweh my Elohim will come, all *the* holy ones with You. And it will come to pass in that day, there will come no light. Brilliances will diminish. And there will come that one day – it will be known to Yahweh. Neither day nor night, but it will come to a time of evening it will become a light. And it will come to pass in that day, living waters will go out from **Jerusalem**, half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea. In summer and in autumn it will occur. And Yahweh will become for King over the whole earth. In that day it will come to pass Yahweh *will be* one, and His name one. And all the

land will go around as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of **Jerusalem**. And she will rise and dwell underneath from *the* Gate of Benjamin up to the place of the First Gate up to the Gate of Corners, and Tower of Hananeel up to the winepresses of the king. And they will dwell in her. And there will not come utter destruction again, but **Jerusalem** will dwell securely. And this will become the blow which Yahweh will strike all the peoples who warred against Jerusalem, causing to rot his flesh, even him standing on his feet. And their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. And it will come to pass in that day, a great confusion of Yahweh will come upon them. And each will grasp *the* hand of his fellow, and his hand will go up against *the* hand of his fellow. And moreover, Judah will wage war in **Jerusalem**, and *the* wealth of all the nations round-about will be gathered – gold and silver and garments in great abundance. Thus will come the slaughter of the horse, the mule, the camel and the donkey. And all the cattle which come into their camp, like this slaughter. And it will come to pass, everyone who *is* remaining from all the nations, who *were* coming against Jerusalem, will go up yearly to bow down to the King, Yahweh of armies, and to keep the feast of the Booths. And it will come to pass whoever does not go up from all the families of the earth to **Jerusalem** to bow down to the King, Yahweh of armies, even upon them will not come the rain. And if the family of Egypt goes not up, and are not coming, then not upon them *the rain*. The plague which Yahweh strikes the nations who go not up to keep the feast of the Booths will come. This will become the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to keep the feast of the Booths. In that day there will come upon the bells of the horses holiness to Yahweh. And the pots in *the* house of Yahweh will become like bowls before the altar. And every pot in **Jerusalem** and in Judah will become holiness to Yahweh of armies. And everyone who *is* sacrificing will come and will take of them and will cook in them. And there will not come again a Canaanite in the house of Yahweh of armies in that day." Zec.14:1-21

A horrible siege and exile begins this "day of the Lord" prophecy, but Yahweh will stand upon the Mount of Olives, which will become split with a very great valley coming in between the halves. If this sounds incredible to your ears, this will be a time of incredible works – of both man and God. But just to show how the rift in the Mount of Olives is neither incredible, nor unseen in the experience of

man, consider the New Zealand earthquake of Mount Tarawera in 1886 which produced the geological transformation pictured below. And recall that the greatest ever earthquake will strike the earth during the end-time (Rev.16:18-19).

A great flight of Israelites will escape through this rift of the earth – just as their forebears escaped through a rift in the Red Sea. God will create enough confusion in the lights of the skies and discord in the attacking armies for this flight to survive. But there are some confusing details here. The sequence of actions as the early chapter records them are these –

1. Yahweh gathers armies to Jerusalem
2. Jerusalem captured
3. half the city exiled
4. remnant not cut off from city
5. Yahweh wages war upon nations
6. His feet stand on Mount of Olives
7. Mount of Olives cleft in two by an exceedingly great valley
8. flight by “the valley of My mountain” (i.e., the new Mount of Olives valley)

Are we to understand this sequence as strictly chronological, or is this a mixed chronology? If Yahweh’s feet on the Mount of Olives immediately precedes its rupture, then the remnant’s flight to escape is *not* that of the woman in Rev.12:6, 14. The woman of Revelation 12 has three and a half years to endure in the

wilderness, but one cannot figure a battle of such length that Yahweh/Jesus undertakes. No matter the size of the surrounding armies, I expect Jesus' speedy dispatch of these nations to resemble the overnight defeat of Sennacherib's army in Hezekiah's day (cp. Zec.14:12-13).

These seem to be the major divisions of chapter 14 –

1. *The nations battle Jerusalem – capture, plunder, exile* 14:1-3
2. *Yahweh battles nations – flight of the people* 14:3-5
3. *Yahweh will come with His holy ones - darkness and light* 14:5-7
4. *Living waters will flow from Jerusalem* 14:8
5. *Yahweh's kingdom – Jerusalem secure* 14:9-11
6. *Yahweh's manner of warfare* 14:12-13
7. *Judah in warfare – plunder and destruction* 14:14-15
8. *Nations that came against Jerusalem must keep feast of Booths* 14:16-19
9. *Holiness in Jerusalem* 14:20-21

Some of these elements appear to flow sequentially, while others appear to qualify earlier statements. Here is how I would sequentially map the flow of events and group the coincident actions –

1. *The nations battle Jerusalem – captured, plundered, exiled*
2. *Yahweh battles nations – flight of the people*
   3. *Yahweh will come with His holy ones - darkness and light*
   6. *Yahweh's manner of warfare*

7. *Judah in warfare – plunder and destruction*

5. *Yahweh's kingdom – Jerusalem secure*
   9. *Holiness in Jerusalem*
   8. *Nations that came against Jerusalem must keep feast of Booths*

Although *4. Living waters* becomes a permanent condition ("in summer and autumn it will occur"), it is difficult to fix when it will begin – it may coincide with *9. Holiness in Jerusalem*. Judah's success in warfare at *7.* comes enigmatically after Jerusalem's capture, plunder and exile at *1.* But the key here at *7.* is Judah's role in defending Jerusalem – their muster may come after a hasty capture of the city by the enemy. Unpredictable things can happen during the chaos of battle.

The earthquake producing the split and separation of the Mount of Olives may also give rise to a spring of "living waters" in Jerusalem, which could flow through that rift to the Dead Sea. And it will also flow to the Mediterranean Sea. Although "living waters" indicates "running water" in its early occurrences, Yahweh applied this term to Himself in Jer.2:13 and 17:13. The implication for Yahweh in using this metaphor of Himself was that He would cleanse the nation. Running water was to be used under the law for ritual cleansing (Lev.15:13; Num.19:17). Thus millennial Jerusalem will become a source of both clean water, and cleansing water. If that water flows immediately after the mount is split, it will provide a water source for the hurried flight of escaping Jerusalemites. Remember that Jesus said –

> "And when you see Jerusalem being encircled by encampments, then know that her desolation has drawn near. Then those in Judea, let them flee; and those in her midst let them depart out; and those in the territories let them not enter into her." Luk.21:20-21

> "Whenever, therefore, you may see the Abomination of Desolation, the one having been spoken by Daniel the prophet, having stood in the holy place – let the one reading understand – then those in Judea let them flee into the mountains; the one on the housetop let him not descend to take the things out of his house; neither let the one in the field return back to take his cloak." Mat.24:15-18

For most, the flight of Zechariah 14 will be sudden and not something they have prepared for. The Luke 21 and Matthew 24 warnings from Jesus could be prepared for – if one believed His prophecies. Note that Jesus did *not* say, "When you see the Mount of Olives split in two, then flee." However, the giving of the Matthew 24 prophecy from Olivet rather provides a hint of its significance in the fulfillment of it.

Yahweh's feet on the Mount of Olives invites our attention to this pronouncement about Christ's return –

> "And as they were staring into the sky *at* His going, even two men had stood by them in white clothing, who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why have you stood looking into the sky? This Jesus, Who was taken up from you into the sky, **this**

> **way He will come, which manner you observed Him going into the sky**.' Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount which is called 'Olive', which is near Jerusalem, having a journey of a Sabbath." Acts 1:10-12

So Jesus Christ will return to the Mount of Olives, and Yahweh's feet will stand there in His personal defense of Jerusalem. Both Zechariah and Acts speak of the same event, the same Person. Incidentally, in Mic.1:3-4 Yahweh "coming out of His place" to earth is depicted in terms of "the valleys will split themselves apart", and this seems to confirm Zechariah 14.

In previous chapters we have already examined the role of a great earthquake in certain end-time texts – Eze.38:19-20; Rev.11:3; 16:18-19. How can preterism explain this visible return of Christ to the Mount of Olives? That mount is outside Jerusalem, and it was observable by the average Jew who was not shut up in Jerusalem in AD 70. Josephus made no mention of visions "outside the gate", because that did not serve his purpose of justifying the Roman siege. And if a preterist wishes to allegorize the split of the Mount of Olives, let him do so with a picture of Mount Tarawera in front of him. And was the parting of the Red Sea also a mere allegory?

The grisly scene of how Yahweh will deal with the nations coming against Jerusalem includes His enemies rotting away while standing upon their feet. Some in our day have hypothesized that nuclear warfare is indicated. But the devices of war need not be so sophisticated – napalm or white phosphorus could produce the same effect. But does Yahweh need man's "sword" and "spear" to do what He intends? He is fully able to build His own plague to accomplish what is pictured here. Would not fire from heaven, as in the destruction of Sodom, satisfy this requirement of Zechariah? And the "two witnesses" will have authority to call down fire from heaven – this is how I interpret the fire coming from their mouths to devour their enemies (Rev.11:5).

By the international protocol of Yahweh the King, the remnant of nations that warred against Jerusalem will be required to keep the feast of Booths, the last feast of the Jewish festal year. This could be to commemorate Israel having again lived in makeshift shelters in a wilderness (Rev.12:6). That is the greater, prophetic meaning of this Feast for Israel. But Booths also celebrated the annual threshing

and wine-pressing, when people would stay in their fields and vineyards until the end of harvest (Deu.16:13). Both "threshing" and "wine-press" are metaphors for God judging the nations, and these seem relevant to why the nations will be required to keep this millennial Feast. Also, harvest time would be an ideal occasion for the nations to bring their abundance into Jerusalem. Ezekiel's kingdom vision included Israel keeping the Passover, whose seven days included Unleavened Bread as a component. But Booths seems to be the only kingdom Feast required of the nations.

And note the implication that Egypt will be one of the nations coming against Jerusalem in the day of the Lord. I have earlier drawn attention to Egypt being absent the nations-lists of Psalm 83, Ezekiel 38-39, Isaiah 13-14, and Jeremiah 50-51 (against Babel). But Egypt's inclusion in the Jeremiah 25 list of nations to drink from Yahweh's cup may draw Jeremiah 25 into the various day of the Lord prophecies, like Zechariah 14. These are the Jeremiah 25:17-28 nations/cities said to drink from Yahweh's cup of wrath –

1. Jerusalem and cities of Judah – their kings and princes
2. kings of the land of Uz
3. **king of Egypt, his servants, princes, all his people including mixed ancestry**

- all the kings of the Philistines –
    4. Ashkelon
    5. Gaza
    6. Ekron
    7. remnant of Ashdod
8. Edom
9. Moab
10. Ammon

- all the kings of –
    11. Tyre
    12. Sidon
13. kings of the isle which is beyond the sea
14. Dedan
15. Tema
16. Buz

17. all cutting *the* side *of the beard*
18. all kings of Arabia
19. all the kings of the mixed people dwelling in the wilderness
20. all kings of Zimri
21. all kings of Elam
22. all kings of Media
23. all the kings of the North, the near and the far (cp.50:41 "the ends ['hips'] of the earth")
24. all the kingdoms of the earth which *are* upon the face of the ground
25. and king Sheshak (i.e., Babel) will drink after them

I get 25 separate entities from this "doom list", but some of them are compound expressions, like "all the kings of the North, the near and the far", and "all the kings of the mixed people dwelling in the wilderness". Note that this great destruction was to come after the 70 years of service to Babel (Jer.25:11-12). But a later messenger to Daniel explained that the 70 years had been extended by another 70 times 7 years, and the final 7 of those years has not been fulfilled at any time since. This tells me that the judgments signified by Jeremiah 25 have likewise been postponed. Also, this extensive and somewhat ambiguous list implies that a great part of western Asia and of the Mediterranean nations will be caught up in the conflict of the Apocalypse. And for all we know, some of the ambiguous expressions in Jeremiah 25 might extend the boundaries into Europe, and other parts of Africa. I would not press the boundaries too far, because Jeremiah was directed to make these nations drink from Yahweh's cup. Either he traveled to all of them, or we need to understand his making them drink was an effect of his prophesying about them drinking – similar to Ezekiel's saying how he came to destroy Jerusalem in Eze.43:3 (i.e., he prophesied its destruction). Also, these would be nations that have first come under Babel's dominion.

The last word in Zechariah was that no Canaanite would again enter Yahweh's house. Might this indicate the nationality of the Beast, whose image will stand in the Holies, as the "abomination of desolation"? I have already made a conjecture concerning "Satan's throne" in Pergamos in the end-times, possibly indicating that the Beast will come from that quarter (Rev.2:12-14). The ancient Hittite Empire covered a great swath across Asia Minor, and their ancestral father Heth was a son of Canaan (Gen.10:15). So here is a second hint that may point to modern Turkey

(or a successor nation there) as a key player at "the end of the age". I deem it of great significance that the book of Revelation was addressed as a warning – specifically to seven assemblies in Asia Minor. This fact should be considered carefully in any interpretation of the book, and parallels should be sought to help explain it. One such parallel is that Asia Minor was Greek in culture during later Biblical times. That aligns Revelation's personal message with the belly and hips of bronze in Nebuchadrezzar's dream-image, part of a prophecy due for a second fulfillment in its entirety.

The emphatic "in that day" occurs seven times in Zechariah's final chapter – in fact the book of Zechariah ends on that phrase in the Hebrew text. Concerning the number seven (*Number*, p.168) Bullinger wrote –

> "It is seven … that stamps with perfection and completeness that in connection with which it is used."

It is with these seven statements of "in that day" that the day of the Lord and Zechariah's prophecy concerning it are completed. But specifically, these occurrences of "in that day" all point back to "a day is coming for Yahweh" (14:1), which is further clarified as "a day of His waging war in a day of battle" (14:3). If the number seven is providing us a clue, it is that the day of the Lord is rather summed up in chapter 14.

There is also an enigmatic "that one day", apparently a single day as we would describe it, in which celestial light will diminish – "neither day nor night, but it will come to a time of evening it will become a light." (14:7). So the time of Israel's escape from Jerusalem will be swift, as even Jesus' warnings emphasized the need for speed. Zephaniah's prophecy of the day of Yahweh included a gloomy forecast, which helps explain the "great confusion of Yahweh" in Zechariah 14 –

> "a day of fury that day, a day of straits and distress, a day of ruin and desolation, **a day of obscurity and gloom, a day of cloud and thick cloud**, a day of horn and war-alarm" Zep.1:15-16

Zechariah chapter 14 contains the last of the twenty-three OT occurrences of "dwell securely" (Heb. *yâshab* [any form] *l$_e$beṭach*) and the only chapter of

Zechariah that mentions Jerusalem. It seems to point upward to the pinnacle of Yahweh's security for His people.

Summation

I have covered about seventy pages in this long chapter on Yahweh defending Jerusalem. I would have been satisfied to find only two or three texts whose combined testimony demonstrated God's forgiveness toward erring Israel, and His restoration of their fortunes at the end. But just look at the enormity of these restoration texts – enormous in both their number and in the scope of their blessings. I hope my extensive quotes above have given proper emphasis to this divine bounty. I have noted in an earlier chapter, **The Stick and the Carrot**, how prophetic texts often weave in and out of their principal lines of thought, providing alternations of:

- Condemnations of wickedness
- Threats of punishment
- Exhortations to change wicked ways
- Actual punishments inflicted
- Promises of restoration and blessing

I even provided an analysis of the whole book of Isaiah along these lines. For all the texts promising restoration, one can find about an equal number that denounce Israel's abominations and threaten a just punishment for them. This divine discipline must precede the forgiveness, or else what lesson would be taught? Paul explained that the Law was a "schoolmaster" to bring its students to Christ (Gal.3:23-25). Even so, many that were under the Law in OT times were scarcely willing to admit the evils they were practicing. Idolatrous and unjust, their feet were swift to shed blood. It seems the greater part of them were very wicked children, indeed, while only a small remnant seemed willing to listen to God's truth. Hebrews chapter 11 provides a short list of some of the great ones of faith from the OT. If David was a man "after God's heart" back then, it was not because he always lived a pure and upright life. Few of us have committed murder and adultery, as he did. What endeared him to God was His contrite heart, and his desire for a new heart. I believe this is also what distinguished Job from his three

friends (Job 42:6-7), because all four of them professed the same theology concerning God's reward of good and punishment of evil in this life.

Under New Covenant conditions the priority of punishment and reward was reversed. First came the forgiveness, followed by spiritual gifts and enablements. Then, if willful sin followed, God delivered punishments (Acts 5:4-6; 1 Cor. 11:28-31; 1 Joh.5:16-17). The New Covenant was a different kind of proof-testing for Yahweh's covenant people, but there seemed to be only a remnant willing to give it a try during the Acts-period. The rewards for faithful, enduring "overcomers" will be pretty fantastic. They will partake of the former resurrection, reign with Christ during the Millennium, and have unlimited access to the New Jerusalem (Rev.20:6; 21:2). Recognition of the disparity between these New Covenant rewards, and the earthly rewards promised in OT prophecy has shown the need for a careful "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim.2:15). I have already pointed out how Otis Sellers proposed dividing unfulfilled prophecy into two periods of reward, a pre-millennial and a millennial, in order to resolve the difficulty. Another paradigm of reward for earthly peoples, espoused by Charles Welch (e.g., in his booklet *The Bride and the Body*), is a division of Israel into two concurrent companies, which he named "wife" and "bride". I will explore the Sellers and Welch models more fully in the later chapter, **Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?**

Christ in the Old Testament, and the New

In this chapter I have primarily followed an OT order of texts that are cited in the NT, omitting quotes that have no unfulfilled future significance (e.g., as to Christ's *Parousia*). I have also omitted those parallels that are merely allusions, but not quotes or obvious paraphrases.

Isaiah 61:1-2 quoted in Luke 4:18-19 –

I am starting with this particular example, out of OT sequence, to establish an important principle – that the full context of a cited OT text may reveal even more Messianic truth than was evident in its limited NT citation.

I have previously noted how Jesus applied the first portion of the Isa.61:1-2 prophecy to His current ministry in Luk.4:18-20. In his paraphrase of the *LXX*, Luke depicts Jesus proclaiming "an acceptable year of *the* Lord", stopping short of "and a day of recompense". Dispensational teachers have made much of Jesus' "right division" (per 2 Tim.2:15) of this small Isaiah text, and rightly so. But Isaiah chapter 61 continues on with much more encouragement and comfort to Israel. What I would emphasize is how Isaiah chapters 61 and 62, as a prophetic unit, embrace two fulfillments of their prophecies. In Jesus' earthly ministry, and that of His apostles during Acts, came the proclamation of the year of acceptance. Later, at a time not specified, would come the day of recompense, with its judgments and rewards (or punishments). The full preterist would have us believe the day of recompense came in AD 70, but does that ring true with Isaiah chapters 61-62? Had any of the following taken place by that date? –

- those mourning in Zion will be given a turban instead of ashes, (61:3)
- and oil of rejoicing instead of mourning, (61:3)
- and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of faintness (61:3)
- they will be called "The Pillars of Righteousness" (61:3)
- they are a planting of Yahweh to beautify Himself (61:3)
- they will build old ruins (61:4)

- they will raise former desolations (61:4)
- they will repair cities of drought, desolated for generations (61:4)
- foreigners will pasture their flocks for them (61:5)
- sons of a foreigner will be their plowmen and vine-dressers (61:5)
- they will be called “Priests of Yahweh, Ministers of our God” (61:6)
- they will eat the wealth of nations, and speak of themselves in terms of their abundance (61:6)
- they will have double instead of their shame (61:7)
- they will rejoice loudly for their share, instead of being reproached (61:7)
- they will inherit double in their land (61:7)
- they will have an age-abiding joy (61:7)
- Yahweh will appoint their reward in faithfulness (61:8)
- He will cut an age-abiding covenant for them (61:8)
- their offspring will be known by nations and peoples (61:9)
- they will be recognized as an offspring blessed by Yahweh (61:9)
- Yahweh clothed “me” with garments of salvation (61:10)
- He has covered “me” with a robe of righteousness (61:10)
- Yahweh will cause righteousness and praise to sprout before all the nations (61:11)
- “I” will not keep quiet until Jerusalem’s righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a torch burns (62:1)
- nations will see her righteousness, and all kings her glory (62:2)
- you will be called a new name, designated by Yahweh (62:2)
- she will become a crown of beauty, a turban of kingship by Yahweh’s hand (62:3)

- you will no longer be called “Forsaken” (62:4)
- nor will your land any longer be called “Devastation” (62:4)
- you will be called “Hephzibah”, and her land “Beulah” (62:4)
- for Yahweh delighted in her, and her land will be married (62:4)
- her sons will marry her (62:6)
- as a bridegroom, God will rejoice over her (62:6)
- honor guards on Jerusalem’s walls will be active continuously (62:6)
- those remembering Yahweh will have no rest (62:6)
- they will give Him no rest, until He sets Jerusalem a praise in the earth (62:7)
- oath of Yahweh by His right hand: enemies and foreigners will no longer take the fruits of her toil (62:8)
- those gathering the crops will eat, and those picking the grapes will drink in His holy courts (62:9)
- pass through gates; turn a way for the People; cast up the highway – free it from stones; raise a banner toward the peoples (62:10)
- say to the daughter of Zion, “**Behold**, her salvation *is* coming. **Behold**, His reward *is* with Him, and His work before Him.” (62:11)
- they will call them, “The Holy People, Redeemed of Yahweh”; you will be called, “Sought One, a City Not Forsaken” (62:12)

NOTE: I have already translated Isaiah chapter 62 extensively in the previous chapter **Yahweh Fighting the Nations – His Defense of Zion and Jerusalem**, section, **Jerusalem, by Other Names Known**).

In Isaiah 61-62 take note how the prophet sometimes switched the point of view to first person “I” and “me” – here he was speaking not only for himself, but also for the nation. Let us see if any of this long list fits into the AD 70 disaster that struck Jerusalem. I have listed 41 things above, although some are related to one another and could be combined. If someone were inclined to spiritualize any of

these points, I would have to ask, "How did the Judah and Jerusalem whom Isaiah addressed understand this prophecy?" To "inherit double in their land" would have meant either doubling the size of the land granted, or doubling its value because of its "improved" status (i.e., fences and plowed fields, winepresses and vineyards, buildings, cities and towns). When did inheritances increase in the years before AD 70?

Then there is the relationship between Israel and the nations. According to this prophecy, Israel will keep the fruit of their toil. And above that, they will "eat the wealth of nations." Compare this to the Roman tax system, in which both the Roman tax (estimated by some as 5-7%) and the "publicans" were so hated by the Jews. Payment of tribute to a plundering foreign nation had been a long experience of Israel and Judah. There was no relief to paying tribute before the year the Jewish revolt began in AD 66. And it seems likely that, as Rome began re-pacifying areas of Palestine in AD 68, tax rates were increased to pay for the war. An army of that day would typically live off the land that it conquered.

Further, Israel is to become an object of praise and admiration to the nations at the time depicted by Isaiah, even as foreigners become their agricultural workers. Statements about rebuilding ruins and repairing cities could point to either – 1) a previous abandonment, or 2) a prior devastating war. From other prophetic sources we have already seen that both of these will apply to Israel's future. But did any great rebuilding program precede AD 70? I do not think that Josephus' account in *Wars* of his fortifying the walls of Galilean towns qualifies as this. There will be a much more extensive effort involved in future, to satisfy a greater need – the huge remnant streaming back to the homeland. None of the towns that Josephus fortified could be called ruined, devastated, or "Forsaken" – they just had weak defenses, especially against an enemy with the engineering know-how of the Romans. The picture in Isaiah chapters 61-62 is of Israel in his glory, while the Roman destruction of Jerusalem was a humiliation. And with the Temple burnt, how could Israel "drink in His holy courts" after AD 70?

While Jesus excerpted a tiny portion of these two chapters for application to Himself, the remainder of these glorious things must remain future. Yahweh's "day of vengeance" (*KJV*) sounds like a day of pay-back to His enemies, but there are no enemies named here in Isaiah 61-62. The Heb. *nâqâm* does mean "vengeance",

while the equivalent *LXX* Gk. *antapodosis* of Isa.61:2 means merely "compensation" and can have both good and bad senses. Luk.14:14 is an example of a good recompense – the resurrection of the just.

In Isaiah 61-62 we must either treat "day of vengeance" as an aside that is not elaborated here, or else understand it from the Greek as the "day of reward" for Israel. Everything in these chapters of Isaiah is positive, or a positive overcoming of previously negative circumstances. But what positives can we draw out of the Roman re-conquest of Judea?

Isaiah chapters 61-62 can be interpreted as relevant background for Peter's question, "Lord, surely at this time You restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). The Lord's answer in v.7 showed him it was still future. Then was the kingdom restored at *any* time before AD 70? How could that be, seeing that Israel's fortunes just kept going downhill, finally ending in their rebellion and conquest by Roman legions?

A right interpretation of "day of vengeance" requires "comparing spiritual *things* with spiritual *things*" (1 Cor.2:13). Pro.6:34 puts forward a "day of vengeance" generally as a time of jealousy and a husband's fury for an adulterer. But it also applies specifically to Yahweh in two other places in Isaiah –

> "For *it is* a day of vengeance to Yahweh, a year of reward for the dispute of Zion" Isa.34:8 (context – His revenge upon Edom)

> "For a day of vengeance *is* in My heart, and a year of My redeemed has come." Isa.63:4 (also in a context of His revenge upon Edom)

There is no mention of revenge toward Edom in Isa.61:2, but these other references in Isaiah suggest that the unspecified "day of vengeance" at 61:2 is this very prophecy – and especially since the next chapter (63) after chapters 61-62 provides that missing detail. That leaves the "year of good-will (*KJV*, 'acceptance') for Yahweh" in 61:2 as a parallel to "a year of reward for the dispute of Zion" (34:8) and "a year of My redeemed has come" (63:4). If these parallels are correct, then Jesus began to proclaim "the acceptable year", but the greater part of these prophecies remained unfulfilled. Even as Jesus applied the small opening of Isaiah 61-62 to His first presence among Israel, so the whole of the text will apply to the

time of His return. Jesus' application, and the context demand it, even if the bulk of this text is not quoted elsewhere in the NT. Fact is, the great bulk of OT prophecy is not quoted in the NT. We have to constantly turn over portions of unfulfilled OT prophecy to see how they might fit into the NT narrative. And if we cannot fit them into the narrative (historical) part, they must somehow fit into the NT prophetic (future) part.

Also, consider that if the "day of vengeance" in 61:2 came before AD 70, then where is the evidence for a Yahweh-inflicted bloodshed on Edom during this time? Read the whole of Isa.34:5-17 and 63:1-6 and explain how Yahweh has already fulfilled this "day of vengeance" against Edom.

There are lots of Messianic references in the OT. Many are general in nature, but some are specific enough to "rightly divide" into categories: a) His first visit in suffering, humility, and rejection, and b) His return visit in conquest, glory, and recognition.

But there are also other texts, similar to Isaiah chapters 61-62, where the context will guide us into an as-yet unfulfilled Messianic interpretation. And seeing that *Kurios* in the *LXX* typically refers to Yahweh, while in the NT *Kurios* is principally Jesus Christ, I am inclined to identify "Yahweh" as Christ in these OT prophecies, unless another "person" alongside Yahweh is the Messianic figure. Additionally, there are also the types and shadows whereby Christ was hidden in the OT – e.g., the "sign of Jonah the prophet" (Mat.12:39-41), which pertained to His first coming.

Isaiah 9:1-2 quoted in Matthew 4:15-16 –

This next Messianic text follows the Isaiah 61-62 model above, but is much shorter –

> "For no gloom *is* toward one who *had* her distress, like the former time *when* He made light of *the* land Zebulon and *the* land of Naphtali, and the latter-time *when* He gave *her* <u>weight</u> (or 'honor'), the way of the sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who *were* walking in darkness have seen a

> great light. Those dwelling in a land of deep-shadow, a light has shined upon them." Isa.9:1-2

Mat.4:13-16 applied this portion of text to Jesus preaching in Galilee, but look where this Isaiah chapter 9 text continues –

> "You have magnified the nation, her joy to become great. They rejoice before You like *the* joy in the harvest, like when they rejoice in their dividing a spoil. **For** You have shattered *the* yoke of his burden, *the* rod of his shoulder, the oppressing club upon him, as *in the* day of Midian. **For** every trampling boot in quaking, and rolled up mantle in blood, even it will become for burning, a fuel of fire. **For** a Child has been brought forth to us, a Son has been given to us. And will come the dominion upon His shoulder. And they will call His name Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Continuity, Prince of Peace. For the abundance of the dominion and for peace *there is* no boundary. Upon *the* throne of David and over His kingdom, to make it stable and to support it with judgment and with righteousness ('justice'), from now and until an age. A jealousy of Yahweh of armies will do this." Isa.9:3-7

The **for**'s highlighted in bold font are Heb. *kîy*, meaning "because". What we have here is a chain of causation. An aggrandized nation will rejoice as in harvest time (i.e., the annual "end-time", or *sunteleia*) and as in victors taking spoil, **because** Israel's oppressors have been eliminated – from club to boot. Israel has been delivered of oppressors **because** a Child has been born (even this obviously Messianic part is *not* quoted in the NT). This is all Messianic and mostly unfulfilled. Only the birth of the Son has been fulfilled – His dominion and delivering the Land from oppressors are still future. And just look at the Child's fourfold name (four is the number of the creation – *Number*, p.123) – magnificent and divine. Whenever was Jesus Christ called by these names? He has not been called such, even in NT prophecy. Has God rescinded this promise of a just government "upon the throne of David" under this "Son"? I will repeat this – no son of David (a rightful heir) has sat upon the throne of David since Zedekiah, who reigned almost six centuries before the Incarnation. From the viewpoint of the Gospels-Acts period, the time since Israel had a legitimate kingdom would have been seen as *ancient* history. If you deny that this is still future, then how can you explain it other than as the word of God, unfulfillable and negated? If you accept

such an explanation, then your God is a rather small god, indeed, to let his word be broken thus.

Isaiah 11:10 quoted in Romans 15:12 –

Here is a small OT quote which Paul applied to his readers from among the nations –

> "And again Isaiah says, 'There will be the Root of Jesse, even the One rising to rule nations. Upon Him nations will hope.'" Rom.15:12

Note that it is "the Root" and not "a root" – I have capitalized Root, as another name of Messiah, following the lead of Rev.22:16. This was the last in a series of OT quotes by Paul to show that God intended mercy toward the nations. What Paul's excerpt of Isa.11:10 does not show is an abundance of other characteristics which the OT applied to Messiah's reign. Here is the larger text –

> "And will come out a Branch from *the* **stem of Jesse**, and a Sprout from **his root** will be fruitful. And will rest upon Him a spirit of Yahweh, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and strength, a spirit of knowledge and fear of Yahweh. And His ointment *is* in *the* fear of Yahweh, and He will not judge according to *the* sight of His eyes, nor decide according to *the* hearing of His ears. But He will judge *the* poor with righteousness ('justice'), and He will decide with uprightness toward *the* afflicted of *the* earth. And He will make stricken *the* earth with *the* rod of His mouth, and with *the* breath of His lips He will kill *the* wicked. And righteousness ('justice') will become *the* waistcloth of His loins, and the faithfulness a waistcloth of His hips.
>
> And will dwell a wolf with a lamb, and a leopard will lie down with a kid, and a calf and a young lion and a fatling together. And a young boy *will be* leading them on. And a heifer and a bear will graze, together their young will lie down. And a lion like an ox will eat straw. And a nursling will play upon *the* hole of a cobra, and upon *the* den of a viper a weaned one will stretch out his hand. They will not do injury, nor spoil, in all My holy mountain, for the earth was full of knowing Yahweh, as waters covering in regard to *the* sea.

> And **it will come to pass in that day** a **Root of Jesse**, Who *will be* standing for a banner of peoples – to Him nations will seek, and His resting-place will become a glory. And **it will come to pass in that day** the Lord (Heb. *Adônây*) will add a second *time* to get a remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and from Egypt and from Pathros and from Cush and from Elam and from Shinar and from Hamath and from *the* coasts of the Sea. And He will lift up a banner for *the* nations, and He will gather *the* downcast of Israel, and He will collect *the* scattered of Judah from *the* four corners of the earth. And the jealousy of Ephraim will be turned aside, and those vexing Judah will be cut off. Ephraim will not be envious of Judah, and Judah will not vex Ephraim. But they will fly upon *the* shoulder of *the* Philistine seaward. Together they will plunder sons of *the* East, Edom and Moab. *By* an outstretching of their hand even *the* sons of Ammon will obey them.
>
> And Yahweh will destroy *the* tongue of *the* sea of Egypt. And He will wave His hand over the River with His hot wind, and He will strike it into seven streams, and He will make it tread by sandals. And there will come to pass a highway for *the* remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, as what came to Israel in *the* day of his going up from *the* land of Egypt.
>
> And you will say **in that day**, 'I will praise You, Yahweh, for You were angry at me. You will turn back your anger, and You will comfort me. Behold, God *is* my salvation. I will trust and not be in dread, for my strength and my song *is* Yah-Yahweh, and He has become to me for salvation. And you will draw waters with joy from *the* springs of the salvation.' And you will say **in that day**, 'Praise to Yahweh. Call upon His name. Reveal His deeds among peoples. Bring to remembrance that His name is exalted. Sing praise to Yahweh, for He has done majestically. This *is* made known in the whole earth. Cry out and shout, dweller of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.'"
>
> Isa.11:1-12:5

This long text is not an aimless or random succession of prophetic sayings. The first part of the text (vv.1-10) is bound together by the phrases "stem of Jesse", "his root" and "Root of Jesse". Then 11:10-12:5 is bound together by four emphatic pronouncements of "in that day" – that is, all these events will happen in the same "day". Paul used the *LXX* version of a part of this (double underlined above) to

demonstrate that blessing for the nations had come with Israel's early harvest (Pentecost, Rom.15:12). This was a present blessing during Acts, but the full import of Isaiah chapters 11-12 must be future. The "Branch" is Messianic, and this "name" appears elsewhere in the OT in Isa.4:2, Jer.23:5; 33:15 and Zec.3:8; 6:12 (*KJV, NKJV*). Further, this Messiah is pictured as reigning, for He will strike the earth and slay the wicked. Jesus did none of these things at His first appearing to Israel. Note how lack of conflict will prevail in both the animal kingdom and in Yahweh's kingdom ("in all My holy mountain"). The return to pre-Flood conditions in the animal kingdom (compatible with the lengthened lifetimes of Isa.65:20), stands together with the widespread "knowing of Yahweh" as waters covering the sea. Thus, knowledge of Yahweh will flood the earth, and will put an end to destruction, unlike the Great Flood of Noah's day, which covered the earth and destroyed almost every living thing. Those who allegorize this peace in the animal kingdom of Isaiah 11, should do likewise with conditions before the Flood. Then, why not water down the Flood narrative itself into an allegorical-moral tale, rather than history? Can the prophecy of Isaiah 11 be any more a fable than the Flood story? But Jesus validated the Flood narrative in Mat.24:37-39. Was Jesus a Teacher of myth, or truth?

Here "in that day" is described a second gathering of the remnant of Israel, but on this occasion not merely from the North, nor only from East and West, but "from the four corners of the earth". Eight specific regions are described here as the diaspora to be gathered –

1. from Assyria
2. from Egypt
3. from Pathros
4. from Cush
5. from Elam
6. from Shinar
7. from Hamath
8. from isles (or coastlands) of the Sea

Eight is the number of new beginnings (*Number*, p.200) and the Millennium will be radically so for Israel. The beginning of the Millennium will reverse changes in the earth that began with the Great Flood. This gathering of the remnant is

compared with Israel coming up "from *the* land of Egypt" – the implication is one of a massive national return.

We also see here the two leader-tribes, Ephraim and Judah, no longer warring and competing, but united in subduing ancient enemies (Philistia, Edom, Moab, Ammon). We have already seen that geological changes will affect the region about Jerusalem and its Mount of Olives, and here we see geographic changes to Egypt's "sea" (Gulf of Suez, or Bitter Lake?) and "river" (Nile). The text ends with salvation and praise in the heart of Israel. God's finish of the Jews here is only a happy ending – "Cry out and shout, dweller of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel". This is not the destruction and oblivion that the full preterist imagines for Israel. Compare the "dweller of Zion" in AD 70, who would also cry out, but only from anguish.

Psalm 2:1-2 quoted in Acts 4:25-26;

Psalm 2:7 quoted in Acts 13:33 and Hebrews 1:5; 5:5 –

Another OT Messianic text with a limited NT use is Psalm 2. Here it is in full, with the NT citations underlined –

> "Why have nations been in tumult, or peoples imagine vanity? Kings of *the* earth take a stand, and rulers have seated themselves together against Yahweh and against His Anointed. 'Let us tear away their bonds, and throw off their cords from us.' The One Dwelling in *the* heavens will laugh. *The* Lord (Heb. *Adônây*) will mock them. Then (Heb. *âz*, 'at that time') He will speak to them in His anger, and in His wrath He will dismay them. But I have set My King upon Zion, My holy mountain. I will relate about a decree: Yahweh said to Me, 'My Son are You. I Myself today have begotten You. Ask from Me, and I will give *the* nations *as* Your inheritance, and Your possession *the* ends of *the* earth. You will do them injury with a staff of iron; as a potter's vessel You will shatter them.' 'But now, consider, *you* kings; be disciplined, *you* judges of *the* earth. Serve Yahweh with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He become angry. And you will perish *in the* way, when He ignites His wrath just a little.' Happiness *will be to* all those seeking refuge in Him." Psa.2:1-12

The first underlined portion was applied by a company of believers in Acts 4:25-27 as a condemnation of what Herod and Pilate had done against Jesus. The second quote was used in Acts 13:33 to reinforce the truth of Jesus' resurrection, and in Heb.1:5; 5:5 to show how much greater Christ is than the angels. These were partial, historic fulfillments of Psalm 2.

But what else does this Psalm reveal to us about Messiah? Some kings of the nations will be inclined to throw off the kingdom of "His Anointed" in His reign "upon Zion, My holy mountain" (note again: "My holy mountain" is another designation of the kingdom of God). This answers to "the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish" in Isa.60:12. It will be millennial, as will the exhortation for these frisky nations to serve with fear, and rejoice with trembling. There has been no past occasion that satisfies this prophecy. The threat of the Son's "staff of iron" shattering nations "as a potter's vessel" will be a power shared with "overcomers" according to Rev.2:26-27. Although these will be times of blessing for those nations seeking Yahweh, rebellion will be dealt with sharply.

Psalm 8:4-6 quoted in Hebrews 2:6-8 –

Next, Psalm 8 must be seen retrospectively as a bit of a riddle for its initial hearers –

> "To *the* overseer upon the Gittith. A melody for David. Yahweh, our Lord (Heb. *Adôwn*), more majestic *is* Your name in the whole earth, Who would set Your majesty above the heavens. From *the* mouth of children and nurslings You have established strength, because of Your vexers, to make cease *the* enemy and avenger. When I see Your heavens, *the* work of Your fingers, moon and stars which You have established – what is man that You remember him, and a son of mankind that You visit him? And You made him a little lower than elohim ('judges', or 'God'), and *with* glory and honor You crown him. You have caused him to rule over *the* works of Your hands. You have put all things under his feet – flocks and cattle, all of them, and also beasts of the open, bird of *the* heavens and fishes of the sea, passing through paths of seas. Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic *is* Your name in the whole earth." Psa.8:1-9

On the face of it, we have here a reminder of the dominion given to Adam in Gen.1:26. The *LXX* introduces a variant reading as to whom the "son of mankind (Adam)" was lesser than – "angels" (Gk. *aggelos*) instead of "judges" (or perhaps Elohim-God Himself was meant). Possibly the *LXX* translators understood "elohim" here as equivalent to "the sons of Elohim" (Gen.6:2). Hebrews chapter 2 follows the *LXX* in declaring the underlined portion above as applying to Christ, Who was made "a little lower than the angels" (*KJV*). But after this Psalm 8 quote, Hebrews continues thus –

> "for in the subordinating to Him all these things, He left out nothing to Him as unsubordinated. **But now**, we do **not yet** see to Him all these things having been subordinated." Heb.2:8

I have emphasized the "but now" and "not yet" aspects of this statement. As of the writing of Hebrews, a mid-to-late Acts period epistle to the Jews, Jesus Christ was not yet reigning. Did He assume sovereignty over "all these (earthly) things" subsequently? How can that be credible, without a shred of evidence to support it? Such sovereignty will be plenary in the earth, and we could hardly have overlooked such a momentous change in earth's affairs. If the Millennium had begun in AD 70, we should have seen the Romans bowing in subordination to Christ the King, and also many other nations subordinated to Him. If Christ had reigned and the Romans refused to submit, they would have ceased being a nation, per Isa.60:12. Also the millennial "thousand years" would have ended in the eleventh century, and shortly afterward a Satanic uprising of nations would have attempted one last time to exterminate the saints in Jerusalem ("the beloved city", Rev.20:7-9). One can hardly equate this end-of-Millennium event with the Crusades, unless you are willing to identify Muslims with "the camp of the saints", and the Crusaders with "the Gog and Magog" "in the four corners of the earth" (Rev.20:8), i.e., streaming in from all directions. But the Europe of the Crusaders was only one corner of the earth.

Psalm 22:22 quoted in Hebrews 2:12 –

Psalm 22 is greatly descriptive of Christ in His crucifixion, and so this is also a relevant text. Part of David's cry in this Psalm was historical and biographic – a reminder of Yahweh's deliverance of "the fathers" (vv.4-5). Then there is a

confusing cry for deliverance –

> "Deliver My life from *the* sword, my Only One from *the* hand of *the* dog." Psa.22:20

"Deliver My life (Heb. *nephesh*)" might align with the Messianic pleas in Gethsemane. Then the point of view seems to change to another person's plea for "my Only One" (Heb. *yâchîyd*). This same Hebrew word is first used in Genesis, and it applied to Yahweh's request for Abraham to offer up his "only one" Isaac (Gen.22:2, 12, 16). We also saw this word previously in Zec.12:10 –

> "Then they will look toward the One Whom they pierced, and they will wail over Him as a wailing over the **Only One**, and to be made bitter over Him as being made bitter over the Firstborn."

Seeing that Psa.22:16 also includes a piercing of hands and feet, we can see that in some ways Psalm 22 was prospective of what Israel will experience in Zec.12:10 when they "look" again at the Pierced One.

Then Psa.22:22 is cited by Heb.2:12 showing that God intended that the "Captain of their salvation" through suffering would reach His "brethren" and bring "many sons to glory" (all quotes, *KJV*). This was an Acts period fulfillment, but also spans into the distant future of Zec.12:10. The next portion Psa.22:23-26 seems personal to David, especially his affirmation to "pay my vows".

Only the ending of this Psalm seems obviously futuristic, but it is not clearly Messianic. Rather, it glorifies Yahweh's reign over the whole earth –

> "All *the* ends of the earth will remember and turn back to Yahweh. And all clans of nations will bow down before You. For to Yahweh *is* the kingship, and He *is* ruling among nations. All *the* fat ones of *the* earth have eaten and bowed down. All those going down to dust will bow before Him – even his life he has not kept alive. An offspring will serve Him. It will be accounted to *the* Lord (Heb. *Adônây*) for a generation. They will come and declare His righteousness ('justice') to a people being brought forth, when He has done *it*." Psa.22:27-31

Yahweh will be ruling among nations, but this must be the reign of Christ. Rev.19:15 depicts a returning Christ smiting the nations, then ruling (lit.

"pasturing") them with an iron staff. Also, 1 Cor.15:25 declares that Christ must reign until all enemies are put under His feet – and Rev.20:6 says those of the former resurrection will reign with Him a thousand years. Have all nations ever bowed to Yahweh or Jesus Christ before? Then this portion of Psalm 22, and Revelation 19, must be future. If the "fat ones" (i.e., the rich and mighty) bow down to divine rule, then everyone else must also do so, even all those returning to dust (i.e., all flesh). The "offspring" (or 'seed') serving Him will be reckoned to Him "a generation". This will be a different, obedient generation, unlike "this generation" which Jesus so often rebuked at His first advent.

Exactly who "they" are, declaring His righteousness in 22:31, is not clear. But "a people being brought forth" is identifiable with Isaiah's "nation brought forth in one stroke" (Isa.66:6-9). The "they" could be the newborn Israel declaring His righteousness among themselves. Or it may be an earlier wave of believing Israelites declaring it to a nation about to be born. I have remarked before how not all returning remnants of Israel appear to aligned, and it may be likewise with groups of God-enlightened Israelites. The simplest solution to a text is not always the best, and I believe that God has His share of surprises in store for all of mankind.

Psalm 45:6-7 quoted in Hebrews 1:8-9 –

Psalm 45 has a portion (underlined below) applied to Messiah in Heb.1:8-9, but the whole of Psalm 45 has Messianic overtones throughout –

> "To the overseer, upon lilies, for sons of Korah. A contemplation, a song of beloveds (fem. pl.). My heart has stirred a good matter. I *am* speaking my work concerning *the* King. My tongue is a pen of a ready scribe. You are more beautiful than *the* sons of mankind (lit. 'Adam'). Grace has been poured upon Your lips. Therefore, Elohim has blessed You for an age. Gird Your sword upon *Your* thigh, Mighty One, Your majesty and Your splendor. And may Your splendor prosper; ride concerning a word of truth and humility – righteousness ('justice'). And may Your right hand instruct You fearful things. Your arrows *are* sharpened – May peoples fall under You – in *the* heart of *the* enemies of the King. Your throne, Elohim, *is* of an age and continuously. A rod of uprightness is *the* rod of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness ('justice') and You

> have hated wickedness. Therefore, Elohim, Your Elohim has anointed (Heb. *mâshach*) You *with* an oil of rejoicing better than Your companions. Myrrh and aloes, cassia *are on* all Your garments, out of palaces of ivory, out of *which* they have gladdened You.
>
> Daughters of kings are among Your honored ones (fem. pl.). A queen (or 'consort') has stood to Your **right** in gold of Ophir. Hear, daughter, and see and incline your ear, and forget your people and *the* house of your father. And the King has longed for your beauty, for He is your Lord (Heb. *Âdôwn*), so bow down to Him. And *the* daughter of Tyre *will come* with a gift. Rich ones of a people will seek favor before you (fem. sing.). All abundance *has* a daughter of a king within, besides her garments *being* woven of gold. She will be conducted to *the* King in varied clothing. Virgins, her companions behind her, *are* being brought in to you (fem. sing.). They will be conducted with gladness and rejoicing. They will enter into *the* palace of *the* King.
>
> Instead of Your (masc. sing.) fathers will come Your (masc. sing.) sons. You will appoint them for princes in the whole earth. I will cause to remember Your name in all generations. Therefore, peoples will give thanks to You for an age and continuously." Psa.45:1-17

I have followed the lead of the *NKJV* in capitalizing "King" and certain pronouns, to indicate Messiahship throughout this Psalm. This King has been anointed by God to be greater than all companions (i.e., all mankind) and Heb.1:8-9 celebrates this as the anointing of God's Son. The King is further depicted as having a sword and arrows – for use on enemies. Messiah's enemies are not just the demonic kingdom of Satan. Mankind will resist Him taking His rightful throne in the earth. In order for truth and righteousness to prevail, He must put down these enemies.

An interesting aspect is the presence of a "queen" here. I have not followed the *NKJV* capitalization of "You" where the Heb. pronoun or suffix is in the feminine singular, and therefore must apply to this "queen". A better translation here is "consort" for the Heb. *shêgal*, which the Masoretes considered obscene and substituted another word in most places in the OT. In certain Gentile kingdoms whomever the king married would become his queen-consort. The Biblical examples are confined to Belshazzar (Dan.5:2,3,23 – "wives" pl.) and Artaxerxes

(Neh.2:6). The consort here in Psalm 45 is a "daughter of a king", among "daughters of kings". Ostensibly these would be Gentile kings, and the only other occurrences of this phrase applied to Jezebel (2 Ki.9:34) and a future "daughter of *the* king of the South" (Dan.11:6), rather confirming this as a Gentile term. The "daughter" consort in Psalm 45 is clothed (*LXX periballō*) with gold cloth, while the "wife" of the Lamb will be arrayed with (Gk. *periballō*) "fine linen, pure, bright" (Rev.19:7-8), which is explained as the righteousness of the saints. So we should not confuse these two.

In the marriage supper of the Lamb, the King will wed Israel – "the saints" of Rev.19:8 are implied to be "His wife" of 19:7. And we have already seen several OT texts where Yahweh described His relationship with Israel in terms of a marriage covenant. But here in Psalm 45 the "consort" (or favorite of the harem) is only one "daughter of a king" in the midst of other "daughters of kings". The only specificity to be found in Psalm 45 is a certain "daughter of Tyre", who is not this King's "consort". All of these daughters appear to come from the nations, so what is depicted in the latter part of this Psalm seems to be marriage-like honors bestowed on one of them by a King, the Anointed One. Is it just coincidence that one of these "daughters" will stand at the King's "**right**", and be brought into the King's palace with her virgin companions – that is, coincidental in comparison with Matthew chapter 25? There in Matthew we have the Parable of the Ten Virgins awaiting a bridegroom's arrival. Then after a small gap (Parable of the Talents), Jesus continued with "the Son of Man shall come in His glory" (v.31) and the judgment scene of all the nations, separated on His left and on His **right**. The righteous of these nations will go into "eonian life" (v.46) because of their good works toward Jesus' "brothers" (i.e., Israel). Is there some hint of this in Psalm 45, veiled in royal wedding garb? Recall that "the burden of Egypt" in Isaiah chapter 19 ends with healing and salvation for Egypt, and also that wonderful statement of Israel being "a third next to Egypt and next to Assyria" (Isa.19:24). God will have His favorites among the nations, after their "healing". And remember that His most favored nation, Israel, must also be healed.

Several Hebrew words are translated "queen" in the OT. The Heb. *malkâh*, which is a feminine form of *melek* ('king'), is the most literal. It is used of the queens of Sheba, Persia and Babylon. Another is Heb. *g$_e$bîyrâh*, meaning "lady" or simply "mistress" (e.g., Sarah's relation to Hagar in Genesis 16). Seeing that

g$_e$bîyrâh is a feminized form of *geber*, "strong man", we might render this as "lady of power". In the NT, "queen" (Gk. *basilissa*) has very limited use – Queen of the South, Candace queen of Ethiopia, and Babylon the Great are depicted as queens, using *basilissa*. Note how the usage of some of these words is limited to Gentile queens. If a king of Israel had a favorite wife, she was just his favorite, not his queen. In some cases the title "Mistress" (*g$_e$bîyrâh*) was applied to queen-mothers (*NKJV*, wherever such a "Lady" is mentioned with a king of Israel). Her position was not as grandiose as the queens of the nations (like Tahpanhes, a pharaoh's wife – 1 Ki. 11:19). Although Israel has been depicted as Yahweh's wife, that nation was not given the exaltation of queenship. Nor was any wife of an Israelite king called "queen". The ending of Psalm 45 points nation-ward, not Israel-ward, but the identity of the "consort" remains a mystery. The events are future, and they involve a King whose identity is established as Jesus Christ by the citation at Heb.1:8-9.

Psalm 69:4, 9 quoted in John 15:25; 2:17 –

Next, Psalm 69 is one of those Psalms of David, in which he cries out for deliverance from persecution. The Psalm cannot apply to Messiah in its entirely – e.g., "my folly and my guilt" (v.5) are strictly Davidic. However, some of the verses were applied to Christ –

> "But in order that might be fulfilled the word which *is* having been written in their law, 'They hated Me for nothing.'" Joh.15:25 from Psa.69:4
>
> "His disciples remembered that it is written, 'The zeal of Your house will consume Me.'" Joh.2:17 from Psa.69:9
>
> Also Mat.27:34 and Joh.19:29, suggesting Psa.69:21

These citations concern Christ historical. But then Psalm 69 ends on a Restoration theme, that is identifiable with a future Messianic hope.

> "For Elohim will save Zion, and build cities of Judah. Then they will dwell there and possess her (Zion). And *the* offspring of His servants will possess her, and those loving His name will dwell in her." Psa.69:35-36

I did not include this text in the previous chapter, **Yahweh Fighting the Nations – His Defense of Zion and Jerusalem**, but it does provide another example of Yahweh saving and building Jerusalem.

Psalm 78:2 quoted in Matthew 13:35 –

Next, Psa.78:2 was applied to Jesus' teaching in parables in Mat.13:35, and the quote was loosely based in part on the *LXX* version.

> "So that might be fulfilled that having been spoken by the prophet, saying, 'I will open My mouth in parables. I will declare things hidden from the overthrow of the world.'" Mat.13:35

> "I will open My mouth in parables. I will utter enigmas from *the* beginning." Psa.78:2 (*LXX*)

But Psalm 78 itself was an historic account of God's rescue of Israel from Egypt and their subsequent rebellions. There is no tacitly future application of the "parables" of Psalm 78, unlike Jesus' Matthew 13 parables which were oriented toward realization of a future kingdom. I will discuss the prophetic significance of Jesus' parables in the next chapter, **Parable as Prophecy**. Seeing that Jesus was Himself a prophet, some of His teaching also dealt with future, prophetic things.

As for the "parable" of Psalm 78:2, how are we to understand this? The Heb. noun *mâshâl*, which was translated *parabolē* by the *LXX*, also means a "proverb", as in "Proverbs of Solomon" (Pro.1:1). The verb form, *mâshal*, is a homonym connoting two different actions: 1) to rule or reign, or 2) to be like or resemble. It is definition 2) that gives rise to the parabolic form, so often used by Jesus – "the kingdom of the heavens **is like**…". The content of Psalm 78 suggests this likeness indirectly. Like as Israel were in Sinai, so they have continued to this day. Psa.78:2 pushes its "parabolic" subject even further –

> "I will open my mouth in a parable. I will pour out riddles from ancient time." Psa.78:2

This is typical Biblical parallelism. And it declares what follows in the rest of this Psalm to be an enigmatic proverb (a parable of riddles).

In spite of the great blessings God had bestowed on Israel, their reaction to His goodness is summed up in v.57 –

> "But they were backslidden and dealt treacherously, like their fathers. They were turned back like a slack bow."

A review of divine punishments follows, but the Psalm ends on an upbeat note –

> "But He chose *the* tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved. And He built like *the* heights His sanctuary, like *the* earth He founded for an age. And He chose David His servant, and He took him from pens of cattle. From after nursing cattle He brought him, to pasture Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. So he (David) shepherded them according to *the* integrity of his heart, and by *the* faculty of his hands he led them." Psa.78:68-72

So, did the last verse preview Jesus as the "son of David" and the "Good Shepherd"? It is not clear to me that this would be the "riddle" of the Psalm. The enigma, as it appears to me, is that a people so blessed could be so treacherous toward their Benefactor. Such treachery might be found in individuals, but in a whole people? This is rather akin to Paul's use of a local slogan, "Cretans *are* always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." Tit.1:12 (*NKJV*). But Psalm 78 may have previewed the treachery that Jesus received. Why did Jesus suddenly turn to teaching parabolic riddles? I will delve into that question in the next chapter, **Parable as Prophecy**.

Psalm 110:1 quoted in Matthew 22:44, et al.;

Psalm 110:4 quoted in Hebrews 5:6; 7:17, 21 –

Psalm 110 is both short, and obviously Messianic from its two excerpts cited in the NT. I propose that the whole of this Psalm should be taken as Messianic –

> "For David a psalm. An utterance of Yahweh to my Lord (Heb. *Adônîy*), 'Sit at My right until I appoint Your enemies a **stool for your feet**.' Yahweh will send *the* rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies. Your people *will be* volunteers in *the* day of Your power. By ornaments of holiness, from *the* womb of dawn to night-mist *is* Your youth. Yahweh has sworn and He

> will not repent, 'You are a priest for an age, according to My manner for Melchizedek.' My Lord (*Adônây*) *is* upon Your right. He has shattered kings in *the* day of His anger. He will execute judgment upon nations. He has filled with shattered corpses – a head upon many a land. He will drink from a stream by the way. Therefore, He will lift the head." Psa.110:1-7

What specific enemies have been or will be appointed for subjugation under Christ's feet? In the Mat.22:41-46 text that includes Psa.110:1, Jesus was parrying words with the Pharisees. The Mar.12:36 and Luk.20:42-43 citations are set in the context of a question from a scribe, and Jesus' subsequent warning about the scribes. The Acts 2:34-35 citation might have included "the whole house of Israel" (v.36) as enemies, although some of these became "stabbed in the heart" by Peter's speech. Those hearing Peter were also told to "be saved from this crooked generation" (v.40). So the disbelieving generation of Israel during Acts was like the rebellious generation that fell in the wilderness of Sinai (Psa.78:8). The Psa.110:1 citations at Heb.1:13 and 10:13 give no clear indication of who the enemies of Christ are, but the book of Hebrews is full of warnings to its Hebrew readers not to go back to what they once were. Jam.2:3 shows that being made to sit by a **footstool** was a humiliation. The citations in the NT seem to point to the enemies of Christ among the Israelites. We have already looked at the Psa.69:4 citation of "they hated me for nothing", which goes on to call them "My enemies of deception".

When the Bible refers to Yahweh's enemies, we can classify them into one of two groups –

Israel:

> "Your princes are rebellious and companions of thieves. Everyone *is* loving a present and *is* pursuing a bribe. They judge not an orphan, and the dispute of a widow does not come to them. Therefore, an utterance of the Lord (Heb. *Âdôwn*), Yahweh of armies, Strong One of Israel, '**Woe**, I will console Myself from **My adversaries**, and I will avenge Myself from **My enemies**."
>
> Isa.1:23-24

The Nations:

> "And it came to pass when the ark set out, then Moses said, 'Arise, Yahweh,

> and let **Your enemies** be scattered. And let those hating You flee from before You.'" Num.10:35

The second group is indicated by His shattering of "kings" and His executing "judgment upon nations" in Psalm 110. This devastation will be quite physical, because of His filling "with shattered corpses". How might you spiritualize away "shattered corpses" to neutralize this psalm into the past? This prophecy is Messianic, bloody and futuristic.

Both these groups of enemies may constitute His footstool, when Christ assumes His reign upon earth. But to repeat Heb.2:8, "we do **not yet** see all these things subordinated to Him". "All these things" are elaborated further by 1 Cor.15:24-28, where we find mention of "all rule and all authority and power", and even "all the enemies", including "the last enemy…death".

Concerning "the last enemy…death", Isaiah said several things about it with Messianic overtones –

> "You are Yahweh, my Elohim. I exalt You. I praise Your name for You have done a wonder – *Your* counsel from old-time *is* steadfastness, faithfulness. For You put from a city to a heap, an enclosed town for a ruin, a palace of foreigners from a city will not be built for an age. Therefore a strong people will glorify You. A town of terrifying nations will fear You. For You became protection to *the* weak, protection to *the* poor in his distress, shelter from a rain-storm, a shadow from heat, for a wind of terrifying ones *is* as a rain-storm *against* a wall. As heat in a dry place, You will humble *the* uproar of strangers. *As* heat in *the* shadow of a cloud, a song of terrifying ones will give answer. And Yahweh of armies will make for all the peoples in this mountain a feast of fat *portions*, a drink of dregs, fat things of marrow, refined dregs. And He will swallow up in this mountain the fronts of the covering which enwrap over all the peoples, and the web which is woven over all the nations. He will swallow up the Death for continuity, and the Lord (Heb. *Âdôwn*) Yahweh will wipe away tears from upon every face. And He will turn aside *the* reproach of His people, from upon the whole earth, for Yahweh has spoken. And one will say in that day, 'Behold, this *is* our Elohim. We have waited for Him and He has saved us. This *is* Yahweh. We have waited for Him. We will rejoice and be glad

> in His salvation. For *the* hand of Yahweh will rest upon this mountain. But Moab will be trampled under Him, as straw being trampled in *the* waters of a dung-pit. And He will spread out His hands in their midst, as when the swimmer spreads *them* out to swim. And He will bring low their pride, with *the* deceits of their hands. And *the* fortress of *the* stronghold of your walls He has prostrated, He has laid low. He has struck *it* to *the* earth, as far as *the* dust."
>
> Isa.25:1-12

The "swallowing up of death" is also how 1 Cor.15:54 describes Messiah's subordination of "the last enemy". Although it is God Who will "wipe away every tear" in Rev.7:17, is not Messiah also God? The larger context of Isaiah chapter 25 (and note how "in that day" opens chapters 26 and 27, demonstrating the continuity of this message) is the subduing of both nations and death. It is also about reward, as Yahweh will make them a feast. We have seen earlier how Israel's ancient enemies (Moab, Ammon and Edom) will be defeated, and here it is also mentioned that Moab will be made like a dung-pit. The subordination of "all these" is Messianic, even though Isaiah 25 mentions neither King, Anointed One, Son, nor Child. Note also the parallelism here: the swallowing up of the covering/web over the nations is the swallowing up of "the Death". The verbs and their context demand such an interpretation. The definite article before "death" has demonstrative force, "this death", in that it refers back to the covering and web enwrapping the nations. Note that the definite article is used much less frequently in the Hebrew than in the Greek, which gives it more force when used in the Hebrew. You have seen how often I have introduced an elliptical *the* in a Heb. translation, in order to avoid it sounding like cockney English.

Going back now to Psalm 110, the second underlined portion is cited severally in Heb.5:5; 7:17 and 7:21. And the priesthood of Christ is further attested by –

> "And say to him surely, 'Thus said Yahweh of armies surely, "**Behold**, a Man, Sprout ('Branch', *KJV, NKJV*) *is* His name. And from below Him He will sprout, and He will build Yahweh's temple. Yes, He Himself will build Yahweh's temple. And He will take majesty and sit and rule upon His throne. And He will become a priest upon His throne, and counsel of peace will come between *the* two of them." Zec.6:12-13

This text has some difficult statements. How should we take "from below Him He will sprout"? This could be a reference to Christ rising from the dead, or His rising in great exaltation from the great humility that preceded it (Phi.2:6-9). But truly, His death and resurrection played a key part in His progress from humiliation to exaltation. I would take the "counsel of peace" coming "between *the* two of them" as the perfect joining of the roles of the great King-Priest in His rule of peace. This might include – the King "will rule with an iron staff", while the Priest seeks forms of mediation for wrongdoing. The great King Solomon showed something of this dual mindset, when he ordered the disputed babe to be split in two. He seemed to show a readiness to use the sword, even while seeking a more humane verdict. Justice often stands somewhere between the harsh and the compassionate sentence. Under Him Who will be called "Prince of peace", the earth will have a reign of peace, and this will follow the model of the king-priest Melchizedek. This one was also called "king of Salem", that is, "king of peace" (Heb.7:2). Thus he was a prophetic type of the Christ, although the book of Hebrews does not say so explicitly.

Isaiah 13:10 quoted in Matthew 24:29, et al. –

I have already given in the earlier chapter, **Urgency in Prophecy**, an extensive quote of "the burden of Babel" from Isaiah chapter 13. Now I will focus on just this portion –

> "Howl, for **near *is* a day of Yahweh**. Like a devastation from Shaddai it comes. Therefore, all hands go limp, and every heart of man melts. Then they will be terrified. Pains and anguish will take hold; like bringing forth they will writhe. Each to his fellow will be astounded. Their faces *will be* faces of flushing (lit. ' of flames'). **Behold**, **a day of Yahweh is coming**, cruel and furious and of burning wrath, to appoint the land for a waste, and its sinners He will exterminate from it. For *the* stars of the heavens and their constellations will not shine forth their light. The sun has grown dark in its coming out and *the* moon will not cause to shine its light. But I will appoint evil upon the world and upon the wicked *for* their iniquity. And I will put an end to pride of insolence, and I will bring low *the* majesty of *the* terrible." Isa.13:6-11

The underlined portion above was alluded to by the Lord Jesus in His great *Sunteleia* prophecy –

> "Therefore, if perhaps they should say to you, 'Behold, He is in the desert', you should not go out – 'Behold, in the inner-room', you should not believe. For just as the lightning goes out from *the* east, and it flashes up to *the* west, thus will be the presence (Gk. *Parousia*) of the Son of Man. Wherever the corpse may be, there will be assembled the eagles. But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the heaven with power and great glory." Mat.24:26-30

The underlined portion of the Matthew 24 text above is roughly parallel to the "day of Yahweh" prophecy of Isaiah 13. Such celestial signs could hardly escape notice, even as eagles circling at a distance tell us of the presence of a corpse. This "eagles" statement may have been an idiom of the day, like our modern saying, "You can't miss it." These signs will appear suddenly, to the surprise of an earth not looking for His return, even as men in the days of Noah (Mat.24:37) were surprised by the onset of the Flood. Could these signs have come and gone in the past, with Christians across the earth not taking any notice? Not *these* signs. They will be too conspicuous, too universal to be overlooked. Therefore, Isaiah 13 and Matthew 24 must still be future.

Isaiah 55:3 quoted in Acts 13:34 –

Standing on its own, "the sure mercies of David" (*KJV, NKJV*) in Isa.55:3 seemed only to confirm the Davidic covenant, and its blessings for the people Israel. But in Paul's preaching at Antioch, he applied this saying to the resurrection of Christ (Acts 13:34). This Messianic application was hidden in the original Isaiah text. That text ends with –

> "For with gladness you will go out, and with peace you will be brought out. The mountains and the hills will burst forth before you a ringing cry, and all the trees of the field will clap *the* hand. Instead of the thorn-bush will come up a

> cypress, and instead of the desert-plant will come up a myrtle. And it will become to Yahweh for a name. For **an age-abiding sign, it will not be cut off**." Isa.55:12-13

The simultaneous rejoicing of nature, along with the joy of restored Israel, is a keynote of that day. Fruitfulness and springs will be restored to a land that will have been given over to drought and the brier (see also Isa.35:1-2, 6-7; 41:18-19; 43:19-20; 51:3; 65:9-10). This greening of the desert is here called "an age-abiding sign" (*hapax*). Therefore, we should take careful note of it. It will be age-abiding, not a here-today, gone-tomorrow sensation – quickly forgotten like yesterday's rain-storm.

The similarly-worded "sign for an age" had been applied to the Sabbath, as the confirming sign of the covenant of the Law (Exo.31:17), and being "cut off" was the fate of the breakers of that covenant. This future sign of the greening of the Middle East **will not be cut off** – moreover, it will be "to Yahweh for a name" (another unique expression). Although not specifically Messianic here, it will be an accompaniment when Christ does, indeed, "restore the kingdom to Israel".

Isaiah 59:20-21 quoted in Romans 11:25-26 –

In defending Israel to his Gentile readers, Paul gave this defense, which included a future fulfillment –

> "For I do not desire you to be ignorant, brothers, of this secret, lest you be wise beside yourselves, that hardness in part has happened to Israel, until when the fullness of the nations may come in. And thus, **all Israel** will be saved, according as it has been written, 'Will come from Zion the Deliverer. He will remove impiety from Jacob.' And this *is* My covenant to them, when I cut off their sins. Indeed according to the gospel *they are* enemies on account of you, but according to the election beloved on account of the fathers. For irrevocable *are* the gifts and the calling of God." Rom.11:25-29

The underlined portion is almost verbatim the *LXX* of the underlined portion below:

> "As according to *their* dealings, thus accordingly He will make good – rage to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies. For *the* coastlands He will make good a recompense. Then *those* from *the* west will fear *the* name of Yahweh, and His glory from *the* rising of sun. When an adversary comes in like a river, the spirit (or 'wind') of Yahweh has driven upon them. And will come out from Zion a Redeemer, even to those returning from rebellion in Jacob – an utterance of Yahweh. 'And I – here is My covenant with them,' said Yahweh, 'and My spirit which *is* upon you, and My words which I put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, nor from *the* mouth of your offspring, nor from *the* mouth of the offspring of your offspring,' said Yahweh, 'from now and until an age.'" Isa.59:18-21

Both texts look forward to the fullness of the new covenant, which "all Israel" has yet to experience. As stated in so many OT texts, an outpouring of God's spirit will be required to make this change in His elect nation. The Redeemer, indeed, came from Zion in the person of Jesus Christ, but the "all Israel" did not receive Him. A second coming from Zion will be required for that. I will have more to say on the elections of Romans 11 in a following chapter, **Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?**, and its section **Two Elections**.

Isaiah 62:11 quoted in Matthew 21:5 –

Mat.21:4-5 makes clear that Jesus' acclaimed entry to Jerusalem fulfilled prophecy, being loosely based on the *LXX* of Isa.62:11.

> "Say to the daughter of Zion, '**Behold**, your King comes to you, gentle and mounted on a donkey and on a colt, son of a female donkey.'"

We have already examined Isaiah chapter 62 extensively in **Yahweh Fighting the Nations – His Defense of Zion and Jerusalem**, and we saw that the glorification and renaming of Zion and Jerusalem are pictured throughout. One can infer from 62:11 – "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your salvation comes.'" (Heb. text) – that its Messianic significance extends to the fullness of restoration glory described in the whole Isaiah 62 passage. Most of that is still future.

Micah 5:2 quoted in Matthew 2:6 –

At times, the scribes of Israel seem to have correctly interpreted OT prophecy, as on this occasion –

> "And having gathered all the high priests and scribes of the people, he inquired from them where the Christ is to be born. And they said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written by the prophet, "And you Bethlehem, land of Judah, you are smallest among the rulers of Judah, for out of you will come forth a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel."'" Mat.2:4-6

The underlined portion paraphrases the *LXX* of Mic.5:2, but the whole of Micah 5 has even more Messianic revelations –

> "Now, a daughter of a troop will band together. He has placed a siege against us. They will strike a judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. And you Bethlehem Ephrata, little to come among *the* thousands of Judah. Out of you will come to me *One* to become a Ruler in Israel. And His places *are* from of old, from a day of an age. Therefore, He will appoint them a time of bearing *when* she has borne. And a remnant of His brothers will return toward *the* sons of Israel. And He will stand and shepherd *them* by *the* strength of Yahweh by *the* excellence of *the* name of Yahweh His Elohim. And they will dwell, for now He will become great up to *the* ends of *the* earth. And This One will become peace. Asshur (i.e., Assyria), when he comes into our land, and when he treads into our palaces, then we will raise up against him seven shepherds and eight princes of mankind. And they will become hurtful to *the* land of Asshur with a sword, and the land of Nimrod at its entries. And He will deliver from Asshur, when he comes into our land, and when he treads inside our border. And a remnant of Jacob will come in *the* midst of many peoples, like a dew from Yahweh, like showers upon herbage that waits not for man, nor tarries for sons of mankind. And a remnant of Jacob will come in among nations, in *the* midst of many peoples, like a lion among beasts of a forest, like a young lion among herds of cattle, who if he should pass through and tramples and tears, then no one *will be* snatching away. Your hand will be lifted against your adversaries, and all your enemies will be cut off. 'And it will come to pass **in that day**' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'that I will cut off your horses from

> your midst, and I will destroy your chariots. And I will cut off *the* cities of your land, and I will tear down all your fortresses. I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and soothsayers will not come to you. And I will cut off your idols and your pillars from your midst, and you will not bow down again to *the* work of your hands. And I will pluck up your Asherah from your midst, and I will annihilate your cities. And I will do vengeance, in anger and in rage, upon the nations which have not listened.'" Mic.5:1-15

This chapter opens with dark sayings. Who is meant by "a daughter of a troop" (*hapax*)? And who will be "a judge of Israel" struck on the cheek with a rod?

The chief judge in any kingdom was typically its king. And the king of Israel was also the shepherd, according to the Davidic model. Mic.5:4 attributes "shepherding" to this Ruler, so evidently He is the one struck on the cheek. Although the "reed" (Gk. *kalamos*, cane, measuring rod) that the Roman soldiers struck Jesus with is a different word from the *LXX* (Gk. *rhabdos*, pasturing rod, scepter), it does seem to qualify as a historic fulfillment of Mic.5:1. We do not know what other beatings He was subjected to. Isaiah 53:2 (*NKJV*) describes His appearance thus – "He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him." Jesus' physical appearance after the Romans' rough treatment must have been repulsive.

Micah's career was contemporaneous with much of Isaiah's, but Micah addressed both Samaria and Jerusalem with his voice of doom (Mic.1:1). And doom there is aplenty in Micah chapter 5. The promised deliverance from Assyria "when he comes into our land" had a preliminary fulfillment in Hezekiah's reign, and this first fulfillment was a rescue of Jerusalem only. But historically, Samaria *was* destroyed by Assyria. The Micah 5 text speaks of a general deliverance from an Assyrian invasion of the land, and one might infer that Samaria would be included in that deliverance. Afterwards, under a leadership of seven shepherds and eight princes, Jacob will invade Assyria – an event not yet recorded in history. This final solution of the Assyrian controversy is the result of –

- an ancient One, a Bethlehemite to become Ruler in Israel
- He will appoint "them" (masculine pl.) a time of childbearing

- a remnant of His brothers will return to their homeland
- He will shepherd the rebuilt nation
- He will become great to the ends of the earth
- He will become peace (Heb. *shâlôwm*)
- He will deliver from the Assyrian

Up to this point in the text "he" has been either Messiah, or the Assyrian. After the name "Jacob" is introduced (v.7), "he" and "you" become the Israelite.

Four similes are given concerning "a remnant of Jacob" (v.8), when he will be a diaspora "in the midst of many peoples", "among nations" –

- like dew from Yahweh
- like showers upon herbage
- like a lion among the wild beasts
- like a young lion tearing the flocks

The message here is a mixed one – both blessing and plague will be meted out. Will the experience differ for these nations, depending on their treatment of this remnant? See Mat.25:40.

First Yahweh promised to cut off Israel's enemies (Mic.5:6, 9), but then He immediately added –

- I will cut off your horses and chariots
- I will cut off your cities and fortresses
- I will cut off your sorceries and soothsayers
- I will cut off your idols, pillars and Asherah
- I will annihilate your cities

This seems to flash back to the prelude of the blessings – the punishment of the nation for their many rebellions. Is this perhaps Messiah's appointment of their time of childbearing? One could infer these "cuttings off" as past punishments over a long period of time. Four of the last five bullet-points above might be associated with the AD 68-73 catastrophe, although the idols, pillars and Asherah were long gone at that time. But "annihilate your cities" seems a bit strong, as the Romans did not pursue a scorched earth campaign against all of Judea at that time. And when did Messiah ever cut off the enemies of Jacob? Not yet.

This text ends with an abrupt about-face to "do vengeance … upon the nations which have not listened". Recall that Jonah was sent to Nineveh, and Jeremiah was later sent to a series of nations (chapter 25). If they had not heard the word of the Lord, they would not have been held accountable for it. The same Hebrew expression behind "the nations which have not listened (heard/obeyed)" (Mic.5:15) would later be applied to the singular "nation" Israel in Jer.7:28. As Romans 3:23 well says, "all have sinned". But whenever has God avenged Himself on the nations (Assyria specifically, but all of them generally)? Is this not the warfare prelude to the judgment scene at the return of Christ (Mat.25:31-46)?

Micah 7:6 quoted in Matthew 10:35-36 –

Another NT quote from Micah applied to Christ's first visit –

> "Do not suppose that I came to bring peace upon the land. I came not to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to turn a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And the man's enemies *will be* those of his own household." Mat.10:34-36

The underlined portion is an expansion on Mic.7:6, which is underlined in the OT quote below. Before turning to that, let me state that Messiah's first presence with His people was not as "Prince of peace" – that will come later, but only after more conflict and division. In the Micah 5 text that we reviewed previously, "This One will become peace" (5:5) is still future. The division that Jesus spoke of in Matthew chapter 10 continued right through to Acts 28:25-27, which ended on a contentious note among the Roman Jews Paul was preaching to. Now to quote Micah chapter 7 –

"Woe to me, for I have become as gatherings of summer-fruit, as gleanings of a vintage – no cluster to eat – an early fig *that* I myself have desired. *The* kind one has perished from the earth, and a straight one among mankind *there is* not. All of them strive for blood. Each hunts his brother *as* a devoted thing (i.e., a sacrificial offering), concerning the evil thing, *their* hands to succeed. The prince *is* asking, also the judge, for a bribe. And the great one *is* speaking *the* desire of his person – he also weaves *a web* with him. *The* best of them *is* like a brier; *the* straightest *is* a hedge. A day of your watching; your visitation has come. Now will come their confusion. Trust not in a friend, nor should you believe in a chief. From **her *who is* lying in your bosom** guard *the* doors of your mouth. For son *is* treating father as a fool; a daughter *is* rising up against her mother; a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. One's enemies *are* men of his own house. But I will watch closely by Yahweh. I will wait for Elohim my salvation. My Elohim will hear me. Be not joyful, **my enemy**, over me. When I have fallen, I have arisen. When I dwell in darkness, Yahweh *is* a light to me. I will bear a raging of Yahweh, for I have sinned. Until whenever He conducts my case, then He will execute my judgment. He will bring me out to *the* light; I will look upon His righteousness ('justice'). Then **she, my enemy**, will see, and shame will cover her, who *was* saying to me, 'Where *is* Yahweh your Elohim?' My eyes will look upon her. Now she will come to trampling, as mud of *the* streets. A day to build your walls – that day a decree will go far. That day, then, until they come to *you* from **Asshur** and cities of siege, and to *you* from siege-works and up to *the* river, and sea from sea, and mountain *to* the mountain. Then the land will come to desolation on account of those inhabiting it, because of *the* fruit of their deeds. Shepherd **Your** people with **Your** staff, flock of **Your** inheritance, inhabiting separately a forest, **in *the* midst of Carmel**. May they **pasture Bashan and Gilead** as days of old ('an age'). As days of your coming out from *the* land of Egypt, I will show them wonders. Nations will see and become ashamed on account of all their strength. They will put hand upon mouth. Their ears will be deaf. They will lick dust like a serpent, as crawlings away to earth they will become disturbed from their safety. They will be in dread of Yahweh our Elohim, and they will fear on account of **You**. Who is God like You, carrying away iniquity and passing over rebellion to a remnant of His heritage? He has not strengthened His anger for continuity, for He Himself delights in kindness. He will turn back, He will have compassion on

> us. He will subdue our iniquities, and You will throw into *the* depths of *the* sea all our sins. You will appoint faithfulness to Jacob, kindness to Abraham which You swore to our fathers from days of old." Mic.7:1-20

Evil days leading to mistrust and watchfulness among families was a byword of Jesus to His disciples. Are those days over and done with? I think the Gospels-Acts period was a dress rehearsal for the greatest test Israel will ever face (Dan.12:1) – the tribulation of the second half of the final "seven" (Dan.12:7). At that time, we might expect that "enemies, men of his own house" will become worse than ever for a faithful, Christ-believing Israelite.

An interesting expression in 7:8 and 7:10 is "my enemy", a participial noun in the feminine gender. These are the only places in the OT where "enemy" is in the Hebrew feminine. On the other hand, "enemy" in Greek is the masculine noun *echthros*, while the feminine form *echthra* is the abstract noun "hatred" and not a female enemy. I have also highlighted in 7:5 "her *who is* lying in your bosom" (*hapax* expression), evidently meaning a man's wife, and probably the one meant by "my enemy" in the feminine. If this observation is correct, the bosom enemy will become most hateful to a man in that day – he will come to see her "as mud of the streets", a pretty sad commentary on those times.

In four places I have highlighted "Your" and "You" in the text, also capitalizing them following the *NKJV*. Although there might be some obscurity about Messiahship in chapter 7 by itself, the expression "Shepherd Your people with Your staff, flock of Your inheritance" adds to what chapter 5 said of "a Ruler in Israel" shepherding by the strength of Yahweh. Although the final "You" of Micah 7 is Yahweh, I do not put that sharp a distinction between Lord Yahweh and Lord Jesus (remember – "before Abraham was, I am"). Nations will be in subjugation to Yahweh-Jesus, and all of Israel's sins cast into the sea. This will be the Great Jubilee of forgiveness that we have seen in other prophecies. It coincides with the greater fulfillment of the New Covenant promise in Jer.31:34 – "for I will forgive regarding their iniquity, and regarding their sin I will not remember *it* again".

In Jer.50:18 we saw how God will punish the king of Babel, even as He had punished the king of Asshur. One's initial interpretation of this might cast it in an historical context. But if you would postpone Babel's punishment to align with

Revelation, then a future prophetic viewpoint is also indicated in Micah 7. Assyria will be punished first, then Babylon. The next verse, Jer.50:19, depicts Israel's homecoming to pasture in Carmel, Bashan and Gilead, as in Micah 7 above. In fact I would suggest that these three regions were mentioned specifically so that we might associate events of Jeremiah 50 with those of Micah 7. This also has the confirmatory authority of "two or three witnesses" (Deu.19:15).

From a wider perspective in the book of Micah, redemption from Babel was mentioned earlier at Mic.4:10, while chapters 5 and 7 speak *only* of Assyria. Per chapter 5, first Assyria's invasion of Israel will be repulsed, then Israel will invade and defeat Assyria. The identity of the "seven shepherds" and "eight princes" responsible for the Assyrian rout may remain a secret until it finally happens. The Companion Bible (p.918) note at Ecc.11:2 suggests that a combination of seven plus eight is "an idiomatic phrase denoting several or many". Whatever their numeric significance may be, when I see exact numbers in Scripture I take them literally. These are fifteen individuals whose names will be well-known in Israel in that future day. Can preterism name even a single one of them today?

We have already looked in depth at "the burden of Babel" which runs through Isaiah chapters 13-14. There we found two kingdoms almost side-by-side in their doom –

> "'And I will rise up against them' – an utterance of Yahweh of armies – 'and I will cut off for **Babel**, name and remnant, and offspring and posterity' – an utterance of Yahweh. 'And I will appoint her (Babel) for a possession of *the* porcupine, and marshes of waters. And I will sweep her with a broom of annihilation' – an utterance of Yahweh of armies. Yahweh of armies has sworn, to say, 'Surely, like as I have thought, thus it has come to pass. And like as I have counseled, *so* it will stand, to break **Asshur** in My land, and upon My mountains I will trample him. And his yoke will turn aside from upon them, and his burden from upon their shoulder will turn aside. This *is* the counsel that has been closed against the whole earth, and this the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.'" Isa.14:22-26

Babel will be swept empty in their homeland, while Assyria will be broken "in My land". As in Micah, Assyria is depicted in Isaiah 14 as an invader "in My land and

upon My mountains". But unlike Micah, Isaiah says nothing about Israel repulsing Assyria and taking the battle to the Assyrian homeland.

Micah 7 further promised to show wonders comparable to the great Exodus from Egypt. When the nations witness what God will do again with Israel, it will put them to shame and bring them to fear the same God. From the time of Micah, whenever has this happened? The nations will be subjugated to "lick dust", a position of extreme humiliation. The wonders being shown the nations through Israel will likely be great, fear-inspiring works of destruction, like the destruction of Pharaoh's whole army with not a single Israelite harmed. If you believe the Exodus account was literal, why would you allegorize the prophets as if they spoke insignificant things about the future works of Yahweh? But if you do allegorize the prophets, is that not a case of stretching the territory to fit the map? If your map says all prophecy was completed by AD 70, then you must downplay the prophets to make them fit your interpretation.

Habakkuk 1:5 quoted in Acts 13:41 –

The next NT quote poses something of a conundrum. Paul used the OT text with his Jewish audience at Pisidian Antioch –

> "Beware, therefore, that it does not come upon *you*, what has been spoken by the prophets, 'See (imper.), the (you) scoffers, and marvel and be vanished, because I work a work in your days, a work which you should by no means believe, if perhaps someone should tell you.'" Acts 13:40-41

So Paul, by the Holy Spirit, reached back into OT prophecy for this prod against disbelief from Israel in his day. Besides this, do we see any other Acts-period application from the fuller context of Habakkuk 1?

> "Until when, Yahweh, have I cried out, and You do not hear? I cry out to You, 'Violence' and You do not save. How *is it* You show me wickedness, and make me look at trouble, and havoc and violence to become prominent? And comes to pass strife, and contention arises. Therefore, *the* law grows numb, and judgment goes not forth for perpetuity. For *the* wicked surrounds the righteous ('just'). Therefore, crooked judgment goes forth. Look upon nations and

> consider and be utterly astounded, for *I am* **working a work** in your days. You will not believe when it is declared. **For**, **behold**, I am raising up the Chaldeans, the bitter and the hasty nation, who *is* coming to *the* breadth of *the* earth to possess dwellings not theirs. Terrible and fearful are they. Their judgment and their dignity go out from themselves. And their horses become swifter than leopards, and sharper than wolves at sunset. And their horses spring about, and their horsemen come from afar. They fly like an eagle hastening to eat. They all come for violence. The setting of their faces *is* an east wind, and they gather captives as sand. And they scoff at kings, and rulers *are* a derision to them. They laugh at every stronghold, and they heap up dirt and seize her. Then *his* spirit moves on, and he transgresses and offends – this *is* his power for his god."
>
> Hab.1:2-11

This unjust state in Israel we already saw in Micah, and both these prophets condemned it roundly. The "law grows numb" is an expression unique to Habakkuk. Unlike Paul's use of the Habakkuk prophecy in Acts 13, the **work** Yahweh will perform in the wider context is raising up the Chaldeans. Note how the Chaldean ascendency is connected by "**for**" ('because') to Yahweh's "**working a work**". Everything described of these Chaldeans in Habakkuk could have been fulfilled in BC 586, when Nebuchadrezzar took possession of "dwellings not theirs". But that interpretation would leave the Acts 13 fulfillment as an anachronism, because a Chaldean conquest was nowhere in sight (nor even possible at that time). But given all the prophetic texts we reviewed in the chapter, **"Mystery, Babylon the Great"**, there is much more prophecy to be fulfilled in that part of the world. That being so, the warning to Israel by Habakkuk, and perhaps by others "in your days", will go unheeded. What will seem impossible, or incredible to that generation, will come to pass – and it is reinforced with the prophetic exclamation "**Behold**".

Also, what are we to make of Paul omitting the part, "Look upon nations and consider and be utterly astounded"? If he had included this part in his quote that day, it would have added to his provoking Israel to jealousy (Rom.11:13-14). And the Jews of Antioch did become provoked at Paul, when they saw almost the whole city showing up to hear him (Acts 13:44-45). But God's work through Paul was raising up nations as sons, while according to the full Habakkuk vision it will be raising up Chaldeans for an invasion force.

By the way, Habakkuk makes this single mention of Chaldeans (Heb. *kasdîym*), and none of Babel. Some Bible expositors make the case for Chaldea being ethnically separate from Babylonia. However, the OT includes 24 instances where Babel and Chaldeans are mentioned together in some activity. A review of these texts makes it clear that Babel was the city, a location, while Chaldeans (always the Heb. plural, *Kasdîym*) were the people living within and in the region surrounding Babel. The two go hand-in-hand and are nearly synonymous in Bible usage. According to secular histories, these Kasdîym were foreigners who migrated into the area of the southern Euphrates in the ninth cent. BC. Some have derived this name Kasdîym from Kesed, a son of Arphaxad, according to the apocryphal Book of Jubilees. These "Chaldeans" became so assimilated with the native Babylonians as to become identified with them. The founding of the neo-Babylonian dynasty, from the time of Nabopolassar (626 BC), was ethnically Chaldean. Nebuchadrezzar II was the greatest of this Chaldean line.

Haggai 2:6 quoted in Hebrews 12:26 –

The next OT quote is not clearly Messianic, unless you agree with me that Jesus is Yahweh in bodily "garb" –

> "See that you should refuse not Him speaking, for if these escaped not, refusing Him warning upon earth, much more we who *are* turning away from Him from *the* heavens, Whose voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, 'Yet once, I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven.' But the 'yet once' indicates the removal of the things shaken, as of things made, so that might remain the things not shaken. Therefore, we are receiving an unshakable kingdom. Let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and awe. For even our God is a consuming fire." Heb.12:25-29

The earthly warnings took place when Israel accepted their covenant of Law before a burning, quaking Mount Sinai. Among those "refusing" that covenant were those who later rebelled against the leadership of Moses. And Moses declared that God "will raise up a Prophet from your midst, from your brothers, like me" (Deu.18:15). The present "turning away from Him from the heavens" can be seen as rebellion against both the Father, and the Son seated at His right. Therefore, the following OT text may have a Messianic application. Note that an unshakable

kingdom, the Messianic kingdom, will come out of that future shaking. The double-underlined portion in Heb.12:26 is a partial *LXX* quote from this Haggai text –

> "Speak now to Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, to say, 'Who *are they* among you who remain, who saw this house in its former glory? And how are you seeing it now? *Is* it not as nothing in your eyes? But now be strong, Zerubbabel,' an utterance of Yahweh 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and be strong, the whole people of the land,' an utterance of Yahweh 'and work, for I *am* with you' an utterance of Yahweh of armies. 'The word which I cut ('covenanted') with you, in your coming out from Egypt, so My Spirit *is* standing in your midst. You should not fear.' For thus said Yahweh of armies, 'Yet once – it *is* a little *while* – and I *am* causing to shake the heavens and the earth, even the sea and the dry land. And I will cause to shake all the nations, and **they will approach *the* desire of all the nations**, and I will fill up this house *with* glory ('abundance'),' said Yahweh of armies. 'Mine *is* the silver and Mine *is* the gold,' an utterance of Yahweh of armies. 'Greater will become *the* glory of this latter house than the former,' said Yahweh of armies, 'and in this place I will **appoint peace**.' An utterance of Yahweh of armies." Hag.2:2-9 (translated from Heb.)

Zerubbabel was governor of Judah under the reign of Darius at the time of Haggai's prophesying. A temple had been built following Cyrus' decree, after some delay (Ezr.5:1-2). Yahweh's question concerning the rebuilt temple, "*Is* it not as nothing in your eyes?" shows it did not approach the glory of Solomon's building. But Yahweh promised a house, after the great shaking, that would surpass the glory of the temple that Solomon built. Are we to infer that Herod's temple improvements satisfied this prophesy? Did Yahweh "appoint peace" in Herod's temple? There was an unsteady peace in Herod's time, that is, a lack of open warfare. Was this Yahweh's *shâlôwm*, His perfect wholeness for Israel and the nations?

I have differed with the *NKJV*, which has "they shall come to the Desire of All Nations". The capitalization of "Desire" implies that Messiah is their Desire. Nowhere else can I find "desire" used as an epithet for Messiah, neither by His

"brother" Israelites, nor by the nations. The flow of the clauses indicates that the nations' desire will be access to "this latter house". Isaiah seems to confirm this desire of the nations –

> "And sons of the foreigner, who are joining themselves to Yahweh to serve Him, and to love *the* name of Yahweh, to become to Him for servants, everyone keeping the Sabbath from defiling it and making firm in My covenant. And I will bring these to My holy mountain, and I will make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *will be* for acceptance upon My altar, for My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."
>
> Isa.56:6-7

The shaking of heavens and earth is a theme that Peter also spoke of –

> "But *the* day of *the* Lord will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass with a loud noise, and elements being burned will be broken up. Both earth and the works in it will be discovered. … But according to His promise, we look for new heavens and new earth, in which righteousness dwells." 2 Pet.3:10, 13

We have already reviewed this promise of new heavens and new earth in Isa.65:17 and 66:22 in the previous chapter, **Yahweh Fighting the Nations – His Defense of Zion and Jerusalem**.

The surprise nature of the day of Lord coming "as a thief" was also a lesson of 1 Th.5:2-4. There, Paul likened its suddenness to the oncoming of a birth-agony. I have elsewhere inferred that Israel in birth-pangs in OT prophecy was a figure suggesting national rebirth. But *suddenness* may also be part of the message in those same OT birth prophecies.

Zechariah 9:9 quoted in Matthew 21:5 –

We reviewed Zec.9:9-10 in the preceding chapter, **Yahweh Fighting the Nations – His Defense of Zion and Jerusalem**. The underlined portion in the *LXX* version of this text is paraphrased in Mat.21:5 and Joh.12:15, as applying to Jesus' "triumphal entry" to Jerusalem.

> "Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion. Shout, daughter of Jerusalem. **Behold**, your King comes to you. He *is* righteous ('just') and saving, lowly and riding upon a donkey, and upon a colt, son of a female donkey. And I will cut off *the* chariot from Ephraim, and *the* horse from Jerusalem. And *the* bow of battle will be cut off, and He will speak **peace to *the* nations**. And His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from *the* river up to *the* end of land." Zec.9:9-10 (transl. from Hebrew text)

Even the lengthier citation in Mat.21:5 omits "just and saving" from its quotation. The NT emphasis seems to have been on His humility (*LXX* and NT have *praus*, 'humble') even while He was being praised with Hosannas.

Now look at the context in Zechariah 9 – reigning in the Land, while bringing "peace (*shâlôwm*) to *the* nations", and to Israel. The limited view of "His dominion" in the NT quote may have served its purpose in showing forth Jesus as the lowly King. His later manifestation will show Him to be King of kings and Lord of lords. His justice in judgment and His salvation in battle were "rightly divided" out of Matthew's quote. It will require a return visit of the King to fulfill the remainder of this Zechariah prophecy. My word to the wise is, "Not yet."

Zechariah 13:7 quoted in Matthew 26:31 –

Zechariah is quoted again, this time by Jesus Himself –

> "Then Jesus said to them, 'All you will be scandalized in Me in this night, for it has been written, "I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."'" Mat.26:31

This was taken from Zechariah 13, for which I provide a little context –

> "And one will say to Him, 'What are these wounds between Your hands?' And He will say, "*Those* which I was smitten *in the* house of those loving Me.' 'Sword, awake against *the* Shepherd, and against a Strong One, My companion.' – an utterance of Yahweh of armies – 'Strike the Shepherd and will be scattered the flock. Then I will bring back My hand against the diminishing ones. And it will come to pass in the whole land – an utterance of Yahweh – mouth (i.e., 'individuals') of two in her (land) will be cut off. They

> will die. And the third will remain in her. And I will bring in the third by fire. Then I will smelt them as smelting the silver, and I will prove them as proving the gold. He will call by My name, and I Myself will answer them. I have said, 'This *is* My people.' And he will say, 'Yahweh my Elohim.'" Zec.13:6-9

Historically Jesus was smitten in the house of His friends, the Shepherd struck down. What about the cutting off of two-thirds "in the whole land"? Did the Roman conquest of AD 68-73 accomplish that? Did only a third survive the Roman pacification to find themselves refined and tested such that God considered them precious in His sight? But all who survive the testing of Zechariah 13 will be that precious "third". Were the survivors of the Roman campaign all precious as "My people" to Yahweh? It is anybody's guess as to how many Jews died, but I have seen one estimate that 100,000 either died or were sold into slavery. Could that 100,000 have been two-thirds of the whole population in those days? Hardly. It seems obvious that Zechariah 13 cannot have been fulfilled at any time since Zechariah spoke it. A killing of two-thirds of a population is systematic genocide, like that perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. If the Romans had practiced genocide, who would have been left to pay Roman taxes and support their extravagances? But the Romans were pragmatists, not ideologues like the Jewish Zealots or communists of various stripe in our modern times.

I have elsewhere made the point that the "fire" and "smelting" of Zechariah 13 represent the suffering of the Great Tribulation, ending at Millennium's start.

Malachi 3:1 quoted in Luke 7:27 –

The prophecy of Malachi is not without its Messianic witness. The Lord Jesus stated the following concerning John the Baptist –

> "This is *he* concerning whom it has been written, '**Behold**, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.'"
>
> Luk.7:27

In making comparison between how "this generation" received John, and Jesus' reception by them, Jesus implied that John was the preparer for His way (Luk.7:31-34). The underlined quote above was taken loosely from the *LXX* equivalent of the first sentence of this OT text –

> "'**Behold**, I am sending My messenger, and he will turn out *obstacles from the* way before Me. Then **suddenly** will come into His temple the Lord (Heb. *Âdôwn*) Whom you are seeking, even the Messenger of the covenant Whom you delight in. Behold, He is coming', said Yahweh of armies." Mal.3:1

Ostensibly, until Jesus applied the first sentence to John and Himself, this might have been understood as a future prophet preparing the way for Yahweh's return to His temple (per Eze.43:4-5). But even more than that, "My messenger" (Heb. *malâ'kîy*) in Mal.3:1 is the very Hebrew spelling of the prophet Malachi's name in Mal.1:1. Malachi himself was to be the preparer for the way before Yahweh. Failing that, it became the role of John the Baptist. And if the Lord has not already come suddenly into His temple, then yet another messenger must fill this role. The potential for fulfilling all of Malachi chapters 3-4 was there in Malachi's time, and again in John's time, but the ultimate "day of His coming" (Mal.3:2) has been deferred and is still future.

The next sentence describes "the Lord", "the Messenger of the covenant" (*hapax*) coming "**suddenly**" to His temple. This introduces a number of complexities. If John satisfied the requirement of "My messenger", then "the Messenger of the covenant" would logically have been Jesus Christ. John preached in the wilderness, but Jesus in the temple, as well as in towns and wildernesses. His coming "**suddenly**" to "His temple" seems out of place in the Gospel accounts, which chronicled His first coming. "**Suddenly**", as we have seen in various places, will apply to His second coming. So here is another OT text that, when Jesus quoted from it, He "rightly divided" the present application from the future.

Note that I have capitalized "His" in "His temple", that is, Messiah's temple. The Heb. *hêykâl* is the word for "temple" here, and it is used 80 times in the OT. In 13 instances it refers to men's palaces or profane temples, and the context makes this clear in each case. In the remainder it is "temple of Yahweh" (22), and variously "His temple" (6), "His holy temple" (3), "Your temple" (2), "Your holy temple" (6), or just "the temple" or "temple". Once it is called "temple for Yahweh-Elohim of Israel". My point here is that nowhere is the temple of Jerusalem referred to as Israel's temple, or man's temple, as though men owned any part of it. It was always Yahweh's very own temple, where men could worship

Him. Thus, "His temple" in Mal.3:1 must mean that it belongs to Yahweh-Jesus, and to no one else.

One might incline (mistakenly) toward reading "My messenger" and "the Messenger of the covenant" as the same emissary. Indeed, both John and Jesus were human prophets proclaiming together, "Repent, for has drawn near the kingdom of the heavens." (Mat.3:2; 4:17). Their missions overlapped in time, with John declaring, "That One must increase, but I decrease'" (Joh.3:30). So two messengers are indicated by NT circumstances.

The allusions to Christ's second coming are even more forceful in the remainder of Malachi –

> "'But who *is* enduring ***the*** **day of His coming**? And who *is it* who *is* standing **during His appearing**? For He *is* like a smelting fire, and like a washer's soap. And He will sit, smelting and cleaning silver, and He will clean *the* sons of Levi. And He will refine them like gold and like silver, that they may come to Yahweh, bringing near *their* gifts in righteousness. And will be pleasing to Yahweh the gift of Judah and Jerusalem, as days of old (lit. 'of an age') and as former years. And I will come near to you for judgment, and I will become a speedy witness against sorcerers, and against adulterers, and against swearers for deception, and against oppressors of wages of hirelings, widow and orphan, and those turning away a foreigner. And they have not feared Me,' said Yahweh of armies." Mal.3:2-5

We saw this refining "like gold and like silver" above in Zec.13:6-9, where only a third of the people will endure this smelting by Yahweh. And we have already seen many applications of the "fiery" metaphor to describe "the day of the Lord." This "**day of His coming**" in Malachi will be at the return of Christ. Christ's judgment seat will be a "speedy witness" against those unfit for the kingdom of the heavens – those practicing sorcery, adultery, perjury and fraud. This "speedy witness" is as expedient as His coming "**suddenly**" to His temple – and it is in His temple where He will sit in judgment. Jesus' driving out the money-changers was a prelude and foretaste of this judgment. But His forgiveness of the woman caught in adultery showed that the day of the "speedy witness" was still future.

On the face of it, the next part of Malachi is not futuristic, but was a challenge to contemporary Israel –

> "'For I *am* Yahweh. I have not changed. And you sons of Jacob have not been consumed. From days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes, and you have not kept *them*. Return to Me and I will return to you', said Yahweh of armies. 'But you say, "In what shall we return?" Will a man rob Elohim? For you *are* robbing Me. But you say, "In what have we robbed You?" The tithe and the gift. With a curse you *are* cursed. Even Me you *are* robbing, the whole nation. Bring in the whole tithe into the storehouse, and there will come to pass food in My house. But test Me, I pray, in this,' said Yahweh of armies, 'if I will not open to you the windows of the heavens. And I will empty out to you a blessing up to not enough *room for it*. And I will rebuke for you the consuming *pest*, and it will not spoil the fruit of the ground for you. Neither will the vine in the field be made barren for you,' said Yahweh of armies. 'And all the nations will call you happy, for you will become a delightful land,' said Yahweh of armies." Mal.3:6-12

If this seemed to apply to a current condition of Malachi's Israel, I must agree. But it reinforces my conclusions in the earlier chapter, **Urgency in Prophecy**. Here in Malachi is stated a great impediment restraining God from returning to them ("His coming") – their holding back the tithe. Yahweh was inviting that generation of Israel to "test" *Him*. Usually, it was God testing men, like in Psa.66:10, where the testing is likewise called "as smelting of silver". The only other instances of men testing God in the OT (Psa.95:9; Mal.3:15), have them testing His patience because of their rebellions. Here in Mal.3:10 it was God's invitation to test Him. The result would have been beyond their expectation – "the windows of the heavens" emptying out His blessing. The only other occurrences of "the windows of the heavens" described the raining down of a curse (Gen.7:11; 8:2), but the analogy should have provided those hearing Malachi a perception of a *flood* of plenty. This was an immediate prospect that did not materialize in Malachi's day. The robbing continued. However, we have already seen many texts describing the agricultural plenty of the Millennium, so there is a future prophetic significance to this promise. The acclaim of all the nations will accompany this blessing, and that is another well-attested aspect of the Millennium. A "land flowing milk and honey" was the expectation of the nation coming out of the dearth of Sinai. This

"delightful land" of Mal.3:12 will be the Beulah land of Isa.62:4, which includes Zion, of whom Yahweh declared "My delight is in her (*KJV*, Hephzi-bah)".

The remainder of Malachi sums up more of this "day of the Lord" –

"'Your words have grown strong against Me,' said Yahweh. 'But you say, "What have we spoken against You?" You have said, "*It is* vanity to serve Elohim. And what profit *is there* that we kept His watch, and that we walked mournfully before Yahweh of armies? Even now we *are* calling the insolent happy. Also, those performing wickedness have been built up; moreover, they tested Elohim, and they were allowed to go free."' Then, those fearing Yahweh spoke together, each with his companion, and Yahweh took note and heard. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for those fearing Yahweh, and for those thinking about His name. 'And they will become Mine,' said Yahweh of armies, 'for a day when I am making up My possessions. And I will have compassion on them as when a man has compassion on his son who *is* serving him. And you will turn back and discern between a just one and a criminal, between one serving Elohim as to one who has not served Him. For, **behold**, **the day *is* coming, burning like an oven**. And all the insolent and all those doing wickedness will become chaff. And **the day which *is* coming will set them ablaze**,' said Yahweh of armies, 'which will not leave for them root or branch. But for those fearing My name, will rise a sun of righteousness, and healing in its rays (lit. 'wings'). And you will go out and spring about as calves of *the* stall. And you will tread down the wicked, for they have become dust under *the* soles of your feet – in the day that I Myself *am* doing *it*.' – said Yahweh of armies. 'Remember *the* law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb concerning all Israel – statutes and judgments. Behold, I *am* sending to you Elijah the prophet, before *the* **coming of the day of Yahweh, the great and the fearful**. And he will turn back hearts of fathers upon sons, and hearts of sons upon fathers, lest I come and strike down the land *as* a devoted thing.'" Mal.3:13 – 4:6

The righteous treading down the wicked stands in contrast with the current evil of "calling the insolent happy" and not "discerning between a just one and a criminal". We already saw in Mic.7:2-6 a perfectly deplorable picture of a criminally treacherous society in Israel. But Malachi is different. Instead of "a

man's enemies the men of his own house" (Mic.7:6), we find a promise of sending "Elijah the prophet" to mitigate these household controversies.

We have already examined how Jesus applied the "My messenger" portion of the text to John the Baptist, and there are further associations between John and "Elijah the prophet". First the angel declared to Zachariah concerning the birth of his son –

> "And he will go before in His presence in *the* spirit and power of Elijah, to turn back hearts of fathers toward children, and rebellious ones by *the* wisdom of *the* just, to prepare for the Lord an equipped people." Luk.1:17

The angel was making an adaptation here of Mal.4:6. He quoted the name Elijah, then a little of his mission, but instead of "lest I come and strike down the land as a devoted thing", he substituted "to prepare for the Lord an equipped people". This emphasized the blessing that John as Elijah would bring, instead of the Lord's threats in Malachi.

Much later Jesus declared of John –

> "And if you desire to receive *it*, he is Elijah, the one about to come. The one having ears, hear! (imper.)" Mat.11:14-15

Then even later, Jesus reinforced Malachi's prophecy after His Transfiguration –

> "And the disciples asked Him, saying, 'Why, therefore, do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' Then answering, He said, 'Elijah, indeed, comes and **will restore** all things. But I say to you that Elijah already came and they did not recognize him, but they did with him whatever they desired. In the same way even the Son of Man is about to suffer from them.' Then the disciples perceived that He spoke to them concerning John the Baptist." Mat.17:10-14

Note how Jesus spoke of Elijah's restoration as still future ("**will restore**"), after John had already been executed by Herod (Mat.14:10).

Now consider also that John himself had declared –

> "And they asked him, 'What, therefore, are you Elijah?' And he says, 'I am not.'" Joh.1:21

John's denial was point-blank, while Jesus introduced His teaching with "if you desire to receive it". Jesus also qualified other teaching with "the one having ears, hear!" – two of these were the parables of the Sower and of the Tares, difficult sayings. Conditionality and enigma are implied by "if you desire to receive it" and "the one having ears, hear!" Had Israel received John as "My messenger" he would have been reckoned for Malachi's Elijah. Had they received Jesus, He would have been declared "the Messenger of the covenant" with loud Hosannas.

But there is still an anomaly in receiving John as the "Elijah" of Mal.4:6. Jesus said of His own mission that He came to bring division, and not peace (see previous section, **Micah 7:6 quoted in Matthew 10:35-36**), and John's preaching did largely the same thing. How, then to understand John's fulfilling Mal.4:6? Note that Luk.1:17 altered the goal of the Heb. text of Mal.4:6, "to prepare for the Lord an equipped people". John's peace-bringing work applied to a remnant. Without that believing remnant, Israel might have been liable to the curse of Mal.4:6 instead.

Is the work of Malachi's "Elijah" finished? How can that be, seeing that the "heart-turning" was only just a beginning, and "the great and fearful day of the Lord" did not follow? Will another come in Elijah's place before that day? It is tempting to see in "My two witnesses" (Rev.11:3-7) additional Elijahs. These two will be clothed in sackcloth, while John wore camel's hair (Mat.3:4). The first Elijah was described as "a man, lord of hair" (1 Ki.1:8, Heb. perh. meaning "a man with a garment of skin", BDB, p.972) – *KJV* follows the *LXX*, translating as "a hairy man". Fire will come from the mouths of the Two Witnesses to destroy their enemies, while Elijah himself had called down fire to ignite his sacrifice (1 Ki.18:37-38). The Two Witnesses will have power to stop rain, as Elijah did (1 Ki.17:1). Turning water to blood and striking the earth with plagues (Rev.11:6) is like what Moses called down before Pharaoh. In the Two Witnesses we can see anti-types of Moses and Elijah. No, the Two Witnesses are not named, so their likeness to Elijah and Moses is shadowy, at best. Also note that "John did no miracle" (*KJV*, Joh.10:41), so his coming "in the spirit and power of Elijah" was limited to his preaching. John's likeness to Elijah, in terms of his prophetic career, may also be seen as a type and shadow of the fullness yet to come. If only a third are to come through the smelting fire of the day of the Lord, this third will be the "brothers" who receive Yahweh's peace. In any controversy one will generally

find three groups of people: 1) advocates of some principle or truth, 2) deniers of that principle or truth, and 3) a neutral party who either does not care, or cannot decide whether to join 1) or 2). Although I take numbers in Scripture literally, the "third" remnant in Zechariah 13 might be understood in an ordinal sense as belonging to one of three groups.

Why did Moses and Elijah appear in the Transfiguration vision of Jesus? Seeing that "His face shone like the sun" (Mat.17:2), this vision was of Christ in His *Parousia* glory (Mat.25:31). Doubtless, Moses and Elijah will rise in the prior resurrection to share the kingdom with Him. Thus, the Transfiguration vision was a prophetic boon of things to come, granted to Peter, James and John. When we consider how few of the original Exodus-Israelites entered the promised Land, and how few were the Israelites faithful to Yahweh in Elijah's day, then we must concede that elect remnants tend to be small. The "third" being purified in the day of the Lord somewhat follows these examples. The point I would leave you with is that even a small remnant hearing the latter-day Elijah would confirm that he has fulfilled his role. That "third" could be seen in the Messianic Christians of Acts, but Acts did not culminate with the smelter of Daniel's final "seven". So a repetition of the Acts experience, perhaps briefer in extent, must usher in the final "seven" of the day of the Lord. But this will be the time of "My two witnesses" (Rev.11:3), rather than the Twelve Apostles. And there will doubtless be other witnesses to assist a latter-day fulfillment of Matthew 10 – and especially 10:23.

Parable as Prophecy

In the previous chapter I gave the etymology of the word translated “parable” – Heb. *mâshâl* (“is like”). There are also its *LXX* Gk. equivalents, *parabolē* (etymologically a “casting beside”) and *paroimia* (a “beside the way”, or “by the wayside”). The parabolic form of teaching relies heavily on the figure Simile (*Figures*, p.726).

The Matthew 13 Secret Collection –

Jesus began to use parabolic teaching in a special, secretive manner after the following things happened –

- rejection of John the Baptist and Jesus by scoffers (Mat.11:18-19)
- Jesus’ rebuke of the cities where He had done most of His miracles (Mat.11:20)
- the Pharisees’ accusation of Sabbath-breaking (Mat.12:1-8)
- the Pharisees’ blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Mat.12:24-32)
- scribes and Pharisees seek a sign, but receive only “the sign of Jonah the prophet” as a hidden prophecy (Mat.12:38-42)
- Jesus’ condemnations against “this generation” and “wicked and adulterous generation” occur 5 times in Matthew chapters 11-12 (elsewhere in Matthew “this generation”, “wicked and adulterous generation”, and “faithless and perverse generation” occur 4 times)

The first parable in the Matthew chapter 13 account is exemplary, the Parable of the Sower. This was the first teaching culminating with “the one having ears, hear!” I sense something of the disciples’ amazement in Jesus’ change of method –

> “And the disciples having come forward, said to Him, ‘Why do You speak to <u>them</u> with parables?’” Mat.13:10

Now Jesus had not used the word "parable", nor had He used the typical parabolic form "A is like B", but the apostles recognized a parable when they heard one. Furthermore, they sensed He was speaking parables to the crowds ("them") rather than His inner circle (else they would have asked, "why do You speak to us with parables?"). Many Bible teachers claim that Jesus was using parables to clarify His teaching on the kingdom, but that was not the case with these particular parables (except when He expounded them to His inner circle). He Himself explained –

> "And answering, He said to them, 'Because to you it has been given to know **the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens**, but to those it has not been given.'" Mat.13:11

So the kingdom has its secrets, and the doubters and the scoffers will have those truths veiled from them. I have tried in the previous pages to penetrate some of the secrets of OT prophecy, based on "comparing spiritual *things* with spiritual *things*" (1 Cor.2:13). This comparative method, allowing Scripture to explain Scripture, has common ground with the parabolic method, whose model is "A is like B". Then Jesus continued to explain –

> "For whoever has, to him will be given, and he will be overflowed. But he who has not, even what he has will be taken away from him." Mat.13:12

This is essentially the same conclusion as for the Parable of the Talents (Mat.25:14-29) –

> "To everyone having, *it* will be given, and he will be overflowed. But of the one not having, even what he has will be taken away from him." Mat.25:29 (trans. from ABS text)

After "Sower", Jesus continued to explain the reason for the secrets of the kingdom:

> "Therefore, in parables I speak to them, because seeing, they see not, and hearing, they hear not. Neither do they understand. And **is filled up** (Gk. *anaplēroō*) in them the prophecy of Isaiah, which *is* saying, 'You will hear a report and in no wise may you understand. And you will surely see and in no wise may you perceive. For the heart of this people grew dull, and their ears heard heavily, and their eyes they closed. Lest they might see with the eyes, and

> they might hear with the ears, and they might understand with the heart, and they might turn, and I will heal them.'" Mat.13:13-15

I must stress this all-important reason that Jesus gave for His parabolic teaching – a "this generation" fulfillment of Isa.6:9-10, and the failure once again for Israel to attain the long-awaited kingdom. The prophets of old had exhorted Israel to prepare themselves for the kingdom. Most of the Gospels-Acts books tell the failure of these old prophecies to materialize, and the consequences of failure to the current generation. The possibility for another "indefinite" postponement is seen in the growing opposition of the Jewish authorities. Here I mean "indefinite" from a human perspective, because God has known His timetable since the beginning.

There is an emphasis in Jesus' words that most translations fail to bring out – the intensive *anaplēroō*, "**fill up**", instead of the simpler *plēroō*, "fulfill" for the prophecy of Isa.6:9-10.

The *LXX* of Gen.15:16 uses this same *anaplēroō* of a future time when "the sins of the Amorites" would be **filled up**, implying a limit would have been reached, and a judicial result would ensue. Additionally, Paul used it of Epaphroditus **filling up** a lack of service to him on the part of the Philippians (Phi.3:20), implying a service to him that had a sort of "balance due", a debt of service.

Considering that Paul once wished himself "accursed from Christ" because of his countrymen (Rom.9:3), his judgmental statement below is somewhat surprising:

> "For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God, which are in Judea in Christ Jesus, because you even suffered the same things from your own fellow-countrymen, just as they also from the Judeans – they having killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and having driven us out, and *are* not pleasing God, and *are* contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the nations so that they might be saved, for <u>the **filling up**</u> (Gk. *anaplēroō*) <u>of their sins always</u>, but the wrath has come upon them in the end." 1 Th.2:14-16

Although "<u>the filling up of their sins always</u>" could have implied a permanent condition, Paul's use of *anaplēroō* indicated that a limit would be reached. The

wrath he spoke of (in the perfect tense) was sure to come, in accordance with all the prophetic warnings of doom, going back to Moses.

Seeing that Paul uttered the final, condemning quote of Isa.6:9-10 in the events of Acts 28:25-27, then the end of Acts must have been that filling point of Israel's sins. That was the last warning that a "return" and "healing" were receding from "this generation", whom Jesus and the Apostles had repeatedly warned. My conclusion is that, from Acts 28:27 onward, Paul no longer felt bound to preach "the kingdom of God" to the Jew first. And possibly implied in the use of *anaplēroō* in Mat.13:14, was that the oft-quoted Isa.6:9-10 was done and finished at the end of "this generation" (i.e., end of Acts).

What of the future, then? Other prophecies will apply in the future, but Isa.6:9-10 seems to have had a specific season when it applied. When God's prophetic clock begins ticking again, the *Sunteleia* harvest will be swift, the preaching may not advance to all the cities of Israel, and those prepared to receive His revitalizing spirit will flee swiftly into the wilderness to await His return. Will some reject the gospel message of the future? Yes, we have already seen OT prophecies concerning only a remnant of Israel receiving the kingdom. But perhaps I am wrong in applying *anaplēroō* and Isa.6:9-10 this way for all time – perhaps each generation will have its own *anaplēroō* limit of doubts and cynicism.

The irony of the situation in Gospels-Acts was that, along with the advancing kingdom failure came a preview of New Covenant blessings, in those with seeing eyes, hearing ears, and understanding heart. And eventually through Paul's apostleship, these same blessings overflowed to the nations, who seemed more ready to receive them in simplicity of heart than "the sons of the kingdom", for whom they were originally meant.

Now for contrast, note the eyes and ears of Jesus' disciples in the Matthew 13 testimony –

> "But happy *are* your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For, **amen**, I say to you that many prophets and righteous ones coveted to see what you see, and they saw not, and to hear what you hear, and they heard not."
>
> Mat.13:16-17

But those not seeing or hearing in the past were not accountable like the current generation, because Christ had not yet come to teach men "the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26). So Jesus' disciples were the opposite of the Isa.6:9-10 crowd, and they got the secrets of the kingdom explained to them.

Next in Matthew 13, Jesus launched into an explanation of the Parable of the Sower, which we will get to shortly. Later in Matthew's Gospel, after telling His disciples to beware of the doctrine ("leaven") of the Pharisees and Sadducees, "From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day." (*NKJV*, Mat.16:21). This second turning point in His message came after John the Baptist's murder by Herod ("My messenger", the second "Malachi"). So the killing of "My messenger", John, could be viewed as a sort of filling point. Considering what followed in the trumped-up trial and execution of Jesus, humanly speaking His kingdom mission seemed to be an utter failure – and from many perspectives in OT kingdom prophecy, it "failed" to bring about all the promises of the kingdom. Only the "new heart", re-birth aspect was realized after that time, and then only by a remnant. God's conditions for bringing about blessing for mankind are not to be rushed, nor His methods to be second-guessed – He knows when the situation is ripe for everything in His "purpose of the ages" (Eph.3:11).

So Jesus' parabolic teaching in Matthew 13 was both a warning and a signpost of further rebellion and failure on the part of Israel. At their heart, these parables repeated more ancient prophecy, as much as being new prophecies of doom and failure. The prophetic aspect of "<u>the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens</u>" was initially the Acts period, while in parallel "the Secret of Lawlessness is already at work" (2 Th. 2:7). This dual aspect of growth will continue in the future into Daniel's final "seven", and especially the Great Tribulation conclusion of it.

I have earlier warned about fanciful handling of the Parables of Jesus, and I will try to heed my own warning.

Sower –

What did Jesus explain to His inner circle about the Parable of the Sower?

- the seed sown is “the word of the kingdom” (i.e., His teaching concerning it)
- the seed fell on 4 types of ground: wayside, stony, thorny and good
- these seed environments were like various conditions of a man’s heart:
    1. not understanding
    2. joyful, but unrooted (untrained)
    3. distracted by cares of this world (trying to serve 2 masters)
    4. understanding
- there are impediments in the first 3 conditions – the wicked one, tribulation, riches
- there are 3 outcomes among the “good ground” hearers – fruitfulness to a hundred, sixty, and thirty-fold

The characteristics of this parable and its explanation resemble the classic divisions of OT prophecy, similar to those in the earlier chapter, **The Stick and the Carrot:**

1) Commandments to be obeyed (“word of the kingdom”, “heard”)
2) Accusations of disobedience (“no root in himself” – failure to train for the long haul)
3) Threatened punishment for disobedience (“even what he has will be taken away”)
4) Promises of forgiveness and restoration (“bears fruit and produces”)

To draw out anything more than this, such as comparisons between the types of soil and various dispensational or historical eras, is just human conjecture. What is naturally implied in the parable is that one would find all four conditions present, whenever the kingdom was preached. That is, all four conditions will be found in any time period appropriate for preaching “the kingdom of the heavens”.

Wheat and Tares –

There followed six more parables in succession: Tares, Mustard Seed, Leaven, Hidden Treasure, Pearl of Great Price, and Dragnet. Altogether these seven were the opening declaration of "the secrets of the kingdom". The Parable of the Tares is the only other Matthew 13 parable that the disciples asked an explanation for. This was another "sower" type of parable, but the meanings were different –

- there were 2 sowers, the Son of Man and the devil
- the field was the world
- the two seeds were "the sons of the kingdom" and "the sons of the wicked one" – that is, those "hearing", and those opposing the preaching of the kingdom
- the harvest was the end-of-the-age (*Sunteleia*) and the harvesters were angels

These were the main points, but other clarifications were also important. The provider of the good seed instructed his servants not to rip out the tares until the harvest was ripe. So the testing that these enemies of the righteous will provide is part of the divine plan to bring the righteous to perfection (see also Rom.8:17; Jam.5:10; 1 Pet.2:20-21). The gathering out of His kingdom "all things causing stumbling and those who work lawlessness" will be for destruction in "the Furnace of the Fire" (both articles present). This was not new, and it confirmed the fiery prophecies of Isaiah, Joel and Malachi. The expression "the Weeping and the Gnashing of the Teeth" (all articles present), which will characterize the Tares, is formulaic in the Matthew account of certain parables and another saying of Jesus (see Mat.8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30).

In Tares, the final warning of "the Furnace of Fire" carried the implied lesson, "Avoid being gathered up with the tares!" Should we identify the Tares ("sons of the wicked one") with any of the types of ground in the Parable of the Sower? I would suggest that anyone opposing the word of kingdom, and also those falling away from the faith, will constitute Tares. Even as the Lord had stated, "he who is not with Me is against Me" (*NKJV*, Mat.12:30). This is the "division" that He came

to give on the earth (Luk.12:51). There was no neutral ground. Fence-sitters were (and will be) His enemies also. If this division seems at odds with the mediatorial role of Elijah (Mal.4:5-6), the answer is this – were it not for this latter-day Elijah, the "division" would be between a returning Christ and the whole accursed nation. Elijah, with the Spirit's enablement, will help effect the salvation of the remnant of Israel in the day of the Lord.

And the concluding remark in Jesus' explanation of Tares –

> "Then the righteous ones will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The one having ears, hear!" Mat.13:43

"The righteous will shine" is what Dan.12:3 declared of the resurrected "wise ones", even "those causing many to be righteous". Could this also explain that murky saying in Mal.4:2 "But for those fearing My name, will rise a sun of righteousness, and healing in its rays."? I am inferring here that the "sun of righteousness" will be within these shining saints, first as spiritually reborn, then as resurrected ("gathered") sons of the kingdom.

The disciples did not ask Jesus for an explanation of the next parables – Mustard Seed, Leaven, Hidden Treasure, Pearl of Great Price, and Dragnet – and they answered "Yes" to His question, "Did you understand all these things?" (Mat.13:51). I assume, then, that the meaning of all these were direct and simple.

How Seed Grows –

This parable is unique to the parallel Markan account, that covers these same Matthew 13 "secrets of the kingdom" parables –

> "And He said, 'Thus **is** the kingdom of God, **as** a man should throw the seed upon the land, and he should sleep and be arisen night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, as he himself perceives *it* not. By itself the land bears fruit, first a sprout, then a head, then full-grown grain in the head. And whenever the fruit may yield, immediately he sends in the sickle, because the harvest has stood.'" Mar.4:26-29

Mark inserted this between the parables of the Sower and the Mustard Seed, so How Seed Grows must also form part of "the secret of the kingdom of God" collection of parables (Mar.4:11). However, unlike Sower, How Seed Grows is not explained. Thus, a simple explanation is probably called for. The kingdom is like the growth of a seed to maturity. The farmer does not actually see the growth, but he notes at various times the progress and stages of its growth. Some have likened various periods of the kingdom to a "blade stage", a "head stage" and a "ripe head stage". But trying to identify these stages of unperceived growth as to their definite time periods seems as futile as the farmer trying to see his crops grow. He keeps an eye on things, until the ripening, when he knows he must harvest. Jesus also taught, "the kingdom of God comes not with observation", so trying to identify the beginning of each stage is impossible with men. It seems the disciples' question at Acts 1:6 was likely an anticipation of the "ripe ear stage" and entirely premature. Identifying the "blade" with the Acts period may be a true observation through hindsight, but who can say whether the resumption of the kingdom (after the current dispensation closes) will not be a continuation of the "blade" stage? Or will it be the "head" stage? The "ripe head stage" would coincide with the angelic harvest, just before the *Parousia*.

Mustard Seed –

> This parable was spoken with a single, complex sentence –
>
> "The kingdom of the heavens **is like** a seed of mustard, which a man having taken, sowed in his field, which is smaller, indeed, than all the seeds, but whenever it may be grown is greater than the herbs, and it becomes a tree so that the birds of the heaven come and nest in its branches." Mat.13:31-32

The point of the Mustard Seed is that, even as a small beginning can yield a great result, the kingdom of the heavens will grow in like fashion. God does not require hyped-up campaigns to achieve His plans. In fact, He prefers to use "the foolish things of the world" (1 Cor.1:27) to achieve His ends. I believe we are also meant to associate "faith as a seed of mustard" (Mat.17:20) with this parable. Viewing that faith in its simplicity might make it appear insignificant, but its effect would be mountain-moving – great, like the tree of this parable.

The great tree that grew out of the Mustard Seed will be the kingdom of the heavens come to fruition. The significance of "the birds of the heaven" in its branches is twofold, and can be drawn from OT parables.

First, Pharaoh was likened to Assyria (or a "box-tree", suggests *Companion Bible* note, p.1150), as a cedar in Lebanon. This was a tree that grew greater than all the trees in Eden, so that "the birds of the heaven" sheltered in its branches and the beasts of the field came under its shadow (Eze.31:6). And even "all great nations" came under it. The immediate sense would apply this to the dominion of Adam over the various domains of the creation (Gen.1:26, first occ. of "the birds of the heaven"). But the greater significance was the political nature of all great nations coming under its shadow.

Much the same prophecy came to Nebuchadrezzar in the form of a dream of a tree of great height that could be seen to the ends of the earth. In its branches dwelt "the birds of the heaven" and the beasts of the field were under it. Daniel interpreted this dream as the extension of Nebuchadnezzar's dominion "to the end of the earth" (Daniel chapter 4). Both Ezekiel's and Daniel's visions were of great kingdoms, and both visions included their trees eventually being cut down, so these kingdoms were temporary. In contrast, the Mustard Tree hosts "the birds of the heaven", but it is not cut down. This will be a long-lasting kingdom, not to be destroyed. Compare the kingdom of the "God of heavens", which Daniel interpreted from Nebuchadrezzar's earlier dream (Dan.2:44). Based on these OT parallels, "the birds of the heaven" in the Mustard Tree represent "all the great nations" that the earlier tree visions included.

Some have interpreted the birds in Mustard Seed based on the Parable of the Sower, where the wayside seed is eaten by "the birds" (Mat.13:4, or "the birds of the heaven" in Luk.8:5). The birds in Sower are afterward explained to be "the wicked one", snatching away the word of the kingdom. Which of these interpretations is the more viable? Well, the birds in Sower are thwarting the kingdom, while the birds of Mustard Seed do not attempt to eat the seed, but come to rest in its branches after it has matured. So the birds in the Mustard Tree branches appear to be enjoying the millennial peace that Messiah's kingdom will bring to the nations.

Leaven –

This parable was also given in a single sentence –

"The kingdom of the heavens **is like** leaven, which a woman having taken hid in three measures of flour, until when *the* whole was leavened." Mat.13:33

Now "leaven" had an OT significance to those first listeners. The use of leaven under the Mosaic Law was ceremonially restricted during Passover week. In fact, any use of leaven during the Passover season would render its user "cut off" from the nation (Exo.12:15). The grain offering was always to be made without leaven (Lev.2:11). In the NT, a warning against "the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Mat.16:6) was a denouncement of the falsehood and hypocrisy of their doctrine (Mat.16:12; Luk.12:1). Further, Paul would later teach about the "leaven of evil and wickedness" (1 Cor.5:8). And "a little leaven leavens the whole lump" in Gal.5:9 was implied to be the dynamics of untruth (v.7). So among the Jews, leaven was a well-established metaphor for evil.

A common, modern interpretation of this leaven of the parable interprets it as evil. The woman "hid *it* in" (Gk. *egkruptō*, "encrypted in" we might say) the flour, until its leavening effect could be seen in the fully baked loaf. This would mean that a hidden component of evil will be maturing, contemporaneous with the growth of the kingdom. We can easily connect this with Paul's later prophecy of "the Secret of Lawlessness" and the ultimate revelation of "the lawless one" (2 Th.2:7-8).

In support of this interpretation one might include the *LXX* texts that also use *egkruptō* – Jos.7:21-22 (Achan <u>hiding</u> the forbidden spoils of Jericho), Hos.13:12 (sin of Ephraim), Amo.9:3 (if those sinning with the "guilt" of Samaria <u>were to hide</u>, Yahweh would find them), Eze.4:12 (his symbolic baking of the barley cake mixed with human filth). But can this really be the "secret of the kingdom" conveyed by the Parable of the Leaven? If we transpose this meaning of "leaven" into the first clause of Mat.13:33, it would become, "the kingdom of the heavens is like **evil**". But this sounds preposterous.

However, an alternate understanding of the leaven can be gained from the Mosaic Feasts – particularly Pentecost. While the grain offering of Firstfruits was

offered without leaven, the grain offering of Pentecost was a second first-fruits offered with leaven. The significance here applied to Christ the First-fruit (the sinless offering) and a first-fruit of men (an offering that included fallen men). Thus, the leavened loaf was the initial kingdom phase in which men in the flesh were the participants. I prefer this simpler interpretation. Its prophetic significance was of the kingdom in its premillennial phase – i.e., the Acts period, and its continuation up to the *Sunteleia*.

Thayer (p.273) suggests that the power of the metaphors of leaven and leavening (Gk. *zumē* and *zumoō*, respectively) is the ability for their effect to spread, as would become evident in the well-done loaf. So this growth effect of something hidden in the loaf was equivalent to the unseen power by which God would add to His church. That growth effect was also the lesson of the Parables of Mustard Seed and How Seed Grows. God's enablement of men by His Holy Spirit was at the heart of Leaven's secret. The sinister kingdom of Satan growing alongside God's kingdom was the lesson of Tares, and to a lesser extent Sower, but not Leaven.

Hid Treasure –

A "treasure hidden (Gk. *kruptō*, a less intensive form than *egkruptō*) in the field" would not evoke the same understanding as the hidden leaven. Jesus had earlier taught these things –

> "For where your treasure is, there will be also your heart." Mat.6:21

> "The good man from the good treasure takes out good things, and the evil man from the evil treasure takes out evil things." Mat.12:35

Seeing that this earlier "treasure" teaching dealt with a man's most cherished things, that application would certainly apply to the Hid Treasure. The treasure of kingdom knowledge was something which, when a man finds it, he cherishes it in his heart above all (and hides it again – i.e., preserves it in his heart), and sacrifices everything for it.

Pearl of Great Price –

The lesson of the Pearl of Great Price is the same as that of the Hid Treasure. The merchant, above all, was seeking good pearls. Having found one very precious pearl, he sacrificed everything for it.

Could there be a connection between his "one pearl", and New Jerusalem's twelve gates, each of "one pearl"? That is probably reading too much into the parable, standing by itself, but John's later prophecy may have built upon this parabolic image. Note that New Jerusalem will belong to Overcomers – it will certainly be a Pearl of Great Value to them. But could there be a pearl of lesser value that an Israelite might cherish? I am here suggesting an inheritance in earthly Jerusalem during the kingdom (more on this in the chapter **Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?**).

Dragnet –

The lesson of the Dragnet is much the same as that of the Tares. A haul (harvest) is brought in; the good separated from the bad; and the bad destroyed. Again, the angels will be the gatherers, and the bad "will be cast into the Furnace of Fire – there will be the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth". Exactly the same ending as for Tares.

Then note what Jesus said in His conclusion to these seven "secrets of the kingdom of the heavens" in Matthew –

Discipled Scribe –

> "And He said to them, 'Therefore every scribe, having been discipled in the kingdom of the heavens, **is like** a man, a householder who takes out from his treasury new things and old." Mat.13:52

This statement closes the seven parables with an eighth – the discipled scribe **is like** a householder taking account of his cherished goods – the new (Jesus' teachings) and the old (established doctrine of the law and the prophets). And note

how Jesus interwove the new (His parables) with the old (quotes from Isa.6:9-10 and Psa.78:2) in His discourses of Matthew chapter 13. I discussed the Christological application of Psa.78:2 in the earlier chapter, **Christ in the Old Testament, and the New**. Although Jesus had much condemnation for the official scribes, as hypocrites, here I believe He was addressing His average follower as a kind of "scribe", i.e., a scholar in the word of God with an inclination toward the truth of the kingdom. In this sense, every student of God's word is a "scribe".

.An Analysis of Matthew 13

In summary, then, what are the great lessons of Matthew 13?

- only a remnant will receive and be productive in the word of the kingdom – the rest will either not perceive the word, or lack the tenacity to persevere in it
- the remnant will cherish what they have found, and they will be greatly rewarded – those who are excluded will gnash their teeth (in anger), when they realize what they have lost
- the kingdom will grow from small beginnings to become great, but will require some time to mature
- the devil's kingdom will grow alongside God's kingdom, until harvest-time
- the secrets of the OT prophets have already foretold these things – the new builds upon the old

Concerning the productive remnant, we might assume that the Sower typically aims his seed at the well-plowed ground. So the wasted seed would be a very small remnant of his seed. It is doubtful whether this analogy applies, because the Lord did not include it in His explanation. Perhaps it is only true that it is what one would expect of a normal farmer. But the parabolic farmer seems to have aimed his seed aimlessly – i.e., so that all might hear. This would leave none with the excuse, "But You gave me no seed!"

It might help to wrap up Matthew 13 with a broad diagram of the action going

on in it (see next page). Here are some of the high points in the diagram –

- Jesus spoke 4 parables outside to the crowds
- He spoke another 4 parables "in the house" to His disciples
- the disciples asked for 2 explanations – Sower and Tares – both of these dealt with sowings, but Tares revealed the sinister side of Satan's sowing – Sower was expounded outside, but Tares "in the house"
- the warning, "One having ears, hear!", was first given outside and then "in the house" – although the disciples were a privileged group, they were not excluded from this warning (note how Judas Iscariot did not "hear")
- the reason for these parables was to reveal to the disciples "the secrets of the kingdom", "things hidden since world's overthrow"
- the "discipled scribe" will treasure up the old (fulfillment of prophecies, like Isa.6:9-10 and Psa.78:2) and the new (Jesus' teachings)

This was a cryptic beginning of Jesus' parabolic teaching concerning "the secrets of the kingdom", but it included some important points that should be remembered alongside the rest of His parables. And it included the use of these important words:

- hear (*akuō*) – 16; hearing (*akoē*) – 1
- see (*blepō*) – 7; perceive, visualize (*eidon*) 4
- understand (*suniēmi*) – 6
- heart (*kardia*) – 3
- parable, proverb (*parabolē*) – 12

Parable as Prophecy

Mat.13:1-2 **Narrative:**

Action: Jesus went out of the house,
Speech: and spoke to the crowds in parables

3-9 **Jesus to crowds:**

Speech: Parable of the Sower (1)
Warning: "One having ears, hear!"

10 **Disciples ask Jesus**: "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

11-23 **Jesus to Disciples:**

Reason: for you, "the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens"; not for them
Prophecy: Isa.6:9-10 filled up
Disciples' Privilege: to see and hear what was denied to many prophets and righteous ones
Exposition: Parable of the Sower

24-34 **Jesus to crowds:** parables of Tares, Mustard Seed, Leaven (3)

34-36 **Narrative:**

Speech: Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables
Prophecy: Psa.78:2 fulfilled
Reason: declare "things hidden from the overthrow of the world"
Speech: Jesus dismissed the crowds,
Action: and went into the house

36 **Disciples ask Jesus**: "Explain to us the parable of the Tares"

37-51 **Jesus to Disciples:**

Exposition: Parable of the Tares
Warning: "One having ears, hear!"
Speech: other parables – Hidden Treasure, Pearl of Great Price, Dragnet (3)
"Did you understand all these?"

51 **Disciples answer Jesus:** "Yes"

52 **Jesus to Disciples:** parable of Householder's Treasury – things old and new (1)

53 **Narrative:**

Speech: Jesus finished these parables,
Action: and departed

Things Defiling Men, Blind Leaders –

To continue with the Matthew parables, we turn ahead to chapter 15 –

> "And having summoned the crowd, He said to them, 'Hear and understand! The thing entering the mouth does not defile the man, but the thing going out from the mouth, this defiles the man.' Then the disciples approaching, said to Him, 'You know that the Pharisees having heard the word were scandalized.' But He having answered, said, 'Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted. Leave them. They are blind leaders of blind ones. And if perhaps a blind one should lead a blind one, both will fall into a ditch.' Then Peter answering, said, 'Explain to us **this parable**.' And He said, 'Are you still also not understanding? Do you not discern that everything entering into the mouth goes into the belly, and is cast out into the latrine? But the things going out from the mouth come out from the heart, and these defile the man. For out of the heart come forth disputes, evils, murders, adulteries, immoralities, thefts, perjuries, blasphemies. These things are what *is* defiling the man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.'" Mat.15:10-20

This teaching of Jesus should be classified as part of the "new" treasury of values (Mat.13:52), a completely spiritual definition of the "unclean" state, apart from physical defilement. This showed a keen difference between the physical laws of the old covenant, in distinction from the New Covenant "heart" teaching. Most of Israel, including Jesus' disciples, had physical defilement so ingrained in their thinking that they were sometimes blinded to the state of their own heart.

Using the "A is like B" parabolic model, you can observe the similarity in Things Defiling Men between "every plant … uprooted" and the earlier Parable of the Tares. This implied that the Pharisees were "sons of the wicked one", because "My heavenly Father did not plant" them.

And note this comparison:

- Matthew 13 used the imperative "hear!", once for the crowd and once for the disciples

- Matthew 15 uses the double imperative “hear and understand!” for the crowd and the disciples together

Was this defilement parable in any way prophetic? Like the Matthew 13 parables, it expanded upon OT prophecy – especially those that prophesied concerning a new birth and a new heart (e.g., Psa.51:10; Jer.31:33; 32:39-40; Eze.36:26). I believe the burden of Jesus’ spiritual expansions of the law became so great as to elicit an astonished “Who then can be saved?” (Mat.19:25). But this was before the outpouring by the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Even without that spiritual enablement, Peter recognized “You have words of aionian life” (Joh.6:63). Despite his spiritual immaturity, Peter already had a hearing ear.

Note that “this parable” in Mat.15:10-20 contains a part about “blind leaders of blind ones”. This part was singled out as a “parable” by Luk.6:39, but in the form of a question. It then continued into its conclusion in 6:40 “a disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone having been trained **will be as** his teacher.” (i.e., ‘A is like B’). If the people were blind, did that not reflect upon the vision of their teachers?

Two Children’s Answers – “No” and “Yes” –

Matthew chapter 21 continues the parables, although the first of them was not called such, until after it was spoken –

> “’But what does it seem to you? A man had two children, and approaching the first, he said, “Child, go today, work in the vineyard.” And answering, he said, “I will not.” But later, regretting, he went. Then approaching the second, he said likewise. And he answering, said, “I *go*, sir”, and he did not go. Which of the two did the will of the father?’ They say, ‘the first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘**Amen**, I say to you that the tax-collectors and the prostitutes go before you into the kingdom of God. For John came to you by way of righteousness and you believed him not. But the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him, but seeing *that*, neither did you regret later to believe him.’” Mat.21:28-32

The crux of this parable to the chief priests and elders of the people was so pointed, they could not have missed it – "You **are like** the child who said 'yes', but did 'no'" – i.e., hypocrites.

The lesson of this parable was principally moral, but it did signal the growing opposition of the leadership of Israel. That opposition led to the crucifixion of Christ, and to the rejection and persecution of His apostles and ministers during Acts. Is there not a message here for end-time Israel also? Given that the apostasy Paul warned about has not happened yet (2 Th.2:3), this parable has a future moral-prophetic significance too.

Leased Vineyard, Rejected Stone –

Jesus followed immediately with "another parable" –

"'Hear (imper.) **another parable** (i.e., after **Two Children's Answers**, above). There was a man, a householder who planted a vineyard, and put a fence around it, and dug a wine-press in it, and built a watch-tower, and leased it to farmers, and went away. Now when the season of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the farmers to receive his fruits. And the farmers having taken his servants, indeed they beat one, and they killed one, and they stoned one. Again he sent other servants, more than the former, and they did to them likewise. Then, last, he sent to them his son, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But the farmers, seeing the son, said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and we should have his inheritance.' And having taken him, they cast *him* outside the vineyard and killed *him*. Therefore, whenever the master of the vineyard may come, what will he do to those farmers?' They say to Him, 'He will destroy those wicked ones wickedly, and he will lease the vineyard to other farmers who will repay to him the fruits in their seasons.' Jesus says to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures, "A stone which the builders rejected, this became for head of a corner. It came from the Lord and is wonderful in our eyes."?' Therefore I say to you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you, and it will be given to a nation performing the fruits of it. And the one having fallen on this stone will be smashed, and upon whomever it may fall it will crush him.' And the chief priests and the Pharisees having heard these **parables**, they knew that He speaks concerning them." Mat.21:33-45

Both these parables were so pointed, that their barb could not have been missed by educated men, like the priests and Pharisees. The "vineyard", which was to be the son's "inheritance", was the kingdom of God. And the leaders of Israel were its caretakers, the "farmers". And like the tenant farmers of the parable, these leaders wanted to kill Jesus, the Heir (Mat.21:46). And like Nathan's parable to David (2 Sam.12:1-7), this parable provoked a word of condemnation from its hearers (but not with David's self-repentance).

The double-underlined portion in the Parable of the Vineyard is quoted verbatim from the *LXX* of Psa.118:22-23. This was a Messianic prophecy that I did not include in the previous chapter, **Christ in the Old Testament, and the New**. This "have you never read?", taken from OT prophecy, must have been like salt to the wound that the parable itself had made in these leaders. Moreover, He applied their own response, "He will destroy those wicked ones", to His own extension of the Rejected Stone prophecy – it will "smash" and "crush". Like the "discipled scribe" of Matthew 13, this takes from both "old" and "new". The imagery of a crushing stone might also have reminded the scribe, literate in the scriptures, of the stone of Dan.2:44-45, which was God's kingdom crushing all the kingdoms of men. These Jewish leaders were treating their religious stewardship like a fiefdom, a kingdom in rivalry with God's kingdom.

Luk.20:9-19 relates a variation of this parable, but with these differences –

- 3 servants were sent for the fruits, each in succession, and each was beaten by the farmers
- Jesus answered His own question – "he will destroy those farmers and give the vineyard to others"
- to which His audience answered, "May it not be!"

Although different in some details, this was essentially the same parable spoken on another occasion. In Matthew the crowd seems to have answered Him, while in Luke it must have been the leaders who said, "May it not be!". They had gotten the point that they were the farmers.

This parable was certainly prophetic concerning the Jews killing their own Messiah, and their ensuing punishment. "He will destroy those wicked ones" may

have been a preview of AD 70. However, by AD 70 how many of that Jewish leadership were still alive to be destroyed? With Jesus' further citation from Psalm 72, the "rejected stone" reinforced the main lesson of Leased Vineyard – they would kill "the Heir." But Psalm 72 had this added turn-about – "the Heir", although killed, would still become "Head of the corner". This could only be accomplished through resurrection. The Rock of this cornerstone could not really be destroyed.

Some will be inclined to understand the Gentiles as the "other farmers". But even Paul, the "apostle of nations" (Rom.11:13) during Acts, preached to "the Jew first" throughout that time right up to his preaching to the Roman Jews in Acts 28. The dispensation of the secret following Acts had nothing to do with the vineyard of Israel – Gentiles today are not the "other farmers". The "other farmers" were the Messianic Christians of the Acts period, who replaced the old leadership as "sons of the kingdom". These included Jewish believers, Samaritans, and lax Jews of the diaspora.

Wedding-Feast –

The discourse from Matthew 21 continues right into chapter 22 –

"And having answered, Jesus spoke to them again in **parables**, saying, 'The kingdom of the heavens **is like** a man, a king who made a wedding-feast for his son. And he sent his servants to call those invited (lit. 'the called') to the wedding-feast and they did not want to come. Again he sent other servants, saying, "Tell the invited, 'Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatted cattle having been slaughtered, and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding-feast.'" But they having disregarded *it*, went away, one indeed to his own farm, and one concerning his business. And the rest having seized his servants, mistreated and killed them. But the king was furious, and sending his army, he destroyed those murderers and burned down their city. Then he says to his servants, "The wedding-feast is indeed ready, but those invited were not worthy. Therefore, go upon the fanning out of the roads, and whoever you should find call to the wedding-feast." And those servants having gone out into the roads, they gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good, and the wedding feast was filled with guests. But the king having entered to take

> note of the guests, saw there a man not clothed *with* a **wedding garment**. And he says to him, "Friend, how did you enter here not having a wedding garment?" But he was put to silence. Then the king said to the servants, "Bind him foot and hand. Throw him out into the Outer Darkness. There will be the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth." For many are called, but few chosen.'"
>
> Mat.22:1-14

Let us focus first on the conclusion of this tale – "many are called, but few chosen". Later revelation calls another gathering the "wedding-feast of the Lamb" (Rev.19:7-9), where all those present were "called". However, they were not necessarily *all* those who had been called. Rev.17:14 says those with Him will be "called, chosen and faithful", and this seems to narrow down the acceptable attendees at that wedding-feast.

In the Parable of the Wedding-Feast, the destruction of the murderers and the burning of their city appears to be a prophecy of the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus' warning on the way to Calvary, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but for yourselves weep, and for your children." (Luk.23:28), seemed to be fulfilled at AD 70. And there were other distinct prophecies, like "there will not be left stone upon stone, that will not be thrown down", and also "whenever you should see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its destruction has drawn near" (Luk.21:6, 20). Did Jesus mean AD 70 by all these? I believe we can see in AD 70 a typical fulfillment, but not an exhaustive one. While a "not left stone upon stone" destruction may have applied to the Temple in AD 70, it did not apply to the whole city at that time.

What circumstances surrounded the angelic harvest of faithful ones in the other parables? "The Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth" will be the result of a juridical condemnation, like that of some nations in Mat.25:31-46. Whenever did Jesus and the Twelve sit in such a judgment of Israel? If Jesus had wanted to be understood as prophesying the end-times being AD 70, He could have made this clear by saying, "whenever you should see Jerusalem surrounded by **Roman** armies". But as I have demonstrated earlier, Rome cannot be the two iron legs of Nebuchadrezzar's dream. The Roman legions were but a shadow of things to come.

The burning of the murderers' city in the parable precedes a second calling of guests. If we adhere to the chronology of the story, and assume the burning of the city happened in AD 70, then the second calling must be for a time future to us, because the dispensation of the secret has since intervened. No one has been "called" to Israel's kingdom since about AD 62 (end of the Acts period). Also note that the king burned the city in revenge for his murdered servants – nothing was said about his murdered son in this parable or its judgment.

Why was the inappropriately attired guest called, "Friend"? This is the Gk. *hetairos*, which Thayer denotes as "a comrade, mate, partner" (p.254). It is not the more intimate friend, *philos*. It seemed to have been a courteous opening, but the guest's silence brought on the rough treatment of "bind him foot and hand". *Hetairos* is also the word with which Jesus greeted His betrayer in Gethsemane. While Judas might have been a *philos* had he remained faithful, Jesus addressed him like a mere acquaintance.

As to being bound "foot and hand", this is the order of words in the Greek text. The usual order in Scripture in speaking of these is "hand and foot". But note how the raising of Lazarus includes that he "was bound, the foot and the hand" (Joh.11:44). Were we intended to make this association with the unattired guest in Wedding-Feast, that he was being bound for burial? But that would make his *faux-pas* guilty of death, the same as the servants' murderers. If death will be the universal sentence for every type of malefactor during the "last days", then the answer to "Who then can be saved?" would have to be, "Few, indeed, can be saved!" This conclusion seems extreme, even though only a remnant will inherit the kingdom. Drawing again on Zec.13:8-9, two-thirds in the land will be cut off and die, while the one-third is refined by the fire. I have previously offered the suggestion of interpreting the "third" ordinally, rather than cardinally. If the secondary guests from the byways are understood as the diaspora, Zechariah's "one third" figure may not apply to them at all. The next paragraph may shed more light on the careless guest's outcome.

What about being cast into "the Outer Darkness"? The Greek translates literally "the Darkness the Outer" – both definite articles make this term very emphatic. What can it refer to? Matthew's Gospel uses this same expression two other times–

> "But I say to you that many from east and west will come, and recline (at table) with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens. But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out into **the Outer Darkness**. There will be the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth." Mat.8:11-12

This same judgment is also the lot of "the worthless servant" (Mat.25:30) in the Parable of the Talents. In Talents, it is the useless servant who gets cast out, but in Wedding-Feast, it was not the judgment of the murderers, but of the secondary attendee who attended carelessly (perhaps complacently). For some who are expelled from the kingdom, destruction will be their judgment, but for others who are invited to take their place it will be "the Outer Darkness". What exactly is the difference?

Some think no punishment for sin can be too severe, and such want to make "the Outer Darkness" into a synonym for eternal damnation in hellfire. I am not of that mind-set. Mat.8:11-12 above makes it rather clear to me that "the Outer Darkness" is expulsion from the long expected kingdom. "The Outer Darkness" is the "east and west" from which the replacement guests will come. The kingdom administration will be "light", but out among the nations will be this outer darkness (relatively). Even OT prophecy foresaw this –

> "Arise, become day, for your daybreak has come, and *the* glory of Yahweh has shined upon you. For, **behold**, **the darkness** covers *the* earth, and **heavy cloud** *covers* peoples. But upon you Yahweh will shine, and His glory will be seen over you." Isa.60:1-2

I have perhaps been too literal in translating "become day" and "daybreak", but I wanted to make clear the Hebrew use of these metaphors. Also, it is "**the darkness**" (definite article) in the Hebrew of Isa.60:1-2. Now Jesus said of Himself –

> "I am the light of the world. The one following Me will in no wise walk about in **the darkness**, but he will have the Light of Life." Joh.8:12

In keeping with this lightened state of the kingdom, we have already seen how a "sun of righteousness" will rise for those fearing Yahweh's name (Mal.4:2). The

indications from various prophecies we have reviewed thus far indicate both a physical ("pillar of fire", *shekinah*) and a spiritual aspect of "the light".

It is a popular interpretation of some covenant theologians to view "those murderers" in the Parable of the Wedding-Feast as the Jews in general; "those Christ-killers" is what they really mean. Their view of the secondary guests is that the covenant was taken from Israel and given to the nations. I will have more to say on this in a later chapter, **Failure to Rightly Divide**. My view is that "the highways" guests here, like the other "nation" in the Leased Vineyard, represented the Jewish diaspora, whom the Jerusalem elite held in low esteem. These were not as diligent in keeping the Law of Moses, as those closer to Jerusalem were. However, the Wedding-Feast king's expectation that all should wear a wedding garment shows there was still a certain formality expected of those replacement guests – this was not a "come as you are" celebration. And I have earlier shown that, using an AD 70 chronology for the burned down city, this diaspora cannot be called during our current dispensation, but must follow it.

How should we understand the "wedding garment" that the guest should have had on? Clothing and being clothed upon are Biblical metaphors for qualities a person is endowed with, and especially their deeds. For example, in Zec.3:3-4 Joshua's being removed of "filthy garments" was equivalent to "I have taken away your iniquity". Therefore, we should understand that the Wedding-Feast guest was trying to slip into kingdom, short of deeds fit for the kingdom, rather than as a breach of nuptial etiquette. Merely being "called" is not sufficient to enter the kingdom – one must be found "faithful" too (Rev.17:14).

Fig Tree –

A very short parable follows the great end-time prophecy of Matthew chapter 24. It was an illustration of how to know when those end-time events were nearing:

> "But from the fig tree learn the **parable**. When its branch already may become leafy, and may put out leaves, you know that summer *is* near. Thus also, when you should see **all these *things***, know that it is near, at the doors."
> Mat.24:32-33 (also Luk.21:29-32)

As the harvest follows not long after the greening of crops, so the kingdom would come after the signs Jesus said to look for. And what set of "all these things" were they to see, like "leaves" on the fig tree of His coming?

Just these –

- many coming in Jesus' name, claiming to be the Christ (Mat.24:4-5; Luk.21:8)
- reports of wars, and rumors of wars (Mat.24:6-7; Luk.21:9-10)
- famines, pestilences and earthquakes in various places (Mat.24:7; Luk.21:11)
- Jesus' disciples being afflicted and hated by all the nations (Mat.24:9)
- many scandalized, delivering up and hating one another (NOTE: Jews hated within the Nation, and hated by all the nations; Mat.24:10; Luk.21:12-17)
- many false-prophets deceiving many (Mat.24:11)
- lawlessness abounding, love of many dying out ("growing cold"; Mat.24:12)
- the gospel of the kingdom heralded to all the nations (Mat.24:14)
- Daniel's "abomination of desolation" standing in the holy place (Mat.24:15)
- Jerusalem surrounded by armies (Luk.21:20-21)
- Jerusalem trodden by nations (Luk.21:24)
- tribulation greater than any since world's beginning (Mat.24:21-22)
- false-christs and false-prophets showing great signs and wonders (Mat.24:23-26)
- a lightning-like coming of the Son of Man (Mat.24:27; Luk.17:24; cp. Luk.21:27)
- sun, moon and stars darkened – powers of heaven shaken (Mat.24:29; Luk.21:11, 25-26)

- a great sound of trumpet, and angels gathering the chosen ones (Mat.24:31)

If even half of these things appeared in some form, I might say, "Grow alarmed – we are nearing the beginning of the end-time." A teacher of preterism would have to show me how that whole array of things above has been fulfilled. Fig Tree was a parabolic lesson on watchfulness in answer to the disciples' question, "when will these things be?" (Mat.24:3). It also buttressed Jesus' warning, "Beware *that* no one may deceive you." (Mat.24:4). Insofar as preterism teaches that Jesus' *Parousia* has already come, but the Fig-Tree has not shown all those "leaves", it is a deception. Note that through all this end-time discussion there are multiple mentions of "all the nations", but not a single reference to Rome. That is a singular omission.

A House Divided –

Mark uniquely calls this next discourse "parable", although its parallel teaching in Matthew and Luke is not called such –

> "And the scribes who were descending from Jerusalem said, 'He has Beelzeboul' and 'By the ruler of the demons He casts out the demons.' Then having summoned them, He was speaking to them **in parables**, 'How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom should be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot be established. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot be established. And if Satan arose against himself and was divided, he cannot stand but has an end. But no one can enter into the house of the strong *man* to plunder his vessels, except first he should bind the strong one, and then he will plunder his house. **Amen**, I say to you that all the sins will be forgiven to the sons of men, and the blasphemies, however much they may blaspheme. But whoever may blaspheme toward the Holy Spirit, it has not forgiveness until the age, but it is liable as an **age-abiding sin**." Mar.3:22-29

Jesus not only showed the self-contradiction of the scribes' charge against Him, but he used the occasion to point out the seriousness of their "age-abiding sin". The Matthew account of this confrontation also says that their sin would not be forgiven, "neither in this age, nor in the coming one" (12:32) – this "coming one" being the kingdom age. And the parallel accounts add "he who is not with Me is

against Me" (Mat.12:30; Luk.11:23), indicating that the division was not within Satan's house, but between God's house and Satan's.

Concerning the Markan "age-abiding sin", it might be understood in the sense of a man's "age" or life-time (Thayer, *aiōn*, def.1 at the very top of p.19). This sense might align it to Cain's very great sin, for which he bore the mark for the rest of his life-time. Whether Cain ever went back to the tent "door" (Gen.4:7) to offer the correct sin-offering we are not told. Instead, he seemed inclined toward self-justification, as if *he* were the victim. This was likely a first terrible example of the cauterizing of conscience that Paul warned against much later (1 Tim.4:2).

Fast vs. Feast;
Patches, Wineskins – Old vs. New –

Luke introduces parables not recorded in Matthew and Mark. While the Gospel of Luke does use the word "parable" at times, in other instances the Lord introduced His parabolic teaching with the formula "a <u>certain</u> man" (Gk. *anthrōpos <u>tis</u>*). Of the "certain man" parables in Luke (there are eight of them) two also use the word "parable". So this provides the grounds for calling the other six "parables" too. The Gk. *tis* can be either an indefinite or an interrogative pronoun – its position and context usually determine which of these it is. If we include the Lost Sheep parable, which begins with the question "What man…?" (Gk. *tis anthrōpos*), then we have nine such "What Man"/"Certain Man" parables, three of which use the word "parable" as well. Nine is the number signifying judgment (see *Number*, p.235), and that rather confirms that these illustrative stories carried with them judgment warnings. As warnings of judgment, they took a page right out of OT prophecy (refer back to the earlier chapter, **The Stick and the Carrot**).

The first uniquely Lukan parable was this one, here with its introduction –

> "And they said to Him, 'The disciples of John fast frequently and make supplications, likewise also those of the Pharisees. But Yours eat and drink.' Then Jesus said to them, 'Can the friends (lit. "sons") of the wedding do fasting, while the bridegroom is with them? But days will also come, when the bridegroom may be taken away from them. Then they will fast in those days. Then He also spoke to them a **parable**, 'No one puts a cut-out patch from a new

> garment upon an old garment, but if indeed even the new cut-out, the patch which is from the new, will not even agree with the old. And no one puts new wine into old skins, but if indeed the new wine will burst the skins, and it will pour out, and the skins will be lost. But new wine must be poured into new skins. And no one having drunk old *wine* wants new, for he says, "the old is good."'" Luk.5:33-39

The illustrations of garment-patch, wine into skins, and desire for the old wine all pointed to why discipleship under Jesus was different from John's. But He was also pointing ahead to the discipline change that awaited His departure from them. Here Luke was bridging a gap, indicating what practices would apply during Acts, the subject of his next treatise after his Gospel. Acts continued to record "what Jesus began to do" (Acts 1:1) in the Gospel of Luke. But note that the introduction to the parable above included a metaphorical illustration (itself a parabolic form) of a Wedding as a Feast, and not a Fast. The figure of the Feast will apply at a future time in the kingdom – millennial conditions for true sons of the kingdom will differ yet again from the Acts period. I will explore this more fully in a later chapter, **Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?** The "Fast" conditions applied to times of testing and tribulation. This was the prophetic meaning here, an application to the Acts-period and beyond (Daniel's final "seven", after the current "dispensation of the grace of God" closes).

Two Debtors –

This teaching includes the phrases "a certain *thing*" and "a certain creditor". On that basis it is close enough to Luke's "certain man" keynote, to be included in the parables he records.

> "But the Pharisee who invited Him, having seen *it*, said within himself, saying, 'If This One were a prophet, He were knowing whoever and what kind of woman who touches him, that she is a sinner.' And Jesus having answered, said to him, 'Simon, I have a certain *thing* to say to you.' And he says, 'Teacher, speak.' 'There were two debtors to **a certain creditor**. The one was owing five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Their not having *anything* to pay, he forgave both. Therefore, which of them will love him more?' Simon answering, said, 'I suppose that to the one he forgave the more.' And He said to him, 'You

> judged rightly.' And turning to the woman, He said to Simon, 'You see this woman. I entered into your house. You gave Me no water upon *the* feet, but she rained upon My feet with the tears, and with her hair wiped *them*. You gave Me no kiss, but she, from when I entered, has not ceased kissing My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. On which account I say to you, her many sins have been forgiven because she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, little does he love.'" Luk.7:39-47

Nothing is said of Simon's motives in inviting Jesus to dinner. Possibly he was curious about this Man, reputed to be a prophet. Giving a dinner usually required some degree of wealth. Jesus was given no special attention by Simon, so He was likely *not* the guest of honor.

There is even a secondary conclusion that we might draw from the real-life situation here, comparing the Pharisee with the sinner-woman. To whom much is *forgiven* we should find much love, but not so readily to whom much is *given*. The rich are often self-absorbed and smug, but not thankful to God for their blessings. The next parable speaks to such a case.

Self-Satisfied Rich Man –

Luke 12 has this unique parable, given here with its preamble –

> "Then said one from the crowd to Him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide with me the inheritance.' But He said to him, 'Man, who appointed Me a judge or divider over you?' Then He said to them, 'Take heed and guard because of every envy, because one's life is not in the overflowing out of his possessions.' Then He spoke a **parable** to them, saying, 'The land of a **certain man** of plenty yielded well, and he reasoned within himself, saying, "What should I do, because I have not where I will gather my crops." And he said, "This I will do. I will pull down my granaries and will build greater ones. And I will gather there all my grain and my goods. And I will say to myself, 'Self, you have many goods stored up for many years. Refresh yourself. Eat, drink, be glad.'" But God said to him, "Senseless one, this night is demanded from you your life. Then for whom will be the things you prepared?" Thus *is* the one <u>treasuring</u> up for himself, and not growing rich toward God.'" Luk.12:13-21

This seems to contain the gist of the parable, although the sermon continued in the same vein through much of chapter 12. Note the reference again to treasure, a strong theme throughout Matthew's Gospel and the parables he recorded. I would summarize the points below from the parable of the Self-Satisfied Rich Man, and its after-context (not quoted above):

- do not worry about food and raiment; life is greater than food, the body than raiment (12:22-23)
- God feeds ravens; you differ much from the birds (12:24)
- lilies neither toil nor spin, but they out-glory Solomon (12:27)
- seek not what to eat or drink; worry not; your Father knows you need them (12:29-30)
- seek His kingdom, and all these things will be added (12:31)
- fear not – your Father's good pleasure is to give you the kingdom (12:32)
- sell your possessions and give to the needy – make for yourselves inexhaustible, indestructible treasure in the heavens (12:33)
- "for where your treasure is, there also your heart will be" (12:34)
- INSTEAD: keep waist girded, lamps burning (12:35)

These were instructions appropriate for expectancy of the kingdom – they were not meant for our dispensation, so you must rightly divide them (2 Tim.2:15). Today, if you toil not, like the "lilies of the field", and give all your possessions away, you are likely to starve. God does provide what we need today, but not by miraculous provision. He gives us steady endurance to press on with our daily toils. Paul's post-Acts instruction to believers included, "if any does not care for his own, and especially *his* household, he has denied the faith and is worse than unbelieving" (1 Tim.5:8). That "care for his own" requires toil. However, we must not use that toil as an excuse for neglecting *our* spiritual "treasure" work. We should do both.

In Luke 12 the repeated emphasis is on the heart-treasure, the true riches in the kingdom. Luk.12:35 is the turning point of the discourse – instead of worrying

about things that are under the Father's care, be on your guard. Watch and be ready for the kingdom – these were the things to care for, and worry about. This parable was prophetic in a manner similar to Matthew chapter 24. Instead of preparing for earthly riches, prepare for the kingdom. It could come sooner than you think – this was the warning for that day.

Good Samaritan –

The account of the Good Samaritan lacks the word "parable". Some of Luke's parabolic tales open with the signature phrase, "a **certain man**…", so we can infer from this phrase, wherever it occurs in Luke, that a parable is following.

> "But he wanting to justify himself said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Jesus, answering, said, 'A **certain man** descended from Jerusalem into Jericho, and he fell among thieves, who having stripped him and having laid blows *on him*, went away, having left him half-dead. But by chance a certain priest came down that way, and having seen him went by opposite *him*. And likewise even a Levite, having come down to the place, and having seen, went by opposite *him*. But a certain Samaritan, traveling, came down to him, and having seen, he had pity on *him*. And having approached, he bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. And placing him upon his own mount, he led him to an inn and cared for him. And tomorrow, departing, he gave two denarii to the inn-keeper and said, "Look after him, and whatever more you might spend I will repay you at my returning." Which of these, of the three, do you suppose became a neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?' And he said, 'The one having practiced Mercy with him.' And Jesus said to him, 'Go, and you do likewise.'"
>
> Luk.10:29-37

In portraying a despised Samaritan as the hero of this tale, and Jewish rulers as self-centered and uncaring, Jesus was turning the tables on his religious opponents. Luke's portrayal of Samaritans is divided. A Samaritan village rejected Jesus because of His intent to go to Jerusalem (Luk.9:52) – in those days there were hard feelings on both sides of their religious fence. Then in the Luke-only account of Jesus cleansing ten lepers, it was the lone Samaritan who came back to give Him thanks. The Apostle John had a particular mission to Samaria (Acts 8:14, 25), and the whole fourth chapter of his Gospel is devoted to Jesus' ministry at Sychar and

the Samaritans' warm reception of Him. Seeing that Acts could be called "Luke II", Luke's singling out this parable in his Gospel provides favorable background for later apostolic missions to Samaria. But I would not call this prophetic – merely preparatory, at best. If "Galilee of the nations" represented the Jerusalemic view of Galilee, how much lower was their view of Samaria? Luke's writings do reflect an outward-from-Jerusalem focus. And Good Samaritan seems to presage Luke's record of the Acts period ministry toward Samaria by the Apostles Peter and John.

Seating Arrangements –

Here is another parable unique to Luke –

> "Then He spoke a **parable** to those invited (lit. 'the called'), noting how they were choosing the seats of honor, saying to them, 'When you may be invited by anyone to a wedding-feast, you should not sit down in the seat of honor, lest one more honored than you was invited by him. And having come, the one having invited you and him will say to you, 'Give place to this one,' and then you will begin with shame to take the last place. But whenever you are invited, going, sit at the last place, so that whenever he may come who invited you will say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then there will be to you honor, before all those reclining with you. Because anyone who is exalting himself will be humbled, and one humbling himself will be exalted." Luk.14:7-11

This parable is very clear in its point – it pictured for its hearers the case just witnessed by all who were taking their seats at a supper. The issue seems to have been commonplace, but the grand lesson for the kingdom (the humble being exalted) taught the opposite of what men were prone to practice. Even the Twelve were not unaffected by pride of place (Luk.9:46). The "friend" addressed in this tale was a Gk. *philos*, as one might expect of an honored guest at dinner.

Great Supper –

The Great Supper illustration picks right up where Seating Arrangements leaves off. Therefore, it appears as a continuation of that previous parable. Although it may seem to be a Lukan parallel to Wedding-Feast, it does not have the severe

judicial outcome of Wedding-Feast. It seems rather to be prophetic of what would follow in the Acts period, but judge this for yourself. We can discern that it is a parable, because it starts with the Lukan formula "a **certain man**". I include here the introduction, which shows why this parable was spoken.

> "Then He also said to the one having invited Him, 'Whenever you make a lunch or supper, do not summon your friends, nor your brothers, nor your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also should invite you back and there should come to you a repayment. But whenever you make a banquet, invite poor, crippled, lame and blind ones. And you will be happy, because they have not *means* to repay you. For it will be repaid to you in the resurrection of the just.' But one of those reclining, having heard these things, said to Him, 'Happy *will be* whoever eats bread in the kingdom of God.' Then He said to him, 'A **certain man** made a great supper and invited many. And he sent his servant at the hour of the supper to say to those invited, 'Come, because now they are ready.' And they all from the first began to excuse themselves. The first said to him, 'I bought a farm, and necessarily I *am* going out to see it. I ask you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them. I ask you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' And the servant coming by, announced these things to his master. Then, being angry, the householder said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the ways and streets of the city, and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind ones and lame ones. And the servant said, 'Master, what you commanded has come to pass, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the ways and the hedges and force *them* to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I say to you that none of those men, those having been invited, will taste my supper.' " Luk.14:12-24

The lesson of the Great Supper illuminated the bystander's remark, "Happy will be whoever eats bread in the kingdom of God." Jesus' parable explained that the "whoever" could be just about anyone who was not originally invited. Furthermore, some of these would have to be compelled to come, and perhaps compulsion would be needed because they had no prior acquaintance with the master or his generosity. The invited guests who had better things to do were the leaders of Israel who rejected Jesus Christ. Their punishment was merely exclusion from the supper. In this illustration, there is no mention of weeping and gnashing,

outer darkness, or furnace of fire. If they had proven themselves unworthy, the master would yet fill his supper with the "unworthy ones" in their eyes. As this was not a wedding-feast, no wedding garments were looked for – this supper was truly "come as you are", without any "ritual" requirements.

Luke may have written his Gospel and Acts, one right after the other. His colleague Paul had shaken the dust of judgment from his feet against Jews in various places, having said on one occasion:

> "It was necessary to have been spoken to you first the word of God. Since you reject it and judge yourselves not worthy of the aionian life, behold, we turn to the nations." Acts 13:46

This was Paul, doing as the servant in the Great Supper did. Paul explained further that his mission to the nations was "to make them (Jews) jealous" (Rom.11:11, 14). I suspect that the Jewish leaders, on hearing this parable of Jesus, were provoked – whether with a godly jealousy depended on their state of heart. Paul described this provocative use of the nations as a "secret" (Rom.11:25). While Romans chapter 11 unveils the secret of Israel's blindness, I think we may detect a preview of that secret in the Great Supper. Therefore, it was prophetic of the Acts period. This was emphatically not the secret concerning the nations having independent blessings "in the heavenlies" apart from Israel's covenants. That later secret, withheld from "the sons of men" "in other ages", was especially revealed to Paul and his entourage of "apostles and prophets" (Eph.3:5) following Acts.

The reward for charitable suppers for the poor and lame will be paid at the resurrection of the just. Paul defended himself before Felix saying his doctrine was orthodox in that he taught a "resurrection … of both just and unjust" (Acts 24:15). One can derive this doctrine from the prophet Daniel, who spoke of "aionian righteousness" (9:24), as well as an awakening – some to "aionian life", and some to "reproach and aionian abhorrence". (Dan.12:2).

Great Supper might appear to be a modification of Wedding-Feast, but that is only in an outward sense. The details differ, and the conclusion is quite different. Luke has several parables unique to him, and his selection, by the Holy Spirit's guidance, was likely geared to his Jewish diaspora/engrafted nations readership.

Lost Sheep, Lost Coin –

This is actually a double parable that emphasizes its conclusion twice, so I have underlined that conclusion in both places –

> "Then there were drawing near to Him the tax-collectors and the sinners to hear Him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled ('murmured'), saying, 'This One accepts sinners and eats with them.'
>
> Then He spoke this **parable** to them, saying, '**What man** of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not abandon the ninety-nine in the wilderness and goes after the lost one until he should find it? And having found *it* he puts *it* upon his shoulders, rejoicing. And having come into the house, he summons the friends and the neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I found my sheep which *was* lost.' I say to you that likewise there will be *more* joy in the heaven over one sinner repenting, than over ninety nine righteous who have not need of repentance. Or **what woman** having ten drachmas, if she should lose one drachma, does she not light a lamp and sweep the house thoroughly until when she should find *it*? And having found *it*, she summons the friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I found the drachma which I lost.' Likewise, I say to you, there comes joy before the angels of God over one sinner repenting." Luk.15:1-10

Sinners and tax-collectors, who were despised by the "righteous" Pharisees and scribes, were coming to hear Jesus and actually repenting at His preaching. This fact seems to have been lost on these blind guides. They preferred feeling superior to sinners, rather than trying to convert them to righteousness. Seeing that the righteousness of the Pharisees fell short of acceptance for the kingdom (Mat.5:20), they were certainly in no position to correct sinners. If there was anything prophetic in these parables, they may have previewed Paul's apostleship to the diaspora of Israel ("the lost") during the Acts period.

Prodigal Son –

Following Lost Sheep is an unbroken succession of illustrative stories, daisy-chained as it were. None of these is called "parable" but their linkage back to Lost

Sheep implies they are a succession of parables. They have that parabolic look and feel, and two of them use the signature phrase "a **certain man**". Although not so strongly linked by propinquity, Rich Man and Lazarus has a strong stylistic tie to Embezzling Steward. Prodigal Son follows –

> "Then He said, 'A **certain man** had two sons. And the younger said to the father, 'Father, give me the share of the property falling *to me*.' Then he distributed to him the livelihood. And after not many days, having gathered *it*, the younger son left home for a distant country, and there he squandered his property, living recklessly. But his having spent *it* all, there came a mighty famine upon that country, and he began to lack. And having gone, he was joined to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed hogs. And he lusted to feed on what the hogs were eating, and no one gave him *anything*. But having come to himself, he said, 'How many laborers of my father abound *in* bread, but I perish here from hunger? Rising up, I will go to my father and will say to him, "Father, I sinned toward the heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your laborers."' And having arisen, he went to his father. But yet his being far off, his father saw him and had pity. And having run, he fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I sinned toward the heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quickly, bring out the former robe and clothe him. And bring a ring for his hand, and sandals for the feet. And bring the fattened calf. Kill *it* and, having eaten, we should celebrate, because this my son was dead, and he lived again. He was lost, and has been found.' And they began to celebrate. But his older son was in the field, and as he *was* coming, he drew near the house. He heard music and dancing. And having summoned one of the boys, he questioned what these things might be. And he said to him, 'Because your brother has come, your father also slaughtered the fattened calf, because he received him back, being sound.' But he was angry and did not want to come in. And the father having come out, he appealed to him. Then answering, he said to his father, 'Behold, so many years I am serving you, and never did I neglect your commandment. And you never gave me a goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours, having consumed your livelihood with prostitutes, came, you slaughtered for him the fattened calf.'

> And he said to him, 'Child, you are always with me, and all that *is* mine is yours. But it was necessary to celebrate and rejoice, because this your brother was dead and lived, and having been lost he was even found.'" Luk.15:11-32

If the prodigal son had returned to his father to demand more possessions, so that he might continue in his dissolute ways, what might a righteous father have done? He would likely have turned him away as if he were "no son of mine". But the prodigal came back repentant, and humbled, willing to receive the lowest position in his father's household. He admitted his sin before God, and before his father. That attitude of heart gained his father's acceptance – back from the dead, from the lost. The prodigal son's manner of life had been extreme, perhaps to prove an extreme point – no matter the sin, God would always be willing to forgive. For example, He forgave King David both murder and adultery.

Although this parable made a very moral point about repentance, it was also prophetic. Recall the Jewish attitude, as portrayed even by Paul in Scripture –

> "We *are* by nature Jews, and not sinners from the nations." Gal.2:15

Would not "the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens" ("things concealed from the overthrow of the world") have also included the Acts period secret of Israel's blindness and the engrafted nations (Rom.11:16-25)? This latter secret was also "having been silenced for age-times" (Rom.16:25). Prodigal Son was a preview of the lax Jewish diaspora "living again", "being found". Despite the synagogues in many nations, there were prodigal Jews of the diaspora, whose life among the "Greeks" had converted them to the Greek lifestyle. Among them were Timothy's father, who failed to have Timothy circumcised, as Mosaic Law prescribed. "Galilee of the nations" (Mat.4:15) conveys a sense of this far-away-ness in the heart of some far-away Jews.

Embezzling Steward –

Embezzling Steward picks up without a break from Prodigal Son, so it appears to be a second parable in succession. It also uses the Lukan parabolic formula "a **certain man**".

> "Then He also said to the disciples, "A **certain man** was rich, who had a steward. And this one accused him as squandering his possessions. And having called him, he said to him, 'What *is* this I hear about you? Render the account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do, because my master is taking away the stewardship from me. I am not able to dig. I am ashamed to beg. I recognize what to do, so that whenever I should be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.' And he summoned each one of his master's debtors. He said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your account and having sat, quickly write fifty.' Next he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He says to him, 'Take your account and write eighty.' And the master praised the Steward of Injustice, because he did shrewdly – because the sons of this age are shrewder than the Sons of Light among **their own generation**. And I say to you, 'Make friends for yourselves by means of the Mammon of Injustice, so that whenever he should fail, they may receive you into the age-abiding tents.'" Luk.16:1-9

I have paused here to make some remarks. What master would praise such a double-dealing steward? Would that not also reflect on such a master's unjust view of the world? That might be a possible conclusion, if the lesson of the parable stopped here. Up to this point, Jesus seemed to be praising unjust greed. But this parable was spoken in irony, like the prophet Micaiah's word to Ahab, "Go and prosper," when disaster was in store for him.

The "generation" of this parable has two parties: "the sons of this age" (shrewd ones) and "the Sons of Light" (honest ones). The contrast is between the back-room dealer and one who deals in the open (cp. Luk.12:1-3). Master and steward alike in this tale admired the back-room deal. But Jesus' lesson continued –

> "The one faithful in least is also faithful in much, and the one unjust in least is also unjust in much. Therefore, if you have not become faithful in the unjust mammon, who will entrust you with the true? And if you did not become faithful in what *is* another's, who will give you what *is* yours? A servant cannot at all serve two masters. For either he hates the one and loves the other, or he holds to the one and despises the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.'

> But the Pharisees, being lovers of money (Gk. *philarguros*), heard all these things, and they ridiculed Him. And He said to them, "You are those justifying yourselves before men, but God recognizes your hearts, because what *is* exalted among men is abomination before God. " Luk.16:10-15

Jesus' irony and concluding clarification were not lost on the Pharisees, who were trying to serve two masters, but in the process were really despising God. And they proved it by ridiculing Jesus. Then there are the all-too-visible "righteous" deeds done before men, which may not match the heart-deeds as they appear before God.

Serving money as a master is a pitfall for every dispensation and stewardship of God. In his last letter to us, Paul explicitly warned –

> "For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money (Gk. *philarguros*), boasters, arrogant, blasphemers, rebellious to parents …" 2 Tim.3:2

This was part of Paul's "last days", "difficult seasons" prophecy for our dispensation of grace (Eph.3:2). I will have more to say on this in the later chapter, **Is Today Part of "the Coming Age"?**

Concerning Israel's *Sunteleia*, there may be a hint of prophecy in the lesson of Embezzling Steward. How will the False Prophet of Revelation be able to wield his influence in end-time Israel without the complicity of Jewish hypocritical leaders, and the approval or indulgence of others trying to serve multiple masters? A great lesson for the Overcomers of Israel is – they will be required to serve the One Master unequivocally. Also note that the riches of latter-day Babylon will become a magnet for many (Rev.18:11).

Rich Man and Lazarus –

The next lesson in Luke chapter 16 is full of irony, as well as some veiled truths. The ironic aspect deals with a lesson crafted right out of Pharisaic lore concerning Abraham's bosom, and supposed rewards and punishments in a judgment hereafter. For more detail on this, consult Bullinger's *The Rich Man and Lazarus*. This parable also pierced the Pharisees because of their love of money. This is another "**certain man**" type of parable, but it has a preamble important to its great lesson –

> "The law and the prophets *are* up until John. From that time, the kingdom of God is being proclaimed, and everyone is forcing themselves into it. But it is easier the heaven and the earth to pass away, than one pen-stroke of the law to fall. Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery. And one divorced from a husband, marrying, commits adultery.
>
> But a **certain man** was rich and dressed himself *in* purple and linen, celebrating splendidly every day. And a certain poor one, by name of Lazarus, had been put near his gate, having been covered with sores, and lusting to be satisfied from the things falling from the rich one's table. But even the dogs, coming, licked his sores. And it came to pass the poor one dying and he being carried away by the angels into the bosom of Abraham. The rich one also died and was buried. And in the Hades, having lifted up his eyes, being in torments, he sees Abraham far off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he, having called, said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, so that he might dip the tip of his finger *in* water and cool my tongue, because I am pained in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you received your good things in your life, and Lazarus likewise the bad things. But now he is encouraged, but you are pained. And with all these things, between us and you a great chasm has been established, so that those wanting to come over from here to you cannot, neither from there to us might they cross over.' Then he said, 'Therefore, I beg you, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he might warn them, lest they might also come into this place of the pain.' But Abraham says, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.' But he said, 'No indeed, father Abraham, but if someone should go to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from *the* dead.' Then He said to His disciples, 'It is impossible *for* the stumbling-stones not to come. However, **woe** *to one* through whom they come.'" Luk.16:16-17:1

We should analyze this carefully in view of the context here and elsewhere.

- Pharisees were typically lovers of riches
    - the parable starts with a rich man, ostensibly their hero

- Pharisees taught false doctrines – "guard yourselves from the leaven, which is the hypocrisy of the Pharisees" (Luk.12:1)
    - one such doctrine was the immortality of souls, and conscious torment in the Grave ("Hades") – teachings borrowed from Plato
    - this gave the parable part of its ironic twist
    - the conclusion at 17:1 implicated the Pharisees as a source of doctrinal stumbling-stones

- the preamble endorsed the immutability of the Law
    - the parable and its preamble twice-endorsed "<u>the Law (or Moses) and the prophets</u>"
    - Jesus elsewhere exposed their hypocrisy with "if you were believing Moses, you were perhaps believing Me, for that one wrote about Me" (Joh.5:46)
    - those trying to force themselves into the kingdom were ignoring what the law said

- if they did not believe Moses, neither would they believe if one should rise from the dead
    - this was prophetic: while the Pharisees did teach resurrection, neither the raising of a real-life Lazarus, nor that of Christ, was able to convince most of them (Joh.12:9-10)

- reward and punishment
    - this was also an ironic twist – the rich one was punished (only because he was rich) and the poor one rewarded – how they conducted their lives is not discussed, except perhaps that the rich man was stingy – righteous (just) deeds were not even considered in the story

- "bosom of Abraham"
    - this terminology was direct from Pharisaic teaching
    - but it also confirmed a prophecy set forth below (next bullet)

- prophetic kingdom truth
    - many from east and west will recline with Abraham in the kingdom (Mat.8:11), but sons of the kingdom will be rejected into the Outer Darkness, the Weeping and the Gnashing

- the rich man in Hades, in pain, loosely reflects the future experience of the Jewish plutocracy when the kingdom arrives – however, when prophetic "flames" and "oven" appear in the day of the Lord, the chaff will be consumed (destroyed), not tormented forever
- like the Syrophenician woman, herself a Gentile "dog", who would have been satisfied with crumbs falling from the Master's table (Mar.7:24-29), Lazarus before death was in the company of dogs and desired a few table-scraps – this presaged kingdom blessings being announced among the nations (diaspora Jews and Gentiles)
- being gathered by angels was partly true, but the gathering for "Abraham's bosom" was Pharisaic fable – the angelic gathering of the *Sunteleia* will be a prelude to judgment, which is as lacking in this parable as is justice (another ironic twist)
- Also, it is possible to interpret the character of "Lazarus" as the prophetic outcasts of Israel being accepted into the kingdom (Jer.30:17; Mic.4:6-7)

To interpret Rich Man and Lazarus as non-parable is to treat it as face-value doctrine, and to endorse it as a proof-text for a fiery burning cauldron for anyone whose life falls short of entry to the kingdom ("heaven", as some would call it). And if you believe that, then examine yourself to see if you live up to every work that Jesus taught for gaining the kingdom. Yes, I said "gaining", because most of His teaching was works-based. Jesus was addressing believers – some were armchair believers, and some were heart-doers.

Moses disobeyed God in one instance and was denied entry to the kingdom of his day. Is Moses in "hell" right now, suffering for that infraction? That can hardly be true, seeing he was included in the Transfiguration vision, talking with Jesus about His resurrection. If you compare Rich Man and Lazarus with everything else taught in Scripture concerning the nature of Sheol/Hades (the Grave) and of *nephesh/psuchē* (Life, or Self), you will see what a mass of contradiction it introduces. That was part of the Pharisaic stumbling-stone that this parable was a taunt of. I will leave this parable on the following note –

> "The wicked plots against the just, And gnashes at him with his teeth. **The Lord laughs at him**, For He sees that his day is coming." Psa. 37:12-13 (*NKJV*)

Rich Man and Lazarus was a parable spoken in derision.

Unjust Judge –

This next parable appears to have a simple point only –

"Then He spoke a **parable** to them for it being necessary always *for* them to pray, and not to become discouraged, saying,

'A **certain judge** was in a certain city, fearing not God and respecting not man. Then there was a widow in that city, and she was coming to him saying, "Give me justice from my adversary." And he was not wanting to for a time. But after these things he said within himself, "Even if I fear not God, nor respect man, on account of this widow's bringing me trouble, I will give her justice, lest her coming continually wear me out."' Then the Lord said, 'Hear what the Judge of Injustice says. And will not God render the just verdict of His chosen ones, of their crying out to Him day and night, even as He bears patiently with them? I say to you that He will render their just verdict speedily. However, the Son of Man coming, will He find the faith upon the earth?'" Luk.18:1-8

This seems to be the point – at Christ's return, will He find such faith ("the faith") as was shown by the widow of the parable? Just by asking the question, Jesus rather implied "not much". Do men persist in their search for human justice? Then they ought to persist even more for divine justice. He spoke this parable for encouragement during the days of trial before His return. This will likely be a time when human justice becomes so corrupt as to incite a wholesale cynicism.

And remember that Mosaic Law had a particular regard for justice toward the widow and the orphan (e.g., Deu.10:17-18). I suspect Jesus chose a widow as protagonist in this parable with that legal emphasis in mind.

Pharisee and Publican –

The parable of the Unjust Judge led right into the next parable, about attitude in prayer –

> "Then He also spoke this **parable** to <u>certain ones</u>, those having been persuaded in themselves that they are righteous, but despising the rest. 'Two men ascended into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee having stood, was praying this to himself, "God, I thank You that I am not like the rest of men – greedy, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax-collector. I fast twice a week. I give a tenth of all, as much as I gain." But the tax-collector having stood far off, was desiring not to even raise the eyes toward the heaven, but he was beating his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me the sinner." I say to you, this one descended, justified, into his house rather than *the* other. Because everyone exalting himself will be humbled, but the one humbling himself will be exalted.'" Luk.18:9-14

Previously, Good Samaritan had taught a lesson that a Samaritan should be treated as a neighbor, and therefore as loved "as yourself". But a Samaritan was viewed by the Jews as a cultist would be today – outside the faith. On the other hand, a tax-collecting Jew was welcome in the Temple. Should he not also be loved as a neighbor, "as oneself"? This parable had the same concluding lesson as Seating Arrangements – the reversal of rewards, for the humble and the proud.

After this parable came a demonstration of youthful exuberance, which annoyed the disciples and led to their rebuke of the children –

> "And they presented to Him even the infants, so that He might touch them. But having seen *it*, the disciples were rebuking them. But Jesus summoned them, saying, 'Let the children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for of such as these is the kingdom of God. **<u>Amen</u>**, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God **like** a child should by no means enter into it.'" Luk.18:15-17

So even the maturest of men should come like a humble sinner (the publican), and like a simple child. The lesson here was initially moral, but also prophetic of who might be accepted in the kingdom of God.

Ten Minas –

I considered whether to comment on this Lukan parable under Talents (below). But its details differed sufficiently, so that it seemed to warrant separate treatment

– especially regarding its prophetic aspects. Further, Talents was spoken at the temple in Jerusalem, while Ten Minas was taught "near Jerusalem" (in Jericho).

> "And their hearing these things, adding, He spoke a **parable**, on account of His being near Jerusalem, and their supposing that immediately the kingdom of God is about to appear. Therefore He said, 'A **certain man**, high-born, went into a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. Then calling his own ten servants, he gave them ten minas and said to them, "Trade in it *till* I come." But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We do not want this one to reign over us." And it came to pass on his returning, having received the kingdom, he even said, calling to him his servants to whom he had given the money, so that he might know what they profited. Then the first came near, saying, "Master, your mina profited ten minas." And he said to him, "Well done, good servant, because you became faithful in *the* least, be having authority up above ten cities." And the second came, saying, "Your mina, master, made five minas." Then he said also to this one, "You even become up above five cities." And the other came, saying, "Master, behold your mina, which I have kept stored away in a handkerchief. For I was fearing you, that you are a hard man. You remove what you did not lay down, and you harvest what you did not sow." He says to him, "Out of your mouth I judge you, wicked servant. You had known that I am a hard man, removing what I did not lay down, and harvesting what I did not sow. Then why did you not put my money on the trading-table? And I, having come, might have collected it with interest." And he said to those standing by, "Remove from him the mina, and give *it* to the one having the ten minas." And they said to him, "Master, he has ten minas *already*." I say to you "To everyone who has, it will be given. But from him who has not, even what he has will be removed. But those enemies of mine, those not wishing me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them in front of me."' And having said these things, He went ahead, ascending to Jerusalem." Luk.19:11-28

Ten Minas is called "**parable**", as well as using the Lukan formula "a **certain man**", sharing both these characteristics with the Self-Satisfied Rich Man.

We saw in Rich Man and Lazarus how "The law and the prophets *are* up until John. From that time, the kingdom of God is being proclaimed, and everyone is

forcing themselves into it." Similarly, Jesus told Ten Minas for this specific reason, "on account of His being near Jerusalem, and their supposing that immediately the kingdom of God is about to appear". That supposition was wrong, and Jesus was already committed to His own crucifixion.

Obviously Jesus meant Himself as the master in this tale. His going to a distant country to receive a kingdom had a real life parallel with their current earthly rulership. From the time of Herod the Great to the current Herod Antipas, the "kings" of Judea reigned at the consent of the Roman emperor. And the senior Herod traveled several times to the "distant country" of Rome to cultivate his alliances. What was lost on His hearers that day was that Jesus' "distant country" and the source of His authority was the Father's throne in heaven.

There is a duality here in Minas that is not in Talents – the future king has servants serving him, but citizens of the kingdom he is about to acquire are hating him. These rebellious citizens will be destroyed, but the servants rewarded or punished, on the basis of their service to him. Some will be winners, some losers, and the enemy-citizens executed. This lifts some of the shadows from OT prophecies about the final controversy with "Zion" (i.e., both Jerusalem and the Land). Jesus Christ will be the central figure in the unfolding of these final events. Note how the master leaves, receives a kingdom, then returns and has a reckoning with his stewards after an interval of investment has passed. Prophetically, these pointed to *postponement* of the matured kingdom until man's service was completed. If any is inclined to read the AD 70 Jerusalem climax into Ten Minas, I would agree that it may be a typical fulfillment only, typical of a much greater controversy at the end-of-the-age.

Another difference between Minas and Talents is that the Minas seem to have been distributed evenly among ten servants, whereas the Talents were distributed to "each according to his own ability". It appears that the investments of each parable represented something different – equal shares of the Minas versus shares of the Talents proportionate to ability. However, the profits in Minas were disproportionate to their investment. Perhaps there is a comparative lesson here of an election out of an election. The Talents group seems more privileged than the Minas group. Similarly, the secondary guests of the Wedding-Feast are held more accountable than the uninvited guests of the Great Supper. The answer as to "Why

these differences?" may lie in the respective first-readers of Matthew and Luke. Even as the Jerusalem Council on the "Gentile" question (Acts 15) made few dogmatic demands on believers from the nations, Luke's intended readership fell into this category to a great extent. On the other hand, insofar as Matthew directed his Gospel toward the Jews, they were a people of privilege – as even the "apostle of nations" (Rom.11:3) taught in Rom.3:1-2. While Peter directed his epistles to the Jewish diaspora (1 Pet.1:1), calling them a "holy priesthood" and a "royal priesthood" (*KJV*, 1 Pet.2:5, 9), Paul never claimed priesthood nor addressed anyone as "priest", although he acknowledged his own mission to "the Jew first".

Luke's Gospel account follows the Ten Minas parable with Jesus' "Triumphal Entry", so called. But it was hardly a triumph by any standard, and certainly not the Roman standard, from whom the word "triumph" originated. A triumph was a celebration of a victor after vanquishing his enemies. The Roman victor was given a crown and a glorious reception before his citizens. Jesus entered Jerusalem, neither a victor over His enemies, nor celebrating His glory. Instead He entered as a mourner –

> "And as He drew near, having seen the city, He wept over it, saying, 'If you knew in this day, even you, the things for peace, but now they have been hidden from your eyes. Because days will come upon you – even your enemies will set up a barricade toward you, and they will surround you, and they will distress you on all sides. And they will raze you and your children within you, and they will not leave a stone upon a stone within you, because you recognized not the season of your oversight.'" Luk.19:41-44

First note that the *KJV* has preferred "visitation" to my "oversight" (Gk. *episkopē*) above. Some have interpreted that Jesus' incarnation was that "visitation". But trace the *LXX* use of *episkopē*, which is often a translation of Heb. *pâqad*. In the prophets (e.g., Jer.6:15), the *KJV* tends to translate this as "visitation", but the *NKJV* as "punishment" – it is this latter sense that Jesus was inferring by "their oversight" in Luk.19:44. Here it was not so much "the acceptable year" that they had failed to recognize, but the looming punishment ("the day of vengeance") that all the prophets up to John the Baptist had warned was coming.

Many would understand Luke's selection of teachings and acts of Jesus to cast an eye toward AD 70 events. But He said nothing here that was not in the OT prophets. This blindness toward their "oversight" was met with "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (*KJV*, Luk.23:34). There followed the Acts period and an even greater ministry to Jews throughout the inhabited world (Gk. *oikoumenē*). Even at the final rejection event by the Jews at Rome, Paul spoke futuristically of only one thing – "the saving instrument of God was sent to the nations, and they **will hear**" the "heralding *of* the kingdom of God" (Acts 28:28, 31). We are still reading Luke here at the end of Acts, but there is no doom-saying prophecy against Jerusalem or Judaism. Even in the years following Acts, when Paul was given the stewardship of "the secret" – the secret that God had a previously hidden plan regarding His blessing for the nations – there is nothing said about the imminent destruction of Jerusalem. While believing Jew and Greek were made "one body" by this plan, the old majority of disbelieving Jews were given an epithet, "the Sons of the Rebellion" (Eph.2:2; 5:6; Col.3:6). This was a reference back to the rebellion of Dathan (Num.17:10, Heb. *b$_e$nêy merîy*), and not to any current trouble with Rome. If "the Sons of the Rebellion" title was an inference that what happened to Dathan's crowd also threatened the current generation of disbelieving Jews, it would not have been a new revelation. Throughout the OT prophets we find this same warning of catastrophe, if the people did not turn back to the Lord – review the previous chapter, **The Stick and the Carrot**. Of course, we can see in the AD 70 disaster a typical fulfillment of what will be its eventual, final fulfillment. And note further, that Luke 19's "they will not leave a stone upon a stone" pertains to the city, and not the Temple. But the Romans did not systematically raze Jerusalem in AD 70. Nebuchadrezzar seems to have done that in ancient times, but not Titus.

I will elaborate further on the relationship today between "the Body of Christ" and "the circumcision" in the later chapter, **Failure to Rightly Divide**.

Shepherd and Sheep –

Turning now to John's Gospel, we take note of his emphasis on the "signs" of Jesus' Messiahship. John does not repeat the parables of Matthew, Mark or Luke, but he presents two teaching discourses of Jesus as "proverbs" (Gk. *paroimia*). The

Heb. *mâshâl* is rendered in the *LXX* of the book of Proverbs by both *parabolē* and *paroimia*. So I will treat John's *paroimia* teachings like parables in this survey.

The preamble concerning blind Pharisees establishes a context for this first **proverb** –

> "Then Jesus said, 'For judgment I came into this world, so that those not seeing might see, and those seeing might become blind.' *Some* of the Pharisees having heard these things, those being with Him, even said to Him, 'Are we also blind?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you were not having sin. But now you say, "We see." Your sin remains.'
>
> '**Amen**, **amen**, I say to you, "The one not entering by the gate into the fold of the sheep, but ascending another way, this one is a thief and robber. But the one entering by the gate is shepherd of the sheep. To this one the gatekeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and he leads them out. Whenever he drives out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. And they will by no means follow another, but they will flee from him because they know not the voice of the others.' Jesus spoke this **proverb** to them, but those ones did not recognize what things they were which He was speaking to them." Joh.9:39-10:6

Because of their lack of understanding, He continued with the following illustration, making it more personal –

> "Therefore, Jesus said further, '**Amen**, **amen**, I say to you that I am the door of the sheep. All whoever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If any should enter by Me, he will be saved, and go out, and come in, and find pasture. The thief does not come except in order that he might steal and slaughter and destroy. I came in order that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd puts (aside) his life for the sheep. But the laborer, not being a shepherd, whose are not the very sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees. And the wolf seizes and scatters them, because he is a laborer, and it is no concern to him about the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I recognize what *are* Mine, and what are Mine recognize Me.'" Joh.10:7-18

The first part of the **proverb** contrasted between the shepherd and the thief, and the perception of these two roles by the sheep themselves. The figure of a shepherd as spiritual guide should have been familiar to all who were schooled in the Scriptures, particularly in the book of Jeremiah.

> "And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, and they will pasture you *on* knowledge and insight." Jer.3:15

The book of Jeremiah is full of such allusions. So one must wonder why Jesus' hearers were so dull-witted. Perhaps they had not read the prophets with enough devotion.

In the second part of the **proverb**, Jesus spoke plainly that He was both "the gate" (the correct access to the sheep) as opposed to some other way; and He was "the good shepherd" as opposed to the careless "hireling" (*KJV*). This demonstrates that God's revelation can provide multiple levels of meaning. However, if not divinely guided, we are apt to put a fanciful explanation on veiled revelation. This is why the method of "comparing spiritual *things* with spiritual *things*" (1 Cor.2:13) is so vital to spiritual understanding. Inadvertently, we may become spiritually retarded with man's wisdom, instead of the Holy Spirit's teaching. We who have the completed Scriptures have much treasure with which to make these spiritual comparisons.

These pastoral teachings of Jesus also build upon the prophet Jeremiah, here –

> "**Hah**, shepherds destroying and scattering the flock of My pasture – an utterance of Yahweh. Therefore, thus said Yahweh, Elohim of Israel, against the shepherds, those shepherding My people, 'You have scattered My flock and driven them out and have not attended them. **Behold**, I *am* visiting upon you *the* evil of your deeds.' – an utterance of Yahweh. 'But I will gather *the* remainder of My flock from all the lands where I have driven them there, and I will return them to their pen. And they will be fruitful and increase. And I will raise up over them shepherds, and they will pasture them. And they will no longer fear nor be dismayed nor be visited ('punished').' – an utterance of Yahweh."
>
> Jer.23:1-4

The verses following in Jeremiah 23 point to Yahweh's saving Judah and Israel by a "Branch of righteousness", leading them "from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them. And they shall dwell in their own land." (*NKJV*). I believe Jesus' **proverb** was meant to build upon Jeremiah 23. The gathering of this remnant "flock" from the North is still future. The scattering of the flock, the dispersion of Israel, was often a just punishment from Yahweh for their sins – but the leaders' sins were more culpable than the sins of the flock. When the nation had good kings in the past, it benefited from their leadership of intolerance toward idolatry and injustice.

Grief and Joy of Childbirth –

This was John's only other **proverb** –

"Jesus having known that they were wanting to ask Him, then He said to them, 'Concerning this you are seeking with one another, because I said, "A little *while* and you do not see Me, and yet a little *while* and you will see Me." **Amen**, **amen**, I say to you that you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice. You will be grieved, but your grief will become for joy. The woman, whenever she may have birth-pangs, has grief, because her hour has come. But whenever she may bear the child, she no longer remembers the suffering on account of the joy that a man has been born into the world. Therefore now, indeed, you also have grief, but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one takes from you. And in that day you will not ask Me anything (lit. 'not ask Me nothing'). **Amen**, **amen**, I say to you, if you should ask anything of the Father in My name, He will give *it* to you. Until now you have not asked anything in My name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be filled (or 'fulfilled'). These things I have spoken to you in a **proverb**. An hour comes when I will no longer speak to you in **proverbs**, but I will proclaim to you concerning the Father with frankness (*KJV*, 'plainly'). In that day you will ask in My name, and I say not to you that I will request the Father on your behalf. For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from (beside) God. I came out from (beside) the Father and I have come into the world. Yet I leave the world and go to the Father.' His disciples say, 'Look! Now You speak with frankness, and You

speak **proverbs** not at all.'" Joh.16:19-29

The **proverb** of the states of mind, before and after childbirth, applied to the effect that the Savior's going away (His death, ascension) and returning (His *Parousia*) would have for them.

What was still hidden was how the Holy Spirit at Acts 2 would bring Jesus' resurrection to bear in their lives. The apostle John had earlier recounted Jesus' lesson to Nicodemus –

"**Amen**, **amen**, I say to you, unless one should be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Joh.3:3

This text is usually applied to the great "born again" event of Acts 2. However, *seeing* the kingdom in Mar.9:1 and Luk.9:27 is reserved for certain ones who "may not taste death until perhaps" they may see it. I assume the 3 texts speak with one voice, so "being born from above" must mean either resurrection, or the equivalent physical change that some may experience without "tasting death" (1 Cor.15:51).

Although there was a certain rejoicing when the disciples saw their resurrected Lord (Joh.20:20), it was not the "filled" joy that Jesus spoke about in John 16. Note how Peter was grieved when the resurrected Lord saw him and asked him three times, "do you love Me?" (Joh.21:17). The "filled" joy will come after deliverance from Tribulation grief and that generation's entrance into the kingdom.

We have already examined several OT prophecies that used the birth metaphor in connection with the day of the Lord (e.g., Isa.66:5-10). This will become the rebirth of the redeemed Nation, through suffering into joy.

Christ as High Priest –

There are still two examples of **parables** outside of the Gospel accounts. The first of these is –

"But thus these things having been prepared, indeed the priests entered into the first tent by all *of them*, accomplishing the services. But into the second, the high priest only, once a year, *entered*, not without blood, which he offers on his own behalf and for the people's sins of ignorance, the Holy Spirit indicating

> this: the way of the Holies having not yet been revealed, while the first tent having stood, which *is* a **parable** for the season which has arrived, according to which both gifts and sacrifices are offered, not able to make perfect the worshipers according to conscience – only with foods and drinks and different baptisms, regulations of flesh until a season of reformation being imposed. But Christ having come beside (Gk. *paraginomai*), a high priest of the good things to come, by the greater and more perfect tent, not hand-made, that is, not of this creation, not by blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered once for all into the Holies, having obtained aionian liberation."
>
> Heb.9:9-12

I have cut the discourse short, but the above portion should suffice to show how Mosaic Law concerning the Tent and its services was a shadow and "parable" of things to come. We can find much in Moses that was prophetic of what Christ would accomplish, and this particular example is termed a "parable". The Mosaic Tent and its offerings **were like** the heavenly Holies and the offering of the blood of Christ. Note the implication of two coexisting covenants for the Acts period, by the "having come beside" of Christ the High Priest. That is, the New Covenant was instituted and grew in prominence, while the Old Covenant was vanishing away (Heb.8:13). In the interim (Acts period) they existed side by side.

Abraham's Offering of Isaac –

> And the last lesson labelled "**parable**" in the Bible is here –
>
> "By faith Abraham, being tested, offered Isaac, and he who received the promises was offering the only-begotten, to whom it was said, 'In Isaac will be called your seed', having reckoned that God was able to raise *him* even from *the* dead, from where he even received him in a **parable**." Heb.11:17-19

Ostensibly, Abraham's receiving Isaac back alive **was like** receiving him back from the dead. I think we might derive a further lesson and say that the Abraham-Isaac experience on Moriah **was like** the Father receiving the Son back from the dead. This may be an implicit parable behind Abraham's great example of faith. And a similar example of being **like** receiving one from the dead is found also in the Prodigal Son, "this my son was dead, and is alive again" (Luk.15:24, *KJV*). But

of course the wayward son was not a Messianic figure, unless we apply it to believers who had the Acts period anointing (2 Cor.1:21).

The Lesser Parables:

The next examples are what I am calling "Lesser Parables", some of which were given well before Matthew 13 and the disciples' question, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" Some do have the classic parabolic form, "A is like B", but they are not called by the name "parable". They were meant to expand upon kingdom teaching, and to make it easier to understand. These examples deserve to be called "clarifying the kingdom", rather than cloaking its meaning in secrecy. Like the previous set of "Greater Parables", I will take these mostly in canonical order.

Bedrock Builder –

This first "lesser parable" example is from Matthew –

> "Therefore, anyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, **will be like** a thoughtful man who built his house upon the bedrock. And the rain descended, and the floods came and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, but it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the bedrock. But everyone hearing these sayings of Mine and does them not, **will be like** a man, a fool who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it did fall. And its fall was great." Mat.7:24-27

This was actually a triple parable, also making comparisons between a thoughtful man and a foolish man. This secondary comparison takes us back to the book of Proverbs, with its many "wise" versus "fool" comparisons.

The initial "therefore" links this parable back to Jesus' previous teaching that not everyone crying "Lord, Lord" – and loudly boasting their works – will enter the kingdom of the heavens. The "bedrock" (Gk. *petra*) that the thoughtful man built upon would have to be the same bedrock that Christ would build His assembly upon – that is, Himself (Mat.16:18; 1 Cor.10:4 - both use *petra* for

"rock", rather than *petros*, a "stone"). No other foundation will be fit for the kingdom. This parable was mostly hortatory. But there was some prophetic significance to "the floods", and the Great Tribulation "flood" expected within the lifetimes of some of the parable hearers (see *KJV* Rev.12:15-16). A believer would stand or fall based on his building upon this Bedrock. Recall that not all the seed sown in the parable of the Sower would bear fruit.

Children Piping –

Another example taken from Matthew 11 –

> "But to what **will I liken** this generation? It **is like** children sitting in the markets, who calling to the others, say, 'We played the flute to you and you did not dance; we mourned and you did not wail.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold a man, a glutton and drunkard, friend of tax-collectors and sinners.' And wisdom was justified by its work." Mat.11:16-19

The equivalent parable in Luk.7:31-35 ends with, "And wisdom was justified by all its children", making the conclusion very barbed, indeed. "This generation" was a gang of self-justifying, hypocritical children who wanted the game played only their way. In Luk.7:30 it is stated clearly that "the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the will of God" in regard to John's baptism. If they rejected "My messenger", they would also reject "the Messenger of the covenant" (Mal.3:1). The message was moral, with a prophetic nuance concerning the great division that would come between faithful and apostate Israel during the end-time.

Humble Child –

This simple illustration occurs in Matthew 18 –

> "In that hour the disciples approached Jesus, saying, 'Who, then, is greater in the kingdom of the heavens?' And having called a child, He stood him in the midst of them and said to them, '**Amen**, I say to you, unless you may be turned and may **become like the children**, you may in no wise enter into the kingdom of the heavens. Therefore, whoever will humble himself **as this child**, this one

> is greater in the kingdom of the heavens. And whoever may receive one such child for My name, receives Me. But whoever may cause to stumble one of these little ones who *are* believing in Me, it is better for him that a donkey's millstone be hung around his neck and he be drowned in the depths of the sea. **Woe** to the world because of the stumbling-stones. For necessarily the stumbling-stones *are* to come, yet **woe** to the man through whom the stumbling-stone comes.'" Mat.18:1-7

The lesson here was taken from a child's world into the adult world. The greater sin is to him who teaches sin, and the greater error to him who teaches error. And who were tossing these stumbling-stones in the way of men believing in Him? Mainly they were the Pharisees, chief priests and scribes – that exclusive club of guardians of the law.

The conclusion that it is better to be drowned with a millstone than to be like these stumbling-stones is similar to Jesus teaching about discarding a "right eye" or a "right hand" that causes self-stumbling (Mat.5:29-30). And we saw in the conclusion of Tares the angels gathering out of the kingdom all things causing stumbling (Mat.13:41). The religious rulers were the chief offenders, and they were being warned here that they were failing to "make the grade" for kingdom entry.

Unforgiving Debtor –

The next "lesser" parable also occurs in Matthew chapter 18. It was a parabolic response to Peter's question –

> "Then Peter approaching, said to Him, 'Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I will forgive him – up to seven times?' Jesus says to him, 'I say not to you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven (Comment: the Gk. expression may mean 'seventy-seven times'). Therefore, the kingdom of the heavens **is like** a man, a king, who wanted to settle a matter with his servants. And his beginning to settle *it*, was brought to him one debtor of **ten thousand talents**. But his not having *means* to repay, the master commanded him to be sold, and the wife and the children, and all as much as he has, and to repay. Therefore, the servant having fallen, was kneeling to him, saying, "Be

> patient with me, and I will repay you all." But, having pity, the master of that servant released him, and he forgave him the debt. But that servant having gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants, who was owing him a hundred denarii (Comment: according to Epiphanius, this equaled **one talent**). And having seized him, he was choking *him*, saying, "Repay whatever you owe." Therefore, his fellow-servant having fallen, begged him, saying, "Be patient with me and I will repay you." And he was not willing, but having gone away, he threw him into prison until he should repay what *is* obligated. Therefore, his fellow-servants having seen what was going on were greatly distressed, and having come, they reported to their master all that *was* going on. Then his master having summoned him, says to him, "Wicked servant, all that debt I forgave you, because you begged me. Should you not also have shown mercy to your fellow-servant, as I also showed mercy to you?" And his master having grown angry, delivered him to the torturers until when he should repay all that *was* obligated. Thus even My heavenly Father will do to you, if perhaps you should not forgive each one his brother, from your hearts.' Mat.18:21-35

Firstly, note the parabolic form, "the kingdom of the heavens **is like**…" The word "parable" does not appear in the narrative, but it is one, nonetheless.

This was the Lord's direct response to Peter's question about forgiveness. In one respect it resembled Daniel's request for restoration of the kingdom (Dan.9:1-3) – and the response: not seventy "times" (i.e., 'years'), but "seventy sevens". The answer received must have been as difficult for Peter as it had been for Daniel. I imagine that Peter might have thought that his suggestion of "up to seven times" was very magnanimous. Not so, according to kingdom standards. At that point, Peter had not yet taken to heart what he had heard in the Sermon on the Mount –

> "But I say to you that everyone being angry at his brother will be liable to the judgment. And whoever may say to his brother, 'Raca!', will be liable to the sanhedrin. And whoever may say, 'Fool!', will be liable to the Gehenna of Fire. Therefore, if you should bring your gift to the altar, and there you should recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go away. First be reconciled to your brother. Then having come, present your gift. Be coming to terms with your opponent, while you are with him in the way, lest the opponent should deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the

attendant. Then you will be thrown into prison. **Amen**, I say to you, 'You may in no wise come out from there until you may have paid the last penny.'"

Mat.5:22-26

This was part of the justice standard of the kingdom; as it were, an extreme of forgiveness compared to current norms – even compared to Peter's proposed generosity. Note that the servant owing this huge debt (it must have seemed unpayable to the hearers of the parable) begged only for an extension of the debt. Instead, his master forgave him the debt outright. This, too, must have seemed almost unthinkable to the hearers.

The "brother" throughout Matthew's Gospel meant "brother Israelite". "The Gehenna of Fire" and "the Furnace of Fire" both pointed toward the fiery destruction, awaiting many in the day of the Lord. If the code of conduct that the Lord demanded seemed tough, that was the rigor they were expected to train for, if they wanted a place of honor in the kingdom. The Twelve were promised twelve thrones in the kingdom, but there was an implied provision of heart-felt compliance with all the rest of the kingdom teaching. This included some very "hard sayings" of the Lord. The fact that Judas fell from his place (Acts 1:20) shows that the "Twelve Thrones" (Mat.19:28) was a contingent promise as far as the individuals assigned to them were concerned.

Workers' Wages –

Another parable of the "lesser" class is found in Matthew 20 –

"For the kingdom of the heavens **is like** a man, a householder, who went out at early morning to hire workers for his vineyard. And having agreed with the workers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And having gone out about *the* third hour, he saw others having stood idle in the marketplace. And he said to these, 'Go, you also into the vineyard, and whatever may be just I will give you.' And they went. Again having gone out about *the* sixth and *the* ninth hour, he did likewise. And about the eleventh *hour* having gone out, he found others having stood, and he says to them, 'Why have you stood here the whole day idle?' They say to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He says to them, 'Go, you also into the vineyard.' And it having become evening, the master of

> the vineyard says to his foreman, 'Call the workers and render to them the pay, beginning from the last up to the first.'" Mat.20:1-8

The beginning "For" links this illustration back to the Lord's previous statement that "Many first *ones* will be last, and last *ones* first." (19:30). The parable and its conclusion were the response to a conversation that began –

> "And, behold, one having approached Him, said, 'Teacher, what good should I do in order that I might have aionian life?' Then He said to him, 'What do you ask Me concerning the good? Good is one. But if you want to enter into the Life, keep the commandments.' He says to Him, 'Which?' Then Jesus said, 'This – you will not murder, you will not commit adultery, you will not steal, you will not perjure, honor the father and the mother, and you will love your neighbor as yourself.' The young man says to Him, 'All these I have guarded. What still do I lack?' Jesus said to him, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in *the* heavens, and come, follow Me.' But the young man having heard the word, went away grieving, for he was having many possessions. Then Jesus said to His disciples, "**Amen**, I say to you that a rich one with difficulty will enter into the kingdom of the heavens. And furthermore, I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through *the* hole of a needle, than a rich one to enter into the kingdom of God.' Then the disciples, having heard, were greatly astonished, saying, 'Who, then, is able to be saved?' But Jesus having looked, said to them, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things *are* possible.' Then Peter having answered, said to Him, 'We left all things and followed You. What, then, will be for us?' Then Jesus said to them, '**Amen**, I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the **re-birth** when the Son of Man sits upon the throne of His glory, you will also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone, whoever left houses or brothers or sisters or fathers or mothers or children or fields, for the sake of My name will receive a hundredfold, and **will inherit aionian life**. But many first will be last, and last first.'" Mat.19:16-30

The discourses with the rich young man and the disciples, and the ensuing parabolic illustration were about works and rewards. The first point of the discussion was that salvation (aionian life – kingdom life) was only possible with

God – works of man cannot attain it. But in addition to that salvation, a man will be rewarded for his works.

The parable of Workers' Wage continued to its conclusion –

> "And having come those concerning the eleventh hour, they received a denarius apiece. And the first having come, they supposed that they will receive more, and they also received the denarius apiece. But having received *it*, they were murmuring against the householder, saying, 'These last ones worked one hour and you made them equal to us, who bore the burden of the day and the heat.' But he having answered one of them said, 'Friend, I do you not an injustice. Did you not, indeed, agree with me *for* a denarius? Take what *is* yours and go away. But I want to give to this last one, even as to you. Or is it not permitted to me to do what I want with what *is* mine? Or is your eye evil because I am good?' So the last will be first and the first last." Mat.20:9-16

Although there is a dispute with the one addressed "Friend" (Gk. *hetairos*, as in the Parable of the Wedding-Feast), he still gets his wage (reward). There was no injustice done to him. This one differed from the "friend" addressed in Wedding-Feast, who was speechless, and cast out as unworthy. The conclusion of this parable was the same as the lesson of chapter 19 on the reward for those who left comfortable circumstances to follow Him. But it changed "first will be last, and last first" into "last will be first, and first last". Not only does each statement reverse the order of man's expectation, but the restatement at the end of the parable reverses the expression itself. Presented in this dual-way, the lesson was even more emphatic.

The lesson of the Workers' Wage seems twofold. God will reward each a just reward, according to what He has promised. Some will seem to be rewarded above their measure – the Twelve had abandoned all, and were promised thrones. I suspect others had abandoned all too, but there seem to be *only* twelve of those special tribunals, and the sovereign God has done the choosing. However, those who have given up all are said to "reign with Him" (Rev.20:6), so a fitting reward will come to all. The rich young man sensed he still lacked something, and Jesus told him how he could be "complete", "perfect", and thus get "treasures in *the*

heavens". These "treasures" of the "perfect" might have served as a reminder of the earlier parables – Hid Treasure (Mat.13:44) and Discipled Scribe (Mat.13:52).

Jesus' comment on the rich entering the kingdom only with great difficulty was confirmation of the Parable of the Sower – the thorny-ground seed would be choked with cares and riches. The disciples' astonishment over this realization was met with – "with God all things *are* possible" and also the "re-birth" (Gk. *paliggenesia*). The context here would make "**re-birth**" mean resurrection, because they **will inherit aionian life**. And we know from 1 Cor.15:50 "that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God".

Householder and Thief –

The "lesser" parable of Ten Virgins has a preamble that it builds upon. This introduction stemmed from the lesson of Jesus' end-time prophecy in Matthew chapter 24 – "Watch!" (Mat.24:42). That word "watch" is also the byword of the lesson that followed –

> "But know this, that if the householder had known what watch (i.e., hour of the night) the thief comes, he would have been alert and not allowed his house to have been broken into. Therefore, you also **become ready**, because the hour you do not imagine, the Son of Man comes. Who, then, is the faithful and thoughtful servant, whom the master appointed over his household to give them the food in season? Happy *will be* that servant whom, his master having come, he will find so doing. **Amen**, I say to you that he will appoint him over all his possessions. But if that evil servant should say in his heart, 'My master delays', and he may have begun to beat his fellow-servants, and he may eat and drink with the drunken, the master of that servant will come in a day which he expects not, and in an hour which he knows not. And he will cut him in two, and he will set his portion with the hypocrites. There will be the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth." Mat.24:43-51

"The Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth" links this warning with Tares, Dragnet and Wedding-Feast. All of these parables were getting at the issue of expulsion from the kingdom from different perspectives. The Tares were a sowing of the wicked one. Dragnet gathered everything, good and bad. In Wedding-Feast it was

not a murderer but an unprepared guest who was thrown out. Here in Householder and Thief, it is the unalert, slothful, bullying servant who misses out.

It is noteworthy that Luk.12:39-48 has a different version of this, and at its beginning, Peter interrupted, "Lord, do You speak **this parable** to us, or to all." But Jesus just continued to the conclusion –

> "But that servant, the one having known the desire of his lord and not having prepared, nor having done according to his desire, will be beaten many *times*. But the one not having known, and having done things worthy of blows, will be beaten few *times*. And everyone to whom much was given, much will be required from him. And to whom much was committed, more they will ask of him." Luk.12:47-48

I believe the main point here was moral: don't take your privileges for granted. Peter's question seems a bit sensitive as to whether "this parable" was singling out Jesus' inner circle. The Lord's answer was general and inclusive of all – the knowledgeable and the ignorant.

The disciples got everything explained (not to say they always fully understood), while those outside were under the veil of Isa.6:9-10. Of course after Pentecost, everything was made known – the Gospels, Acts, early Epistles and Revelation were all published and in the open. All who cared to associate with "the way" had access to the fullness of kingdom truth, including its secrets. The restricted access to secrets of the kingdom from Matthew 13 up to the Great Pentecost of Acts 2 did not apply afterward. Therefore, the heightened responsibility for the "much … given" must have fallen to a great degree on all Israel of that generation. I can imagine that even the Jewish scribes of the Acts period must have read what the apostles wrote, in order to find legal points to accuse them on.

Take note that some of those who will be excluded from the kingdom will be worthy of corporal punishments, varying according to culpability (knowledge vs. ignorance). These Israelites must pass bodily into the kingdom age, beaten, disgraced and disinherited. If you think this sounds a bit outrageous for the opening of the kingdom age, then do you believe that a physical beating will be an unjust punishment for those who unjustly applied "stripes above measure" (*KJV*, 2

Cor.11:23-25) to faithful servants like Paul? And where Paul spoke of being "beaten with rods", he used the Gk. verb *rhabdizō*, which relates to the shepherd's "staff", *rhabdos*. Recall that it is with an "iron staff" (*rhabdos sidēra*) that the Overcomers and Jesus will rule during the Millennium (Rev.2:27; 19:15). If this sounds harsh to our 21st century ears, can you imagine anything harsher than the unjust tyrannies of men these past two millennia? We know that the Millennium will be ruled with justice, and punishment of egregious sin and rebellion will have their place in God's demonstration to mankind during the kingdom age. For more on the "iron staff", see the later chapter, **Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?**

The Householder and Thief parable is a "Watch!" lesson that relates to the *Sunteleia* prophecies. We might also classify such parables as "wake up" calls to sleepy servants.

Ten Virgins –

The watchword "**watch**" continues right into Ten Virgins –

> "Then the kingdom of the heavens **will be likened to** ten virgins who, having taken their lamps, went out to the meeting of the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish and five thoughtful. For the foolish having taken their lamps, took no oil with them, but the thoughtful took oil in the vessels with their lamps. But *as* the bridegroom *was* delaying, they all grew drowsy and were asleep. And *at* midnight a shout came, 'Behold the bridegroom. Go out to meeting *him*.' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. But the foolish said to the thoughtful, 'Give us from your oil, for our lamps are extinguished.' But the **thoughtful** answered, saying, 'Lest there in no wise should be enough for us and for you, go rather to the sellers and buy for yourselves.' But *during* their going away to buy, the bridegroom came, and those *who were* **ready** went in with him into the wedding-feast, and the door was shut. But later the remaining virgins come also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he having answered, said, '**Amen**, I say to you, I know you not.' Therefore, **watch**, because you know neither the day nor the hour." Mat.25:1-13

The message of Ten Virgins is very straightforward – be watchful, "ready" and "thoughtful". They would not know the precise time of the Lord's *Parousia*, so it was needful for them to be ever-ready. This parable was framed like Solomon's proverbs and Bedrock Builder, comparing wise and foolish courses of action. One can also see in this parable the warning of the "watchman" in Eze.3:17-21.

Talents –

Ten Virgins continues without a gap into Talents, which I have already commented on a little. Talents actually falls into the "lesser" parable group, because it begins with –

> "For *it is* **just as** (Gk. *hōsper*) a man going away called his own servants and delivered to them his possessions." Mat.25:14

The phrase "just as" links Talents back to Ten Virgins, and the theme is similar – be prepared at the Master's coming. I have already shown a similarity of the lessons in Sower and Talents, due to their conclusions –

> "For whoever has, to him will be given, and he will be overflowed. But he who has not, even what he has will be taken away from him." Mat.13:12 (Sower)

> "To everyone having, *it* will be given, and he will be overflowed. But of the one not having, even what he has will be taken away from him." Mat.25:29 (Talents)

Further, Talents and Wedding-Feast both depict a casting out "into the Outer Darkness" – i.e., exclusion from the kingdom. While the *KJV* supplies an ellipsis here "*the kingdom of heaven is*", I have simplified this to "*it is*". Here is the full parable of Talents –

> "For *it is* **just as** (Gk. *hōsper*) a man going away called his own servants and delivered to them his possessions. And to one indeed he gave five talents, and to one two, and to one one, each according to his own ability, and he went away immediately. The one having received the five talents, having gone, he worked with them and gained five others. Likewise, the one *having* two gained two others. But he having received the one, having gone away, he dug *the* earth and

> hid his master's money. Then after much time the master of those servants comes and settles *the* matter with them. And having approached, the one having received the five talents presented five other talents, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents. Look, I gained five other talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful over a few *things*. I will appoint you over many. Enter into the joy of your master.' Having approached also, he *having received* the two talents said, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents. Look, I gained two other talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful over a few *things*. I will appoint you over many. Enter into the joy of your master.' Then also he having received the one talent, approaching, said, 'Master, I knew you, that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter. And having feared, having gone away, I hid your talent in the earth. Look, you have what *was* yours.' But his master having answered, said to him, 'Wicked and lazy servant, you had known that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I scattered not. Therefore, you should have put my money with the bankers, and having come, I might have received what *was* mine with interest. Therefore, take away from him the talent and give *it* to the one having the ten talents. For to everyone having, *it* will be given and he will be overflowed. But of the one not having, even what he has will be taken away from him. And throw out the worthless servant <u>into the Outer Darkness</u>. There will be the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth.'" Mat.25:14-30

In the case of the five virgins without oil, they were unprepared due to thoughtless folly, and perhaps also laziness. The one-talent servant was called "lazy" by his master, but there was something more. He seemed to resent his service, calling his master a "hard man" and implying that he was greedy. Both cases, whatever their lack of motivation, showed a lack of zeal in service. The five virgins were excluded from the marriage-feast (kingdom), while the one-talent servant was expelled <u>into the outer darkness</u> (outside the kingdom). Note that none of these were ordinary people, especially in Talents. They were servants in positions of trust, with duties to perform and rewards to be expected. The one-talent servant was like Esau, who so disregarded his inheritance that he sold it for a bowl of soup. Esau's "great and exceeding bitter cry" (*KJV*, Gen.27:34) is an early example of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Summation

The following table captures a condensed view of the Greater and Lesser Parables:

Title (Greater, Lesser)	Reference (Secrets of the Kingdom)	to crowd	disciple	Key word or phrase	Prophetic Significance
Sower	Mat.13:3-9	X		in parables	Acts-period; Daniel's final "seven"
Sower, explained	Mat.13:18-23		X	in parables	….
Tares	Mat.13:24-30	X		in parables	Acts-period; Daniel's final "seven"; judgment
Tares, explained	Mat.13:36-43		X	in parables	….
How Seed Grows	Mar.4:26-29		X	is…as	Acts-period, premillennial, *Sunteleia*
Mustard Seed	Mat.13:31-32	X		in parables	Acts-period; salvation of nations; Millennium
Leaven	Mat.13:33	X		in parables	Acts-period; Daniel's final "seven"
Hid Treasure	Mat.13:44		X	in parables	premillennial attitude
Pearl of Great Price	Mat.13:45-46		X	in parables	premillennial attitude
Dragnet	Mat.13:47-50		X	in parables	premillennial judgment
Discipled Scribe	Mat.13:52		X	is like	premillennial attitude
Things Defiling a Man	Mat.15:10-14	X		this parable	New Covenant purity – Acts-period & beyond
Things Defiling, explained	Mat.15:15-20		X	this parable	….
… contains Blind Leaders	Luk.6:39-40	X		parable	Acts-period; Daniel's final "seven"
Two Children – Yes and No	Mat.21:28-32	X		prior to "another parable"	moral edification for Acts-period & final "seven"

Title (Greater, Lesser)	Reference (Secrets of the Kingdom)	to crowd	disciple	Key word or phrase	Prophetic Significance
Leased Vineyard	Mat.21:33-35	X		another parable	Crucifixion; Acts-period; Daniel's final "seven"; judgment
… Luke's variant	Luk.20:9-19	X		this parable	Crucifixion; Acts-period; Daniel's final "seven"; judgment
Wedding-Feast	Mat.22:1-14	X		in parables	Acts-period; Daniel's final "seven"; judgment
Fig Tree	Mat.24:32-33		X	the parable	Tribulation; *Parousia*
House Divided	Mar.3:23-29	X		in parables	behind the Secret of Lawlessness
Patches, Skins – Old and New	Luk.5:36-39	X		parable	New Covenant supersession of Old
… Wedding as Feast, not Fast	Luk.5:33-35	X		preamble to a parable	Millennium
Two Debtors	Luk.7:39-47	X		certain creditor	moral edification for Acts-period & final "seven"
Good Samaritan	Luk.10:29-37	X		certain man	moral edification for Acts-period & final "seven"
Self-Satisfied Rich Man	Luk.12:13-21	X		parable, certain man	moral edification for Acts-period & final "seven"
Seating Arrangements	Luk.14:7-11	X		certain man	moral edification for Acts-period & final "seven"
Great Supper	Luk.14:12-24	X		certain man	Acts period
Lost Sheep, Lost Coin	Luk.15:1-10; *Mat.18:12-14*	X		this parable, what man, what woman	God's joy over repentance

Title (Greater, Lesser)	Reference (Secrets of the Kingdom)	to crowd	disciple	Key word or phrase	Prophetic Significance
Prodigal Son	Luk.15:11-32	X		certain man	God's joy over repentance
Embezzling Steward	Luk.16:1-12	X	X	certain man	diligence in Tribulation – Acts & final "seven"
… postscript Two Masters	Luk.16:13-14	X		part 2 of the above	moral edification for Acts-period & final "seven"
Rich Man and Lazarus	Luk.16:19-31	X		certain man	moral vs. doctrine of Pharisees
… concluding lesson	Luk.17:1		X		….
Unjust Judge	Luk.18:1-8	X		parable	moral edification for Acts-period & final "seven"
Pharisee and Publican	Luk.18:9-14	X		this parable	moral edification for Acts-period & final "seven"
… postscript Children of the Kingdom	Luk.18:15-17	X	X	part 2 of the above	moral edification for Acts-period & final "seven"
Ten Minas	Luk.19:11-28	X	X	parable, certain man	vigilance during Tribulation; *Parousia* judgment
Shepherd and Sheep	Joh.9:39–10:6	X		the proverb	the 2 kingdoms compared:
… explained, includes Good Shepherd	Joh.10:7-18	X			Good Shepherd's vs. hireling's attitude
Grief and Joy of Childbirth	Joh.16:19-29		X	in proverbs	Crucifixion & resurrection; ascension & *Parousia*
Bedrock Builder	Mat.7:24-27	X		will be like	moral edification for Acts-period & final

Title (Greater, Lesser)	Reference (Secrets of the Kingdom)	to crowd	disciple	Key word or phrase	Prophetic Significance
					"seven"
Children Piping	Mat.11:16-19	X		will liken	moral edification for Acts-period & final "seven"
Humble Child	Mat.18:1-7		X	become like	moral edification for Acts-period & final "seven"
Unforgiving Debtor	Mat.18:21-25		X	is likened	moral edification for Acts-period & final "seven"
Workers' Wages	Mat.20:1-16		X	is like	God's sovereignty in rewarding
Householder and Thief	Mat.24:43-51; Luk.12:35-41		X	like, parable	vigilance during Tribulation; *Parousia* judgment
Ten Virgins	Mat.25:1-13		X	will be like	vigilance during Tribulation; *Parousia* judgment
Talents	Mat.25:14-30		X	just as	diligence during Tribulation; *Parousia* judgment

Do you think this exhausts the Lord's parabolic teaching? Take note how the extended Luk.15:1-10 version of Lost Sheep describes it as "this parable", but the shorter Mat.18:12-14 account does not. But because of these parallel accounts, it is surely safe to say that Lost Sheep of Mat.18:12-14 is also a parable. Here are more examples with an explicit or implicit comparison in the "A is like B" mode –

- "the lamp of the body is the eye" (Mat.6:22-23)
- no one can serve two masters (Mat.6:24) – note that this was also a lesson of the parable of the Embezzling Servant (Luk.16:13)

- “look at the birds of the sky” (Mat.6:26)
- “consider the lilies of the field” (Mat.6:28-30)
- the “speck” and the “plank” in the eye (Mat.7:3-5)
- giving the “holy to dogs” and casting “pearls before swine” (Mat.7:6)
- a stone for bread, a serpent for a fish (Mat.7:9-11) – “what man?” (Gk. *tis anthrōpos*)
- “the narrow gate” (Mat.7:13-14)
- wolves in sheep’s clothing (Mat.7:15)
- know them by their fruits (Mat.7:16-20)

I have culled these examples from just two chapters in Matthew. Is it any wonder, then, that the disciples recognized Sower as a parable, without being told so?

Then consider some of the “hard sayings” of John’s Gospel, such as –

- “I am the bread of life” and much more in Joh.6:47-63 – compare this to “Take. Eat. This is My body.” in Mat.26:26
- “you know where I am from” and “where I am, you cannot come” in Joh.7:26-36
- “I am the light of the world” in Joh.8:12; 9:5
- “I am from above” in Joh.8:23
- “before Abraham came to be, I am” in Joh.9:1
- “I am the resurrection and the life” in Joh.11:25
- “if I am lifted up from the earth” in Joh.12:32-36
- “where I am going you cannot follow Me now” in Joh.13:36
- “I am the way and the truth and the life” in Joh.14:6

- “I am the true vine” in Joh.15:1-8
- In fact, all the “I am” statements of Christ pointed to His identity, in harmony with Exo.3:14

Many of these examples were metaphorical. The nature of a parable is typically the figure Simile (*Figures*, p.726), but does that differ greatly from a Metaphor (*Figures*, p.738)? Both figures are of the same class – the addition of characteristics in order to make a more graphic illustration.

The parables of Jesus covered a lot of ground. Some of them were inspirational examples to encourage lives worthy of the kingdom. Others pointed to the next phase after Christ’s death, resurrection and ascension. This was a period of gracious forgiveness – the Acts period early harvest and calling of a remnant, and the fulfillment of the early part of Joel 2:28-32. Then there were those parables of Matthew 13 revealing “the secrets of the kingdom” – including its aspects of failure, punishment, and the culmination of Satan’s kingdom. Finally, there were the *Sunteleia* parables of Matthew 24-25. The Acts have come and gone, but the growth of the two kingdoms on earth (Christ’s and Satan’s) and the *Sunteleia* are still to come.

Conditions of the “Rapture”

Note that I have put “Rapture” in quotes. It is so-called by man, but that word is not to be found in the Scripture where most people imagine “the Rapture” to be depicted. To many, a rapture implies “being beside oneself”. That condition could be due to some sort of parapsychological experience. And then, insanity is sometimes called “being beside oneself”. Again, I recommend reading Bullinger’s *The Rich Man and Lazarus*, in which he strongly denounced all the conjurations of the spiritists of his day. Do you think spiritism is dead today? I urge you to think again.

Defining the Word “Rapture”

Here is how *Webster’s* defines “rapture” –

1a. a state or experience of being carried away by overwhelming emotion

1b. a mystical experience in which the spirit is exalted to a knowledge of divine things

2. an expression or manifestation of ecstasy or passion

Syn. See ECSTASY

Definitions 1a. and 2 seem to be what some Christians mean by “the Rapture” – i.e., the **overwhelming** emotional ecstasy that accompanies being carried away in body (to be with the Lord).

Scripture does use words that *might* be used to convey “ecstasy”. The Gk. *ekstasis* is the noun form, and *existēmi* is its corresponding verb. *Thayer* is some help in showing how pagans and the Jewish mystic Philo used these words. Under *ekstasis*, *Thayer* gives these definitions:

1. universally in Greek writers *any casting down of a thing from its proper place or state*; *displacement*, (Aristotle, Plutarch).
2. a throwing of the mind out of its normal state, alienation of mind, whether such as makes a lunatic (*dianoias*, Deut. Xxviii. 28 ; *tōn logismōn*, Plutarch

Sol. 8), or that of the man who by some sudden emotion is transported as it were out of himself, so that in this **rapt** {my emphasis} condition, although he is awake, his mind is so drawn off from all surrounding objects and wholly fixed on things divine that he sees nothing but the forms and images lying within, and thinks that he perceives with his bodily eyes and ears realities shown him by God, (Philo, *quis rerum divin. Heres* § 53 [cf. 51 ; B. D. s.v. Trance; Delitzsch, Psychol, v. 5]) : *epepesen* [Rec., al. *egeneto*] *ep’ auton ekstasis,* Acts x. 10 ; (*eiden en ekstasei horama,* Acts xi. 5; *genesthai en ekstasei,* Acts xxii. 1 7, cf. 2 Co. xii. 2 sq.

3. In the O.T. and the New – **amazement** {my emphasis} [cf. Longin. 1,4; Stob. Flor. Tit. 104, 7], the state of one who, either owing to the importance or the novelty of an event, is thrown into a state of blended fear and wonder {I have not included Thayer’s examples here}

Thayer’s definition 2 is useful in showing that Bible exposition has become distorted by the mysticism of a few ancient philosophers. Pharisaic teaching on the state of death and the soul/spirit after death was tainted by Platonism, as I pointed out in the section **Rich Man and Lazarus**. The Acts-period Jewish mystic Philo had his influence as well. Being taken over by the Divine Spirit in the manner of definition 2 above is downright “heathenish”, to put it mildly. It is of the same character as demon-possession, which is nowhere described in Scripture as an *ekstasis*, or an activity of *existēmi*. The *ekstasis* of a saint of God is NOT divine-possession. Here is how receipt of a divine spirit is described –

> “And spirits of prophets are subordinated (Gk. *hupotassō*) to prophets. For God is not *a God* of insurrection, but of harmony (lit. ‘peace’), as in all the churches of the saints.” 1 Cor.14:32-33

This came at the conclusion of Paul’s upbraiding the Corinthians for their wild insurrectionist meetings, at which they vied with one another for the display of their spiritual gifts. They were out of control, possibly in a way that accorded with the seers of the Greek pagan mysteries, or the OT priests of Baal (1 Ki.18:26-28).

John recalled his vision of the Lord’s *Apokalupsis*, simply thus –

“I came to be in spirit in the Lord’s day.” Rev.1:10

“Came to be” is *ginomai*, which conveys no sense of being carried or thrown outside himself. And according to the principle of 1 Cor.14:32, John was in control of that vision, not the vision in control of him. He was not “beside himself”.

When the Twelve were together on that pivotal Pentecost they heard a sound, “like a rushing violent wind”. Then they saw a vision of tongues “like fire”. Finally they “were filled of holy spirit”, and they spoke with other tongues. But they were not carried away by these things, because they were aware of the crowd’s reaction, including their mockery about the Apostles’ being full of wine (Acts 2:1-15).

The Best Definition – “Amazement”

I believe that Thayer’s definition 3 adequately conveys the Biblical meaning of *ekstasis* and *existēmi* – a state of mind of amazement and wonder, yes, but not overwhelmed or carried away by it. Here is a sampling of NT occurrences, quoted from the *KJV* –

> “And all the people **were amazed** (*existēmi*), and said, Is not this the son of David?” Mat.12:23
>
> “And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they **were** all **amazed** (*existēmi*), and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.” Mar.2:12
>
> “And when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He **is beside himself** (*existēmi*).” Mar.3:21
>
> “And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they **were astonished** (*existēmi*) with a great **astonishment** (*ekstasis*).” Mar.5:42
>
> “So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and **were amazed** (*ekstasis*). And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.” Mar.16:8
>
> “And all that heard him **were astonished** (*existēmi*) at his understanding and answers.” Luk.2:47

"And they **were** all **amazed** (*existēmi*), and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day." Luk.5:26

"And they **were** all **amazed** (*existēmi*) and **marveled** (*thaumazō*), saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? … And they **were** all **amazed** (*existēmi*), and **were in doubt** (*NKJV*, 'perplexed', Gk. *diaporeō*) saying one to another, What meaneth this?" Acts 2:7, 12

"And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple: and they were filled with **wonder** (*thaubos*) and **amazement** (*ekstasis*) at that which had happened unto him." Acts 3:10

"But all that heard *him* **were amazed** (*existēmi*), and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?" Acts 9:21

"I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a **trance** (*ekstasis*) I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:" Acts 11:5

"But they said to her, 'You are mad' (Gk. *mainomai*), but she was insisting it to have been thus. But they were saying, 'It is his angel.' But Peter continued knocking, and having opened, they saw him and **were amazed** (*existēmi*)." Acts 12:15-16

NOTE: This text shows the difference between being beside oneself (madness) and being amazed. 'You are mad' is the same exclamation Festus made after hearing Paul preach (Acts 26:24), but I sense he was trying to excuse himself from his own culpability as an unjust judge.

"And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a **trance** (*ekstasis*)" Acts 22:17

"For whether **we be beside ourselves** (*existēmi*), *it is* to God: or whether we be sober, *it is* for your cause." 2 Cor.5:13

I wanted to use the *KJV*, to show just how tainted Christian doctrine has become by these heathenish mysticisms.

Conditions of the "Rapture"

Of first note, when the crowds witnessed strange things, they were not beside themselves but "amazed" or "astonished", and this was typically accompanied by "wonder", "fear", or "confusion". I do not think any would label these as "abnormal psychological states". Yet when Jesus did strange things, and Peter and Paul had visions, the *KJV* translators described them as either "beside themselves" or "*fell* into a trance". But take note –

- When the Twelve "were filled of holy spirit" on that Pentecost, they were not *en ekstasis*, but it was the crowds who **were amazed** and **confused**.
- Literally what Peter said at Acts 11:5 was, "and I saw a vision in **amazement**" – the earlier *KJV* account says, "he fell into a trance and saw" (Acts 10:10-11), where "fell" translates Gk. *ginomai* – that is, "he came to be in amazement" because of what he saw.
- When Paul was praying in the Temple, he also "came to be (*ginomai*) in **amazement**" because he saw and spoke with the Lord – take note that he spoke cogently to the Lord, and not with the mutterings of mediums. Recall the lesson of Isa.8:19, "And when they say to you, 'Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,' should not a people seek their God? *Should they seek* the dead on behalf of the living?" (*NKJV*).
- I would make a secondary point from Isa.8:19 above, that mediums have not the power to bring up the dead – Saul's consultation at Endor was a deceptive hoax – "the dead know not anything" (Ecc.9:5). To believe otherwise is to *believe in* spiritism.
- Why were those of Mar.5:42 only and emphatically "**astonished** with a great **astonishment**", and not beside themselves? Do you see the inconsistency in translating these words?
- I will deal later with what Paul meant in the 2 Cor.5:13 example, because it requires a contextual study.
- My conclusion from all occurrences of *ekstasis* and *existēmi* are that they mean "amazement", or "astonishment" – the Gk. should be consistently translated thus.

- Note that *ekstasis* and *existēmi* are not used in any of the three accounts of the Transfiguration vision (Mat.17:1-9; Mar.9:2-9; Luk.9:28-36), but the three Apostles were afraid – the Lukan version says they were at first heavy with sleep, then became fully awake, so this was no dream vision for Peter, James and John.

- Neither *ekstasis* nor *existēmi* are used in the Revelation – but John did express the following –

  - "I fell … like a corpse", but he was told by the Lord, "fear not" (1:17)

  - "I wept much", because no one was found to open the scroll (5:4)

  - "having seen her, I wondered a great wonder" (17:6)

  - "I fell in front of his feet to worship him", and the angel's response "Do it not!" (19:10; also 22:8-9) – apparently John did not know the proper etiquette to exercise with angels

  - What is "astonishment" to me is that, for all that John saw, heard, ate, and testified in this book, he showed so little emotion about it. Apparently the Lord's encouragement at 1:17 braced him for his out-of-the-ordinary visionary experience.

Because of its contextual closeness to "be present with the Lord" (2 Cor.5:8), this one text might give some credence to a "rapture" at resurrection –

> "For if **we are beside ourselves**, *it is* for God; or if **we are of sound mind**, *it is* for you." 2 Cor.5:13 (*KJV*)

The *KJV* may seem correct in using "we are beside ourselves" here for *existēmi*, but the contrast is with "we are of sound mind", Gk. *sōphroneō* (**wise-** or **sober-minded**). Anyone interpreting this text should first examine more of the context –

- "For <u>we commend not ourselves</u> again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to *answer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart." 2 Cor.5:12 (*KJV*)

- Paul speaks of "commending ourselves" or others "commending themselves" throughout this epistle (3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4; 10:12, 18; 12:11). Now focus on these two texts –

  - "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are **not wise**." 2 Cor.10:12 (*KJV*)

  - "I am become a **fool** (Gk. *aphrōn*, 'un-minded') in glorying (i.e., 'boasting'); ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing." 2 Cor.12:11 (*KJV*)

- The intervening chapter 11 is full of Paul's boasting, which he introduced as "folly" in v.1 (Gk. *aphrosunē*, lit. "un-mindedness"). The context determines that Paul's company being "beside ourselves" to God in 2 Cor.5:13 was due to their being forced by the Corinthians into the "un-mindedness" of boasting. It had nothing to do with some emotional anticipation of being "clothed upon" (2 Cor.5:4) in the day of the Lord. That is, there was no hint of a so-called "rapture" in his remark.

Then again, Paul's experience of visions per 2 Cor.12:1-5 might be described by some as rapturous – he could not tell whether he was in or out of his body, so strong were these visions. I can imagine that John may also have experienced this, by his being "in spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev.1:10). Neither Paul nor John described his visions in any way as rapturous, or even joyful. They "went" (Gk. *ginomai,* 'came to be', 'became') obediently where the Lord took them. Paul boasted in his God-given visions, but not in himself because of them. He may not have been aware of his body during the visions, but he was mentally in control. I think the English word "focus" may be apt. Have you ever been so focused on a thought, that you were unaware of your surroundings? Yet you did not fall out of your chair or crash your automobile for all of that mental focus. Then would you label that focus as a "rapture"?. Sometimes we focus so intently on such innocuous things, but they could hardly be called "amazing", "astonishing" or "wonderful".

Concluding then, “astonishment” can be a sort of “un-mindedness”. And if this latter sense includes folly, it would mean only that we are not in possession of our higher mind, or self. Why did Solomon in Proverbs repeatedly exhort his son to follow wisdom, and eschew folly? Have you ever mentally kicked yourself in the pants for a stupid act? Later, you may have said to yourself, “I must have been out of my mind to do that!” But you were not really out of your mind. That is just a customary hyperbole of our day.

And our popular myths about hypnosis make it out to be a trance-like state, which it is not. Rather, hypnosis is a very relaxed state in which the subject retains complete self-awareness. Just ask any certified hypnotist.

My warning here would be, “Beware concerning ‘trances’ – they are a device of mediums, that is, those with ‘familiar spirits’”. A true spirit of prophecy, as practiced during the Acts period, was under the control of the prophet, literally “subordinated” to him. This is the opposite of spiritism, in which the medium is subordinated to his “control” (that is, a demon).

The Experience of Resurrection

There are no references to *ekstasis* or *existēmi* in connection with resurrection doctrine, or with meeting the Lord in the air. Yes, there will be joy for those of the former resurrection (Rev.20:5-6). Actually, Rev.20:6 describes them simply as “happy” (Gk. *makarios*, *KJV* “blessed”). But then, 1 Pet.4:13 describes these resurrected ones to whom Christ’s glory is revealed (Gk. *apokaluptō*), as both rejoicing (Gk. *chairō*) and exulting (Gk. *agalliaiō*). But in Peter, resurrection is an inference and secondary – it is Christ’s Apocalypse and glory that will be the cause of their great joy.

We might do well to examine earthly joy in Scripture. When the Magi saw the star again, after visiting Herod, it says “they **rejoiced** very much a great **joy**” (Mat.2:10). Were they rapturous, or just full of much joy?

When the true disciple is persecuted, he is “happy” (Gk. *makarios*), for Jesus instructed them to “**rejoice** and be greatly **glad**, because your reward *is* great in the heavens” (Mat.5:11-12). The faithful servant can expect to “enter into the **joy** of

his Lord” (Mat.25:21). The women receiving the angelic message at the tomb of Jesus “went quickly from the tomb with fear and great **joy**” (Mat.28:8). Paul’s company spread news of the conversion of the nations to Phoenicia and Samaria, causing “great **joy**” as they went (Acts 15:3).

Then John declared that he had “no greater **joy** than this, to hear that my children walk in the truth” (3 Joh.1:4). This hardly exhausts the occasions in which God’s people in OT or NT would express their joy, even “exceedingly great joy”. Might these pass for rapturous events in the lives of those concerned? Well, not in any sense of being beside themselves with joy, or being in a blissful trance.

Now examine the principal resurrection texts of the Acts period – 1 Th.4:13-18 (“meet the Lord in the air”) and 1 Th.5:1-11; 1 Cor.15:12-58; 2 Cor.5:1-11; and 2 Th. 2:1-17. Before their resurrection, according to these texts, believers are described as, or encouraged to be – confident, faithful, in terror, groaning, watchful, sober, comforted, and standing fast. After one’s resurrection the words “power”, “glory” and “victorious” apply. There is no mention of “joy” or “astonishment” in these major texts that looked forward to the Lord’s coming. That does not mean that believers were joyless in the Acts period, only that the texts make no such association with the resurrection state. In fact, the Scriptures are rather lacking concerning the believer’s experience *in this state*. John confirms this with –

> “Beloved, now we are children of God, but **not yet was it revealed what we will be**. We know that whenever He may be revealed, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” 1 Jn.3:2

And Jesus made this comparison –

> “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor give in marriage, but they are **as angels in the heaven**.” Mat.22:30

But then, what is it like to be an angel? This is outside the pale of our current experience.

I think those believers undergoing tribulation will have every expectation of a good reward for their pain and suffering, and for good works while in the flesh. But how resurrection will be experienced is still a veiled secret. This was and is a

walk by faith, and not by sight. We in the flesh can at times get out-of-control with our emotions – destructive rage, lustful passion, boundless greed, puffed up pride, narcissistic love of self, paralyzing fear. I have little doubt that those in the spiritual body will have these tendencies removed, as they are the result of the law of sin in us (Jam.1:14-15). Rather, I expect the self-restraint of a Michael will apply to resurrection, as when he said succinctly to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you." (Jude 1:9)

We will now examine the principal Acts period teaching dealing with resurrection in the day of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 – meet the Lord in the air

Perhaps the most prominent resurrection/*Parousia* teaching is this –

> "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those falling asleep, lest you might grieve even as also the rest, those having no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and arose, thus also God will bring those having fallen asleep in Jesus, with Him. For this we say to you by the Lord's word, that we the living, those remaining until the *Parousia* of the Lord should in no wise come sooner than those having fallen asleep, because the Lord Himself by shout, by voice of archangel, and by God's trumpet-blast will descend from heaven. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we the living, those remaining, together with them, will be caught up (Gk. *harpazō*) in *the* **clouds** for meeting the Lord in air. And so we will always be with *the* Lord. Therefore encourage one another by these words." 1 Th.4:13-18

Note that "those remaining until the *Parousia* of the Lord" establishes the timing of this resurrection event. Is there any warrant here for teaching a third coming of Christ? The typical "Rapture" teaching today requires three comings of Christ. If the living saints are to be left until the *Parousia*, then what does that mean, except that they will remain until Christ's regal presence on earth. All the prophecies expected this *Parousia* here on earth. There is no revelation concerning a heavenly *Parousia*, or even a mid-air *Parousia*. The kingdom saints will meet Him "in the air", as He is returning to earth ("will bring … with Him", "will descend", but no mention of going back to heaven with them). His *Parousia* on earth will include

His retinue of faithful ministers, right from the start of His reign. There is no Scriptural basis for believing that this being caught up with the Lord is a rescue of the living from the Great Tribulation. If those saints are not tested by this Tribulation, then they go to the Lord full of dross, and unrefined. If you have skipped to this chapter, then you may have missed my citation and comments on Zechariah chapter 13 in a previous chapter, **Christ in the Old Testament and the New** – specifically, "I will smelt them as smelting the silver, and I will prove them as proving the gold" (Zec.13:9).

The misguided attempt of some to "rapture" these saints into heaven is due to their failure to rightly divide Paul's Acts period gospel ("the hope of Israel", Acts 28:20) from his post-Acts heavenly gospel ("the hope of His calling … the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Holies", Eph.1:18 – our hope as the Body of Christ).

Even as He ascended into a **cloud** (Acts 1:9), Christ will return in like manner (Acts 1:11). The great *Sunteleia* prophecies concurred –

> "And then will appear **the sign of the Son of Man in heaven**, and then will mourn all the tribes of the earth, and they will see the Son of Man coming **upon the clouds** of the heaven with power and great glory."
>
> Mat.24:30

This coming of the Lord "upon the clouds" is the prelude to His *Parousia,* and all earthly tribes will mourn because they know that a great judgment is *then* coming upon the earth. The kingdom expectation was an earthly hope first, and for the Overcomers a heavenly city (which will descend to earth a thousand years later). I will develop this heavenly theme more fully below in the next chapter, **Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?**

What precisely will be "the sign (Gk. noun, *sēmeion*) of the Son of Man in heaven"? His appearance "coming upon the clouds of the heaven with power and great glory". That would make His sign the same as the sight of Him in the sky. Keep in mind that the whole Olivet Discourse was partly in answer to the disciples' question, "what *will be* the sign of Your *Parousia*?". So everything spoken in Matthew 24 has the significance of this *Parousia* "sign".

Thayer (p.573) gives *sēmeion* a general definition of *a sign, mark, token*, and then definition "1) universally that by which a person or a thing is distinguished from others and known". Thus, "coming upon the clouds" will be a distinguishing feature of His uniqueness at His return.

Consider how the signs of the covenants were very distinguishing features, not previously in the experience of mankind –

- the covenant with Noah, and its sign, "My bow in the cloud" (Gen.9:13) – apparently rainbows did not exist prior to the Flood
- the covenant with Abraham, and its sign, circumcision (Gen.17:11) – nothing like this rite had been practiced before, and it must have seemed shocking to the rest of mankind at that time
- the covenant with Moses, and its sign, keeping "My sabbaths" (Exo.31:13), which included the special feasts and their sabbaths
- the New Covenant with Israel, and its inferred sign of resurrection – "the sign of Jonah the prophet" (Mat.16:4)

When we come to the book of Revelation, part of its stated purpose was "to signify (Gk. verb form *sēmainō*) *it* (His unveiling) … to His servant John". Thus the whole of Revelation has been defined for us as a "sign". And it is chock full of significant things. Just look now at these unique things spoken about Jesus' return to earth –

- riding a white horse in the sky (Rev.19:11)
- eyes as flames of fire, wearing "many diadems" (19:12) – NOTE: the dragon and the beast wear only "seven diadems" (12:3; 13:1)
- wearing a vesture dipped in blood (19:13)
- followed by a heavenly army, also on white horses (19:14)
- out of His mouth comes a sharp sword (19:15)
- His name written on garment and thigh – "King of kings and Lord of lords" (19:16)

I believe these end-time phenomena of John’s vision will be seen by “all tribes of the earth”, in their mournful “welcome” of the King of kings.

The Olivet discourse has another feature that is time-specific –

> “Then **immediately after** the tribulation of those days, the sun will become darkened and the moon not give its light and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” Mat.24:29

From this we know that the same celestial signs of the OT prophets, notably Joel 2:10, 31, will come right after the Great Tribulation, and then “the sign of the Son of Man” will appear in the heaven (‘sky’). These celestial signs will signify to the surviving remnant of faithful Israel that their salvation has come at last.

The Sign of the Woman

What else is said of that saved remnant? At the beginning of their tribulation a different sign will be given. I am making this diversion into Revelation 12, because some have taught that it also speaks of a “rapture” –

> “Then a **great sign** appeared in the heaven – a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon underneath her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And having *a child* in the womb and suffering **birth pangs** (Gk. *ōdinō*), she cried out, and being tormented she **gave birth** (Gk. *tiktō*). And **another sign** appeared in the heaven. And, **behold**, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. And his tail drags the third of the stars of the heaven and it threw them into the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman, who is about to **give birth**, so that whenever she **might give birth** he might eat up her child. And she **gave birth** to a son, a male, who is about to shepherd all the nations with an iron staff. And her child was taken away to God and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has there a place prepared from God, so that there they might feed her a thousand two hundred sixty days.” Rev.12:1-6

In vision, **at the beginning** of the tribulation came this “great sign” of a woman associated with sun, moon and stars. Immediately **after** the tribulation will be phenomena in sun, moon and stars that fulfill Joel chapter 2 and precede “the sign

of the Son of Man". Seeing that the lights in the heavens were given "for signs and for appointed times" (Gen.1:14), these must be two applications of their purpose since the beginning. The "woman" appears to be Israel in flight (per Jesus' instruction in Mat.24:15-16), but who is the "son, a male"?

The *NKJV* capitalizes "Child", implying this is Messiah. The difficulty with this interpretation is that the dragon has just thrown a third of the stars (angels) to earth (Rev.12:4) before his attack upon the woman. After the woman gives birth, the child is **taken away** (Gk., *harpazō* – "seized"). Seeing that "the dragon stood before the woman … whenever she might give birth", the action seems to flow rapidly here. Remember, a keynote of the end-times is their rolling on "swiftly" (*en tachei, tachu* – 8 occs. in Rev.). Then was the Christ-child taken up to God at birth? Or was the resurrected Christ seized away from the dragon to God? Acts 1:9 says He "was lifted up" (Gk., *epairō*), and there is no sense He was in any danger. And think about it, can Christ in resurrection be in any way threatened by Satan? Unthinkable. Also, this interpretation would make the "woman" His mother Miriam – did she flee to the desert after Christ's ascension? Was she fed there for 1,260 days (Rev.12:14, and see below concerning the "times")? Was the dragon enraged with James, Joses, Simon, Judas and the sisters of Jesus ("the rest of her offspring", *NKJV* of Rev.12:17)? You see how non-sensical this Messianic interpretation gets.

NT Emphasis on the "Overcomer"

A better interpretation is that the child is some portion of Israel, who will be taken up to the heavens – the sequence might imply before both the Tribulation and the *Parousia* event of 1 Th.4:13-17. Note that "taken up" in 1 Th.4:17 is also Gk. *harpazō*, used in Revelation 12 of the "male". This child "is about to shepherd all the nations with an iron staff" (Rev.12:5), and that is also a promise given to the "overcomers" (Rev. 2:26-27, Gk. *nikaō*, lit. "victors", or "winners"). If the "woman" is a collective metaphor representing Israel "in labor", then it would make sense for the "child" to be a collective metaphor as well. Welch proposed that this ascending child is "the rapture of the overcomers" (*This Prophecy*, pp.153-154), an early harvest at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Can this be correct?

Here is some of what is said of the overcomers in Revelation –

"To the **one overcoming** I will give him to eat from the Tree of Life, which is in the paradise of God" Rev.2:7

"The **one overcoming** should in no wise be harmed from the second death." Rev.2:11

"To the **one overcoming** I will give him the hidden manna." Rev.2:17

"And the **one overcoming**, and the one keeping My works to *the* end, I will give him authority over the nations. And he will shepherd them with an iron staff." Rev.2:26-27

"The **one overcoming** thus will don white garments, and I will in no wise wipe out his name from the Book of Life. And I will profess his name before My Father, and before His angels." Rev.3:5

"The **one overcoming** I will make him a column in the temple of My God, and he may in no wise go out again. And I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which *is* descending from the heaven from My God." Rev.3:12

"The **one overcoming** I will give him to sit with Me on My throne, as even I overcame and sat with My Father on His throne." Rev.3:21

These messages to the seven Asian assemblies speak to the rewards that will be given the overcomers. The defects that each assembly must overcome are given prior to these promises of reward. Among the rewards are a "hidden manna" (suggesting the woman's flight into the wilderness, "and they will feed her"), "the tree of life" in a restored Paradise (suggesting restoration of what Adam might have retained for the human race), shepherding with an iron staff (rulership of the nations will require an earthly presence), entry in the Book of Life and freedom from the Second Death (the two alternatives are limited to these: Book of Life, or Lake of Fire – a judgment of works, Rev.20:15 – cp.1 Cor.3:15), temple membership in New Jerusalem (the hope of Abraham), and reigning with Christ. Of these, "the hidden manna" would seem to rule out an early seizure into heaven for the overcomers. But not only that, what will these Overcomers overcome, if

they are seized immediately to heaven after their “birth” as the male-child? That interpretation is just too hasty, or the Overcomer is no overcomer at all. Recall the “smelting” of Zechariah 13.

One of these rewards for Overcomers raises a question about the Tree of Life – will one bite of its fruit convey the same deathlessness (Gk. *athanasia*) that Christ alone has now (1 Tim.6:16)? That deathlessness is the end-state of resurrection per 1 Cor.15:53-54 (*KJV*, “immortality”). Why is there no mention of “the Tree of Life” in that great resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15? I will examine the reasoning behind 1 Corinthians 15 before the end of this chapter.

But here is a relevant question – why would not the woman fleeing into the wilderness have the promise of these same rewards? Is she blotted from the Book of Life and destined for the Lake of Fire, even after having suffered through the Great Tribulation? That would make her tribulation seem pointless. Look what else John said about overcoming –

> “I write to you, young men, because you have **overcome** the wicked one.”
> 1 Jn.2:13, 14

> “You are from God, little children, and you have **overcome** them (spirits of antichrist), because greater is the One in you, than the one in the world.”
> 1 Jn.4:4

> “Because everything which has been born from God **overcomes** the world. And this is the **victory** (Gk. *nikē*) which is **overcoming** the world – our faith.”
> 1 Jn.5:4

> “But who is the one **overcoming** the world, if not the one believing that Jesus is the Son of God?” 1 Jn.5:5

John used a great simplicity of language to make his points above. The requirements for overcoming in 1 John can be boiled down to “act according to your faith in Jesus, and keep on doing it to the end”. Everything indicates that it will be desirable (and possible) for every believer during the end-times to be an overcomer. Therefore, the “woman” of Revelation 12 also includes these overcomers.

Then what is it that differentiates the "male-child" from the "woman" (Gk. *gunē*) of Revelation 12? The child is first called "a son, a **male** (Gk. *arsēn*)", and Luk.2:23 says of every **male** (*arsēn*) opening the womb, "he will be called holy to the Lord". On this basis, the "child" of Revelation 12 may be the firstborn of a new birth of spiritual sons, as prophesied of old (e.g., Isa.66:7-8, where *LXX* uses *arsēn* for *KJV*, "male child"). Of this child it is said –

"And her child was caught up (Gk. *harpazō*) to God and **to His throne**."
Rev.12:5

But will this be immediately after his spiritual birth? That hardly makes sense, given that sitting with Christ **on His throne** is a reward for overcomers (Rev.3:21). And what have they overcome, if they are taken away *before* being tested? The Rev.12:5 citation above has the "male child" being "caught up (Gk. *harpazō*) to God and **to His throne**", but the translation "caught up" is not entirely accurate. There is no "up" in *harpazō*, as if it had a prefix like *ana-* or *huper-*. Moulton & Milligan (p.78) cites instances where it means simply "snatch", or even "plunder", and they say it is found "often in petitions complaining of robbery". One gets the sense from Rev.12:5 that God will snatch away a plunder that the dragon expects will be his.

Further, Revelation 12 does not say of the male child *when* he will be caught away to God's throne. Seeing that the heavenly Temple will be "off-limits" until the seventh bowl of the seventh plague has finished (Rev.15:8), this would permit the male child to be before the throne only as early as the *Parousia*, but not before. But how long after that they appear before the throne is *not* stated. There seems to be no way of knowing this timing, but it would likely depend on when the Heavenly Jerusalem is open to the Overcomers. This same time restriction must also apply to "the lives of those slain because of the word of God", who are seen underneath the altar (heavenly) when the fifth seal is opened (Rev.6:9). They cry out for their blood to be avenged – but this must be compared to Abel's blood speaking in Heb.12:24. And below the earthly altar was where sacrificial blood was poured out. These can hardly be near the throne of God, or anywhere else, before the first resurrection brings them back to life (Rev.20:5-6). For a fuller treatment of how the book of Revelation deals with time, see the later section **Overview of the Revelation: Timing & Tense**.

Because the child appears to be separate from the woman in the vision, they likely represent two different groups of people going through the Great Tribulation. The timing of their “throne” presence is left indefinite.

The Women in Revelation

Although I disagree with Welch concerning the “male child”, he may be correct that “the woman” of Revelation chapter 12 is specifically Jerusalem (*This Prophecy*, p.151). She is **clothed with** (Gk. *periballō*) the sun, while the woman (Babylon) of a separate vision is **arrayed with** (*periballō*) purple and scarlet (Rev.17:4). Chapter 12 follows chapter 11, in which the “two witnesses” give their remarkable testimony and plagues. Theirs is “the holy city” (11:3), even “the great city which is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified” (11:13) – obviously Old Jerusalem. The other “great city” is Babylon (16:19, 17:18, 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21). It seems noteworthy to me that Old Jerusalem should be depicted with the sign of a woman and with epithets, but is not even named in Revelation. In fact, the second epithet, “spiritually Sodom and Egypt” is a strong condemnation of the apostasy of the end-times. This un-naming of Old Jerusalem mirrors Hebrews, which names only the heavenly Jerusalem and heavenly Zion (Heb.12:22) and says further, “for we have not here a continuing city” (Heb.13:14). The writer of Hebrews has already turned his back on earthly Jerusalem, because he has set his prospect to overcoming and attaining the New Jerusalem.

The Revelation could be called *A Tale of Three Cities (or Three Women)*, as that is a theme that occupies much of the book. The third city is New Jerusalem, depicted thus –

> “the wedding of the Lamb came, and His wife (Gk. *gunē*) has readied herself” Rev.19:7
>
> “the Bride, the Lamb’s wife (*gunē*)” Rev.21:9

Gunē can mean either “woman” or “wife”. Note how this last woman will “be **arrayed with** (Gk. *periballō*) fine linen, bright, pure” (Rev.19:8). I will deal with

more particulars of the New Jerusalem in the next chapter, **Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?**

So the woman of Rev.12 is wearing apparel suited to Israel, but more particularly she is old Jerusalem bringing forth a first-fruit to God out of tribulation. Her people eventually become another woman, “the Bride, the Lamb’s wife” – occupants of New Jerusalem. But before this wedding takes place, one of her persecutors will be a third woman, the harlot, Babylon the Great.

Recall from a previous chapter, **Christ in the Old Testament, and the New**, that Yahweh’s wife, Israel, was not called “queen”, but may qualify as “mistress” or “lady of power” (Heb. *g$_e$bîyrâh*). Such was Sarah in regard to Hagar (Gen.16:4, where the *LXX* translates *g$_e$bîyrâh* as Gk. *kuria*). This helps explain whom John addressed in his second epistle as the “elect **lady** (*kuria*) and her children” (2 Jn.1:1). As one of the Twelve, John ministered to the circumcision, and he had a special interest in Samaria (Acts 8:14, John chapter 4). Samaria represented the northern kingdom half of Israel, the “elect lady”, while Judea was the southern kingdom and Samaria’s “elect sister” with her children (2 Jn. 1:13). The sisterhood of the two kingdoms was well established by the parable of the two sisters in Eze.23:2-4. By means of this circumlocution, *kuria*, John was addressing Samaritan believers as part of the Bride, the Lamb’s wife.

There are even more contrasts between the two cities, earthly Jerusalem and Babylon. The dragon will send a river of water (Gk. *hudōr*) after the woman he pursues (12:15), while the other woman Babylon “sits upon many waters (*hudōr*)” (17:1), who are explained to be “peoples and crowds and nations and tongues” (17:15). Could the latter explain the nature of the “river of water” the dragon will send to sweep away the woman he persecutes? The OT prophets spoke of multiple nations coming against Jerusalem, and especially take note of the hordes coming with Gog (see previous chapter, **Where Does Gog of the Land of Magog Fit?**). Also, Jesus declared –

> “But when you may see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation has drawn near. Then let those in Judea flee (Gk. *pheugō*, as the woman in Rev.12:6 will flee) into the mountains, and those in the midst of her

> go away. And let not those in the territories enter into her. For these are days of vengeance, the fulfilling of all the things written.” Luk.21:20-22

In order for Luke 21 to fulfill “all the things written”, it necessarily takes us beyond AD 70, as numerous other unfulfilled prophecies must be included in that phrase. It also contradicts any proposal that God has rescinded some of His prophecies concerning Israel, unless you believe He has rescinded the “days of vengeance” too.

And consider that Babylon, which must be rebuilt on the River Euphrates, will be “drunk from the blood of the saints, even from the blood of the witnesses of Jesus” (Rev.17:6). Recall from a previous chapter, **Partial and Deferred Fulfillments**, that one of the Immanuel prophecies depicted Assyria as going over his banks and overflowing Judah (Isa.8:7-8). The king of Assyria was given the epithet “the waters of the river, the strong and the many” (from the *LXX*). Assyria and Babylon were both in the plain of Shinar (Mesopotamia). Like Babel, many Assyrian cities were river cities. These Assyrian “waters” may be a component of the “waters” of Rev.12:15 and 17:1.

A parenthetical statement in the middle of Revelation chapter 12 says “And they (“our brothers” v.10) overcame him (“the accuser” v.10) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their witness” (12:11). Babylon will be a great oppressor of Jerusalem, at least until Babylon’s destruction. Then the Beast will take over this work. “The Beast ascending from the Abyss will **make war** with them and overcome them (the Two Witnesses, as they finish their testimony)” (Rev.11:7), even as the dragon will **make war** with “the rest of her seed” (i.e., the woman’s remnant in Rev.12:17). Considering the whole of Revelation 12, there seem to be two groups born of the woman: a firstborn “male son”, and the “rest (or remnant) of her seed, who *are* keeping the commandments of God and having the witness of Jesus”. If these are meant to represent saints of God, of early and later Tribulation periods, then the Two Witnesses could also be part of the “male son” group.

The Two Witnesses will torment men with their preaching and their plagues, but the world will be mostly unchanged by this. Their death by the Beast will be followed by their resurrection, the first recorded in Revelation, and prior to the “prior resurrection” (Rev.20:5-6). Then follows the command, “Ascend (Gk.

anabainō) here”, followed by, “And they ascended into the heaven in the cloud” (Rev.11:12). John **in spirit** had also been told “Ascend (*anabainō*) here” (Rev.4:1), and he did so to see God’s throne. But the Two Witnesses must ascend **in body**, because “their enemies saw them” during their ascent. After the ascent of the Two Witnesses and the great earthquake which will cause the tenth of the city to fall, “the rest (remnant) will become terrified and give glory to the God of the heaven” (Rev.11:13). Might this be “the remnant of her seed”, those fleeing into the wilderness? Could the stimulus of the resurrection of the Two Witnesses and the earthquake convince some of them finally to believe the testimony of the Two Witnesses? Will this coincide with the outpouring of God’s spirit upon a newborn nation? Recall that the “spirit of grace and supplications” of Zec.12:10 will be poured out upon Jerusalem specifically.

The ‘Birth’ in Revelation 12

Revelation records the Spirit saying things to each of the seven assemblies, and then He spoke at Rev.14:13 and 22:17. But there is no reference to an outpouring of spirit on the new nation – we must infer that from other texts. The giving-birth text in Revelation 12 aligns with the following OT prophecies – especially note the similarity of the highlighted **birth** words (and their *LXX* equivalents) in the texts below to the text of Rev.12:1-6 a few pages back.

> “Now, for what do you shout a shouting? *That* the king *is* not among you? Has your counselor perished? For **anguish** (*LXX*, *ōdin*) has taken hold of you like **the birth-pang** (*LXX*, *tiktō*). **Be in labor** (*LXX*, *ōdinō*) and **bring forth** (not in *LXX*), daughter of Zion, as one **bearing** (*LXX*, *tiktō*), for now <u>you will go out from town and dwell in the open field</u> (or plain). And you will <u>go as far as Babel</u>, there you will be rescued, there Yahweh will redeem you from *the* palm of your enemies.” Mic.4:9-10

> “Before that she **writhes** (*LXX*, *ōdinō*), she **gave birth** (*LXX*, *tiktō*). Before that **pain** (*LXX*, *ōdin*) comes to her, she even **gives birth** (*LXX*, *tiktō*) to a **male** *child* (*LXX*, *arsēn*). Who has heard *anything* like this? Who has seen *anything* like these? Will *the* earth **travail** (*LXX*, *ōdinō*) in one day, *as* if a nation **be brought forth** (*LXX*, *tiktō*) in one stroke? For *thus* Zion **travailed** (*LXX*, *ōdinō*), yea, she **brought forth** (*LXX*, *tiktō*) her **sons**. ‘Shall I **bring to birth**

> (*LXX* text differs) and not **bring forth** (*LXX* text differs)?' – says Yahweh. 'Shall I *be* **bringing forth** (*LXX*, *gennaō*) and shut up *the womb*?' – says your Elohim. Rejoice with Jerusalem and exult in her, all *of you* loving her."
>
> Isa.66:7-10

> "And these *are* the words that Yahweh spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus said Yahweh, 'We have heard a voice of trembling, of terror and not of peace. Ask, now, and see if a **male** (*LXX*, *arsēn*) *is* **bringing forth** (*LXX*, *tiktō*). Why have I seen every young man, his hands upon his loins, like her **bringing forth** (not in *LXX*), and all faces are turned to pallor? **Hah**, for great *is* that day! Above any like it. Even a time of that distress to Jacob, but he will be saved from it. Then it will come to pass in that day – an utterance of Yahweh of armies – I will break *the* yoke from over your neck and I will tear away your chains, and foreigners will not enslave him again. But they will serve Yahweh their Elohim, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.'"
>
> Jer.30:4-9

Note how the Micah and Isaiah texts are distinctively Jerusalo-centric. The **birth-pains** (*ōdin*, *ōdinō*) and **giving birth** (*tiktō*) are repeated in these texts – and even more abundantly in the Hebrew version of them. They are spoken variously concerning a male (*arsēn*), Zion, daughter of Zion, Jerusalem, a nation, and the earth giving birth to a male, or to her sons. The nation will be born in a day, in one stroke (i.e., "in a moment"). This will happen in a time of trembling and terror, "the time of Jacob's trouble" (*KJV*), not like any other. Jesus also spoke of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes as "a beginning of **birth-pains** (*ōdin*)" (Mat.24:7-8), implying that the remainder of His discourse would be the rest of the birth-pains. Micah's "you will go out from town and dwell in the open field" suggests the woman's flight into the wilderness (Rev.12:6). But it is also possible to translate this as a "plain" instead of "open field" (*LXX*, *pedion*), and it could suggest "a plain in the land of Shinar" (*LXX* of Gen.11:2, where "plain" is also *pedion*), because they will also "go as far as Babel". And their rescue from Babel has this NT support – "Come out of her (Babylon), My people" (Rev.18:4).

What might we conclude of the child being caught away to the throne in Rev.12:5? It may suggest an early company of believers, including the Two Witnesses as part of it. However, the timing of individual scenes in Revelation is a

very difficult issue (see the later chapter, **Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?** and its section **Overview of the Revelation: Timing & Tense**). Rev.11:11 reveals that from the death of the Two Witnesses until their resurrection will be exactly three and a half days. The heavenly command to "ascend here" seems to come after no great interval – their enemies who previously rejoiced over them, now watched in fear (Rev.11:12). But was this ascent only into the sky, like Elijah's departure into the whirlwind, or was it all the way to God's throne (Rev.12:5)? Rev.11:12 is not clear about that. It says only that "they ascended into the heaven in the cloud". If they are to go immediately to God's throne, then they must leave it again sometime after that, because –

- God's throne is in His Sanctuary (Rev.7:12), and
- no one can enter His Sanctuary until the seven last plagues complete the wrath of God (Rev.15:8)

The implication is that the "male child" will complete his journey to the throne very late in the course of the day of vengeance.

Because the Two Witnesses will be resurrected before the final three and a half years, where will they be during the Great Tribulation? I have already suggested an association with the "male child" caught away to God's throne, but that ascent to the throne must happen later. It says of these two that they will ascend "into the heaven ('sky') <u>in the cloud</u>" (Rev.11:12). It is, perhaps, suggestive that 1 Cor.10:2 says Moses' generation were baptized "<u>in the cloud</u>" – the only other NT occ. of this exact phrase (Gk. *en tē nephelē*). This would have been the "pillar of cloud" in which the Lord Himself led the Israelites (Exo.13:21). Could the Two Witnesses have a similar protective role for Israel in the wilderness of that day? Might this explain why the "male child" and the "woman" have separate identities in the "sign" of Revelation 12? The Two Witnesses will be performing Elijah's miracles before their death, and their being caught away after resurrection resembles Elijah's departure in the whirlwind. Elijah of old did not go to heaven, as so many think. He died as others of like faith (Heb.11:32, 39) and he awaits resurrection along with them. Today, only Jesus Christ has the deathlessness of resurrection (1 Tim.6:16).

Structure of Revelation 12

A.1 Great <u>sign appeared in the heaven</u> – a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon underneath her feet, and <u>upon her head a crown of 12 stars</u>.

2 about to give birth – her company (could these be the one third remnant of Zec.13:8-9?)

A.1 Another <u>sign appeared in the heaven</u> – and, **<u>behold</u>**, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and <u>upon his heads seven diadems</u>.

2 His tail dragged the third of the stars of the heaven and threw them into the earth – his company.

B. The Dragon standing before the woman to destroy her child.

C. Male son caught away to God. (angelic harvest)

D. Woman fled into the wilderness where she has there a place prepared from God, so that there they might feed her **1,260 days**.

E.1 *War in the heaven.* Armies of Michael and the Dragon.

2 <u>Result</u>: the Great Dragon was thrown into the earth, and his angels were thrown after him.

F.1 Praise in the heaven, “Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ,

2 <u>Cause</u>: the accuser of our brothers was thrown.

E. *War on earth.* The brothers overcame Satan by **the word of their witness**.

F.1 Rejoice, heavens and those dwelling in them. Woe *to* the earth and the sea,

2 <u>Cause</u>: the Devil descended to you, having great rage, knowing that he has a little season.

B. The Dragon persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male.

C. Woman on two wings of the Great Eagle, (angelic rescue)

D. Woman may fly into the wilderness, into her place where she is fed there **a season and seasons and half a season**.

E.1 *War on earth.* The Snake sent a river-flood after the woman.

2 Result: the earth helped the woman.

E. *War on earth.* Dragon made war with the rest of woman’s seed, who *are* having **the witness of Jesus**.

But there are more intriguing truths in Revelation 12. See the chapter’s structure on the previous page. The “woman” has her company of firstborn, represented by the “male” child. The “dragon” also has his company, the third of the stars that he throws into the earth. If this comparison is relevant, it is suggestive that the one third remnant of Zec.13:8-9 might be the woman’s child caught up to God, while Satan drags his third of the angels to earth. The demonic exodus from heaven is said to be both the dragon dragging them, and their being thrown out after him. These statements are not contradictory, as his dragging them may refer to his persuading them to take his side in the heavenly war, that ends with their expulsion. Heavenly and earthly companies will be engaged in this great crisis and war against Satan’s kingdom. It seems that first both signs appeared in heaven, followed by a heavenly eisodos (male child) and exodus (angels) – then the warfare continued on earth. Rejoicing in heavens precedes woe on earth. The war on earth does not reach a conclusive end in chapter 12, but we must read on to chapters 19 and 20 for the termination of Satan’s kingdom on earth.

Then Who Are the 144,000?

Could the 144,000 be part of the “male child” group? Here is what Revelation says of these 144,000 –

> “**After these things, I saw** four angels having stood upon the four corners of the earth, holding fast the four winds of the earth, so that a wind might not blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor upon every tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from east of *the* sun, having *the* seal of *the* living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, whom it was given them to harm the earth and the sea, saying, ‘Harm not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until I may have sealed **the servants of our God** upon their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of those sealed, **one hundred forty four thousands** sealed from every tribe of *the* sons of Israel. {12,000 each from Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher,

Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulon, Joseph, Benjamin}" Rev.7:1-8

Several observations first –

- "servants of God" figure throughout Revelation – the book itself was given by **His servant** John to show **His servants** (1:1).
- Sealing could mean hiding them, or protecting them from the harm done by the 4 angels holding fast the winds. But here I believe this sealing will be to show God's possession of them, as part of His "treasures". They will be an antithesis of those sealed by the Beast in their foreheads (Rev.14:9, contrasting 7:3).
- The numbering of 12,000 from each of the named tribes is suggestive of a numbering for war – note the similarity with Num.35:5-6, when Moses numbered 1,000 each from twelve tribes, along with Phinehas the priest, to move against Midian. Although Levi was typically exempt from warfare, there were exceptions. The Revelation 7 muster will be twelve times greater than the earlier number, suggesting an enemy twelve times greater than Midian. And if these 144,000 each chases his "thousand", as Joshua promised (Jos.23:10), it suggests an opponent on the order of the "two myriads of myriads" (the 200,000,000 of Rev.9:16).
- I have suggested elsewhere that Revelation's 200,000,000 may be Gog's horde in Ezekiel 38-39. See chapter **Where Does Gog of the Land of Magog Fit?** Extrapolating further, the 144,000 may be the military response by Israel's elite troops to fend off that horde. I assume that a greater number of troops could be conscripted at this time, but that this smaller number will allow the greater number of Israelites to escape into the wilderness. What I am suggesting is that this may be a sacrificial army, who holds back the enemy while Israel escapes. Such notable displays of courage can often be found during warfare.

That the 144,000 is a special group can also be discerned from another text –

"Then I looked, and **behold**, the Lamb having stood upon Mt. Zion, and with Him **one hundred forty four thousands**, having His name and the name of His

> Father written upon their foreheads. Then I heard a sound from heaven as a sound of many waters, and as a sound of great thunder. And the sound which I heard was as of harpists harping with their harps. And they sing like a new song before the throne, and before the four living ones and the elders. And no one could learn the song except **the hundred forty four thousands**, those **having been redeemed** from the earth. These are those not having been defiled with women, for they are virgins, these who *are* following the Lamb wherever He may go. These **were <u>redeemed</u>** from mankind, **a first-fruit** to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was not found a lie. They are faultless." Rev.14:1-5

Note that "women" and "virgins" are plural, so interpreting this as the Pauline collective "chaste virgin" (2 Cor.11:2 – where "you" is plural, but "virgin" singular) seems unlikely. These are the only occurrences of "virgin" (Gk., *parthenos*) and "faultless" (Gk., *amōmos*) in Revelation, making them stand-out characteristics of the 144,000. However, as I mentioned above, they seem to have been mustered according to a preset number, probably from a greater pool of "faultless" candidates. If true, then they will be like Gideon's select band of 300, with whom he subdued Midian. More observations on the 144,000 –

- They are with the Lamb on Mt. Zion – this is the only mention of Zion in Revelation. This must be the heavenly Zion that Heb.12:22-23 associates with "heavenly Jerusalem" and an "assembly of firstborn". Even allowing for the jumps back and forth across time that Revelation makes, their being a "first-fruit" suggests an early access to New Jerusalem, but not necessarily a pre-Tribulation access.

- If we read temporal continuity into this middle section of Revelation, then the 144,000 will be "<u>redeemed</u>" ahead of the *Parousia*, which will be when the majority of Israel are redeemed. I interpret their redemption as a resurrection. But while the visions were continuous, their time-schemes are something of a secret that must be unveiled using other available clues.

- In the OT, new songs were sung by those rescued from great calamity, or victors after a great victory. These 144,000 will have their unique victory song. The only other "new song" is in Rev.5:8-10, sung by the four living

> ones and twenty-four elders concerning the unique worthiness of the Lamb to break the seals of the scroll.

Following the sealing of the 144,000 is another statement, beginning with "After these things I saw" –

> "**After these *things* I saw**, and **behold**, a great crowd, which no one was able to number it, out of every nation and tribe and people and tongue, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palm-branches in their hands, and crying with a great voice, saying, 'The salvation by our God, the One Sitting upon the throne, and by the Lamb.'" Rev.7:9-10

John recorded the flow of his *visions* with "after these *things* I saw (or heard)" (Rev.4:1(1st occ.); 7:1, 9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1), while in other instances he used "after these *things*" to record the flow of *events* within the visions themselves (Rev.1:19; 4:1(2nd occ.); 9:12; 20:3) – the Gk. for "after these *things*" is *meta tauta*. It is highly questionable whether "after these *things* I saw" means "after these things it happened that". Therefore, the timing of the 144,000 being sealed, the timing of the innumerable crowd before the throne and the Lamb, and the timing of the 144,000 with the Lamb on Mt. Zion cannot be established relative to each other – unless some other clues give us the solution. One thing is *not* said of the "great crowd" "before the throne" – they are not called a "first-fruit", so on that basis their appearance there before the Lamb would logically fall after the 144,000 appear there.

The bulk of the evidence so far points to several choice groups, who attain New Jerusalem possibly before the very end of the Tribulation. If true, it seems likely that *their* period of tribulation and testing will be completed before the final "half-seven" of Daniel is finished. That will certainly be the case with the Two Witnesses, who will be resurrected at the end of the first half-seven. But their personal tribulation will have been completed before the general Great Tribulation (second half-seven).

In Revelation 12 every verse, except v.12, begins with Gk. *kai*, which is typical OT narrative style. *Kai* can be translated variously "and" or "but", but in narrative style "then" best conveys the flow of action. If the flow of John's vision is true to the flow of future events in chapter 12, then the "male child" will be rewarded

before “the rest of her seed”. This would represent an exception to 1 Th.4:13-17, which deals only with the living and dead at the *Parousia*, and whether those living until the *Parousia* will go to meet Him first. From the perspective of Revelation 12, all *Parousia* events are still future. But an argument against treating the details of Revelation 12 chronologically is the repetition of the woman’s flight of v.6 at v.14.

If there is an early group, Paul seems to overlook it in his great resurrection lesson –

> “But each in his own order, First-fruit Christ, afterwards those of Christ at His *Parousia*” 1 Cor.15:23

But consider that in the next verse Paul jumped ahead to – “then the end, whenever He may deliver the kingdom to God, even the Father”. This jump omitted the second resurrection (Rev.20:5-6). Apparently Paul’s principal point here in 1 Corinthians 15 was to demonstrate to some the very necessity of resurrection to the Christian faith, and not to explain all the finer points of the various resurrection events.

The Half-Sevens

But there is another timing consideration that seems to align many of the activities in Revelation – the two periods of three and a half years. Here are the texts –

> First Half-Seven:
>
> “And I will give to My two witnesses, and they will prophesy **days a thousand two hundred sixty**, clothed with sackcloth.” Rev.11:3
>
> Second Half-Seven:
>
> “Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has there a place prepared from God, that there they may feed her **days a thousand two hundred sixty**.” Rev.12:6

> "And the court which *is* outside the temple throw it outside, and you should not measure it, because it was given to the nations. And they will tread the holy city **months forty and two**." Rev.11:2

> "And there was given him (the Beast) a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. And there was given him authority to work **months forty and two**." Rev.13:5

> "And there was given the woman the two wings of the great eagle, so that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place where she is fed there **a season** (Gk. *kairos*) **and seasons and half a season**, from before the snake." Rev.12:14

These relate directly to some of Daniel's prophecies –

> "And he will speak words against the Most High, and he will wear away at the holy ones of Elyon. And he will intend to change seasons and law. And they will be given into his hand until **a time** (*LXX kairos*) **and times and half a time**." Dan.7:25

> "Then he said to the one clothed with the white linen, who *was* from atop the waters of the river, 'Until when *is* the end of the wonders?' And I heard the man clothed with the white linen, who *is* from atop the waters of the river, and he raised his right hand and his left to the heavens, and he swore by the One Living for the age, that it is for **an appointed time, appointed times and a half**. And as a completion of the shattering of the hand of the holy people will be completed all these *times*.'" Dan.12:7 (*LXX* of **bolded** phrase is used verbatim in Rev.12:14)

> "And he (the coming ruler of v.26) will make strong a covenant for many **one seven**. And *at* **half the seven** he will make cease sacrifice and gift. And upon a wing of abominations *will be* a desolating one, and until a completion, even a strict decision will be poured out upon *the* desolating one." Dan.9:27

So the following activities seem to fall into alignment –

- prophesying of the Two Witnesses, *then follow* –

- nations treading the holy city
- feeding of the woman in the wilderness
- the Beast having self-aggrandizing authority
- shattering of the holy people
- breaking a covenant, stopping sacrifice, the desolating abomination

The 1,260 days of the Two Witnesses is the first half of Daniel’s final “seven”. They seem to witness uncheered, but also unopposed – except when the Beast from the Abyss kills them. That Beast/Abaddon is released at the fifth trumpet. Given the rapidity of events in the Revelation, would the Beast wait any part of the witnesses’ 1,260 days before striking? Probably not. Abaddon’s release must come at the start of the Great Tribulation, at the mid-point of Daniel’s final “seven”. Apparently, the Two Witnesses will run their course and then be murdered at the end of the first half-seven. While the Two Witnesses preach in Jerusalem, could others be doing the same throughout Israel? Could such a group be the “male … caught up to God” (Rev.12:5)? This is at least possible. Of those listed as reigning with Christ in Rev.20:4 will be “those beheaded on account of the witness of Jesus”, so there will be active preaching of a Messianic Christian message sometime during that final “seven”. And recall that Jesus prophesied concerning preaching with persecution, “You may not at all have finished the cities of Israel until perhaps the Son of Man may come” (Mat.10:23).

Then what of the 144,000? If they are young, unmarried men in uniform, holding off the hordes of the nations, while the remnant flees into the wilderness, then they seem to have an early reward before the Lamb too. Will all of these be caught away to the throne at the same time as the Two Witnesses? Not necessarily – but speaking collectively all of them will be caught up there.

Why is this three and a half year time period of the Great Tribulation described in the four different ways above? Perhaps so that Revelation might be seen to align with the “seven”, “half the seven” and the “appointed time”, times and a half of Daniel. Given that the prophecy of the Two Witnesses fills an identical time period that the woman is fed in the wilderness, we might be inclined to confuse their “appointed times”.

To tarry a bit longer on the Two Witnesses, I have remarked in an earlier chapter, **Christ in the Old Testament, and the New**, on the character of the plagues they bring, as resembling those of Elijah and Moses. John, who saw the vision of the Two Witnesses, also saw the Transfiguration vision. In that earlier “vision” (Mat.17:9), he saw Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah (Mat.17:3), who spoke with Jesus about “His exodus which He was about to fulfill at Jerusalem” (Luk.9:31). So the Transfiguration vision also contained a near-term prophecy. Afterwards, in response to the disciples’ question, Jesus explained both that “Elijah indeed comes and will restore all things” (Mat.17:11), and “that Elijah already came” (Mat.17:12). These apparently conflicting statements must be understood in a sense of multiple prophetic Elijahs. The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11 will resemble Elijah in the power of both their witness (like John the Baptist resembled him) and their miracles (although “John did no miracle” – *KJV*, Joh.10:41). Elijah was “taken up” (*LXX* uses *anagō* in 2 Ki.2:1, and *analambanō* in 2 Ki.2:11) by a whirlwind into the heaven. On the other hand, Moses was told to “ascend” (*LXX*, *anabainō*) Mt. Nebo, to the top of Pisgah before his exodus from life. Moses and Elijah provide examples of extraordinary exits from earthly life. The Two Witnesses will exit the earth following their resurrection, after the manner of Jesus’ own exodus, which He discoursed with Moses and Elijah in the Transfiguration vision. Are these similarities just coincidences, or are we meant to take special note of them? Because we are told to compare spiritual things (1 Cor.2:13) and to test things that differ (Phi.1:10), I do not believe any part of Scripture is accidental. We are meant to draw some meaning from all such associations.

If I seem to have zig-zagged across Revelation to draw certain conclusions, it shows the complex and veiled nature of John’s visions in the Revelation. The threads of connection in this book are manifold, spreading out from many points in many directions. You will forgive me, if I have left some threads dangling with no firm conclusion. It is very humbling to try and understand everything that Revelation contains. Ultimately, this book is meant for those servants who will pass through the experiences depicted there. What is also rather a mystery to me is how preterism can take *parts* of Revelation chapters 1-19 as having been fulfilled, but fail to see the *unity* of the prophecy. Also the millennial reign of Christ and Satan’s incarceration, as well as the “little season” rebellion must chronologically

follow Revelation 19. Indeed, the whole of Revelation tumbles as a house of cards, if you try to remove a card or two and declare the rest of the book “fulfilled”.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-10 – “day of the Lord as a thief in the night”

We now continue the end-time message of 1 Thessalonians into its final chapter:

> “But concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, I have not need *for it* to be written to you. For you yourselves know accurately that *the* day of *the* Lord, as a thief in *the* night, so comes. Whenever they may say, ‘Peace and security’, then **unexpected** (Gk. *aiphnidios*) destruction **stands over** (Gk. *ephistēmi*) them, even as the **birth-pain** (Gk. *ōdin*) to her that has *a baby* in the womb. And they may in no wise **flee out** (Gk. *ekpheugō*). But you, brothers are not in darkness, so that the day should overtake you as a thief. For all you are sons of light and sons of day. We are neither of night nor of darkness. Therefore, then, let us not sleep as the rest, but let us watch and be sober. For those sleeping sleep *at* night, and those getting drunk get drunk *at* night. But we, being of *the* day, let us be sober, having put on a breastplate of faith and love, and a helmet of expectation of salvation. Because God appointed us not for wrath, but for possession of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, the One having died for us, so that whether we may keep awake or may sleep, together with Him we may live.” 1 Th.5:1-10

Like the Parable of Householder and Thief (Mat.24:43) in the previous chapter, **Parable as Prophecy**, Paul emphasized the unexpectedness of the day of the Lord with the figure of a thief. Peter did likewise (2 Pet. 3:10), and Revelation depicts Jesus warning His followers with this very thing (Rev.3:3; 16:15). Those who “may in no wise flee out” are those who say “peace and security” during this time of watchfulness.

Jesus also likened His *Parousia* with “the days of Noah” and the normalcy of world activity until the day Noah entered the ark (Mat.24:37-38). Peter called Noah a “herald of righteousness”, so he must have warned the people of coming judgment. Even further, they must have scoffed at Noah, just as some will scoff at

the end-time preaching – until it is too late. I have given reasons above why this may be the time of the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11. During a time of general "peace and security", these Two may not be taken very seriously. Apparently men cannot hurt them (Rev.11:5), but the Beast will be responsible for their destruction.

Then unexpected calamity will come upon those expecting "peace and security". Both peace and security were espoused throughout the OT, even as this text describes them –

> "And will come to pass the work of righteousness *for* **peace**, and the labor of righteousness to be made quiet and **security** until an age." Isa.32:17

Apparently the end-time expectation of "peace and security" will be apart from righteousness, apart from justice. The context in Isa.32:15 indicates this as a time when the spirit would be poured out on them from on high. Those crying out "peace and safety" per 1 Thessalonians 5 will do so from a different spirit, the spirit of the age in which they will be living.

The "unexpected destruction" in 1 Thessalonians 5 echoes the Lord's end-time teaching in Luke chapter 21 –

> "But take care to yourselves, lest your hearts should be weighted with dissipation and drunkenness and anxieties of livelihoods, and that **unexpected** (Gk. *aiphnidios*) day should **stand over** (Gk. *ephistēmi*) you. For as a snare it will come against all those sitting upon *the* face of the whole earth. But be alert, praying in every season that you may have strength to **flee from** (Gk. *ekpheugō*) all these things which are about to come, and to be made to stand in front of the Son of Man." Luk.21:34-36

Note the similarity of three Greek words used in both 1 Thessalonians 5 and Luke 21 (*aiphnidios, ephistēmi, ekpheugō*) . Paul seemed to be taking a cue directly from the Lord in Luke 21 – could it be that Paul's friend Luke had just completed his Gospel around this time? Also this Lukan version of Christ's *Sunteleia* prophecies includes a more global perspective, such as "a snare it will come against all those sitting upon *the* face of the whole **earth**" (Gk. *gē*, not the more limited *oikoumenē* of Mat.24:14). And that same watchful perspective is here –

> "Then, those in Judea **flee** (Gk. *pheugō*) into the mountains, and those in the midst of her (i.e., Judea) go away, and those **in the countries** come not into her." Luk.21:21

This will be a time to go out, or stay out of Judea. Those out among the nations, like some complacent Thessalonians, will eventually seek to "flee out" but their destruction will have come unexpectedly – by then it will be too late to flee. Although the main danger will be in Judea, a snare will come upon "the whole earth". We are not told where Thessalonians, Galatians, or Romans might flee to, but there will be danger everywhere for believers in that day. The Beast will have his tentacles in the politics of many nations.

Rev.12:16 reveals that the earth will help "the woman" who has fled into the wilderness, and this may indicate rescues that occur all over the earth for the persecuted Nation. This also explains the judgment of those nations who will stand on the Lord's right at the judgment of Mat.25:31-46. These nations drinking down "the flood" (or 'river') that "the dragon" sends after "the woman" may also explain a curious statement in Luke, which I translate a little differently than the *KJV* –

> "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in despair of a report of sea and wave." Luk.21:25

Whatever the nature of "the flood" in Revelation 12 and "sea and wave" above, they spell "trouble". The "sea and wave" sounds similar to "when the enemy comes in like a flood" (*NKJV*, Isa.59:19).

While on the subject of the Lord's *Sunteleia* prophecies, some believe this next statement confirms their understanding of a pre-Tribulation "Rapture" for the saints generally –

> "Then two will be in the field. One is taken aside and one is left. Two *will be* grinding at the mill. One is taken aside and one is left. Therefore, be alert, because you know not in what day your Lord comes." Mat.24:40-42

The example of people at work (just as in the Flood example in vv.38-39) was to reinforce the warning, "Be alert", because destruction will come suddenly. But Jesus had just stated, "And he in the field let not turn back around to take his garment'" (Mat.24:18). The one "left" (Gk. *aphiēmi*) appears to be left behind to

take the destruction that will come. Therefore, the one "taken aside" (or "taken along" or "received", Gk. *paralambanō*) would be for rescue. That rescue will be the woman's flight into a wilderness (Rev.12:16), not the flight into the air to meet the Lord. His *Parousia* for His people will still be three and a half years away, when this "taking aside" happens.

In what sense might this flight be a "taking along"? Seeing that "the woman was given the two wings of the Great Eagle" for her flight into the wilderness (Rev.12:14), the Great Eagle appears to be "taking along" "the woman". "Into the wilderness" is not "into the clouds", and these refugees still have 1,260 days to wait for the Lord's *Parousia*. There is a kind of "in the air" experience for them by whatever is meant by "the Great Eagle", but this is still not the *Parousia*. Those remaining alive until the *Parousia* will indeed meet the Lord "in the air" (1 Th. 4:17) – and these would seem to include "the woman" who will have fled into the wilderness for survival. Remember that the flight into the wilderness will be from Judea, whereas those who remain alive to the *Parousia* will include such as the Thessalonian believers. Revelation confirms this with –

- redeemed "<u>out of</u> every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev.5:9)
- an innumerable great crowd "<u>out of</u> every nation and tribe and people and tongue" before the throne and the Lamb (Rev.7:9)

The use of "<u>out of</u>" (Gk. *ek*) above is what we would expect to be said of a great diaspora of Israel, dispersed over the world and then taken out of it.

Looking again at "the Great **Eagle**, so that she **might fly** into the wilderness" (Rev.12:14), where else do we find such a figure? Rev.4:7 comes to our aid –

"the fourth <u>living one</u> like an **eagle flying**"

You might object that the woman flies on "the **two wings** of the Great Eagle", while the living ones have **six wings** (Rev.4:8). The only other description of any creatures with six wings were the "seraphim" of Isa.6:2 – but note that they used only **two wings** to fly with. In Isa.6:3 they say, "holy, holy, holy, Lord of armies", while in Rev.4:8 they say, "holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty". Apparently a seraphic angel, a "<u>living one</u>", will be the agent of the woman's flight and

preservation. I have suggested earlier that the Two Witnesses in resurrection may also have a part to play in her rescue.

Besides the theme of unexpectedness, another point of “one taken, one left” seems to be that perhaps half of Judea will be left behind to suffer the worst punishment (even as half of the Ten Virgins were excluded from the marriage-feast). The watchful ones will already be gone, when they see “the abomination of desolation … standing in the holy place” (Mat.24:15), or “Jerusalem surrounded by armies” (Luk.21:20). The point I would leave you with is this: there is nothing in Matthew 24 or all of Revelation that exactly matches the Thessalonian revelation of “meeting the Lord in air”, which is unique doctrine. And that “meeting” will be an *immediate* prelude to Messiah’s *Parousia* here on earth. Failure to “rightly divide” the heavenlies of our hope from this sky-meeting of Israel is what has led to so many becoming confued over a “Rapture” for themselves.

1 Corinthians 15:35-57 – “a Secret, not all will sleep”

We have already examined a portion of 1 Corinthians 15, but here I include more of it for a better understanding of “day of the Lord” expectations.

> “But one will say, ‘How are the dead raised, and by what body do they come?’ Mindless one, what you sow is not made alive unless it may die. And what you sow, you sow not the body which will come, but a **naked** seed, as it may happen wheat, or one of the rest. But God gives to it a body, even as He desired, even to each of the seeds its own body. Not all flesh *is* the same flesh, but one indeed of man, and another flesh of cattle, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish, and heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. But the glory of the heavenly *is* indeed one, and that of the earthly another. One glory of sun, and another glory of moon, and another glory of stars, for a star differs from a star in glory. Thus also the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a soulish (Gk. *psuchikos*) body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a soulish body, there is even a spiritual. Thus also it has been written, ‘The first man Adam became for a living soul (Gk. *psuchē*), the last Adam for a life-giving spirit. But the spiritual *was* not first, but the soulish, then the spiritual. The first man *was* dust from the earth, the second

> Man from heaven. As *was* the dusty one, so also those dusty ones, and as the heavenly One, so also the heavenly ones. And just as we bore the image of the dust, we will even bear the image of the heavenly. But I say this, brothers, that flesh and blood is not able to inherit *the* kingdom of God, neither does the corruption inherit Incorruption. **Behold**, I tell you a **secret**, not all **will sleep**, but all will be changed. In a little *moment,* in a blinking of an eye, at the last trumpet – for a trumpet will blast, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible *body* must **put on** (Gk. *enduō*) incorruption, and this mortal **put on** (*enduō*) immortality. Then whenever this corruptible may **put on** (*enduō*) incorruption, and this mortal may **put on** (*enduō*) immortality, then will come to pass the word which has been written, 'Death was drunk down in victory.' Where, death, is your victory? Where, death, is your sting? But the sting of Death *is* Sin, and the power of Sin *is* the law. But to God is graciousness, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. So that, my beloved brothers, become firm, immovable, abounding in the work of the Lord always, knowing that your labor is not empty in *the* Lord." 1 Cor.15:35-57

Christians who teach Plato's immortal **soul** are faced with this dilemma – they have transmuted the resurrection "spiritual body" into a part of the "soulish body", contrary to this definitive resurrection teaching – "neither does the corruption inherit the incorruption". Corruption and incorruption are separate; they are not said to be intermingled in these bodies of flesh that we are familiar with.

Also, take note of the two figures. Death is likened to "falling asleep", and becoming "naked" grain. Resurrection is likened to "putting on" as a garment, the immortal, incorruptible body. Sleep is a prominent Biblical metaphor for death. Also the metaphors of being "naked" and "putting on" are going to determine the proper interpretation of our next subject area, 2 Cor.5:1-10.

Perhaps the most salient point in the text above is the "secret" Paul revealed there with a divine exclamation, "**Behold**". Not all believers will sleep, but all will be changed to the resurrection body. And it will happen as one would expect of the Creator, in the blinking of an eye – not over ages of time, like the faulty, evolutionist models of the natural world. In 1 Th.4:16 it says, "the dead in Christ will rise first" "at the trumpet of God". Here in 1 Cor.15:35-57 it is the dead who

will rise, and the living will be changed “at the last trumpet”. That must be the seventh trumpet of Rev.11:15. For those attaining this “former resurrection” (Rev.20:5, 6) the quote from Isa.25:8 will apply, “Death was drunk down in victory (*LXX*, noun *nikē*)”. This victory will belong to the “overcomer” (Gk. *nikōn*, participial form of the verb *nikaō*), who figures so prominently in the Revelation. Each of the seven assemblies has promises made to the “one overcoming”. I also found it interesting that the 1 Corinthians 15 quote of Isa.25:8 conforms to neither the Hebrew nor the *LXX* texts – the latter reads “Death has prevailed and swallowed up *men*”, just the opposite of Paul’s lesson. While the NT often makes adaptations from OT texts, here it says “has been written”, so I assume that Paul’s citation captured a text not represented by the Masoretic or *LXX* textual traditions as we have them today.

Although Paul said above “we shall be changed”, which naturally included himself, we need to recognize that he was later given an entirely different stewardship (Eph.3:2). Concerning that latter stewardship he said, “whatever things were gain to me, these I have considered loss on account of Christ” (Phi.3:7). And a few sentences after, “if somehow I may attain to the out-resurrection (Gk. *exanastasis, hapax*) which is out from dead ones” (Phi.3:11). Paul’s earlier certainty of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 seems to have become uncertainty as to this “out-resurrection”. And implied in the word “out-resurrection” is that it will precede other resurrections. It is not my point here to explore all that is different in the current dispensation, but this is certainly one of the “things that differ” (Phi.1:10) that we are admonished to “try” or “test” (alternate translation). I should hasten to add that there is no mention of an out-resurrection in any Acts period Scripture, including Revelation. As a point of inference, the “prior resurrection” of Rev.20:5-6 is a sort of out-resurrection, but the word of God does not specifically call it that. I will try to sum up more of these dispensational differences in the later chapter, **Failure to Rightly Divide**.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 – to be Absent and to be Present

Now we will consider another major text about resurrection and the day of the Lord –

> "For we know that if our earthly house of the tent should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a not-handmade house, age-abiding in the heavens. For even in this **we groan**, longing **to be clothed upon** with our dwelling which *is* out of heaven. If indeed **having stripped** ourselves, we shall not be found **naked**. For also those being in the tent **groan**, weighed down, for which *reason* we desire not to strip ourselves but **to clothe ourselves, so that the mortal may be drunk down by the living**. But the One having worked out for us this very thing *is* God, Who *has* given us the pledge of the Spirit. Therefore, being confident always, and knowing that being at home in the body we are abroad from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. But we are confident and well-pleased rather to be abroad from the body **and** to be at home with the Lord. Therefore also we aspire, whether at home or abroad, to be acceptable to Him. For we must all appear in front of the judgment-seat of Christ so that each may receive the things *done* through the body for the things he practiced, whether good or worthless." 2 Cor.5:1-10

Note the additional figures "earthly house of the tent" for the "soulish body" of 1 Corinthians 15, and "not-handmade house, age-abiding in the heavens" for the "spiritual body". The heavenly provision of the resurrection body aligns with being "born from above" that we examined earlier in Joh.3:3. Being "clothed upon" (Gk. *ependuō*) and "stripped" (Gk. *ekduō*) are related to the "putting on" (Gk. *enduō*) that was used four times in 1 Corinthians 15 for putting on immortality and incorruption. Being "found naked" in 2 Corinthians 5 relates back to the figure of "naked grain" in 1 Corinthians 15. The groaning (Gk. *stenazō*) in this tent is expanded upon here –

> "For we know that the whole creation **groans together** (Gk. *sustenazō*) and **labors together** (Gk. *sunōdinō*) until the present. And not only *that*, but also we ourselves having the first-fruit of the Spirit, even we ourselves within ourselves **groan** (Gk. *stenazō*), expectantly awaiting **adoption, the deliverance of our body**." Rom.8:22-23

This Romans text adds to the understanding of resurrection as a type of sonship/adoption (Gk. *huiothesia*, lit. appointment as a son and heir). But a first-fruit "spirit of sonship" had already been given to them (Rom.8:15). Having tasted that first-fruit, their expectation of the final "adoption" was made all the more

urgent. Those so gifted were also aware how even the whole creation groaned, and was “in labor” awaiting deliverance from the effects of Adam’s sin. This “groaning together” and “laboring together” of the whole creation will be relieved when “a leopard will lie down with a kid, and a calf and a young lion and a fatling together” (Isa.11:6) and “wolf and lamb will graze as one” (Isa.65:25). Has such a condition existed since Noah let the animals out of the Ark?

The two groanings of Romans 8 are linked. If the Jewish saints of the Acts period have already been “delivered”, which would be a necessary conclusion of preterism, then what of the creation? Or do you believe that Moses’ history of Noah was just a colorful fable? A restored creation today should be another logical deduction of preterism. You cannot rush the Lord’s *Parousia* into the past without undoing the whole fabric of Scripture. I recall my own “religious” upbringing in Catholicism, which is a religious system corrupted by modernistic rationalism. I was indoctrinated as a teenager not to be concerned with a literal Adam and Eve, yet somehow “original sin” was a bedrock of the faith. But without that “first man Adam”, how do I establish the necessary connection with “the last Adam” (1 Cor.15:45)?

Of course, there are some who prefer to misquote the *KJV* of 2 Cor. 5:8 thus – “to be absent from the body ***is*** to be present with the Lord”, but that is not a correct reading – it substitutes “is” for “and” in order to justify Plato’s doctrine of a soul surviving the body. It also nullifies the later statement (v.9) “whether present or absent”, which becomes nonsensical if both states amount to the same thing. If “is” belongs in v.8, then v.9 should read paradoxically “whether present ***and*** absent”.

Then, in v.1 “destroyed” (or “dissolved”) is Gk. *kataluō* (lit. “loose down”), and Paul used the similar noun form *analusis* (lit. a “loosing back”) in 2 Tim.4:6 to speak of his own departure from life. Even the English “departure” is a euphemism for “death”. Another such death-phrase was used in the Transfiguration conversation, in which Jesus spoke of His “exodus”.

Others have fixed on the words “be at home” (Gk. *endēmeō*) and “be abroad” (Gk. *ekdēmeō*) to make the case for the two houses being the earth and New Jerusalem. There might be a good argument for such an interpretation, if we take the first verse by itself, and ignore the context. But the context argues against it.

Unfortunately, non-contextual study is commonplace in many modern books interpreting a verse here and there. These are the cherry-picking scribes.

Such colorful figures of being "at home" and "abroad" should not surprise us. Both terms include *demos* ("people") in their root, and they emphasize life as a social state among one's people. Neither *ekdēmeō* nor *endēmeō* is found elsewhere in the Greek Bible, but the similar verb *apodēmeō* is found 6 times in the NT – it means "leave home on a journey". So, "leave home" and "come home" would be possible translations in 2 Corinthians 5. Even the skeptic speaks of death as a "journey" from which there is no return.

Paul's Acts period epistles were written with an urgency about the day of the Lord (and see **Appendix A: Urgent Expectations of the Gospels and Acts**). These reflect a certain emphasis, like letting go earthly attachments. Thus, Paul advised against marriage at that time (1 Cor.7:29-33). In this light we can understand his preference "to be abroad from the body".

With the change of dispensation after Acts, we also find a change of attitude –

> "For no one ever hated his own flesh, but he feeds and takes care of it, just as also the Lord *does* the church." Eph.5:29

Does this sound at all like being "well-pleased rather to be abroad from the body"? But if you were expecting resurrection to come unexpectedly in the very near future, then the attitude toward the body in 2 Corinthians 5 would make sense.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 – "the Lawless One"

The last "day of the Lord" text that I want to consider in Paul's early epistles follows –

> "But we ask you, brothers, concerning the *Parousia* of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling around Him, for you not to be shaken quickly from the mind nor to be alarmed, neither by spirit nor by word nor by letter, as by us, as that the day of the Lord has arrived. Let no one lead you away in no way, because unless the apostasy should come first and the Man of Lawlessness, the Son of Destruction, **should be unveiled** (Gk. *apokaluptō*), who is opposing and

> puffing himself up against all being called god or reverence, so that he *is* to sit in the Sanctuary of God, claiming himself that he is God … *then the day of the Lord has not arrived* (a possible ellipsis to complete the sentence). Remember not that I being yet with you was telling you these things? And now you know what *is* restraining, until his **having been unveiled** (*apokaluptō*) in his own season. For the Secret of Lawlessness is already at work, only what is restraining now, until it should come out of *the* midst. And then **will be unveiled** (*apokaluptō*) the Lawless One, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy by the breath of His mouth, and He will nullify by the shining forth of His *Parousia*. The ***parousia*** of him is according to *the* in-working of Satan, by every power and signs and lying wonders, and by every deception of injustice to those perishing, because they received not the love of the truth for them to be saved. And on account of this God will send them an in-working of deception, for them to believe the lie, so that all who believed not the truth, but took pleasure in Injustice, might be judged." 2 Th.2:1-12

Note how "the Lawless One" will have both an unveiling (his own *apocalypse*) and a *parousia*, as deceptive imitations in advance of the Lord's own *Apocalypse* and *Parousia*. And note that it is "the Man of the Lawlessness", a single individual. There is no warrant for spiritualizing this into a collective, such as apostate Israel. All the nouns, pronouns and verbs used of him are singular forms. Further, it is belief in this single individual that will constitute "the apostasy". The implication to me is that Israel generally will take this bait, not Messianic Christians. They will have a choice, because the truth will be preached before the final crisis ("received not the love of the truth").

Also, I have translated the term "what is restraining", instead of "He is restraining" because the expression is in neuter gender. Although the Spirit (Gk. *pneuma*, a neuter noun) is possibly what this refers to, He seems to be absent from the text, until v.13, which would be better translated "by holiness of spirit" (i.e., the spirit of believers). Then again, even better than "what is restraining" would be "the restraining", that is, not the restraining agent but just the fact of a restraining. And God would be the necessary Agent of this restraint.

As defined in 2 Th.2:1-12, “the day of the Lord” begins at “the apostasy” and the unveiling of “the Man of Lawlessness”. According to this, “the day of the Lord” must coincide with the final half-seven.

There is an element of confusion in trying to match the Lawless One with a character out of Revelation. There are two characters to consider:

> “And he exercises the whole authority of the first beast before him, and he makes the earth and those dwelling in it that they will worship the first beast, whose fatal blow was healed. And he performs great signs, so that he should even make fire to descend from the heaven into the earth before mankind. And he deceives those dwelling upon the earth by the signs which it was given to him to perform before the Beast, telling those dwelling upon the earth to make an image to the Beast, who has the blow of the sword and lived. And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast may both speak and accomplish that as many – unless they should worship the image of the beast – should be murdered.” Rev.13:12-15

> “And the Beast was captured and with him the False Prophet who performed the signs before him, by which he deceived those having received the mark and those worshiping his image. Living, the two were thrown into the Lake of Fire, which is burning with sulphur.” Rev.19:20

So the work of the False Prophet is to perform the great signs that cause men to worship the Beast and his idol-image. The Lawless One himself is evidently the Beast, because of his claim to be God. His *parousia* “by every power and signs and lying wonders” will be by deceptions performed by the False Prophet “before the Beast”. Certainly, the False Prophet is also a lawless one, but not the chief of the two. Although Matthew 24:11 and 24 speak of many false-prophets to come in the *Sunteleia*, Paul’s focus on a singular Lawless One, claiming all worship for himself, makes him a lone individual. The one in Revelation shown as performing signs before him is also depicted as an individual. Seeing that these two individuals are so particularized in their postures and actions, then we ought to be able to identify them, if the day of the Lord has already come. This is especially true of the

Beast, whose name will convert to the number 666 (see **Appendix B: The Number of His Name**). If this prophecy is past, then who can name these two characters? And how about the names of the Two Witnesses of Revelation 11? Any who preach so prominently for three and a half years, and are murdered to the merriment of all, would almost certainly have had a few lines written about them. If you want to justify a preterist interpretation of the day of the Lord, then you will need to "gray out" a lot of Scripture, as if it were not even relevant.

As for "meeting the Lord in the air", how can that have been a secret meeting, with all the angels shouting and trumpets blasting – or did the remaining Christians have them on "mute" when all this happened?

One more thought on the Beast. There is a Scarlet Beast in Revelation 17 whose identity coincides with the Beast of chapter 13 and elsewhere –

> "And one of the seven angels having the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, 'Come. I will show you the condemnation of the great whore who is **sitting upon many waters**, with whom the kings of the earth fornicated, and those inhabiting the earth were made drunk from the wine of her fornication.' And he took me away into a wilderness in spirit, and I saw a woman **sitting upon** a **scarlet beast** covered with names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was clothed with purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and the uncleannesses of her fornication. And upon her forehead a name having been written – Secret, Babylon the Great, Mother of the Whores and of the Abominations of the Earth. And I saw the woman drunk from the blood of the saints and from the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And I wondered a great wonder, having seen her. And the angel said to me, 'For what *reason* did you wonder? I will tell you the secret of the woman and **the beast** which *is* **carrying her**, the one having the seven heads and the ten horns. **The beast** which you saw was and is not, and is **about to ascend from the Abyss**, and he goes into destruction. Those dwelling upon the earth will be made to wonder, whose names have not been written upon the Book of Life from *the* overthrow of *the* world, seeing **the beast** that was and is not and will be present (Gk. verb *pareimi*, from which the noun *parousia* derives). **Here *is* the mind which *is* having wisdom**. The seven heads are seven mountains where the

woman **sits upon them**, and there are seven kings. The five fell, the one is, the other came not yet. And whenever he may come, he must abide a little *while*. And the **beast** who was and is not, even he is *the* eighth and is out of the seven, and he goes away into destruction. And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings one hour with **the beast**. These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to **the beast**. These will wage war with the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome (Gk. *nikaō*) them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with Him *are* called, chosen and faithful.' And he says to me, 'The waters which you saw, where the whore **sits**, *are* peoples and crowds, and nations and tongues. And the ten horns which you saw and **the beast**, these will hate the whore and make her desolate and naked, and they will eat her flesh and burn her down with fire. For God gave it into their hearts to perform His purpose and to perform one purpose, even to give their kingdom to **the beast** until the words of God have been completed. And the woman which you saw is the great city which *is* having a kingdom over the kings of the earth.'"

Rev.17:1-18

We have already covered some of this ground in the earlier chapter **"Mystery, Babylon the Great"**. But here I wish to focus on the Beast, rather than Babylon. Let me take these point by point –

- the Beast is mentioned 9 times in ch.17 – the number of judgment (*Number*, p.235)

- his first mention here is as the "Scarlet Beast", linking him to the scarlet worn by Babylon the Great – the scarlet being the blood of the saints, the witnesses to Jesus – this is also the Beast who will ascend from the Abyss, and will kill the Two Witnesses" (Rev.11:7)

- Babylon sits upon many waters (explained as peoples, crowds, nations, tongues) and she also has a kingdom over the kings of the earth – altogether she will rule ("sit") over many kings and their subjects

- Babylon also sits on the Beast, at first, until he and a league of ten future kings ("ten horns") destroy her

- Babylon also sits on the seven heads of the Beast, explained to be seven mountains (i.e., kingdoms or reigns) with seven kings
- the Beast who was, is not, and will yet have his *parousia*, he is one out of the seven heads, will have his fatal wound healed, and will become the eighth
- from the vision’s point of view the sixth head is still reigning, and the seventh yet to reign; this makes the Beast one of the five who “fell” because currently he “is not”
- as the Beast “about to ascend from the Abyss” (viewed as future while Babylon sits on him), this aligns him with the opening of the Abyss in Rev.9:1, and its king Apollyon – this aspect of the Beast will be demonic – likewise his appearance ascending from the sea in Rev.13:1, also having seven heads, ten horns and a name of blasphemy as in ch.17 – I conclude that the Abyss is in the sea
- in that the Beast will be a demonic “resurrection” of one of the seven heads, he will appear to be human and have the name of a man (Rev.13:18), but his spirit, or life-force, will be demonic
- the Beast’s description of “was, and is not, and will be present” is in distinction from Messiah’s “Who is and Who was and Who is coming” (Rev.1:8)

All that is said about the Beast may make him appear to be several characters, but he is one man in the final dangerous stage of “the Man of Lawlessness” (2 Th.2:3). Those who would allegorize the Beast into an institution like the United Nations (Jehovah’s Witnesses) have really let their imaginations run loose, as children often do. Such conclusions are not compatible with the “wise as serpents” warning of the Lord (Mat.10:16).

Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?

OT Perspective

God's promise of His kingdom is traceable to shortly after Adam's fall –

> "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her Offspring. He will bruise you *the* head, and you will bruise Him *the* heel." Gen.3:15

Although there is no mention of king or kingdom here, the essence of the promise is Messianic. One of Messiah's goals is to subdue enemies. Once Messiah has subdued the last enemy, He will deliver up the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor.15:24-25).

Long after the Fall, God's calling and promise to Abram were the beginning of His *implementing* a kingdom. Its initial realm was the earth.

> "And Yahweh said to Abram, 'Get yourself from your land and from your relatives and from *the* house of your father to the land which I will show you. And I will make you into a great nation and bless you and make your name great, and become *you* (imper.) a blessing. And I will bless those blessing you, and I will curse one treating you with contempt. And I will bless by you all the families of the ground.'" Gen.12:1-3

All the later promises and covenants with Israel were built upon this bedrock promise concerning a man's posterity and a land given to him. Through him blessings would flow to all earthly families – the nations. This is God's global arrangement for earth. If you knock a leg from under this table, doesn't the whole promise fail? That is what preterism does to the promise to Abram for the earth. If preterism is true, will God move all His favored creatures to heaven, before destroying the earth? He might as well destroy it, if it has no redemptive future. If it does have a redemptive future, what is its basis? Has the Abrahamic covenant

shifted to the sons of Ishmael, and do the Muslims have the correct understanding of God's purpose for the earth?

God's ideal for the kingdom that He intended for Israel was this –

"And you will become to Me a **kingdom** of priests and a holy nation…"
Exo.19:6

Worship of the true God, and not the idols of their neighbors, is what would set them apart from the nations all round them.

If this was the beginning of a kingdom, then who was to be its king? But that was Yahweh Himself, as He later explained to Samuel –

"And Yahweh said to Samuel, 'Listen upon the voice of the people to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, for they have rejected Me from **being king** (Heb. *mâlak*) over them.'" 1 Sam.8:7

I sense here in the people pestering Samuel to "set for us a **king** (Heb. *melek*) to judge us **like all the nations**" (1 Sam.8:5) a departure from the divine ideal set forth in Exo.19:6 – "a holy ('set apart') nation". However, Yahweh consistently declared Himself to be the rightful "King of Israel" (Isa.44:6), "King of Jacob" (Isa.41:21), "King of nations" (Jer.10:7), "King of the whole earth" (Psa.47:2, 7), and "King of the age" (Jer.10:10).

Long before a human king sat over Israel, God had anticipated the envy of Israel to be like their neighbors, and He even gave Moses the law of the king –

"When you come into the land which Yahweh your Elohim is giving to you, and you possess it and dwell in it, and you say, 'I will set a **king** over myself, like all the nations which *are* round about me,' you will surely set over yourself a **king**, whom Yahweh your Elohim will choose from *the* midst of your brothers – you will set over yourself a **king**. You cannot appoint over yourself a foreign man who is not your brother. Additionally, he will not multiply to himself horses, nor will he cause the people to return to Egypt, so as to multiply *the* horse, even as Yahweh said to you, 'Do not again return in this way.' And he will not multiply to himself wives, so his heart will not turn away. And he will not multiply to himself silver and gold abundantly. And it will come to pass as

> he *is* sitting upon *the* throne of his **kingdom**, then he will write for himself a copy of this law upon a book from *what is* before the priests, the Levites. And it will come to pass with him, and he will read in it all *the* days of his life, so that he may learn to fear Yahweh his Elohim to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes to do them, to exalt not his heart out from his brothers, and to turn not aside from the commandment right or left, so that he may prolong days over his **kingdom**, he and his sons in *the* midst of Israel." Deu.17:14-20

So this law of the king set apart the king of Israel to be unlike all the other kings of the earth, perhaps with the exception of Melchizedek, king of Salem. The history of the kingdom of Israel, as ruled by men from Saul to Zedekiah, was mostly a sad story of failure – with a few bright lights to show what was possible when a king truly feared Yahweh. When the kings were devout, the people tended to follow their lead, but even the best of these kings had their shortcomings.

In OT prophecy there were anticipations of a king who would not exhibit the flaws of his predecessors. Here are a couple of them –

> "For a Child has been born to us, a Son has been given to us. And **the dominion** will come upon His shoulder, and He has called His name – Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Enduring Father, Prince of Peace. For the increase of **the dominion** and for peace *there is* not a boundary, upon *the* throne of David and upon **His kingdom**, to prepare it and to strengthen *it* in **judgment** and in **righteousness**, from now until an age. A zeal of Yahweh of armies will do this." Isa.9:6-7

> "'And I will assemble *the* remnant of My flock from all the lands where I have scattered them there. And I will bring them back upon their pasturage, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. And I will raise over them shepherds, and they will pasture them. And they will fear no longer, nor be terrified, nor be missing' – an utterance of Yahweh. '**Behold**, days *are* coming' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'and I will raise to David a Sprout of **righteousness**, and a **King will reign** and prosper, and He will execute **judgment** and **righteousness** in the land. In His days **Judah will be saved** and Israel will dwell according to safety. And this *is* His name which they will call Him – "**Yahweh our Righteousness**". Therefore, **behold**, days *are* coming' – an utterance of

> Yahweh – 'and they will no longer say, "Life of Yahweh, Who brought up *the* sons of Israel from *the* land of Egypt," because rather *they will say*, "Life of Yahweh, Who brought up and brought in *the* seed of *the* house of Israel from a northward land and from all the lands where I scattered them there." And they will dwell upon their own ground.'" Jer.23:3-8

I have already examined these texts in some depth in earlier chapters. I am repeating them here to show that even a casual reading must have thrilled the hearts of zealous Israelites, awaiting this kingdom.

We must jump ahead to NT testimony to find that a "kingly priesthood" (1 Pet.2:9) was finally realized in Israel. But this required divine intervention in a "new covenant".

If we exclude this NT realization of the "kingdom of priests", then what might an OT saint have anticipated about the kingdom, from the revelation given to him? This kingdom concerned a land given to a chosen family, descended from Jacob, who was called out from Isaac, who was called out from Abraham. A predetermined land (Deu.32:8) from the time when the nations were divided (Gen.10), and a chosen family to rule the nations of the earth – to these would be given peace, posterity, prosperity, long life and health. If they loved Yahweh with the whole heart (Deu.6:5), all this would be theirs. And they would have a king, a Son of David, to rule them with justice. There were brief periods when such things seemed possible (e.g., under the young Solomon), but the punishment of the Babylonian captivity left a great void, long after it had passed. For centuries afterward, Israel were seeking *restoration* of a kingdom.

Gospels Perspective

How did the Gospels anticipate restoration of a kingdom? There was a sense of expectation and even urgency about it during Jesus' time on earth.

> "'Where is the One having been born King of the Jews, for we saw His star in the East and we came to worship Him.' And king Herod having heard, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him." Mat.2:2-3

"But from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of the heavens suffers violence, and *the* violent do carry it off." Mat.11:12

"And Jesus stood in front of the governor, and the governor asked of Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?'" Mat.27:11

"Joseph from Arimathea, a respected counsellor, who also expected the kingdom of God …" Mar.15:43; also Luk.23:51

"And **behold**, there was a man in Jerusalem to whom *was given the* name Simeon. And this man *was* just and devout, expecting the encouragement of Israel …" Luk.2:25

"But the people *were* expecting and all *were* reasoning in their hearts, concerning John, whether he might be the Christ." Luk.3:15

"The law and the prophets *were* until John. From then, the kingdom of God is preached and everyone is pushing himself into it." Lu.16:16

"But having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God comes, He answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God comes not with observation, nor will they say, "Behold here" or "There behold", for the kingdom of God is within you.'" Luk.17:21

"But upon their hearing these things, having proceeded, He spoke a parable on account of His being near Jerusalem, and their supposing that immediately the kingdom of God is about to appear (Gk. *anaphainō*, our "pop up" captures the sense fairly well)." Luk.19:11

"And His drawing near now to the descent of the Mount of the Olives, the whole gathering of the disciples began rejoicing to praise God with a loud voice concerning all the works of power they saw, saying, 'Blessed *be* the King coming in *the* name of *the* Lord. In heaven, peace and praise in *the* highest.'" Luk.19:38

"Therefore, Jesus having recognized that they are about to come and seize (Gk. *harpazō*) Him so that they might make *Him* king, He went away again into the mountain Himself alone." Joh.6:15

Considering that both John the Baptist and Jesus were declaring the kingdom of the heavens to be near, one can understand why the level of excitement was so keen. Marvelous things were being spoken and done, which Israel had not experienced before.

Noteworthy in some of the texts above is that man's perception of what the kingdom would, or should be, was mostly wrong-headed. Thus, Jesus warned in Mat.11:12 that "the kingdom of the heavens suffers violence", because men were trying to force it into being. And there was His warning to the Pharisees in Luk.17:21 that "the kingdom of God comes not with observation", because it would begin "within you" as a change in the hearts of men. And who can observe such a heart-change, unless he himself has also had this heart-change? It was a form of crowd enthusiasm that led His disciples to exclaim, "Blessed *be* the One coming in *the* name of *the* Lord" (Mat.21:9). Thus He counseled afterwards, "you may in no wise see Me from the present until perhaps you may say, 'Blessed *be* the One coming in *the* name of *the* Lord'" (Mat.23:39). Evidently, their heart was not right the first time they proclaimed this – or was it only that their timing was wrong? Recall that this was a time when Peter could declare first that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the Living God", then almost in the same breath rebuke Him for declaring His sacrificial mission (Mat.16:16,22). Even His closest disciples had no clear understanding of Christ's role and their role in the kingdom.

Acts-Period Perspective

Given the prevalent mood of expectation, and John's and Jesus' preaching of the nearness of the kingdom, is it any wonder what the apostles asked after His amazing resurrection? ---

> "Therefore, indeed, their having come together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, surely at this time You are restoring (Gk. *apokathistanō*) the kingdom to Israel?" Acts 1:6

After the power of His preaching, miracles, signs, and finally His resurrection, what else would be needed for a restored kingdom? His answer –

> "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father set by His own authority." Acts 1:7

They were still in an "astonishment", and certainly not remembering all that He had foretold would occur before His *Parousia*. And apparently it was His *Parousia* they were expecting "at this time" – i.e., the "ripe head stage" of How Seed Grows (see **Parable as Prophecy**).

So it is natural to ask, "What should they have expected of this kingdom restoration?" Of course it would be an entirely new kind of kingdom, due to its inability to be destroyed (Dan.2:44). But it would also retain features of the old kingdom of Israel, per the Markan account of the Triumphal Entry ("the kingdom of our father David" in Mar.11:9-10, and cp. "the throne of His father David" in Luk.1:32). The old kingdom had been in abeyance since Nebuchadrezzar destroyed it in BC 586. That older aspect is conveyed by the verb "restore" (Gk. *apokathistanō*) and its noun "restoration" (Gk. *apokatastasis*). You might understand this restoration in the same sense that Jesus "restored" a lame man's arm, making it as whole as the other (Mat.12:13). In fact, a great many of the "healing" statements in the OT prophets dealt with the restoration of the nation. Israel's "sickness" was the sin that they were so easily ensnared by. Isa.1:4-6 opens Isaiah's condemnation of the nation, likening their sinful condition to a sick body ("From the sole of the foot even to the head, *there is* no soundness in it, *but* wounds and bruises and putrefying sores" – *NKJV*). And a restored nation would necessarily be ruled by a righteous king, unlike so many of their ancient kings who had been condemned by the OT prophets.

Then the great teacher of men, the Holy Spirit, was sent. Peter's speech to the crowd at Pentecost revealed the following Spirit-led understanding (unlike the flesh-led question at Acts 1:6) –

> "Men, brothers, it being proper to speak with frankness to you concerning the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is among us until this day. Therefore, being a prophet and knowing that by oath God swore to him *one* from the fruit of his loins **to sit upon his throne**, having seen beforehand, he spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was He forsaken in Hades, nor did His flesh see decay." Acts 2:29-31

So David's throne and successor, according to the Davidic covenant, is central to the kingdom.

Shortly after Pentecost, Peter's inspired sermon at the Temple also had a reference to kingdom restoration –

> "Therefore repent and return, for the wiping away of your sins, so that perhaps seasons of refreshing may come from *the* presence ('face') of the Lord, and He may send to you the One hand-picked beforehand, Christ Jesus, Whom heaven indeed must receive until the times of restoration (*apokatastasis*) of all things, which God spoke by *the* mouth of His holy prophets from of old (lit. 'from an age')." Acts 3:19-21

There is no implication here that "seasons of refreshing" and "the times of restoration" would be separate from or precede the Sent One being re-sent. Therefore, these expressions relate directly to His *Parousia*, His personal presence on earth as King of kings. Peter's exhortation thus far included the mature kingdom's beginning, but it omitted "the secrets of the kingdom" from the Lord's parables – i.e., the prelude of its growth from humble beginnings up to its final victory over the lawless kingdom of the Beast. See the previous chapter, **Parable as Prophecy**.

The "all things" to be restored were spoken by the prophets, and Peter went on to name Moses and Samuel in particular. Considering all that the prophets from Moses onward spoke concerning blessings for Israel, there is certainly a lot of ground covered by that "restoration of all things". Peter quoted this specific prophecy of Moses –

> "Moses, indeed, said, '*The* Lord God will raise up to you a Prophet from your brothers like me. Him you will hear ('obey') according to all whatsoever He may say to you. And it will be, every person whosoever may not hear that Prophet will be utterly destroyed (Gk. *exoletheurō*) from the people.'"
>
> Acts 3:22-23

Peter's quote from Deu.18:18-19 reads slightly differently than the Hebrew, which ends, "He will require it from you." And while *exoletheurō* is used in the *LXX* of

Deu.18:19, it is a word that translates various Heb. words. Here is what it renders just from the books of Moses –

- cut off (*kârath*) – "from the people" (19), "altars" (1), "nations" (1)
- bring to ruin (*shâchath*) – (5)
- destroy (*shâmad*) – (19)
- devote (as avowed – *châram*) – (3)
- dispossess (*yârash*) – "nations" (5)
- destroy (*âbad*) – (1)
- not in Heb. – (1)

While it is possible that being cut off from the people could mean "destruction", it might also mean "banishment" or some other form of disinheritance. For a few during Acts, disobedience to "that Prophet" did yield the same punishment that Dathan and his rebels received in rebelling against Moses. This was the fate of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) and other egregious sinners (1 Cor.11:30). Whether the destruction of Jerusalem should be viewed as a fulfillment is problematic. How many of those who died in Jerusalem in AD 70 were personally accountable, according to Deu.18:18-19? Seeing that the dispensation of the covenants was set in abeyance around AD 61-62, we could make an equally specious argument that the twentieth century Jewish holocaust fulfilled Deu.18:18-19. And once on that slippery slope, we could begin explaining away myriad other OT prophecies as fulfilled during the present, non-covenant dispensation.

Still, Peter's warning should have evoked trembling in his audience that day, as it included a warning of the mature kingdom's prelude of destruction of the wicked. I trust that God will pay back with destruction only those deserving such destruction – according to *His* scales of justice. Although Moses spoke only about a coming Prophet, it must be understood that this would be a Prophet-King. Recall Saul as the type here, when he prophesied at the beginning of his reign (see discussion further down).

But first, what about Samuel's role in the restoration of the kingdom?

> "And also all the prophets from Samuel and those following, as many as spoke, also proclaimed these days." Acts 3:24

What exactly did Samuel proclaim? We have OT books named "Samuel", but they are principally historical books about his deeds and those of the kings he anointed. What Samuel had proclaimed about Saul seems germane to Peter's speech, starting with –

> "'Then will rush upon you *the* spirit of Yahweh, and you will prophesy with them, and you will be turned into another man.' … And it came to pass as his turning his shoulder to go from *being* with Samuel, then Elohim turned to him another heart, and all these signs came on that day." 1 Sam.10:6, 9

What Samuel had seen of Saul, Joel would see of the whole nation – "your sons and your daughters will prophesy". But note this difference. In Samuel's day there arose the proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" But on the Great Pentecost of Acts 2, scoffers observed, "They are full of new wine." The Twelve were confronted with a great deal of cynicism in their day. There had been a long period of God's silence between Malachi and John. A difficulty with these periods of God's silence is that men's hearts may grow calloused to the truth.

After Saul had proven his leadership in battle, Samuel reproved the people for desiring a king in the first place. Then after exhorting the people to follow Yahweh, he added –

> "But if you surely do evil, both you and your king will be swept away."
> 1 Sam.12:25

Peter's preaching in Acts 3 ended on a note of warning, even as Samuel's exhortation had.

Perhaps another of Samuel's dictums that Peter's Temple sermon had in mind was this –

> "Yahweh has sought for Himself a man according to His own heart."
> 1 Sam.13:14

Saul had not been such a man, but David would prove to be, because his heart repented of his sins. Peter's word in the Temple began with "repent and return".

Saul's kingdom did not stand, but David's kingdom would stand by a covenant of salt (2 Chr.13:5). It was restoration of David's kingdom that all Israel yearned for in Peter's day. They understood correctly that the Davidic kingdom, although interrupted for six centuries, would continue one day. Interruption of a covenant should not be reckoned as abrogation of a covenant. I say this pointedly of Israel's covenants, interrupted at the end of Acts. And emphatically, this is part of what confirms my faith that there is still a future for God's covenant people Israel.

Here is another memorable prophecy of Samuel –

"*Is* Yahweh's pleasure in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as *great as* listening upon Yahweh's voice? Behold, hearing *is* better than sacrifice, to give attention than fat of rams. For rebellion *is as* a sin of divination, and arrogance *is as* iniquity and idolatry." 1 Sam.15:22-23

These examples of Samuel prophesying to his contemporaries further demonstrate the principle of multiple fulfillments, because Peter applied Samuel generally to the Acts-period generation.

The Role of Elijah

Another element of kingdom restoration was this –

"And He having answered said, 'Elijah indeed comes and <u>will restore</u> (Gk. *apokathistanō*) <u>all things</u>.'" Mat.17:11

I have already explained how this Elijah is future and therefore cannot mean John the Baptist (see the chapter, **Christ in the Old Testament, and the New**). What "<u>all things</u>" will Elijah restore?

"'For, **<u>behold</u>**, the day *is* coming, burning like an oven. And all the insolent and all those doing wickedness will become chaff. And the day which *is* coming will set them ablaze,' said Yahweh of armies, 'which will not leave for them root or branch. But for those fearing My name, will rise a sun of righteousness, and healing in its rays (lit. 'wings'). And you will go out and spring about as calves of *the* stall. And you will tread down the wicked, for they have become dust under *the* soles of your feet – in the day that I Myself *am* doing *it*.' – said

> Yahweh of armies. 'Remember *the* law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb concerning all Israel – statutes and judgments. **Behold**, I *am* sending to you Elijah the prophet, before *the* coming of the day of Yahweh, the great and the fearful. And he will turn back (*LXX*, *apokathistanō*, "restore"; Heb. *shûwb*) hearts of fathers upon sons, and hearts of sons upon fathers, lest I come and strike down the land *as* a devoted thing.'" Mal.4:1-6

From its only other usage in 1 Ki.12:27, "turn back hearts" speaks of reconciliation. Elijah will restore peace to families concerning belief in Jesus Christ in a time of great division and betrayal in Israel (Luk.12:51-53; Mic.7:5-6). This will precede the day of the Lord, and if it were not for that restoration, the Lord would have to devote (i.e., utterly destroy) the Land.

> We also note historical Elijah's mediatorial role in the Baal controversy –
>
> "And Elijah drew near to all the people and said, 'Until when are you springing over the two opinions? If Yahweh *is* the Elohim, go after Him. And if the Baal, go after him.' And the people answered him not a word." 1 Ki.17:18:21

It took a great demonstration of fire from heaven to show a skeptical Israel who was truly God. The hope was that this would shake the people from their indecision – powerful preaching by itself was not enough. And at the end of his demonstration, Elijah killed the rebel prophets of Baal. We know that false prophets will arise before the Lord's coming, and also that the Two Witnesses will call down fire upon their enemies. I suspect that in the time before the day of the Lord, the controversy over who is legitimately the Christ may have many undecided Jews to persuade concerning the truth (see Mat.24:24). Although the signs and testimony of the Two Witnesses will appear to have failed because of their death, the fear created by their resurrection and ascension, and the ensuing sign of a great earthquake will finally convince some in Jerusalem to believe their witness (Rev.11:11-13).

Note how Moses and Elijah are both mentioned in Malachi chapter 4, both are part of the Transfiguration vision, and their miracles will be performed again by the Two Witnesses of Revelation chapter 11. As the lawgiver, the word given through Moses was much taught in Israel, but the role of the coming Elijah was not so well understood – hence the apostles' question about his coming "first", right

after they had witnessed the Transfiguration vision. This Elijah will precede the day of the Lord. I have earlier suggested that one of the Two Witnesses may be this Elijah, even as John was reckoned for him. Has preterism made a positive identification of the historical coming of Malachi's Elijah? But he must have come already, if the day of the Lord has come and gone. Seeing that Jesus' prophecy concerning Elijah confirmed Malachi's prophecy, dare we set them aside as nullified prophecies? And seeing that these prophecies concerned Israel, can Israel be permanently set aside? Then I must ask again, when did this Elijah come? And if Elijah is yet to come, then all prophecy that concerns Israel in the day of the Lord is yet to come. If you claim that this Elijah *must have come already*, because Jesus said he would – this is merely the word of man, and not the word of God. Jesus said he "will come", and indeed he will yet.

Israel Returned from Captivity & Dispersion

Any kingdom restored to Israel must include the people returned from their dispersions. We have covered many texts in previous sections on these dispersions and returns. In the long section following, I will cover a partial survey of these returns –

- "And He said, 'Go, then say to this people, "You will surely hear, but you will not discern. And you will surely see, but you will not recognize." Make fat the heart of this people, and their ears make heavy, and their eyes make blind, lest they see with their eyes, and with their ears hear, and their heart discern, and they **turn back** and He **will heal** them.' Then I said, 'Until when, Lord?' And He said, 'Until whenever cities crash so that no one *will be* dwelling, and houses so that not a man *is in them*, and the ground be ruined in devastation, and Yahweh will send the man far away, and the great forsaking in *the* midst of the land. But yet in it *will be* **a tenth**, and it (the tenth) **will return** and become for burning, like a terebinth or like an oak, whose stump in them *remains* in *its* felling. A holy seed *will be* its stump." Isa.6:9-13

Comment: This first text is exemplary. Israel must turn back (return, repent) to Yahweh, in order to be "healed" (i.e., restored to their former blessings). I extended this quote of 6:9-10 to include Isaiah's question, 'Until when?', and

Yahweh's answer – until devastation and dispersion. But note the glimmer of hope, "the tenth" will remain and through "burning" become a "holy seed". I believe the "burning" is the baptism of fire that John spoke of (Mat.3:11). One can discern a partial fulfillment of Israel having suffered such devastation, destruction and depopulation at Nebuchadrezzar's hand, and the return of a small remnant (much smaller than "a tenth") under Cyrus. But seeing that the blindness and deafness of vv.9-10 were quoted as applying during Christ's ministry (Mat.13:14-15; Joh.12:39-40), and Paul's covenant ministry (Acts 28:26-27), the "until when" aspect of this prophecy must still be future. Neither AD 70, nor AD 135, satisfied the "tenth", the "return" for the "burning", and the "stump" aspects of this prophecy.

- "In that day the sprout of Yahweh will become for beauty and for abundance. And the fruit of the land *will be* for excellence and for adornment for *the* **escaped of Israel**. And it will come to pass the **one left in Zion**, and the **one remaining in Jerusalem**, it will be said to them 'holy' – all those written for life in Jerusalem. If the Lord had washed off *the* filth of *the* daughters of Zion, and rinsed away *the* blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning, then Yahweh would create upon every place of Mount Zion and upon her assemblies a cloud by day and smoke, and brightness of flaming fire by night, for over every glory *would be* a nuptial-canopy. And a booth will become for a shadow by day, and for a refuge and for a shelter from downpour and from rain." Isa.4:2-6

Comment: Even as "a tenth" would become a "holy seed" in Isaiah 6, here the "escaped of Israel" will be called "holy". "Written for life" is a unique Heb. expression, but it suggests being "written in the book of life" (Rev.17:8; 20:15) and "written in the heavens" (Luk.10:20). Here it is a "spirit of burning" that will purge the filth of Jerusalem. The cloud by day and fire by night invite comparison with the "pillars" by which Yahweh led Israel in the Sinai wilderness (Exo.13:21), but here they are over the assemblies of Mt. Zion and not over a wilderness. The "nuptial-canopy" suggests Yahweh's taking back his backsliding wife (as in Hos.2:14-20) in a re-marriage. The reference to a "booth" suggests fulfillment of the Greater Booths ('Tabernacles') – i.e., Israel's future flight into a wilderness, and her shelter there (Rev.12:6).

- "Therefore, the Lord, Yahweh of armies, will send a wasting among his (king of Assyria's) fat ones. And beneath his abundance will burn a burning, as a burning fire. Then *the* light of Israel will become for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame. And it will burn and consume his thorn-bushes and his briers in one day. And it will finish off *the* abundance of his forest and his garden, from life even to flesh, and he will become as a wasted one wasting. Then the remnant of the tree of his forest will become a number *that* even a boy will write them. And it will come to pass in that day, there will not add again *the* **remnant of Israel** and *the* **escaped of *the* house of Jacob** to lean upon those smiting him, but he will lean upon Yahweh, Holy One of Israel, in truth. A **remnant will return**, **remnant of Jacob** to *the* Mighty God. For though your people Israel become as sand of the sea, a **remnant will return** with him. An annihilation *will be* strictly decided, overflowing justice. For Lord Yahweh of armies *is* making an annihilation and a strict decision in the midst of the whole land." Isa.10:16-23

Comment: According to this text Yahweh will use Israel as His fire to purge Assyria. Although in the previous Isaiah 4 and 6 texts, "holy seed" and "holy" referred to Israel, "his Holy One" (Heb. q_e*dôwshôw*) in Isaiah 10:17 has a single parallel (Isa.49:7) where it is obviously Messianic – it also answers to "Yahweh, Holy One of Israel" in 10:20. In that day, out of a numberless people, only a remnant of Israel will return to the Mighty God (one of the names given the Son in Isa.9:6).

- "And *the* **ransomed** of Yahweh **will return**, and **they will go to Zion** with a ringing cry and joy of an age upon their head. They will obtain exaltation and joy, but grief and sighing will flee." Isa.35:10; 51:11

Comment: This ransoming is introduced in Isa.1:27 – "**Zion will be ransomed** with judgment, and her **returning ones** with righteousness ('justice')." The "justice" theme is very prominent in Isaiah, as the "overflowing justice" of Isaiah 10 on the previous page shows. A world overflowing with worldly goods, but little justice, is not a desirable place – rather the opposite of what God's kingdom promises to be.

- "Voice of your lookouts. They have lifted up *the* voice. Together they will cry out, for they will see eye to eye in the **returning** of Yahweh *to* **Zion**. Break forth. Cry

out together, *you* wastes of Jerusalem, for Yahweh has consoled His people. He **has <u>redeemed Jerusalem</u>**." Isa.52:8-9

<u>Comment</u>: Just as a remnant of Israel will return, even so Yahweh will return to Jerusalem. The return of Yahweh "*<u>to</u>* <u>Zion</u>" will be a visible return, seen by the lookouts on Jerusalem's walls. Ezekiel saw Yahweh's glory depart the Temple, and he saw in a visionary Temple His glory returning there (Eze.44:4). Redeeming Jerusalem must be part of the restoration of the kingdom. A Jerusalem overrun by foreign invaders (the Romans in AD 70) is hardly a "<u>redeemed Jerusalem</u>". But note, here I have followed the sense of the *NAB* for v.8, whereas the *KJV* and *NKJV* depict Yahweh returning (i.e., 'restoring') Zion as the direct object of the verb. This is an ambiguous case, because the preposition "*<u>to</u>*" is often implied in action verbs pertaining to place. It is possible that such ambiguities were intended in certain texts, where both senses should be read into them. In this case, Yahweh both brings back Zion (i.e., its inhabitants) and He returns with Israel "*<u>to</u>* <u>Zion</u>".

- "Go and proclaim these words northward and say, '**Return**, <u>apostate</u> Israel' an utterance of Yahweh 'I will not cause My anger to fall on you, because I am kind.' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'I will not keep on *thus* for an age. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have rebelled against Yahweh your Elohim and you scattered your ways to the foreigners underneath every leafy tree. And you have not listened to My voice.' An utterance of Yahweh. '**Return**, sons of <u>turning away</u>,' an utterance of Yahweh 'for I have married you. And I will take you, **<u>one from a city and two from a clan</u>**, and I **will bring you *to* Zion**. And I will give to you <u>shepherds</u> according to My heart, and they will shepherd you *with* knowledge and insight. And it will come to pass when you are numerous and are fruitful in the land in those days' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'they will not say again "ark of *the* covenant of Yahweh", nor will it go up upon *the* heart, nor will they remember it, nor will they seek *it*, nor will it be made again. At that time they will call Jerusalem '<u>Throne of Yahweh</u>', and all the nations will be gathered to it, to the name of Yahweh to Jerusalem. And they will not walk again after *the* stubbornness of their evil heart.'" Jer.3:12-17

<u>Comment</u>: Again, a return of a small remnant – "<u>one from a city and two from a clan</u>", like the "tenth" in Isa.6:13. And note the use of "<u>shepherds</u>", which since the time of the shepherd-king David must certainly include their king. From

Nebuchadrezzar's deposing Zedekiah until today, Israel has had no king "shepherding" them from David's line. Note how these "apostate" (Heb. *mᵉshûwbâh*) "sons of turning away (Heb. *shôwbâb*)" are commanded to "return (Heb. *shûwb*)". All these variant words are based on the Heb. root *sh-w-b* (**שוב** BDB, pp.996-1000).

Not seeking after the ark of the covenant has certain implications. The earthly ark contained the stone tablets, Aaron's rod that budded, and the pot of manna. We could infer that with God's law written upon the heart, no handwriting of laws will be needed any longer. Aaron's rod was a sign against the rebels – so there will no longer be rebels in Israel's camp to be reminded of more ancient rebellions. Seeing that Jesus Christ is the bread from heaven, the spiritual significance of the manna has been fulfilled (Joh.6:31-58). I assume the ark was destroyed in Zedekiah's day – it will *not* be restored when the kingdom is restored. And seeing that at the death of Christ the curtain separating the Holies was torn in two, then will that curtain be required again in a restored sanctuary? Will separation of the Holies be necessary any longer, given that "the way into the Holies" was made by Christ (Heb.9:8)? Well, at least for faithful Overcomers, that separation will not apply. Also note that 'Throne of Yahweh' will apply to Jerusalem in those days, whereas previously His throne was on the cherubim over the ark in the Holy of Holies. The ark will not be brought back to this new Throne of Yahweh.

- "For, **behold**, days *are* coming' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'and I will **return** *the* captivity of My people Israel and Judah.' Said Yahweh. 'And I will cause them to **return** to the land which I gave to their fathers, and they will possess it.'"

  Jer.30:3

Comment: While some of this could apply to Judah's return under Cyrus, note that the Northern kingdom "Israel" were included in this promise. So the return under Cyrus was a type, with a greater return still waiting. In response to Cyrus' edict, Ezr.1:5 says, "Then arose the heads of the fathers to Judah and Benjamin, with the priests and the Levites, with all *whom* Elohim roused his spirit…" So this earlier return from captivity was a Southern kingdom return only, and it did not fully fill Jer.30:3.

> "'Therefore, all *those* consuming you will be consumed. And all your adversaries, all of them, will go into captivity. And your plunderers will become for plunder,

and all your spoilers I will give for spoil. And I will cause **healing** to go up for you, and from your wounds I **will heal** you,' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'for "Banished" they have called you. Zion *is* she. None *is* seeking for her.' Thus said Yahweh, '**Behold**, *I am* **turning back** *the* captivity of *the* tents of Jacob, and I have compassion on his dwellings. And a city has been built upon her mound, and a palace according to its custom remains. And thanksgiving will go out from them, and a voice of laughing. And I will make them numerous, and they will not be few. And I will make them honored, and they will not be insignificant. And his sons will become as before, and his congregation will be established before Me. And I have visited upon all their oppressors. And his majestic one will come from himself, and his ruler will come out from his own midst. And I will bring him near Me, and he will approach toward Me, for who *is* he that has pledged his heart to approach toward Me?' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'And you will become to Me for a people, and I will become to you for Elohim.'" Jer.30:16-22

Comment: Since Zedekiah's day, when has a ruler come from Jacob's "midst"? The Herods were Edomites. And while the Maccabees were Levites, they were neither the ruling tribe nor the Davidic dynasty. You might agree that Jesus, Son of David, was the proper Ruler, and indeed some wanted to force Him to become their King. But He has not yet exercised His rightful place over Israel as their Monarch. Concerning "I will make them numerous", the latter half of Jeremiah 31 reiterates this theme (see several pages below – "a sowing of man and a sowing of cattle").

- "Thus said Yahweh, 'Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for there is a reward for your work.' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'And they **will return** from *the* land of *the* enemy. And there is hope for your after-part' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'and *your* sons **will turn back** to their border. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself, 'You have admonished me, and I am admonished, as a calf not taught. **Turn** me **back** and I **will have turned back**, for You are Yahweh my Elohim. For after my **turning back,** I **repented**; and after my coming to know, I slapped upon *my* thigh. I was ashamed and also I was humiliated, for I have borne *the* reproach of my youth.' *Is* Ephraim a precious son to Me, or a child of delights? For since My speaking profusely against him, I surely remember him still. Therefore, My inward parts have roared for him. I surely have compassion on him' – an utterance of Yahweh. 'Stand up for you

> sign-posts. Set for you way-posts. Set your heart toward a highway, *the* way you went. **Turn back**, virgin of Israel. **Turn back** to these your cities. Until when will you turn away, the daughter of the turning away? For Yahweh has created a new *thing* in the land. A woman will surround a **strong-man**.' Thus said Yahweh of armies, Elohim of Israel, 'Yet they speak this word in the land of Judah and in its cities – by My **turning back** their captivity, Yahweh blesses you, habitation of righteousness, the mount of holiness. And farmers will dwell in Judah and all its cities together, and they will journey with a flock. For I have caused to drink fully *the* weary soul, and every faint soul I have filled.'" Jer.31:16-25

Comment: Both Ephraim (leader of the Northern Kingdom) and Judah (leader of the Southern Kingdom) were addressed here in this call to return. Now Assyria had taken Ephraim captive many years before Jeremiah prophesied. The previous "sons of turning away" of Jer.3:22 have here become "the daughter of the turning away" (Heb. *shôwbêb*), and it is as "virgin of Israel" they were commanded to "turn back" (Heb. *shûwb*) – i.e., they were to return in innocence of heart. That "daughter" metaphor is often associated with Zion and Jerusalem. And the conversion of Yahweh's backsliding wife to "virgin of Israel" will be through an anointing by His Spirit. What is the meaning of this "new *thing*" Yahweh has created – a woman surrounding a strong-man? It follows hard after "virgin of Israel" and "the daughter of the turning away", so the woman appears to be Israel. Then who is the **strong-man** (Heb. *geber*) she will surround? This may be Messianic, because Zec.13:7 describes Him thus – "Sword, awaken against My Shepherd and against the **Strong-Man** (*geber*), My Companion". If you picture virgin Israel surrounding Messiah, would this not depict the kingdom having come? If Jesus will marry the Bride at His *Parousia*, will she not cling to Him as an endearing bride would her new husband? Will Jesus' marriage-relation to the New Israel be merely intellectual (platonic), or one of clinging emotional intensity?

Take note that "turn", "return", "turn back" and "turn away" are all possible English translations of the Heb. verb *shûwb*. Also the adjective for "turned away" ('apostate') is Heb. *shôwbêb* (fem.) or *shôwbâb* (masc.), and are from the same root *sh-w-b* (**שוב** BDB, pp.996-1000). I will deal with the remainder of Jeremiah chapter 31 separately below – we tend to focus on its declaration of a New Covenant, while the larger context is often ignored, to our loss.

- "'Call to Me and I will answer you. And I have declared to you great and inaccessible things. You have not known them.' For thus said Yahweh, Elohim of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and concerning *the* houses of kings of Judah that *are* broken down to the mounds (i.e., the city foundations) and to the sword. 'They *are* coming in to engage the Chaldean, and to fill them with the corpses of man, whom I struck in My anger and in My rage. And *from* whom I have concealed My face from this city on account of all their evil. Behold, I *am* bringing up to it **healing and cure**, and I **will cure** them. And I will lay bare to them abundance of peace and truth. And I **will bring back** *the* captivity of Judah and *the* captivity of Israel. And I **will build** them as at *the* first. And I **will cleanse** them from all their evil which they sinned toward Me, and which they rebelled against Me. Then it will come to pass to Me for a name of joy, for praise and for beauty to all the nations of the earth, who hear all the good which I *am* doing them. And they will fear and tremble over all the good and over all the peace, which I *am* doing for her.' Thus said Yahweh, 'Again will be heard in this place, which you are saying, "It *is* waste, on account of no man and on account of no beast, in *the* cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, which *are* devastated, on account of no man and on account of no one dwelling and on account of no beast." – a voice of joy and voice of gladness, voice of bridegroom and voice of bride, voice of those saying, "Praise Yahweh of armies, for Yahweh *is* good, for His kindness is for an age, bring in thanksgiving to *the* house of Yahweh." For I **will bring back** the captivity of the land as at *the* first,' said Yahweh. Thus said Yahweh of armies, 'Again there will come in this *place*, which *is* waste on account of no man and even up to beast, even in all its cities, a habitation of shepherds, causing flocks to lie down, in the cities of the hill, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the Negev, and in *the* land of Benjamin, and in *the* circuit of Jerusalem, and in *the* cities of Judah, again the flock will pass under *the* hand of the numberer,' said Yahweh. '**Behold**, days are coming' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'and I will make stand the good word which I spoke to *the* house of Israel, and concerning *the* house of Judah. In those days and at that time, I will make sprout to David a **Sprout of righteousness**, and He will perform judgment and righteousness in *the* land. In those days Judah **will be saved**, and Jerusalem **will dwell securely**. And this is what He will call her (i.e., Jerusalem) "Yahweh our righteousness".' For thus said Yahweh, 'There will not be cut off to David a man sitting upon *the* throne of *the* house of Israel. And to the priests the Levites

> there will not be cut off a man from before Me, bringing up an offering and making incense offering, *the* gift, and making sacrifice all the days.' And there came a word of Yahweh to Jeremiah, to say, thus said Yahweh, 'If you may break My covenant of the day and My covenant of the night, even in regard to not coming to pass daytime and night in their appointed time, also My covenant may be broken with David My servant from coming to *his* sons a king upon his throne, and with the Levites the priests My ministers. As what is not counted – the armies of the heavens, and is not measured – the sand of the sea, so I will make numerous the seed of David My servant, and the Levites ministering to Me.' And there came a word of Yahweh to Jeremiah, to say, 'Have you not seen what this people have spoken, to say, "The two clans which Yahweh chose upon, but He has rejected them. And My people they spurn from becoming again a nation before them."' Thus said Yahweh, 'If My covenant *is* not daily and of night, *even* statutes of heavens and earth I have not appointed, then the seed of Jacob and David My servant I will reject from taking from his seed *as* rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I **will turn back** their captivity and will have compassion toward them.'" Jer.33:3-26

Comment: Both houses, Judah and Israel are covered by this prophecy of healing. When have "peace" and security been watch-words in greater Israel? David has not had "a man sitting upon the throne of the house of Israel" since Zedekiah. We have been in the long period prophesied by Hosea, "many days will dwell the sons of Israel *with* not a king" (Hos.3:4) – this time has lapsed 2,609 years of days so far. Under Ezra and Nehemiah, did Yahweh bring back the captivity "as at *the* first"? To my mind that would have been as when Solomon ruled the kingdom in peace and security – no wars and no rumors of wars. Did Israel have such a dominion under Ezra? You might try comparing the military dominion of the modern Israeli state, but where are that "peace" and "security" today? These are the conditions inherent in "Judah will be saved" – not an uneasy truce, or servitude with puppet kings of the wrong house, but *shâlôwm* in the deepest sense of this Hebrew word. This is not the spiritual aspect of salvation as taught in the Gospels and Acts, but a physical salvation from bloodthirsty enemies encircling the Land, and from famine, plague and pestilence, as promised in Leviticus 26. Also note that in this context of salvation, people are getting married, farmers are tending flocks, priests are offering gifts and sacrifices.

Also, we have here a promise that the offspring of David and of the Levites will become uncountable like the hosts of the heavens, and immeasurable like the sand of the sea. These social and economic benefits are difficult to explain, given the New Covenant teaching of the Gospels-Acts times. Where does flesh and blood Israel fit into unfulfilled prophecy? Or is another interpretation of OT blessings warranted? At times, there really seem to be two Israels coming under the future blessings of God. To appreciate the full extent of these physical blessings, see also **Appendix C: The Prosperity (or Disaster) Doctrine**.

When has Yahweh, or anyone else, called Jerusalem "Yahweh our righteousness" – and recall that this will also become the name of a future King (Jer.23:6). There is just too much OT prophecy that has either been superseded, or it must be future. To be a preterist is logically to be a supersessionist also – that is, a believer that all unfulfilled prophecies were superseded at AD 70. But what superseded them? What we have today is "the dispensation of the secret", but is there any doctrinal statement in Ephesians or Colossians about this dispensation nullifying the covenants of Israel?

The Messianic "Sprout of righteousness" in Jeremiah 33 has this Scripture analog – "so Adonai Yahweh will make sprout righteousness", which will become a "song of praise before all the nations" in Isa.61:11- 62:4. There in Isaiah 61, a saved Jerusalem will be given the names "My Delight *is* in Her" (Hephzi-bah) and "Married" (Beulah). If preterism were correct, with this restoration fulfilled long ago, would not Hephzi-bah and Beulah be household names today, and not just church-words? I anticipate they will become household words during the time of their fulfillment. Note that the ancient covenants with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Aaron and David are as immutable as day and night. These unilateral covenants of God with "the fathers" are in abeyance for the current "dispensation of the secret", but they are not forgotten by God.

- "Therefore, thus said Lord Yahweh, 'Now I **will bring back** *the* captivity of Jacob, and I will have compassion on *the* whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for *the* name of My holiness. And they will bear their reproach and all their treachery which they did treacherously against Me, by their dwelling upon their ground securely, and none causing *them* terror, by My **bringing** them **back** from the peoples, and I **will gather** them from *the* lands of their enemies. And I

> will be sanctified by them in *the* eyes of the many nations. And they will know that I *am* Yahweh their Elohim by My removing them to the nations. But I **will gather** them upon their own ground, and I **will not leave any of them there any longer**. And I will not conceal My face any longer from them, when I have poured out My spirit upon *the* house of Israel.' – an utterance of Lord Yahweh."
>
> Eze.39:25-29

Comment: Note the "whole house of Israel", both houses - Ephraim and Judah - will receive this compassion, this "bringing back". Also note the multiple "lands" and "enemies", so this will be a larger regathering than the trickle who came back from Babylon under Cyrus. My thought turns to this NT text –

> "And thus all Israel will be saved, just as it has been written, 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion. He will **turn away** impiety from Jacob. And this to them is the covenant from beside Me, whenever I may remove their sins." Rom.11:26-27

Rom.11:26-27 includes a paraphrase of Isa.59:20-21, which reads additionally, "My spirit which *is* upon you". The outpoured spirit part of Isaiah was omitted from Romans 11 because, where "all Israel" were concerned, the greater part were still in "hardness" (Rom.11:25), when Paul was writing these words. But converting hardened characters is not beyond God's power, as He demonstrated with the conversion of Paul himself. And referring to his conversion experience, Paul spoke of it "as an untimely birth" (1 Cor.15:8-9), suggesting that a timely birth, for others like him in his hardness, would be future. In Ezekiel 39, as in Isaiah 59/Romans 11, the blessing is spiritual – "when I have poured out My spirit upon the house of Israel". There will be a great gathering of Israel that will be accompanied by (or probably motivated by) this spiritual outpouring.

- "'I will not wreak *the* burning of My anger. I will not turn back to destroy Ephraim, for God *am* I and not man, holy in your midst and I enter not with hostility. After Yahweh they will go. As a lion He will roar, for they *are His*. He will roar and sons from *the* sea ('west') will tremble. They will tremble as a bird from Egypt, and as a dove from *the* land of Assyria, and I **will make them dwell** upon their own houses.' – an utterance of Yahweh." Hos.11:9-11

Comment: This will be a gathering of the Northern Kingdom, "Ephraim". "Sons from the Sea" suggests a Mediterranean origin of this diaspora. But the similes of

trembling birds from Egypt and Assyria may be further hints of their provenance. Hos.7:11 had earlier called Ephraim a "silly dove", in their calling on Egypt and going to Assyria for military assistance. In this text Yahweh is restraining anger, because His desire toward Ephraim is kind, not hostile. We have already covered many texts concerning God's vengeance toward His enemies, including Israel. But with God, His punishment will be a divine and truly just recompense. It will not be like a man's vengeance, which is typically vindictive – a "getting even" with unmitigated anger.

- "And I will give wonders in *the* heavens, and in *the* earth blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before *the* coming of *the* day of Yahweh, the great and the fearful. And it will come to pass everyone who calls upon *the* name of Yahweh **will escape**, for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem will come **an escape**, as what Yahweh has said, and among **survivors** whom Yahweh *is* calling. For, **behold**, in those days and at that time, when I **turn back** the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, then I will gather all the nations and I will bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter judgment with them there, concerning My people and concerning My inheritance Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations. And they have divided My land." Joe.2:30 – 3:2

Comment: This "day of the Lord" text includes both an escape "in Jerusalem" (not the flight from "Judea" that Mat.24:16; Luk.21:21 describe), and the turning back "in those days and at that time" of a captivity that includes those scattered among the nations. Note how differently the times are described, and the locations.

- "'**Behold**, *the* eyes of Lord Yahweh *are* upon the sinful kingdom. And I will annihilate her ('kingdom', Heb. *mamlâkâh* is a feminine noun) from upon the face of the ground. Except that I will not utterly annihilate *the* house of Jacob.' – an utterance of Yahweh. 'For, **behold**, I *am* commanding, and I will cause to shake *the* house of Israel among all the nations, as when one shakes with a sieve, and a pebble falls not to earth. Will die by a sword all sinners of My people who *are* saying, "The evil will not approach or meet as far as us." In that day I will raise up the booth of David that *has* fallen, and I will wall up their breaches, and I will raise up its ruins. And I **will build** it as days of old (lit. 'of an age'), so that they may possess the rest of Edom and all the nations whom My name is called upon.'

– an utterance of Yahweh, doing this. '**Behold**, days *are* coming' – an utterance of Yahweh – 'and one plowing will be drawn near upon one reaping, and one treading grapes upon one laying down the seed. And the mountains will drip grape juice and all the hills will flow. And I **will turn back** *the* captivity of My people Israel, and they **will build** desolated cities. And they **will dwell** *there* and they will plant vineyards. And they will drink their wine, and make gardens, and eat their fruit. And I **will plant** them upon their own ground, and they will no longer be plucked up from upon their ground which I have given to them', said Yahweh your Elohim." Amo.9:8-15

Comment: This text opens with annihilation of "the sinful kingdom" (*hapax*), and that title appears to apply to both Israel and the nations. We know from various texts that Satan has his kingdom (Mat.4:8-9; 12:26) and with that kingdom destroyed, would not the kingdom of God fill the void? Nebuchadrezzar's dream image of the rock cut without hands filling the earth confirms this (Dan.2:34-35). While "the sinful kingdom" will be destroyed, Jacob will not be "utterly annihilated" (fig. *Polyptōton*). But apostate Israel will go down with "the sinful kingdom".

After punishment and purging will come the blessing – a people restored to their land, cities rebuilt, vineyards and farms replanted and fruitful. All the blessings here are physical, to be enjoyed by flesh and blood people. The unique "booth of David" reference to Jerusalem is also a backward glance at his being a shepherd in the open fields, where temporary booths were sometimes built. Although the *LXX* of this portion was paraphrased by James in Acts 15:16-17, his point was to confirm Paul and Barnabas in their ministry to the nations. If there was a raising of "the tent of David" during Acts, it was a spiritual house (as in 1 Pet.2:5) that was being built at that time and not David's physical dynasty. "They will no longer be plucked up from upon their ground" indicates an end of all the dispersions of Israel. Can anyone seriously consider that Amo.9:15 has been fulfilled?

- "**Ha**, those inhabiting the territory of the Sea, nation of Kerethites, a word of Yahweh *is* against you, Canaan, land of *the* Philistine, and I will destroy you from none inhabiting. And the territory of the Sea will become pastures, cisterns of shepherds, and hedges of a sheep-fold. And *the* territory will become for a **remnant** of *the* house of Judah. They will graze over them. In *the* houses of

Ashkelon at evening they will lie down, for Yahweh their Elohim will visit them and He **will turn back** their captivity." Zep.2:5-7

Comment: During the greatest extent of the kingdom under David and Solomon, there was still an independent Philistia that included Ashkelon. If shepherds in Israel would use the houses of Ashkelon as their "booths", then this return from captivity must be future. There is no historical precedent for it. The ruins of the ancient city Ashkelon are now an Israeli national park, but Israel acquired this territory in 1948 well after the suspension of "the covenants of promise" (Eph.2:12). Are OT prophecies being fulfilled in modern times? Not yet.

Note how this visiting upon Judah is not with punishment, but with reward. The Heb. *pâqad* ('visit') can have positive consequences, although it is usually used in a negative sense.

- "'**Behold**, I will do mightily with all *those* afflicting you at that time, and I **will save** the limping one, and the banished one I **will gather up**. And I will appoint them for praise and for a name in the whole land of their shame. At that time I **will bring** you **in**, even in a time of My **gathering** you, for I will give you for a name and for praise among all peoples of the earth in My **turning back** your captivity for your eyes,' said Yahweh." Zep.3:19-20

Comment: Note the synonyms: "save", "gather" and "turn back your captivity". And besides this blessing, they will be appointed "for praise and for a name" and then "for a name and for praise" – forward and backward, we might say – that is, completely. This is what Deu.28:13 meant by "Yahweh will appoint you for a head and not for a tail".

The Ultimate Return – Jubilee

We also have this foundational text contained in Mosaic Law –

- "And you will count for yourself seven sabbaths of years – seven years, seven times. And days of the seven sabbaths of years will come to you, nine and forty years. Then you will cause to pass a horn of alarm in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, on the Day of Atonements you will cause to pass a horn through your whole land. And you will set apart the fiftieth year, and you will

> proclaim liberty in *the* land to all its dwellers. A Jubilee this will become to you. And you **will turn back** each to his own possession. And each to his own clan you **will turn back**." Lev.25:8-10

Comment: Even as the Land was to be given a sabbath rest, and to remain unplanted and untended every seventh year, so it was in this sabbath of sabbath years. First the "horn of alarm" in the forty-ninth year (signifying war and tribulation), then liberty in the fiftieth (signifying salvation and peace). The Land was given its rest, and in the fiftieth year debts were forgiven – that is, lands that had been sold to pay debts would revert to their original owners. Due to the long periods between them, a Jubilee was likely a once-in-a-lifetime event for most Israelites. As with other festive events in the Mosaic calendar, Jubilee was a *type* of a great liberation and repatriation to come. If the sabbath was given for "rest", and a "rest" was the expectation of Acts-period believers (Heb.4:11), then it was the prophetic Greater Jubilee that was on their horizon.

These are by no means all of the "return" and "remnant" texts, but they do provide a framework for understanding what "salvation" meant to Israel –

- a purging of sinners and oppressors from the Land – justice, especially for the weak and the helpless
- a prelude of scattering the People into foreign lands because of their sins
- cleansing the People by a new spirit
- regathering the People into their own Land, and extending it to the full borders promised to Abraham
- restoration of agricultural plenty
- rebuilding devastated cities and towns
- a kingdom, ruled again by a son of David
- joy in the Land again
- the praise and admiration of nations, instead of their hatred

Paradigms for Understanding the Diverse Kingdom Prophecies

There are various interpretations possible concerning the many prophetic conditions we have examined thus far, and I have chosen to evaluate the following three –

A. Physical blessings were possible during OT times, but they were superseded by NT spiritual blessings, realizable by a remnant walking faithfully, who will receive their fullness in resurrection.

B. Physical and spiritual blessings will be realized in the future by a saved remnant of Israel, and the nations drawn to them – the pre-millennial kingdom, as taught by Otis Sellers. This will be followed by spiritual blessings for Israel and physical blessings for the nations during the Millennium.

C. Physical and spiritual blessings will be realized by two different remnants of Israel, concurrently during the Millennium – physical Israel will enjoy earthly Jerusalem/Zion, while Overcomers inherit heavenly Jerusalem and a heavenly Zion.

Likely I have missed some other ways of construing these diverse prophecies in the Bible. But the three paradigms above at least provide a framework for discussion.

A. OT Physical Blessings Superseded by NT Spiritual Blessings.

This seems to be the view of a great number of Christians today, many of whom try to make a distinction between the ritualistic part of Mosaic Law and their own Christian ordinances. Some Christians believe that Israel will yet have their renaissance, after an awakening which starts with “looking upon Him Whom they pierced” (Zec.12:10). Others believe that the Christian church has supplanted Israel, as God’s favorite – now and for all time. Let us take a closer look concerning the blessings of Israel during the Gospels-Acts period.

To start with, when did New Covenant blessings begin? Seeing how important "Christmas" is to so many Christian households, they must believe that NT blessings began with the birth of Jesus. But as an adult Preacher, Jesus proclaimed "the kingdom of the heavens" as being near – i.e., not yet present. Yes, He and His disciples performed "miracles" (Gk. *dunamis*, work of power), but so did Moses, Elijah and Elisha in the OT.

The basis of all the blessings of New Covenant salvation is the death and resurrection of Christ. The kingdom would not be possible without its promised King having fulfilled His sacrificial mission ("this is My blood of the covenant", Mat.26:28). After this, a *realization* of kingdom blessings began with the outpouring of divine spirit at the Great Pentecost of Acts chapter 2.

Where Acts 2:1 attests "the day of Pentecost having fully come", it uses the emphatic Gk. *sumplēroō* ("fill fully"). This was not the simple *plēroō* ("fill"), normally used of fulfilled prophecy. This historic day was the desired end of that prophetic feast of the law, and there would not be another Pentecost like it. Then in explaining its spiritual effects to a gathering of Jews keeping the feast, Peter expounded "But this is that which has been spoken by the prophet Joel." And he quoted Joe.2:28-31. So New Covenant spiritual blessings began with an OT prophetic fulfillment. On the basis of Joel's prophecy, this was no supersession of blessings, but an addition to them. And note that the power to heal, that both Peter and Paul exercised during Acts (Acts 5:15-16; 19:11-12), was most certainly a physical blessing having its basis in such OT promises as Exo.23:25. However, this did not become a widespread universal health for Israel, but a healing ministry granted to a few during Acts. It was a physical blessing in miniature.

The greatest blessings of the Acts were indeed spiritual, and this was also according to OT prophecy – how God's spirit would touch their heart and teach their mind. This New Covenant blessing had part of its prophetic origin here –

> "Behold, days *are* coming – an utterance of Yahweh – and I will cut *the* house of Israel and house of Judah a **new covenant** … this is the covenant which I will cut with *the* house of Israel after those days – an utterance of Yahweh – I have given My law within them and upon their heart I will write it. And I will become to them for Elohim, and they will become to Me for people. And they

> will not teach each his fellow, and each his brother, to say, "Know Yahweh", for all of them will know Me, from least of them up to greatest of them – an utterance of Yahweh – for I will pardon their guilt, and their sin I will not remember any longer." Jer.31:31-34

This is the most cited text in regard to the New Covenant and how it would change the covenant people – emphatically it was for "house of Israel and house of Judah", the two kingdoms of divided Israel. But this was only the kernel of the promise and not the whole of it.

Please consult the doctrinal structure on the next page for the rest of this discussion. What is clear from the structure is that the promise is stated in three parts, each part headed by an emphatic, "**Behold**, days *are* coming – an utterance of Yahweh". I found it interesting that the phrase "utterance of Yahweh" occurs nine times altogether in this threefold section – nine being the number of judgment (*Number*, p.235). So Yahweh's injecting this phrase was a warning to stumbling Israel, even as He revealed that this New Covenant was to overcome the faults in the Old Covenant (Jer.31:32; Heb.8:7; Rom.8:3). Despite the necessity of God's intervention in making this New Covenant, the message here is *not*, "Sit back, take it easy, and I'll take care of everything." Israel was expected to *respond* to this heart-change. The implementation of the New Covenant was experimental, in the sense that it required men to *do* something – that is, repent and live a spirit-led life. It was still possible for them to do otherwise.

The first promise in section $\mathbf{A_1}$, "I will sow with *the* House of Israel and with *the* house of Judah, a seed of man and a seed of cattle" had always rather baffled me, until I examined the contextual structure. Since sowing is a prelude to growth, what this says is that Yahweh will grow the population of the nation and its herds – i.e., social and agricultural prosperity. But the way this is expressed is unique, as both "seed of man (lit. 'seed of Adam')" and "seed of cattle" are *hapax*.

Additionally, the complete phrase "with *the* house of Israel and with *the* house of Judah" occurs only two times in Scripture, and both are here – first they are said to be sown with, then they are cut a new covenant with (section $\mathbf{A_2}$). The sowing may be concurrent with making the new covenant, or it will be a prelude to it. Note that the preposition "with" (Heb. *'êth*) is a homonym, the same word as "the mark

Structure of Jeremiah 31:27-40

A_1. Behold, days are coming (utterance of Y' – 9 occs. here and below)
and I will sow with house of Israel and with house of Judah, a sowing of man and sowing of cattle
And it will happen as I watched over them to pluck up, and to tear down, and to throw down and to destroy,
so I will watch over them to build and to plant (utterance of Y')
In those days, they will not say any longer, "Fathers have eaten a sour-grape, and teeth of sons are blunted,"
for each for his own guilt will die. Everyone of man who is eating the sour-grape will blunt his own teeth. [Eze.3:18-19]

A_2. Behold, days are coming (utterance of Y')
and I will cut with house of Israel and with house of Judah a new covenant
not as covenant which I cut with their fathers,
in *the* day of My taking hold by their hand, to bring them from *the* land of Egypt,
when they broke My covenant,
and I was married to them (utterance of Y')
for this *is* the covenant which I will cut with house of Israel after those days, (utterance of Y')
I have given My law within them
and upon their heart I will write it.
And I will become to them for Elohim,
and they will become to Me for people.
And they will not teach each his fellow, and each his brother, to say, "Know Yahweh",
for all of them will know Me, from least of them up to greatest of them (utterance of Y'),
for I will pardon their guilt, and their sin I will not remember any longer.

Thus said Yahweh, giving sun for light by day, statutes of moon and stars for light at night,
disturbing the sea and its waves roar – Yahweh of armies His name.
"If these statutes depart from before Me (utterance of Y'),
then also seed of Israel may cease from becoming a nation before Me all the days."
Thus said Yahweh,
"If heavens from above will be measured, and foundations of earth downwards will be searched,
then also I will reject all seed of Israel regarding all that they have done (utterance of Y').

A_3. Behold, days are coming (utterance of Y')
and will be built the city for Yahweh, from Tower of Hananeel *to* the Gate of the Corner. [cp. Isa.60:14; Zec.14:10]
And will go out again the line of the measurement against it, upon height of Gareb, and it will turn around Goah.
And all the valley of the corpses and the ashes, and all the fields up to Wady Kidron, over to the Corner Gate of the Horse eastward
are holy to Yahweh. [cp. 2 Chr.20:24-26 – Valley Berachah filled with corpses]
It will not be plucked up and not torn down again for an age.

of the accusative", which marks off what we call in English the "direct object" (see BDB, p.84 for its various uses). I have chosen to translate it as "with" in both sections $\mathbf{A_1}$ and $\mathbf{A_2}$, based on the parallelism of the two sentences employing it. A sowing "with" the two houses could express a state of their being alongside "the seed of man" – that is, together and yet apart. This might convey two sets of people living alongside each other, one under the New Covenant and one under the Old, as was the case throughout the Acts period.

"Man and beast" figure prominently in Jeremiah. Nine times they are mentioned as being destroyed or restored together in respect to Israel (and twice more in the destruction of Babel). The root sense of this phrase seems to be the totality of a city or a land. Given that the people of Israel and Judah were God's own choosing, the sowing of man and beast attests to the fullness of God's planting "with" (or 'beside') them.

Next, Yahweh's "watching over" them has two opposite modes: 1) to pluck up and to tear down (past), and 2) to build and to plant (future). The latter rather depends upon the sowing mentioned in the second line. These two modes figure again in the third section $\mathbf{A_3}$, but here it is "the city for Yahweh", which: 1) will be built, and 2) will *neither* be plucked up *nor* torn down.

Although there was a common saying in those days about sour-grapes, meaning the sons are punished for the fathers' guilt, the principle of "each for his own guilt will die" is not new to the New Covenant, as Eze.3:18-19 demonstrates. This principle of dying for one's individual guilt may seem at odds with the New Covenant "I will pardon their guilt". Yes, under the New Covenant their "sins were wiped away", if they repented and turned back, as Peter preached at the Temple (Acts 3:19). But even under New Covenant blessing, they were still not sinless, and some types of sin after repentance had dire consequences –

> "For *it is* impossible, those once having been enlightened, having tasted also the heavenly gift, and having become partners of *the* Holy Spirit, and having tasted *the* good word of God, and powers of a coming age, and having fallen away, to renew *them* again to repentance, having re-crucified to themselves the Son of God, and exposing *Him* to ridicule." Heb.6:4-6

> "This *is* the covenant which I will covenant with them after those days, says the Lord, giving My laws upon their hearts, and upon their mind I will engrave them. And their sins and their lawlessnesses I will in no wise be mindful of again. But where forgiveness of these *is*, *there is* no longer an offering for sin."
>
> Heb.10:16-18

> "If anyone should see his brother sinning a sin not for death, he will ask and he will give him life for those sinning not for death. There is a sin for death, not concerning this I say that he should ask." 1 Joh.5:16

Yes, past sins were forgiven. But God's expectation was that with His gift of outpoured spirit, that past life of sin would be put behind them. So the consequences of apostasy under the New Covenant were just as dire as under the Old. A repentance of the past life was required to begin the new life – as in Peter's call to Israel, "Repent…" (Acts 2:38). But a renewal to repentance after sinning certain sins was not possible (Heb.6:6 above).

Most studies concentrate on the central section **A_2**, because it explains the basis for the New Covenant: a heart-change in the People by an act of God, followed by an ubiquitous knowledge of Yahweh. This divine act will enable the fulfillment of Isa.11:9, when "the Land has been full of knowledge of Yahweh, as waters covering *the* sea." It saw a beginning in the early harvest of the Acts period – but the full, end-time harvest should be much greater. That there would be a gap between these two harvests was not revealed here, although it might have been inferred from the summer growth stage between the early and late harvests.

There have always been those who insist that times go on as before without any change (2 Pet.3:4). Because the gap since the Acts-period Pentecostal harvest has become so wide, it has given incentive to preterism in recent centuries to adopt this attitude. But note how the central section of Jer.31:27-40 compares the lastingness of national Israel with the endurance of God's ordinances of day and night. Words to ponder. Of note, the nation is called "seed of Israel" and "all seed of Israel", drawing attention to the sowing "with" the house of Israel in the previous section. Therefore, a *sowing* of "seed of Israel" seems to be implied by that phrase, and that would be equivalent to their physical establishment in the Land. Ostensibly this

would accompany the spiritual birth of "sons of the kingdom" (Parable of the Wheat and Tares).

The final section **A_3** concentrates on building the "city for (or 'to') Yahweh" (*hapax*), including some particulars about a tower and gate and other geographical features of a rebuilt Jerusalem. Some of these features are identifiable with historic Jerusalem, but what of "all the valley of the corpses and the ashes"? All three definite articles are present, making this a very definite place. A prime candidate for this valley seems to be the valley of the sons of Hinnom – the site of Jerusalem's garbage dump and Potter's Field, where "their flame is not quenched" (Isa.66:24).

However, in searching for parallels, I also found the episode of 2 Chronicles 20, when Judah was greatly outnumbered by an invasion from Moab and Ammon. This fight was Yahweh's, while Jehoshaphat and his retinue were sent out merely to witness its outcome – a valley filled with corpses (2 Chr.20:24-25). They named it "Valley of Blessing" ('Berachah') at that time, but I have questioned in a previous chapter, **Urgency in Prophecy**, whether this is the prophetic "Valley of Jehoshaphat" of Joe.3:1. In Joel, this place is where God will gather and judge "all the nations" who have scattered His people. Jer.31:40 may be another reference to the future significance of this valley.

"All the valley", along with "all the fields" up to Wady Kidron over to the Corner Gate of the Horse, will be "holy to Yahweh". But also declared "holy to Yahweh" will be a section of rebuilt Jerusalem 25,000 by 10,000 cubits measurement (Eze.48:13-14). Is Jeremiah's description here speaking of Ezekiel's measured portion?

A final word on the three sections of the Jeremiah 31 chart – they all bear the Lord's exclamation point (!) "**Behold**". And they all say "days *are* coming", but one may question whether the three "days" will coincide. The prophetic word does not always reveal its time-flow, as we saw in how the "acceptable year" and the "day of vengeance" in Isa.61:1-2 have played out in time. I have treated the three sections as essentially one in time, but there have been anomalies. The central section had an early application during Acts, but not the outer sections. It does

seem to me that all three sections will apply to a future gathering of Israel, but in what order? Here it is not so clear.

To focus more deeply on the central section, we have these pairs of parallelisms:

I have given **My law**
within them and
upon their heart
I will write it.

And I will become to them
for Elohim,
and they will become to Me
for people.

First note that Israel is to "become to Me for people", but the future realization of this will be delayed until after the end of Hosea's Lo-Ammi ("Not My People") prophecy. This period has run at least two thousand years thus far. Yahweh's law, as heart-law, may not include the whole ritual law of Moses – and certainly during Acts the ritual law did not apply to the nations-graft (Rom.11:25). In fact, recall how Jesus defined this "My law" of Jer.31:33 –

> "Then He said to him, 'You will love your Lord God with your whole heart and with your whole life and with your whole mind. This is the great and first commandment, and the second *is* like it. You will love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments the whole law and the prophets depend.'" Mat.22:37-40

We will need to bear these two commandments in mind, as we explore what aspects of the Law became superseded during Acts, and for whom they were superseded. If anything, Jesus seemed to teach an even stricter interpretation of the Law. Remember how He answered the "Who is my neighbor" question? He also taught men to love their enemies, which was contrary to the Mosaic statute of "an eye for an eye".

I will dig deeper into the ways in which the Law of Moses was superseded during Acts under option C. below. The principal problem with option A. is that it

leaves most of the prophetic word as unfulfillable. It also contradicts such divine principles as, “the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom.11:29). Those gifts may be withdrawn from any single generation by reason of their rebellions against God, but He will reserve them for another generation of His choosing. The claims of covenant theology that a Gentile church has taken over the covenants of Israel are ludicrous, in light of what Scripture says about the unconditional nature of those covenants. This “Replacement Theology” makes God appear capricious.

Then, what about option B.?

B. Physical and spiritual blessings will be realized by a saved remnant of Israel, and the nations drawn to them – the pre-millennial kingdom, as taught by Otis Sellers. This will be followed by spiritual blessings for Israel and physical blessings for the nations during the Millennium.

I agree with Seller’s basic timetable of a pre-millennial kingdom aspect, followed by the Tribulation, Christ’s *Parousia,* and then the Millennium. I have already pointed out how some physical blessings, such as healing from sickness, were enjoyed during Acts. And all believers were endowed with a particularized “spiritual gift” (*KJV*), per 1 Cor. 12:1-11. Note that one of the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Cor.12:28, “governments” (*KJV* for Gk. *kubernēsis*, lit. “leaderships”), could be more carnal than spiritual in certain settings. This may have been the gift given to the seven chosen men, who oversaw the distribution of goods to the poor (Acts 6:1-3). Care for the poor was one of the great pillars of justice under the Mosaic covenant.

The Acts-period introduced the New Covenant, and it was also the fore-part of the Pre-Millennium. But some of God’s future outpouring, according to OT prophecy, will be agricultural plenty, which was not a keynote of the Acts period. Will any of these prosperity prophecies apply to a future premillennial period? They could apply to Israel during such a time. But the rise of Babylon and the

Beast at the end of this period will severely restrict such things for the faithful of Israel. One of the promises to the Overcomer will be "the hidden manna" (Rev.2:17), even as the woman fleeing into the wilderness will be fed (Rev.12:6). So there will be sufficiency of "daily bread" for the persecuted of Israel, if not overflowing abundance. But such abundance was the promise of many OT prophecies – see **Appendix C: The Prosperity (or Disaster) Doctrine**.

I can understand why men might prefer to distinguish between an earthly, physical Israel during the pre-millennial period, and a heavenly, resurrected Israel in the Millennium. It would make for a black-and-white distinction between the periods and their blessings, if true. It would also keep intact (treat literally) a sizable portion of OT prophecy, which is difficult to align with NT doctrine and prophecy. I have already spoken against an overuse of allegory in the interpretation of difficult prophecy, and I would similarly advise against allegorizing any of these abundance prophecies. The problem remains – how do we "rightly divide" OT abundance prophecies in view of NT teaching?

Sellers did us all a service in turning such a didactic focus upon the pre-millennium. However, I believe his views were too extreme as to the character of the Millennium, and as to the character and duration of the pre-millennial season. Thus, the pre-millennial period, when viewed as a yet-future extension of the Acts period (my thought), would necessarily be a time of a "heavenly calling" (Heb.3:1) in Israel. The emphasis will continue to be on the Overcomer and his spiritual aspirations.

A physical blessing not experienced during Acts was having a king rule upon David's throne, and a reign of justice. Christ's *heavenly* throne that He now occupies is nowhere called "throne of David". Will a pre-millennial "kingdom of the heavens" be the time when God raises up David himself? According to Jer.30:3-11, there will first come captivity, then salvation – a servitude of foreigners, then service to God and David. Toward the end of their captivity and servitude will come the time of their giving birth, which will be "this time of distress to Jacob", which includes the Great Tribulation persecution (*KJV*, "the time of Jacob's trouble"). The punishment of Israel (v.11) begins with captivity but reaches its climax in the new birth (the 'sorrow' of looking upon Him Whom they pierced) and Tribulation. Salvation and a new service for Israel follows this – that

is the orderly progression of events per Jeremiah. Now "raise up" can mean to resurrect, or to restore the position or possessions of someone. For David to have his position restored he must first be resurrected, so it appears both these senses of "raise up" apply to David in Jer.30:9. But this raising follows Jacob's "distress" (30:7, the Great Tribulation) and is contingent upon his being freed from foreign servitude, so it cannot be pre-millennial.

Jesus sitting upon David's throne seems to be at the heart of the disciples' question, "Lord, surely at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). And the Lord's answer, "It is not yours to know times or seasons which the Father appointed by His own authority" (Acts 1:7), implied that events ten days away (the spiritual outpouring of the Great Pentecost) was not the answer to their time difficulty. Kingdom restoration will not be complete until a rightful King sits on David's throne. From Acts 1 to the present, Christ has sat upon the Father's throne, at His right-hand. The Apostles' line of reasoning in Acts 1:6 must take us to Christ's return to earth and His *Parousia*, in order for Him to sit upon the throne of David (this is the "throne of His glory" in Mat.25:31). Therefore, restoration of the kingdom in its fullest sense must be millennial. Oh, and Christ sitting upon the throne of David does not exclude David having an auxiliary seat of authority for the duration. In fact, the Overcomer will sit <u>with</u> (Gk. *meta* 'behind') Christ on His throne (Rev.3:21). So David will be raised to sit upon his throne behind Christ. It seems only natural that Ezekiel would call out David's throne, because at that time Messiah had not yet revealed Himself and His overarching rulership.

In his *Thirty-Five Contrasts Between the Kingdom of the Heavens and the Thousand Year Reign of Christ* (#SS29), Sellers drew a sharp line between a pre-millennial "kingdom of the heavens" and the Millennium. But his sharp line seems rather blurred in places. Take, for example, his contrast number 5 –

> "The kingdom is the time of Christ's unveiling (**apokalupsin**) and manifestation (**epiphaneia**). 1 Cor.1:7; 2 Tim.4:1. The millennium is the time of His personal presence (**parousia**). Mat.24:3."

This selection of texts creates definitions that are artificial. Logically, it must mean that Christ's "unveiling" is strictly heavenly. Then who will witness it? – angels only, or will others besides John be taken "in spirit" into the heavens to view it?

But the Apocalypse is the subject at the heart of the Revelation, which unfolds rapidly through the Great Tribulation, culminating in Christ's personal presence on earth –

> "**Unveiling** (*apokalupsis*) of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to point out to His servants what things must come to pass with speed. And He signified *it*, having sent by His angel to His servant John." Rev.1:1

Further, one of the great return-of-Christ texts that we have already reviewed says:

> "And then will be unveiled the Lawless One, whom the Lord Jesus will take away by the breath of His mouth, and nullify by the **blazing forth** (*epiphaneia*) of His **presence** (*parousia*)." 2 Th.2:8

An *epiphaneia* may be expressed as a distinct event, but here it is a characteristic of His *Parousia*. I will have more to say about the various epiphanies of Christ in the next chapter, **Is Today Part of "the Coming Age"?**

I agree with Sellers in applying many of the Lord's parables, especially those introduced with "the kingdom of the heavens is like…", to the pre-millennial period. I also agree with him that the equivalent expression in the Gospels of Mark and Luke is usually "the kingdom of God". But here are some things spoken about the kingdom which do not fit the pre-millennial period –

> "I may in no wise drink from now on from the produce of the vine, until which *time* the kingdom of God may come." Luk.22:18

For Jesus to drink wine with His apostles in a future memorial Passover, He will have to be personally present with them. The presence of wine implies presence on earth. But this will be His *Parousia*.

The discussion at the "Last Supper" continued with this point –

> "And I covenant to you, even as My Father covenanted to Me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Luk.22:29-30

Will the Twelve eat and drink in heaven? Will they judge the twelve tribes from heaven? Not likely. "My kingdom" is an earthly kingdom with Christ present,

which the disciples were to look forward to – Rev.20:4 confirms this, with judgment seats to be given to those who will reign with Christ for the thousand years (Millennium).

I would agree that "the kingdom of the heavens", and also "the kingdom of God", emphasize God's heavenly throne while He is supervising affairs upon earth. It also emphasizes the source of kingdom authority, like the source of the "un-handmade house … in the heavens", which is "our dwelling that is out of heaven" (2 Cor.5:1-2). I do not believe the Father will turn His back on earthly affairs, when the Son has His *Parousia* here. As ever, the Son will be working the Father's will upon earth again. In **Appendix D: NT Expressions Using "Kingdom"** I provide textual parallels that demonstrate why "the kingdom of the heavens" applies both pre-millennially and millennially. To use it as a synonym for a pre-millennial kingdom is a mistake, and **Appendix D** proves that. So the Millennium will also be part, the much greater part, of the kingdom of God.

Another interpretation put forward by Sellers in various publications (e.g., *The Kingdom Is Coming*, Seed & Bread No.194) is that Christ will reign from His heavenly throne during the pre-millennium – and with that I agree. This is just as He did during the Acts period. But Sellers' use of "For He must reign (govern) until He has put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor.15:25) as a basis for reigning exclusively from heaven is not entirely correct. Seeing that the very next verse says, "Death is nullified ('destroyed') *as* last enemy", that would make Christ's sitting at the Father's right hand continue until past the Millennium and the Great White Throne. The destruction of the last enemy is contemporaneous with –

> "<u>the end</u> ('goal'), <u>whenever</u> He may deliver up the kingdom to the God and Father, <u>whenever</u> He may abolish every principality, and <u>every authority</u> and power." 1 Cor.15:24

Sellers would have all enemies subdued at the end of the pre-millennium, but this subordination will continue into the Millennium as well. Note the parallel "<u>whenever</u>" clauses. Abolishing "<u>every authority</u>" is the subduing of enemies. If this happens before the Millennium, then delivering the kingdom to the Father also happens then. So "<u>the end</u>" comes at the beginning of the Millennium, which rather

negates the entirety of Christ's earthly kingdom. What, then, is the *point* of the Millennium?

Further, Sellers viewed the Millennium as a time "while sin will be possible, there will be no sin. Death will be possible, but there will be no death. Sin and death will never be seen again until such time as Satan is loosed and appears again upon the scene." (*Sorting Prophetic Material*, p.7). This view would have death subdued at the beginning of the Millennium, then unsubdued at its end, only to be re-subdued when Death and Hades are cast into the Lake of Fire. I will point out further reasons why I disagree with this sin-free/death-free proposal in the subsections below. A principal difference between Sellers' prophetic interpretations and mine is that he sorted many OT prophecies into the pre-millennial bin, that I would sort into the millennial.

The Divine Thrones

Some of these discernings as to which bin to sort prophetic material is based upon where Christ's throne is. A study of God's throne will show that this is not always so cut-and-dried.

Note how it is collectively "the throne of God and of the Lamb" in the New Jerusalem (Rev.22:1, 3), which descends from heaven (Rev.21:10). Because the kings of the earth will bring their abundance into the city, that shows how it must descend all the way to earth. Would this New Jerusalem throne not put Christ at the Father's right hand until the end of the Millennium, or whenever New Jerusalem descends to earth?

Although Father and Son will manifest Themselves together from New Jerusalem, Solomon's observation has not lost its truth –

> "For this truly – Elohim dwells upon the earth. Behold, the heavens, and heavens of the heavens do not contain You. How, then, this house which I built?" 1 Ki.8:27

In those ancient days, God was meeting with men above the cherubim in the Tent (or the Temple), and would continue to do so until His glory withdrew from the Temple in Ezekiel's day. Was this not Yahweh's *parousia* throne with Old

Covenant Israel? Did He cease having a heavenly throne during any of this time? Did the heavens, or heavens of the heavens, contain Him at any time? My point is that we may attempt, by our limited reasoning, to constrain God's power to manifest Himself.

And consider that the prospect of a future temple included this relationship with Yahweh, after His glory has filled the "house" –

> "And He said to me, 'Son of man, *it is the* place of My throne and *the* place of *the* soles of My feet, where I will dwell there in *the* midst of the sons of Israel for an age." Eze.43:7

Any future temple that evidenced His glory would be both His throne and His footstool. Sellers would make the heavens His throne and the earth His footstool (Isa.66:1) exclusively, but that is only part of the picture. The reality is more complex than that. Here is more that is spoken about His throne –

> "And I will set him (Solomon) in My house and in **My kingdom** until the age, and **his throne** will become established until *the* age."
> "And David came in and **sat before Yahweh** and said, 'Who *am* I, Yahweh-Elohim, and what *is* my house, that You have brought me up to here?'"
> 1 Chr.17:14, 16

Comment: The kingdom of David and Solomon was ultimately Yahweh's kingdom ('My kingdom') – they were His surrogates on earth. Further, a thankful David must have gone into the Tent, in order to sit before Yahweh – so Yahweh was also sitting in the earthly Tent as a *throne*. If Solomon's kingdom was also "My kingdom", then would not "his throne" (Solomon's) also be Yahweh's? The next three texts rather confirm this.

> "And out of all my sons – for many sons Yahweh has given to me – He even chose upon Solomon my son to sit upon *the* **throne of *the* kingdom of Yahweh**, over Israel." 1 Chr.28:5

> "And Solomon sat upon *the* **throne of Yahweh** for king, instead of David his father. And he was made prosperous, and all Israel listened to him."
> 1 Chr.29:23

> "Blessed becomes Yahweh your Elohim, Who delighted in you, to set you **upon His throne** for king, for Yahweh your Elohim, in your Elohim loving Israel, to appoint it for an age. And He set you upon it for king to perform judgment and justice." 2 Chr.9:8
>
> "For Elohim is **King of the whole earth**. Make melody, *you* prudent one." Psa.47:7
>
> "At that time they will call **Jerusalem, throne of Yahweh**. And all the nations will be gathered to her for *the* name of Yahweh, to Jerusalem." Jer.3:17
>
> "A **throne of glory** *on the* height *is the* place of our sanctuary." Jer.17:12

Comment: The first five texts of the group above are rather obvious regarding "His throne". In the sixth text (Jer.17:12), "sanctuary" would also make this God's throne, but where was it? "*On the* height" could mean Mount Zion, or the heavenlies, so this may be an ambiguous case. "Our sanctuary" does not exclude the heavenly, if you consider prayers offered at a distance from the earthly sanctuary. The only other text combining "place" with "sanctuary" is obviously earthly (Isa.60:13).

Then we have this unusual statement – it follows a longer pronouncement of destruction in vv.35-37 –

> "And I will set **My throne in Elam**, and I will destroy from there king and princes – an utterance of Yahweh." Jer.49:38

Comment: The gist seems to be that the quelling of rebellion "requires" that His throne first be established in some sense in order to execute judgment. While God is said to be King of the whole earth (by right), only when His judgeship is *established* does the peace of God truly mark off His kingdom. So a throne "in Elam" seems to be necessary in order to punish and subordinate Elam. I believe this serves as a paradigm for Christ subordinating the nations. His throne, or perhaps thrones, upon earth will accomplish it. I am proposing this only to explain God's *modus* in performing certain national judgments. It certainly does not constrain how He *could* exercise judgment. It is His choice to allow the accused to face his Judge and Accuser before he is punished. This will preclude any possibility of the accused explaining away his guilt as an act of nature or chance.

Every mouth will be stopped and the whole world become guilty before God (Rom.3:19).

If the case against Elam appears to make His throne a vagabond throne, think about why Daniel's vision of the Ancient of Days' throne included wheels (Dan.7:9). Was it not to convey a sense of mobility, and ultimately ubiquity?

Then we have this visionary throne –

> "And from above in regard to *the* expanse, which *was* above their head, as *the* appearance of sapphire-stone, a **likeness of a throne**. And upon it, *the* **likeness of the throne**, a likeness as an appearance of a man upon it from above."
>
> Eze.1:26

Comment: Yahweh appearing as a man, enthroned over the cherubim, was the reality copied by the earthly Holy of holies. So Yahweh was enthroned in the earthly sanctuary, while His *shekinah* glory dwelt there – but He was also enthroned in the heavens per Isa.66:1. While Eze.10:4, 18-19 describe the *shekinah* glory leaving the Jerusalem Temple, the vision of its future return is in Eze.43:1-11. That return is still anticipated today, during this time of 'no Temple' (implied by the no's of Hos.3:4).

I have commented earlier on this enigmatic throne in Zechariah –

> "And speak to him to say, 'Thus said Yahweh of armies to say, "**Behold** a Man, Sprout (*KJV*, 'Branch') *is* His name. And from beneath Him He will sprout up and build *the* Temple of Yahweh. Even **He will build *the* Temple of Yahweh**, and He will take majesty. And He will sit and rule upon **His throne**. And He will become a **priest upon His throne**, and a counsel of peace will come between *the* two." Zec.6:12-13

Comment: This Priest-King will be Messiah, the "Branch" of several OT prophecies. I have previously postulated (chapter, **Christ in the Old Testament, and the New**) that "from beneath Him He will sprout up" could mean both Messiah's resurrection and His exaltation out of extreme humiliation. It would be tempting to interpret "He will build the Temple of Yahweh" as His resurrection also. But note this difference – the *LXX* here reads "house of the Lord" (Gk. *oikos Kuriou*) for "Temple of Yahweh". However, wherever the "temple" of the body is

mentioned, it is specifically a "sanctuary" (Gk. *naos* in Mar.14:58; Joh.2:19-21; 1 Cor.3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor.6:16 – and Eph.2:21 extends this principle to the church collectively). Then Zec.6:15 expands the picture to include "and the far-off will come and build the Temple of Yahweh". Thus, even as foreigners will rebuild Jerusalem's walls (Isa.60:10), they will be under Messiah's direction in building the millennial Temple. The implications of Messiah building the Temple and sitting as a Priest upon His throne, is that His throne will be in this Temple. Where else would a priest serve, but in a temple?

After many detailed instructions for building another temple and city, the very last verse of Ezekiel ends with, "and *the* name of the city from *that* day, '**Yahweh *is* There**' (Eze.48:35). We could hardly expect Yahweh to be there as some sort of foreign visitor at an inn. He will be enthroned there. And, of course, Jesus Christ is Yahweh.

But consider also that a pre-millennial temple is indicated by Daniel –

> "And *the* arms from him (i.e., Little Horn) will stand. And they will profane the sanctuary, the refuge. And they will turn aside the continuously. And they will appoint the desolating abomination." Dan.11:31

In an earlier chapter, **"This Generation" in Prophecy**, I explained "the continuously" (Heb. *ha tâmîyd*) that Little Horn will overturn will be the daily sacrifice, offered evening and morning, continuously. The same word actually covers a set of offerings that included the "bread" (lit. "the bread of the continuously" – Num.4:7), and "the grain-offering of the continuously" (Num.4:16), but with the greater emphasis (15 occs. in Numbers chapters 28-29) on "the burnt-offering of the continuously". Now the burnt-offering was made for a "covering" (*KJV* "atonement", Lev.1:4). This might be to cover over an individual's sin, or to ritually cleanse (set apart) an object, such as the altar (Exo.29:36). The question concerning the pre-millennial sanctuary is whether "the continuously" in Dan.11:31 means the whole burnt-offering, and if so, will it be offered memorially, or with the intent to cover sin. It makes a decided difference in what we understand of pre-millennial Israel. Will it be an Israel hardened against recognizing Jesus as Savior? Jesus said that Daniel's abomination of desolation will "stand in ***the* holy place** – the one reading, let him understand". Seeing that

Daniel spoke of this, and that Jesus called Daniel's "sanctuary" "the holy place", then it hardly seems it could be a place of false worship before the desolating abomination appears there. Perhaps "the continuously" indicates Israel following an obsolete worship, because their spiritual awakening has yet to occur, or to be complete. During Acts, Paul was observing the Law and entering the Temple whenever he visited Jerusalem, but he put no trust in his legal works for salvation. His covering was Christ (Gal.3:27) and not the whole burnt-offering. In a future regathering of Israel, those who frequent a rebuilt sanctuary may include both Messianic Jews and orthodox Jews, as it was during Acts. Seeing how in our times it is often devout Christians who are the friends of the Jews, the orthodox Jew of the future may even become tolerant toward a Messianic Jew and not consider him a traitor to Judaism.

Yahweh once said, "The heavens *are* My throne, and the earth a footstool of My feet." (Isa.66:1). He also said to David's "Lord", "Sit (or 'dwell') at My right hand until I set Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." (Psa.110:1, and applied several times to the Son in the NT). These are the basis for Sellers' doctrine of Christ remaining in the heavens (at the Father's right hand) for an extensive time-period throughout the pre-millennial kingdom, until all enemies are subdued.

But we also saw above in Jer.3:17, at a future regathering of a remnant of Israel, they will call *Jerusalem* "throne of Yahweh". What are the implications of this change of perspective? They would seem to include these things in the near context of Jer.3:17 –

- Yahweh married again to His covenant people (v.14)
- shepherds leading them with knowledge and understanding (like the young king Solomon) (v.15)
- they become multiplied and fruitful in the Land (v.16)
- the ark of the covenant gone and forgotten (it would be an empty gesture to rebuild it, since the stone tablets, pots of manna and Aaron's rod are long gone) (v.16)
- the nations will gather to Jerusalem, seeking Yahweh (v.17)
- the vexations of the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, will be replaced by reconciliation (v.18)
- they will call Yahweh "my Father" (v.19)

Seeing that Israel will view Yahweh as Father, then the Son will be sitting at His right-hand, as His Agent on "the throne of Yahweh" which will be *Jerusalem* at this time.

Although this "right-hand" arrangement is usually construed in a physical way, I think the better understanding would be a metaphorical interpretation. The Son has certain authorities delegated to Him. In fact, "all authority… in heaven and on earth" was given to Him long ago (Mat.28:18). We need not constrain him to heaven or earth in the exercise of this multi-faceted authority. One can be the "right-hand" of another who sends him. That said, "Presence" (*Parousia*) will characterize Christ's millennial reign – this will necessarily be an outward demonstration of His regal power, visible to mankind. Because He will be present on earth, that need not mean that all His enemies will be subdued at Millennium's beginning, as Sellers taught. Jesus can still be the Father's Right-hand Man on earth, while He is bringing the earth into subordination to His kingdom. The "last enemy" subdued will be death, but that will not happen until *after* the Millennium.

But note how 1 Corinthians 15 deals with reigning and subduing –

> "But each in his own order – First-fruit Christ, then those of the Christ at His *Parousia*. Then the end ('goal'), whenever He may hand over the kingdom to the God and Father, whenever He may nullify all rule, and all authority and power. For He must reign until what *time* He may put all the enemies under His feet. Death is abolished *as* last enemy." 1 Cor.15:23-26

This text lends itself to the diagram below. This simple set of statements appears to cover the Millennium and beyond, from *Parousia* to "the end", when the "last enemy" death is abolished. Throughout its duration, the Millennium will see Christ reigning and abolishing "principality and power" – I infer this to include heavenly and earthly forms of them.

Structure of 1 Cor.15:23-26

A. But everyone in his own order –
  B. First-fruit Christ,
    C. then those of the Christ at His *Parousia*,
      D. then the end,

E_1. whenever He may deliver up the kingdom to God and Father,
E_2. whenever He may abolish <u>every</u> principality, and
<u>every</u> authority and power.

C. For He must reign
D. until what *time*
E_2. He may put <u>all</u> the enemies under His feet.
E_1. Death is abolished *as* last enemy.

What is indicated by this structure is that from the *Parousia* (C.) until "the end" (D.), when Christ delivers the kingdom to the Father (E_1), He will be abolishing every principality, authority and power (E_2) – that is, by His reigning (*C*.), and having all enemies put under His feet (*E_2*). Except for B. the time-frame is entirely millennial and post-millennial.

The Millennium will begin with heavenly enemies locked up or destroyed, and many (the most rebellious) earthly enemies destroyed. Recall from the Parable of Ten Minas that two classes of Israelites were judged – a) rebellious enemies were destroyed, and b) an unprofitable servant lost his privileges. Thus the Day of the Lord will be a time for weeding out and destroying "sons of the wicked one" ("tares"), but many who are not Overcomers will remain – some of those "sons of the kingdom" (Israelites) will be cast out of their privileged position (Mat.8:12). The Millennium will certainly be a time of great peace, but sin will not be eliminated until the latter resurrection. There is no indication that "the law of sin" (Rom.7:23, 25) will become abolished during millennial times. For mankind the law of sin is a major component of "the law of sin and death" (Rom.8:2). Indeed, just as they came in together for Adam, these two will go out together at the latter resurrection.

Concerning the restraint of sin during the Millennium, we might do well to consider the first sins mentioned in the Bible.

1. Eve was deceived by Satan to disobey God
2. Then Eve persuaded Adam to follow her lead
3. In the heat of temper and jealousy Cain killed Abel

In these first recorded sins, Satan was directly involved on the first occasion only. The next resulted from Eve persuading Adam, but Eve's motive is not explained. Then Cain sinned from an inner impulse. At that time there were no governmental restraints or reprisals to hem in his bad behavior. This is where the millennial "iron staff" will make a difference, as will the teaching efforts of the "kingdom of priests" (the stick and the carrot again). Grievous sin will become something of a rarity, compared to its current waxing "worse and worse" (2 Tim.3:13) in the dispensation of grace. The example we should draw from is the early reign of Solomon, before he backslid into sin. All peoples stood in awe of him after his demonstrations of wisdom. I expect there to be an even greater awe of the Sinless One, when He reigns and judges. His Overcomers will be pretty awesome too.

And we must surely see that an "iron staff" is a keynote of millennial reigning (Rev.2:27; 12:5; 19:15). But in shepherding, what shepherd would dream of using such a staff, except perhaps against ravening wolves or a rabid sheep? What is the original basis of this "iron staff" teaching? The *LXX* of Psa.2:9 uses the exact Gk. expression (*rhabdos sidēra*) found in Revelation. And what else is there in the context of Psalm 2 to characterize the times?

> "How have nations been in tumult, and peoples growl vanity? Kings of earth will take their stand, and rulers have seated themselves, united against Yahweh and against His Anointed One. 'We will tear away Their bonds and we will throw off from us Their ropes.' *The* One sitting in *the* heavens will laugh. The Lord (Heb. *Adônây*) will mock at them. At that time He will speak to them in His wrath, and in His anger He will terrify them. 'And I have poured out My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.' I will relate toward a statute of Yahweh. He said to Me, 'My Son *are* You. Today I have begotten You. Ask from Me and I have given nations *as* Your inheritance, and Your possession – *the* end of *the* earth. You will break them **with a staff of iron**. Like a vessel of a craftsman, You will shatter them.' Then now, kings, ponder. Be disciplined, judges of *the* earth. Serve Yahweh with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish *in the* way, when His wrath burns as a little. Happiness *is* to everyone seeking refuge in Him." Psa.2:1-12 (trans. from Heb. text)

First, consider that Psalm 2 opens with the Lord, "One sitting in the heavens" laughing at the kings of the earth. In His wrath, He will pour out His King upon Zion. This coincides with the earlier part of Revelation, up to and including 19:15-21. The warnings to "be disciplined" and "kiss the Son" are peace overtures before His wrath is poured out upon the guilty and "burns as a little".

The possession of an iron staff by Christ and His Overcomers during the Millennium will serve as a warning of what has already happened. It will be like Aaron's staff that budded, except it will not be hidden in a box like his was.

Of course, this is nothing like the millennial peace that Sellers taught – it will be a theocracy enforced by *threat* of an iron staff. But then Sellers placed Psalm 2 as pre-millennial (*Sorting Prophetic Materials*, p.22). If that were true, then the Psalm's "iron staff" would draw Revelation chapters 1-20 (up to v.4) into the pre-millennium also. Does that make any sense? If Psalm 2 seems too rebellious to fit into the Millennium, I would agree up to a point. I believe that the single demonstration of Yahweh's wrath (Rev.19:15-21) will terrify most of the nations and act as a brake. As an example - there appears to have been a single instance of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira during Acts. The example of their punishment was so severe that a dread of the Apostles after that (Acts 5:13) kept anyone from repeating such a sin. Something similar for the nations would keep certain "frisky" ones in check, until their spirit has been disciplined sufficiently to heart-serve the Lord Jesus. It appears to me that Christ's return to earth with angelic legions in warfare and His judgments in Mat.25:31-46 would be quite sufficient to convince the hesitant and the doubtful that a change of behavior will be required of them. We all tend to resist change – especially radical change. But change comes easier when we see it as inevitable or unavoidable. Although "iron staff" will apply specifically to the nations of the Millennium, does not Peter's severe judgment of Ananias and Sapphira have the appearance of an "iron staff" verdict?

Knowledge of God

I have come to the point where I must analyze in greater depth Sellers' interpretation of a virtually sin-free Millennium. In *Sorting Prophetic Material* (p.5) he cited the *KJV* of two principal texts justifying his view. The first is (my transl.) –

> "Therefore, just as the weeds ('tares') are gathered and are burned down by fire, so it will be in the *sunteleia* ('end-time') of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels and they will gather out of His kingdom **all the stumbling-blocks** and **those working the lawlessness**, and He will throw them into the Furnace of Fire. In that place will be the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The one having ears, hear *it*." Mat.13:40-43

Based on this text, Sellers concluded –

> "From these words of the Lord Jesus we learn the absolute truth that just before the millennium begins He sends forth His angels and they remove from His kingdom everything that causes sin (see Weymouth Version), and every being that does lawlessness. Thus we know that "the thousand years" begins without a single thing being present which would cause anyone to sin and without a single being on earth who does iniquity."

What this conclusion fails to distinguish is that some will inherit the kingdom and participate in it as reigners with Christ, while others will come under its rule and become subordinated to it. The "tares" (sons of the wicked one) will include those who expected to inherit but were disapproved and excluded – hence the extreme expression "the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth" (all articles present). In other teachings about kingdom exclusion (e.g., Mat.8:12), we found the expression "the Outer Darkness" (again all articles, for emphasis). Jesus had earlier said of these excluded ones –

> "Not everyone who is saying to Me, 'Lord, Lord' <u>will enter into the kingdom of the heavens</u>, but those doing the desire of My Father Who is in the heavens. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by Your name? And by Your name drive out demons? And by Your name did many works of power?' And then I will confess to them, 'I never recognized (Gk. *ginōskō*) you. **Go away from Me**, those working **the lawlessness**.''
>
> Mat.7:21-23

While some *apparent* disciples were "working the lawlessness", others who were casting out demons in Jesus' name were not so apparent. Additionally, "entering into the kingdom" means "inheriting the kingdom", that is, possessing it and

reigning in it. Merely coming under the kingdom's rule differs from this "entering".

I have earlier made several observations about "the Furnace of Fire", and other references to fiery judgment that must be taken in some metaphoric sense (see chapter **Parable as Prophecy**). For example, the "sheep" nations of Matthew 25 will inherit the kingdom (v.34), while the "goat" nations go away into the Aionian Fire (both articles, v.41). If this means the goats will be destroyed, then who will be left for the inheritors reign over? In effect the kingdom would come to its logical conclusion before it even begins, if there is no one coming under its rule. And just look at the crimes of the goat nations – they withheld kindness from the Lord's brothers (Israel). If the Aionian Fire means capital punishment, then Christ's will be the most despotic regime the earth has ever seen. I believe that perfect, divine justice demands a different interpretation – both here, and concerning the Lake of Fire in Rev.21:8, where some of those who will undergo it will be merely "the cowardly" and "all the liars". The Great White Throne will be a works-based judgment. Have you ever acted cowardly, or told a lie? If you answer "Yes", then you are morally no better than some who will undergo the Lake of Fire.

Another key text Sellers used to draw his conclusions about the Millennium was the following, which I have expanded a bit for the sake of more context –

> "so that we ourselves boast in you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in all your persecutions and the tribulations which you are enduring, a proof of **the righteous judgment of God** for you **to be reckoned worthy of the kingdom of God**, for which you even suffer, since *it is* righteous with God to pay back tribulation to those tribulating you, and to give you, the tribulated, rest with us at the unveiling of the Lord Jesus from heaven with *the* angels of His power, in fire of flame giving outworking-of-justice (*KJV* 'vengeance') to those **not knowing** (Gk. *oida*) **God**, even those **not obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus**, who will undergo justice, aionian destruction (or 'ruin') from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His strength, whenever He may come to be en-gloried among His saints and to be marveled at among all those believing, because our witness toward you was believed in that day." 2 Th.1:4-10

I have divided this in a structural format below. The main contrasts are between –

A the persevering believers
C. those who are tribulating the believers – those not knowing God/not obeying the gospel

and their judgments –

B. worthiness for the kingdom of God – "rest"
C. tribulation pay-back, aionian destruction

Structure of 2 Th.1:4-10

A. so that we ourselves boast in you among the churches of God for **your perseverance and faith**

B. in all your persecutions and the tribulations which you are enduring, a proof of **the righteous judgment of God** for you **to be reckoned worthy of the kingdom of God**, for which you even suffer,

C. since *it is* **righteous with God to pay back tribulation** to those tribulating you,

B. and **to give you** the tribulated **rest** with us

D. at the unveiling of the Lord Jesus from heaven with *the* angels of His power,

C. in fire of flame **giving outworking-of-justice** (Gk. *ekdikēsis*, *KJV* 'vengeance') **to those not knowing** (Gk. *oida*) **God**, even **those not obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus**, who **will undergo justice** (Gk. *dikē*), **aionian destruction** (or 'ruin')

D. from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His strength, whenever He may come

A. to be en-gloried among His saints and to be marveled at among **all those believing,** because our witness toward you was **believed** in that day.

"Those not knowing God" will include some that Paul wrote about – those having "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom.10:2). Also note how B.

and C. align with the judgments of "sheep" and "goat" nations of Mat.25:34, 41. And it is remarkable that the "sheep" will do the Lord Jesus a service without even being aware of it – they will "know God" by their actions. There will be no excuses at His judgment seat, because a great evangelizing crusade will have reached both Israel (Mat.10:23) and the nations (Mat.24:14; 28:19) before this assize.

Also concerning the nations and their spiritual darkness, the Scripture had this to say –

> "For wrath of God is unveiled from heaven **against all impiety and injustice** (Gk. *adikia*) **of men**, who **are restraining the truth by injustice**. Because what is known (Gk. *gnostos*) of God is evident among them, for God revealed it to them. For **His invisible things** since the creation of the world, being understood by the things He made, **are clearly perceived, both His perpetual power and deity**, for their being **without excuse**. Because having recognized (Gk. *ginōskō*) God, they glorified Him not as God, **nor were they thankful**, but they were given to vanity by their thoughts and their senseless heart was darkened. Claiming to be wise, they were made foolish. And they changed the glory of the imperishable God by the likeness of an image of a perishable man, and of birds and of quadrupeds and of reptiles." Rom.1:18-23

This was an inexcusable ignorance – not *wanting* to know God, preferring to see Him as a mythological Titan, or one of the beasts of the Egyptian pantheon. Idolatry was a restraint of the truth. It was also ingratitude to the Creator. And it was a slander against His greatness. Thus, I have perhaps used an unusual translation in Romans 1 above for *adikia*, whose root is *dikē* (justice). Idolatry was an "injustice" to God. This was their "not knowing God" from ancient times. In the end-times a great crusade toward Israel and the nations will leave them further "without excuse". And then, just before the return of Christ, an angelic declaration to the world will publish "the aionian gospel" concerning God as the Creator, worthy of all worship (Rev.14:6-7).

Based on these other doctrinal sources, the fiery judgment of those "not knowing God" in 2 Th.1:8 acquires the hue of putting down a conspiracy. It will be

the just punishment for those who tried to keep the truth away from others. Men such as these will be weeded out as "tares" from the Millennium.

How Many Heavens?

I also differ with Sellers when he homogenizes "His heavenly kingdom" of 2 Tim.4:18 (Gk. *hē basileia autou hē epouranios*, *hapax*) with "the kingdom of the heavens", which will have Israel at its center (Seed & Bread #194, *The Kingdom Is Coming*). This view mixes "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph.1:3), with blessings for Israel and all the nations of the earth, some of which are spiritual and some physical. I believe that God, expressly and purposefully, as part of His last directions for our dispensation, gave this command to Timothy and to us –

> "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, an unashamed worker, **rightly dividing the Word of the Truth**". 2 Tim.2:15

"Be diligent" (Gk. *spoudason*) is a verb in the imperative mood, so this is a command, not a suggestion. We need to keep our blessings separate from the earthly and heavenly blessings promised to others. Further, He expressed this command individually, not corporately, because preserving the true faith today rests on the individual, and not on religious "bodies" or institutions. The "apostles and prophets" of Eph.3:5 are long gone and they were not replaced, except by "faithful men … able to teach others" (2 Tim.2:2).

Some Acts period blessings were also described as "heavenly". Perhaps better than any other source, Hebrews brings this heavenly picture together –

- a **heavenly calling** (Heb.3:1)
- the **heavenly gift**, sharing in holy spirit (Heb.6:4)
- Mosaic worship: a copy and shadow of **the heavenlies** (Heb.8:5)
- **the heavenlies** themselves purified by better sacrifices than these (Heb.9:23)
- they desire a better ***homeland***, that is a **heavenly** one (Heb.10:16)
- you have come to … the city of the living God, **heavenly Jerusalem** (Heb.12:22)

A home in "heavenly Jerusalem" is what all this was pointing toward. It was the promise for the faithful Jew first, and also the believing Greek during Acts.

But is that all there is to the heavens? It *is* all there is for the covenant calling, but not for those called during the current dispensation –

> "Blessed *is* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the One having blessed us by every spiritual blessing **in the heavenlies** in Christ." Eph.1:3

"In the heavenlies" is an expression unique to Ephesians –

- our blessings in Christ are there (Eph.1:3)
- Christ is seated at the Father's right-hand there (Eph.1:20)
- we are seated together in Christ there (Eph.2:6)
- the church has been making known God's wisdom to principalities and authorities there (Ep.3:10)
- our wrestling is with principalities and authorities there (Eph.6:12)

What, then might be the relation between these two diverse groups of saints labeled "heavenly"? And they are diverse in respect of –

- Israel's relation to God is a covenant, albeit a "new" one
  - the body of Christ has, and holds onto, its calling purely from grace, and not a covenant

- the Overcomer of Israel has a heavenly hope in New Jerusalem – that is his "heavenly homeland"
  - the saint of the dispensation of grace would seem to have "the heavenlies" themselves – although vague, this implies to me a larger sphere than a single city – just "how big" is anybody's guess

- the Overcomer will have access to the heavenly Temple, of which the Mosaic Temple was a copy
  - the body of Christ is itself God's temple (Eph.2:20-22) – this is a new creation altogether

- the Overcomer of Israel will reign <u>with</u> Christ (Gk. *<u>meta</u> basileuō*, i.e., "<u>behind</u>" Him) during the Millennium (Rev.20:6)

- the Endurer of the body of Christ will reign <u>with</u> (Gk. *<u>sum</u>basileuō*, i.e., as His inner circle) Christ for an unspecified period (2 Tim. 2:11-13) NOTE: *meta* conveys a looser association than *sun*

- Israel's promise is "since the overthrow of the world" (Mat.25:34)
- the body of Christ's promise is from "before age-times" (2 Tim. 1:9; Ti.1:2) – i.e., it was a prior purpose in God's plan of the ages

For the present we are bound to earth. If we travel sufficiently, we might gain a very detailed knowledge of our earthly abode. Most of what we know of the heavens is seen at a distance. Even the most powerful telescopes only give us glimpses of a physical universe that seems inaccessibly vast. Did Solomon's "heavens of the heavens" even begin to compass what are "in the heavenlies"? Where the heavenlies are concerned, we have some promises of God concerning them, but their full meaning is largely a secret to us. This is a domain perceived more by faith, than by sight. To want to joint our Lord Jesus Christ there is truly a leap of faith, guided by trust. There might be an analogy here with Jesus inviting Peter to step out of the security of the boat onto dark waters hiding an opaque world below. Peter did not quite know what he was getting into – he only knew he wanted to be with the Lord, and to be like Him.

How Long?

Even after all of the above criticisms, I do agree with much that Sellers wrote about a pre-millennial "kingdom of the heavens". However, concerning its length, Sellers wrote of "centuries of divine rule" (Seed & Bread #113, *The Kingdom Restraints*, Seed & Bread #114, *The Kingdom Rebellion*), and also "the kingdom of the heavens cannot be less than 500 years in length" (*Sorting Prophetic Material*, #SS33, p.22). Well, that was his inference as to how much time might be required for all the prophecies he proposed as pre-millennial to unfold. All his writings on the subject of duration are approximate, so there is no specific "seventy-sevens" type of prophecy behind them.

And here is my timing judgment – if the earlier Pentecost harvest (Acts period) was about 33 years in length, then a comparable period may be reasonable for the Greater Harvest (fulfilling the latter "*Sunteleia*" Feast of the *LXX* – e.g., as found

in Exo.23:16). How could the Savior have said, "This generation may by no means pass away, until perhaps all these things may come to pass", unless the Tribulation and *Parousia* were potentially within the lifetimes of some of His hearers (Mat. 24:34)? So if you say, "centuries long", I have to answer, "no, shorter than that".

Sellers cited Eze.37:35 in defense of his "centuries", and that text says they will dwell on the Land, and their sons and grandsons. Even allowing for three full generations of dwellers, that might be seventy years – and I think the resumption of long lifetimes should be sorted into the millennial bin, not the pre-millennial as Sellers did.

When Will David Reign?

But concerning Israel's dwelling in the Land with their sons and grandsons, I would also place that in the Millennium, because the context in Ezekiel 37 includes –

> "And they will no longer defile themselves with their idols and with their abominations (Heb. *shîqqûwts*, same word used in Dan.9:27; 11:31; 12:11) and with all their rebellions (Heb. *pesha`*, also in Dan.9:24). And I will save them out of all their dwellings where they sinned in them. And **I will purify** them and they will become to Me for a people, and I will become to them for Elohim. And **My servant David** will be king over them, and one shepherd will become for all of them. And in My judgments they will walk, and My statutes they will keep and they will do them." Eze.37:23-24

This portion of Ezekiel cannot be pre-millennial. In the pre-millennium at least one last abomination will remain to defile Israel – "the abomination of desolation" (Dan.11:31; Mat.24:15). The purifying will be the smelting that we investigated earlier in Zec.13:9, which will be the Tribulation. And Jer.30:7-9 shows David raised *after* "Jacob's trouble". Some may prefer to read "Son of David" (i.e., Christ) into this "My servant David". But I have given reasons in the chapter **"This Generation" in Prophecy** why Jesus is always called some variation of "Son of David" or "Root of David", and never the literal "David".

David will be Yahweh's "prince" per an earlier prophecy of Ezekiel –

> "And I will raise up over them <u>one shepherd</u> and he will shepherd them, **<u>My servant David</u>**. He will shepherd them, and he will become to them for a shepherd. And I, Yahweh, will become to them for Elohim, and **<u>My servant David</u>** a <u>prince</u> (Heb. *nâshîy'*) in their midst. I Yahweh have spoken."
>
> Eze.34:23-24

This position of "<u>My servant David</u>" will be delegated by the One having "all authority", Jesus Christ. David will be His right-hand in certain earthly matters, even as David was a man after Yahweh's heart in earthly life (1 Sam. 13:14). And Who is Yahweh, but Christ Himself? David will be one of those millennial saints who reigns with Christ (Rev.20:6), perhaps as an executive officer supports his commanding officer. The details of this co-reigning are not provided, except that Eze.34:23-24 assigns a unique role to David, as "<u>one shepherd</u>" and "<u>prince</u>".

Then we seem to have these conflicting passages in Ezekiel –

> "And upon the <u>prince</u> (Heb. *nâshîy'*) will come the burnt-offering and the present and the drink offering, on feasts and on new moons and on sabbaths. In all appointed-times of *the* house of Israel he will perform the sin-offering and the present and the burnt-offering and the peace-offering, to cover on behalf of the house of Israel." Eze.45:17

> "And the <u>prince</u> (Heb. *nâshîy'*) will make in that day, for himself and for all *the* people of the land, a bullock *as* a sin-offering." Eze.45:22

These Old Covenant, Mosaic rituals seem entirely out-of-place with a millennial Israel – especially the sin-offering. Is this the "holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices" (*NKJV*, 1 Pet.2:5), that Peter exhorted his "chosen generation" (v.9) to excel in? And what of Heb.13:10? – "We have an altar from which they have no authority to eat, those serving in the tabernacle." So there is this major distinction between Old and New Covenant sacrifices.

By way of explanation, I have proposed in the earlier chapter, **Yahweh Fighting the Nations – His Defense of Zion and Jerusalem**, that much of Ezekiel's future city and temple vision were contingent upon a converted Israel returning from their Babylonian captivity. Also, this word "prince" (Heb. *nâshîy'*) is a favorite word of Ezekiel (37 occs.), who used it of princes of Tyre and Egypt,

as well as tribal chiefs in Israel. Note that the name "David" does *not* appear in Ezekiel chapter 45. If such a prince had ever offered these sin-offerings, it would have been one of the "rulers" under Ezra or Nehemiah. How else would a returning captivity of Israel interpret the new Temple and new City of Ezekiel chapters 40-48, except as the rebuilding of the burnt out Temple and City they were coming back to? And these captives in Babylon were the people Ezekiel was prophesying to. They were "this generation" to him.

Consider further that, if the disciples' expectation was of a 500 year kingdom before the *Parousia* of Christ, why did He give so many warnings about watchfulness? What was there to be so vigilant about? Peace? Prosperity? In **Appendix A: Urgent Expectations of Acts**, I have provided at length what the disciples were led to expect – Tribulation, then *Parousia*. I could find no hint of a lengthy pre-millennial period. You can get to such a conclusion through textual cherry-picking, but I urge you to consider all that was written about urgency during the Acts-times. We need to make our Bible studies *systematic*, and add to them as we find more truth that increases our understanding.

His "Coming", a Keynote of Prophetic Expectation

I have found that the verb "come" in its simple, uncompounded form (Gk. *erchomai*) captures much of the expectation of the Apostles' generation of Israel –

> "Our Father, Who *is* in the heavens, Your name be made holy. Your kingdom **come**. Your desire come to pass, as in heaven, even upon earth. Give us today our day-to-day bread, and forgive us our debts, even as we forgive our debtors. And may You not bring us into testing, but rescue us from the evil one.
>
> For if you may forgive men their failings, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you may not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your failings." Mat.6:9-15, and cp. Luk.11:2-4

Comment – Here it is the Father's kingdom that will come, as in Mat.13:43, which sums up the conclusion of the Parable of the Tares. And it is likewise the Father's kingdom in Mat.26:29, when Jesus said He would not drink wine again with His disciples until He drinks it new with them in the Father's kingdom. The divine

forgiveness of debts is a hallmark of the Greater Jubilee that I explored a few pages back. This will also be the Greater Sabbath of rest for Israel. Perhaps this is just my impression of "the Lord's prayer", but testing and rescue are anticipated – these are not what I expect to happen in the Greater Sabbath of their "rest", but they will *precede* the kingdom coming to its "ripe", or *Parousia* stage. When one is at rest, he has finished his hard labor, but here from the prayer's perspective there is still work to be done. This was a Tribulation prayer, which Jesus taught them to pray. That was their expectation.

> "**Amen**, I say to you that there are certain ones having stood here, who may in no wise taste of death until perhaps they may see the Son of Man **coming** in His kingdom." Mat.16:28

Comment – I equate the coming in His kingdom with Christ's *Parousia*, because "they may see" Him coming. Would a coming into a kingdom *in the heavens* be visible on earth? No, it would not be seen. His coming back here will occur in like manner as the disciples saw Him leave (Acts 1:11). A parallel text is Mar.9:1, which substitutes "the kingdom of God having come in power" instead of "the Son of Man coming in His kingdom". Through this parallelism, we see that the *full* power of "the kingdom of God" will begin at His *Parousia*, not at the start of a pre-millennial season.

> "You may in no wise **see Me** from now, until perhaps you may say, 'Blessed *is* the **Coming** One in *the* name of *the* Lord.'" Mat.23:39

Comment – This is precisely what the multitudes had cried out earlier (Mat.21:9). It will have to be spoken again, but in a different spirit than before. Again, the condition of their **seeing Him** shows He will be physically present when this happens. As this doxology was not uttered before His ascension out of sight from the Mount of Olives, it must happen at His *Parousia*. The way He expressed this response to His *Parousia* was that they might live to see it happen. This, too, would exclude a centuries-long pre-millennial period.

> "Therefore, watch, because you know not what day your Lord **comes**"…"you become ready, because what hour you suppose not, the Son of man **comes**" Mat.24:42, 44

Comment – Why would they be told to get ready, if His *Parousia* were centuries away? That would be like my packing a suitcase today for a trip that I plan to take years from now.

> "From now on, you will see the Son of man sitting at the right-hand of the Power and **coming** upon the clouds of the heaven." Mat.26:64

> "From the present, the Son of Man will be sitting at the right-hand of the power of God." Luk.22:69

Comment – These rather remarkable statements were spoken to the high priest (Matthew version), and to the chief priests and scribes in council (Luke version). Was Jesus speaking to a future generation of Israel, or will that high priest and council be among those awakened "to reproaches, to age-abiding abhorrence" (Dan.12:2)? And if the latter, will this resurrection of Dan.12:2 occur before His coming? "Coming upon the clouds of the heaven with power" was the sign of His coming per Mat.24:30. Here in Mat.26:64 for a man to "see the Son of Man sitting at the right-hand of the Power" would require either:

- a prophet's vision to see into heaven (like Stephen at Acts 7:55), or
- our understanding that *wherever* the Son of Man sits, He is at the right-hand of the Power

Note that every one of the seven NT occurrences of "sit at right" (Gk. *kathēmai ek dexiōn*) is a quote from or reference to Psa.110:1 – "sit at My right-hand until ever I may appoint Your enemies a footstool of Your feet" (translated from *LXX*). This uses the intransitive *kathēmai* ("sit") with *ek dexiōn* ("out from right-hand parts"). Since the last enemy, Death, will be vanquished after the Millennium, at least part of this "sitting" must be millennial and upon an earthly throne, where all may readily see Him.

An eighth text must be "rightly divided" from the seven above, because it says "having sat Him at (or 'on') His right in the heavenlies" (Eph.1:21). This uses the Gk. *kathizō en dexia*, where *kathizō* is transitive and means "cause to sit", and *dexia* is the abstract "right". There is no mention of enemies anywhere in the context of this lone expression in Ephesians. In Ephesians, Christ has been made to sit for our blessings, not for the subordination of enemies.

> "If they may not receive a hundred-fold now in this season – houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields with persecutions – and in the age (Gk. *aiōn*) the **coming** one, aionian life." Mar.10:30

Comment – Here the "coming" age is separated from the current one ("now in this season") by "persecutions", i.e., the Tribulation. Note how the promise of current blessings included "houses" and "fields", as well as what must be an extended family of faith. So at least some aspect of those OT abundance prophecies belongs to the pre-millennial period. Insofar as the Apostles had wealth laid at their feet for distribution to others, this aspect of Jesus' promise was fulfilled (Acts 4:34-35). Some may view this as a "slick" interpretation of the text, but that would only be true if the earthly riches were the highest expectation of the times. Instead, Heb.10:34 informs covenant believers of a "better substance" for them. We need to understand that some of what Jesus spoke to His disciples was received with a "dumbed-down" perception, until the Holy Spirit came to enlighten them. From the perspective of this "better substance", all physical possessions took on the glamor of mere earthly necessity – "sticks of Goshen" is what a former teacher of mine used to call them. Mar.10:30 may be a prophecy of a larger millennial role, similar to this Acts period role of wealth distribution. Could this be part of what is meant by the Apostles judging the twelve tribes? These twelve tribunals must be for judging Israel in the flesh. It is inconceivable to me that Overcomers in their resurrection would be judging other resurrected Overcomers. Did not Jesus say "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (*KJV*)? So dividing has this inherent affiliation with judging.

The current age (also called "the age" in Mat.13:22; Mar.3:29; 4:19) was seen extending up to the Millennium. And this time-sense also applies to the expression "the end-time (*Sunteleia*) of the age" (Mat.13:40, 49; 24:3; 28:20). Luk.20:34-35 distinguishes between the flesh and blood life of "this age", in distinction from the resurrection life of "that age". This would seem to put an early time bound on resurrection, as belonging to the Millennium. However, there may be some noteworthy exceptions, such as the coming Elijah and the Two Witnesses. What it does not make allowance for is a 500-700 year-long pre-millennial kingdom.

> "For as often as when you may eat this bread and may drink this cup, you declare the death of the Lord until when He **may come**." 1 Cor.11:26

Comment – The expectation of the Lord's Table was His *Parousia*, not a centuries-long absence and a lengthy kingdom ministered by the Holy Spirit. Why even have such an institution as the Lord's Table to point the way, if the Millennium was still half a millennium away?

> "… your endurance and faith in all your persecutions and the tribulation that you bear, evidence of the righteous judgment of God, for your being counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you even suffer, since *it is* righteous with God to repay tribulation to those tribulating you. And to you who are tribulated, *Him to repay* a relief with us at the unveiling (*Apokalupsis*) of the Lord Jesus from heaven with angels of His power, in fire of flame giving vengeance to those not knowing God and to those not obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus, who will suffer justice, age-abiding destruction from before the Lord and from the glory of His strength, whenever He **may come** to be en-gloried by His holy ones and to be marveled at by all those believing, because our witness was believed by you in that day." 2 Th.1:4-10

Comment – The persecutions and tribulation had already begun, and there seemed to be no break in sight until the repayment of their judicial reward – that is, their "relief" (Gk. *anesis*) at Christ's unveiling (Apocalypse) **from** (*apo*) heaven. Note this is not an unveiling **in** heaven, as Sellers gives us to understand it. If the period of trial had already begun during Acts, when do the rewards of the kingdom begin? Since tribulation precedes the Millennium, then the Millennium is the better candidate for a time of reward – not the pre-millennium.

> "Therefore, cast not away your boldness, which has great reward, for you have need of perseverance, so that having done the desire of God, you may obtain the promise, for yet a very, very little *while* (Gk. *mikron hoson hoson*), the **Coming One** (Gk. *erchomai*) **will come** (Gk. *ēkō*) and He will not delay." Heb.10:35-37

Comment – At the time Hebrews was written, the day was far spent and the expectation of the "Coming One" and His *Parousia* was "yet a very, very little", the Gk. of which could be rendered literally "yet a little, how much, how much". This does not leave much room for a multi-centuried kingdom with Christ ruling

from the heavens. Through the *LXX*, here is the OT text that Hebrews draws attention to:

> "Come, My people, enter into your chambers and shut your doors behind you. Hide, as a little moment (*LXX*, *mikron hoson hoson*), until indignation passes over. For, **behold**, Yahweh *is* **coming** from His place to visit *the* iniquity of him inhabiting the earth – upon him. And the earth will uncover its blood, and it will no longer cover over its slain. In that day, Yahweh will visit with His sword, the severe and the great and the strong, upon Leviathan, fleeing serpent, and upon Leviathan, crooked serpent. And He will kill the Dragon who is in the sea."
>
> Isa.26:20-27:1

Comment – "Yahweh coming from His place" is Christ coming from heaven (Rev.19:11,15). "Indignation" is a term used of Yahweh's judgment, specifically the retribution side of His judgment. The judgment here is also against an evil agent, Leviathan as serpent and dragon, that is "visited" with the sword. This dragon is likely a human ally of Satan, because the death of this dragon seems to coincide with Yahweh's "coming". However, Satan will not be judged for another thousand years, long after Christ wields this sword. The time for faithful Israel to "hide" will be at the beginning of the final three and a half years. Apparently this three and a half years is the "very, very little *while*" that Heb.10:37 and Isa.26:20 refer to. Jesus had promised concerning this time that, for the elect's sake, those days will be shortened (Mat.24:22). The aspect of Yahweh's sword being "the severe and the great and the strong" invites comparison with the coming the day of Yahweh in Joe.2:31 and Mal.4:5, which is called "the great and the fearful". Both expressions have all the Hebrew definite articles expressed, making the terms very emphatic. See also **Appendix I: The Latter-Day Leviathan**.

If you consider only the texts he cites, Sellers makes plausible arguments for an extensive pre-millennial kingdom. But open the contextual vista wider, and you will find problems with his interpretations.

Revisiting the options a few pages back, here is option C. –

C. Physical and spiritual blessings will be realized by two different remnants of Israel, concurrently during

the Millennium – fleshly Israel will enjoy earthly Jerusalem/Zion, while Overcomers inherit New Jerusalem and a heavenly Zion

How could a "saved" Israel be divided into two such disparate companies? The principle can be found in some Acts-period writings of Paul. For example, he wrote –

> "According to the grace of God that was given to me as a wise master-builder, I laid a foundation, but others build upon *it*. And let each see how he builds upon *it*. For other foundation no one can lay, except what *is* standing, which is Jesus Christ. And if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become manifest, for **the day** will make *it* clear because it will be unveiled (Gk. *apokaluptō*) by fire. And each one's work, what sort it is, the fire will prove it. If anyone's work remains, which he built upon *it*, **he will receive a reward**. If anyone's work will be burned down, **he will lose**, but he himself **will be saved**, but thus **as by fire** (Gk. *hōs dia puros, hapax*)." 1 Cor.3:10-15

Will a "saved … as by fire" saint share with the Overcomers in their reward? According to 1 Cor.3:15, he will lose the reward, but still be saved. This text does not distinguish whether those receiving or losing the reward will live through the "proving", or will need to be resurrected to be "saved". Perhaps either condition may apply, depending upon the individual circumstances, whether they lived through or died during the Tribulation.

Two Kinds of Resurrection

It seems natural to ask concerning those "saved as by fire" – saved for what? Further, we are *not* told if the "saved as by fire" Covenant Christian will receive salvation in the form of resurrection, or whether it will be a saving of life of the natural body in "the day" (of the Lord). We know from later in 1 Corinthians that "flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom" (15:50). So an inheriting believer must be resurrected or "changed" in order to be rewarded. Also, those practicing "the works of the flesh" will not inherit the kingdom (Gal.5:19-21). This does not

necessarily exclude those "saved as by fire" from being resurrected (or "changed" per 1 Cor.15:51-52), because Dan.12:1-2 speaks of two classes of resurrection –

- **many** will awake from sleepings of dusty ground
  - these ('some') to life of an age (12:2)
  - these ('some') to reproaches, to abhorrence of an age (12:2)

In both cases something lasts for an age. And "the age" here in Daniel, as with all things "aionian" in the Gospels-Acts record, is the age to come, the millennial age. But the prelude to this age according to Daniel will be –

- a time of distress which has not come since *the* coming of a nation until that time (12:1)
- at that time will escape your people, everyone who *is* found, written in the book (12:1)

So the prelude to this resurrection of "many" will be the Great Tribulation and the "escape" of those "written in the book". My understanding is that these "escaped", and those awakened "some to life of an age", form the two groups who "meet the Lord in the air" (1 Th.4:13-17). That leaves those awakened, "some to reproaches, to abhorrence of an age", as including those "saved as by fire" in the day of the Lord.

Still, there is some doubt as to whether the reproached will share with Christ a body of glory. These may be resurrected like Lazarus and others, when the Lord Jesus was upon the earth. Their situation would be what Adam might have realized, if he had chosen the Tree of Life instead of the tree of death.

It is difficult to see how the two resurrection groups of Dan.12:2 will exist side-by-side – they appear to be opposites. Could there be an unspoken time gap between these resurrections? In searching for other examples of comparing "these" (Heb. *'êleh*) with "these", I found –

- the two flanks of the ambush Joshua had set for the city of Ai, Jos.8:22

- Abner's company and Joab's company confront each other on opposite sides of the pool of Gibeon, 2 Sam.2:13
- Syrians and Samaritans encamped as two armies opposing each other, 1 Ki.20:29
- "some rely on chariot, and some on horses, but we on name of Yahweh", Psa.20:7
- two remnants returning, one from north and west, another from the land of Syenites, Isa.49:12

The time-sense of these lexical comparisons is "at the same time". The comparison of groups using this word-construction does not span a gap of time. So why should we treat Dan.12:2 any differently? The presumption should be concurrent resurrections for the two groups, based on Biblical usage of "these…, these…" comparisons.

I looked for other parallels to Dan.12:1-2, and found "life of an age" and "abhorrence of an age" were Heb. *hapax*. However, "life of an age" through the *LXX* yields "aionian life" (Gk. *zōē aiōnios*), which has 30 occurrences in the NT, usually translated "everlasting life" or "eternal life". I do not dispute that a resurrected saint with "aionian life" will live "forever" in our modern English sense, but my belief is that "aionian" is a descriptor of things pertaining to an "age" – i.e., limited in extent, but not necessarily of known duration. Then after that "age" has passed, what God has in store for his resurrected ones in the post-Millennium will be quite another matter. My expectation is that life will only get better as the ages roll onward. I suspect that our static concepts of eternity, with a fixed end-state, are irrelevant to a life that will continue to change and grow throughout all the ages to come. The *KJV* puts it so eloquently –

> "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Cor.2:9

But getting to the gist of "aionian life" – to "have aionian life" is equivalent to "entering into the kingdom of the heavens". That is the lesson taught by the rich young ruler's question to Jesus (Mat.19:16), and Jesus' lesson to His disciples

when that fellow went away disappointed with the answer (Mat.19:23). "Aionian life" is "kingdom life" – i.e., participation in the kingdom, and not being an outsider, looking in. And one must conclude here that "entering into the kingdom" means "inheriting the kingdom" through resurrection into a body of glory. The one "saved as by fire" in 1 Cor.3:15 is *not* said to have aionian life. So he must be saved for something less than a place of honor in the kingdom. Will he be outside, looking in? I suspect so, to a large degree. That is, he will not attain all of the "betters" of the book of Hebrews (see **Appendix E: Supersession of the Mosaic Covenant**).

Interestingly, a phrase somewhat like Dan.12:2's "abhorrence of an age" is "reproach of an age" –

> "And ***the*** **Lord** (Heb. *Adôwn*) **awoke as a sleeper**, as a mighty one overcome from wine. And He battered **His enemies** backward, **He appointed to them** a **reproach of an age**." Psa.78:65-66

This divine awakening as from sleep is not out of the "dusty ground" of Dan.12:2, and here the "reproach of an age" is directed specifically against "His enemies". Jeremiah 23 names those enemies as the pastors of Israel misleading the flock, the false prophets –

> "And I will appoint upon you a **reproach of an age,** and a **disgrace of an age** which will not be forgotten." Jer.23:40

And something similar was spoken here –

> "But Yahweh *is* with me as a terrifying Mighty One. Therefore my persecutors will stagger and not prevail. They have been ashamed exceedingly, for they have not considered **disgrace of an age** *which* will not be forgotten." Jer.20:1

The words for "disgrace" differ in these two Jeremiah texts, but they derive from the same Heb. root (*k-l-m*, **כלם** BDB, pp.483-484). A final text rounds out the picture of aionian remembrances –

> "Zion they will ask *the* way *to*, thither their faces. Come. And they will be joined to Yahweh, a **covenant of an age** will not be forgotten." Jer.50:5

These three witnesses speak to a good thing and two bad things that Yahweh will not forget – "covenant of an age", the disgrace for an age of false pastors, and the disgrace for an age of the unjust who persecute the just. And they are linked to "reproach of an age" for Yahweh's enemies. It seems plain that certain misdeeds of Israel will earn God's contempt for a very long time, while He is rewarding His servants during that same time. This rather confirms that the two resurrections of Daniel 12 are concurrent. To these reproaches we might add the NT sin, "the blasphemy of the Spirit", which will be forgiven "neither in this age, nor in the coming one" (Mat.12:31-32). The "coming one" is the kingdom age.

The Heb. for "abhorrence" (*dêrâ'ôwn*) in Dan.12:2 is found elsewhere only at the end of Isaiah, which ends on this sour note –

> "And they will go out and look upon the corpses of the men who *were* rebelling against Me, for their worm will not die and their fire will not be quenched. And they will become **an abhorrence to all flesh**." Isa.66:24

I would call this pretty bad company to share an age with – to be as socially acceptable as rotting, burning rebel corpses.

But wait, it gets even worse. After declaring Jerusalem's parentage to include an Amorite father and a Hittite mother (Eze.16:3, 45), Ezekiel continued his condemnation of her abominations –

> "And your elder sister *is* Samaria, she and her daughters, who is dwelling at your left. And your younger sister beside you, who *is* dwelling off to your right *is* Sodom and her daughters. And you walked not in their ways, or with their abominations. As if *it were* a little loathing, you even dealt corruptly more than them in all your ways. I *am* living – an utterance of Lord Yahweh – but your sister Sodom and her daughters have not done as what you have done, you and your daughters. … And Samaria – she has not sinned half the sins you sinned. And you increased your abominations more than them. And you justified your sister by all your abominations which you did. Also bear **your reproach** which you adjudged to your sister, by your sins which you made abominable more than them. They are righteous more than you. And also, be ashamed and bear **your reproach** by your justifying your sisters. And I will turn back their captivity, captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and captivity of Samaria and

> her daughters, and captivity of your captives in their midst, so that you will bear **your reproach**. And **you will be ashamed** from all that you did, in your consoling them. Then your sisters, Sodom and her daughters will return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters will return to their former state, and you and your daughters will return to their former state."
>
> Eze.16:46-48, 51-55

If you think that God is done with Sodom, this text says otherwise. Jerusalem and Judah out-sinned them all, and when Daniel's resurrection "to reproaches" comes to Judah, thus judged, they will come into the company of that by-word city, Sodom. Here in Ezekiel 16 we must interpret the turning back (Heb. *shûwb*) of their captivity (Heb. *sh$_e$bîyth*, also spelled *sh$_e$bûwth* in other texts) in a resurrection sense – how else might it be made to apply to those past generations of sinners. If an interpretation of death as a "captivity" seems far-fetched, take note of the following:

- Job's return to good health is termed literally – "and Yahweh turned back <u>the captivity</u> of Job" Job 42:10
- After the "time of Jacob's trouble," Yahweh will <u>turn back</u> Israel's captivity (Jer.30:3,18), and within this restoration text it states that David will be raised (Jer.30:9)
- "so that through Death He might annul the one having the Grip of Death – that is, the devil, and He might set free those, whosoever by fear of death through their whole life were liable to <u>slavery</u>." Heb.2:14-15

If the mere fear of death produced this slavery/captivity, then would not death itself constitute an even more terrible captivity? Thus, there may be an allusion to resurrection in some of the turning-back-captivity texts that we have previously reviewed in the OT prophets.

Resurrection of Judgment

John's account of Jesus' teaching may also help explain the inglorious resurrection portion of Dan.12:2.

> "**Amen**, **amen**, I say to you that the one hearing My word and believing the One having sent Me **has aionian life and comes not into judgment** (Gk. *krisis*), but **has departed from Death into Life**. **Amen**, **amen**, I say to you that an hour comes and now is, when **the dead** will hear the voice of the Son of God, and having heard they **will live**. For even as the Father has life in Himself, so also He gave the Son to have life in Himself. And He gave Him authority to execute **judgment** (*krisis*) because He is Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, because an hour comes in which **all those in the graves** will hear His voice and go out – those having done the good things into **a resurrection of life**, but those having practiced the worthless things into **a resurrection of judgment** (*krisis*)." Joh.5:24-29

Of first note, "the dead" who will hear and live are also said to be "all those in the graves". There seem to be no restrictions here, but I would read Israel into the context of Jesus' statement. But will rebellious Israelites be resurrected at the start of the Millennium, or only the unworthy servants who built with "wood, hay, straw"? It seems to be both, because John 5 says "all those in the graves".

Neither Daniel 12 nor John 5 puts a time interval between their two resurrections. Rather, the time qualifier "an hour comes and now is" makes the two types of resurrection both imminent and concurrent. Joh.4:23 used this same phrase "an hour comes and now is" for the time of "the true worshipers", and ostensibly the Acts period was that "hour". It appears the "saved as by fire" Christian will experience his salvation (i.e., resurrection) concurrent with the "gold, silver, precious stones" Christian. With this, 1 Cor.5:5 agrees –

> "…to deliver such a one to Satan for *the* destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit might be **saved in the day of the Lord**." 1 Cor.5:5

This may indicate a lighter judicial sentence than the harsh verdict of "sudden destruction" on the peace and safety crowd (1 Th.5:3), and the "aionian destruction" of the gospel-disobedient (2 Th.1:9) in the day of the Lord. The "destruction of the flesh" in 1 Cor.5:5 may be a form of disease meant to discipline (cp. Job 33:19), but not necessarily to kill. But if death were the result, it would still be salutary upon the spirit of the one so afflicted – it may also signify that "saved" in 1 Cor.5:5 means "resurrected".

Revelation also mentions an imminent judgment regarding **the dead**:

> "And the nations were angry, and Your wrath came. And **the season of the dead to be judged**, and to give the reward to Your servants the prophets and to the holy ones and to those fearing Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those destroying the earth." Rev.11:18

This servants' reward will be the "former resurrection" (Rev.20:5-6) which will yield "priests of God", while a "rest of the dead" resurrection follows after the Millennium (Rev.20:5). In Rev.20:13 the Sea, Death and Hades (the Grave) give up their dead to be judged according to their works. The former resurrection includes those who go into the Millennium, having already escaped the Death of Joh.5:24. Then, at last, Death and the Grave are destroyed in the Lake, and the remainder of the dead judged, some of whom are also consigned to the Lake (Rev.20:14-15). Of the two resurrections in Revelation, the latter one seems the better fit for a "resurrection of judgment". However, "the season of the dead to be judged" in Rev.11:18 leaves the door open for an earlier resurrection "to reproaches". Also, 2 Cor.5:10 makes no time distinction when saying "the all of us must appear before the judgment seat (Gk. *bema*) of Christ".

There may be an analogy between these early types of resurrection and certain judgments of the living – that is, the judgment of "all the nations" at Christ's *Parousia* (Mat.25:31-46). The reward for the "sheep" nations will be inheritance in the kingdom (25:34). Since "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor.15:50), then the "sheep" nations will be changed into resurrection bodies along with faithful Israel. But the judgment of the "goat" nations will be thus –

> "Get away from Me, the accursed, into the Aionian Fire which *is* prepared for the devil and his angels." Mat.25:41

If this means the utter destruction of the nations, who did no kind works toward Jesus' brothers (Israel), then who is left to enter the Millennium and be served by the "holy priesthood"? The "sheep" nations will have inherited alongside the "priesthood" of Israel. Is this judgment of the "goats" the "iron staff" of Rev.2:27; 12:5; 19:15? While these Revelation texts do speak of destruction, in all three cases the "iron staff" will be used to "shepherd" (Gk. *poimainō*) the nations – and a

shepherd is not *inclined* to destroy his flock. Who will be left to shepherd, if the Aionian Fire of Mat.25:41 means the "goat" nations will perish at the *Parousia*?

But there is one more statement of "goat" judgment left –

> "And these will go away into aionian pruning (Gk. *kolasis*), but the righteous into aionian life." Mat.25:46

Yes, Gk. *kolasis* usually means "punishment", but its etymological sense of "pruning" gives it a nuance of punishment by hemming in or constraint. Think of this as having one's accustomed freedoms curtailed, or cut off. But take note of the contrasts – it is either "aionian life" (kingdom inheritance) or "aionian fire"/"aionian pruning" – there is no third (middle) option. As for the significance of the Aionian Fire, see the next section.

On "the Second Death"

What exactly is the meaning of "the Second Death"? The Overcomer will not be hurt by it (Rev.2:11). And those in "the first resurrection" will not come under its authority (Rev.20:6). Those not found in the Book of Life will be resurrected to be delivered into the Lake of Fire (Rev.20:15). It is not difficult to see why many would interpret the Lake of Fire as total annihilation of the wicked.

But the next statement is perplexing –

> "Then Death and Hades ('Grave') were thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the Second Death, the Lake of Fire." Rev.20:14

I have capitalized all nouns having the definite article. Here "the Second Death" has both articles, unlike its occurrence at v.6. It seems to introduce more emphasis, where it follows the destruction of Death and the Grave. The implication here is that the Lake of Fire is the Second Death, because of the death of Death, as it were. And consider the contradiction here that, if Death will be destroyed, how can anyone ever be (or become) dead again? Also, Rev.20:6 describes the Second Death as having "authority", and given that Christ will annul "every authority" (1 Cor.15:24), should we not recognize this to be one of them?

I see the Lake of Fire more as a purgative agent, even as God Himself on His throne was seen by Daniel as emanating rivers of fire (Dan.7:9-10) – fires of purification is how I understand them. Note that it is a fire of "testing" in 1 Cor.3:15 that burns up worthless works. Now, in what sense can a "work" be burned? At the Great White Throne it will be works that are judged, so it may also be true that it is the works of men that will be burned in the Lake of Fire. Consider that John recorded some fantastic visions in the Revelation, and this Lake is certainly one of them.

The consequences of this burning in the Lake of Fire are not described in much detail. For the men who are spared this Lake experience, there will be an avoidance of "harm" (Gk. *adikeō* in Rev.2:11). But concerning *adikeō,* Thayer (p.12) also offers definitions "to act unjustly" and "to do wrong", and these may provide an auxiliary sense that injustice will not come to an Overcomer by his being exposed to the Lake. For the devil, his part in the Lake is described thus: "he will be tormented (Gk. *basanizō*) day and night for the ages of the ages" (Rev.20:10). This torment may be the examination of his millennia of wicked works, and the psychological result of his being forced to endure this divine cross-examination of his wicked stream of works. Concerning "torment", Thayer (p.96) offers his first definition of Gk. *basanizō* as "prop(erly) to test (metals) by the touchstone" – so a critical examination seems indicated, at a minimum. If such an examination causes torment to the one so examined, then the punishment would seem justified. To grovel prostrate before a superior is a position of supreme humiliation and submission, and such a position for this proud one was prophesied by God in His earlier judgment of Satan at Gen.3:14.

Those who see the Lake of Fire as an everlasting fiery "hell" of punishment for unrepentant sinners should consider this. How can God ever deal conclusively with the sin problem, if he perpetuates sinners in their own dominion of sin with Satan reigning over it? Are we Zoroastrians or Christians? There is currently in operation "the Law of Sin and Death" (Rom.8:2). If Death will be destroyed, does that not indicate that Sin will go out with it, because its "law" will be destroyed? How can Sin be eliminated unless sinners are purged – either destroyed, or purified – choose which one you prefer to believe. There is some logical basis for universal reconciliation in this death of Death. Once Death is destroyed, and assuming it was sinners (not their works) destroyed in the Lake of Fire, how can they be dead any

longer? You see the conundrum. Note that it is both Death and the Grave that will be destroyed in the Lake. I would paraphrase this as being both the state of death and the place of death – both are named in order to emphasize how death in its entirety will be dealt with. This is not just Death-in-the future (i.e., "dying") that will be destroyed, but Death in the abstract ("the Death") altogether – the whole nasty business of it.

And consider too that the types of sinners thrown into the Lake of Fire will include the somewhat innocuous groups "the cowardly" and "all the liars" (Rev.21:8). Those tossed into the Lake will be a mixed bag, ranging from liars to murderers. What needs to be purged from them will differ, depending on their individual deeds. Those who have believed God and acted according to conscience will escape that painful examination altogether. Some will have sinned grievously, but repented afterwards, like David. Those who have believed His word concerning Jesus Christ as their Savior already have their ticket to an earlier resurrection and reward, and exemption from the Lake's "justice".

Seeking comparisons for the Joh.5:24-29 text, we find the "certain fearful expectation of **judgment** (*krisis*) **and fiery zeal**" of Heb.10:26-27. While this judgment is primarily for "the adversaries", it also becomes the expectation of one sinning willfully after receiving the truth. But note that this expectation is compared in the next verse with those who died for rejecting the law of Moses. Therefore, this judgment was to be (and will yet be for another generation) physical destruction (death) during the Great Tribulation. This is how God judged OT miscreants – by a more or less immediate action affecting their physical well-being. This is apart from their being judged after resurrection – whether that of Dan.12:2 or that of Rev.20:12.

Back to Dan.12:1-2, both classes of resurrection are "of an age", which rather implies an identical time period. So, if the *LXX* parallel of "aionian life" is correct, both groups will enter the Millennium together. An aionian abhorrence or shame will stigmatize the second group, but was this not rather a warning to every Israelite to strive for the first group? Shame can be a good teacher, and that may have been a positive incentive to repent for those who were heading for the second group because of their choices in life. Do you think a "saved as by fire" Christian

will hold his head high at his judgment and afterward? In view of these things, it is certainly salutary to have a keen sense of shame.

Exclusions from the Kingdom

We know from the Parable of the Wedding-Feast that there will be at least two classes of Israelites excluded from the kingdom –

- enemies, who will be destroyed
- unworthy servants, who will be cast into the Outer Darkness (read "Outer Darkness" as "out of the kingdom")

Are the "saved as by fire" Christians to be identified with the second class? Possibly. But there really may be more than just these two classes. I might add these –

- the lazy servant, who did nothing with his mina (a Christian who builds nothing at all on his foundation)
- the undiligent servant (a Christian who does not persevere in his faith)
- the apostatizing servant (a Christian so weak in his faith that he falls under the sway of the Beast, the False Prophet and the Dragon)

In the earlier chapter, **Parable as Prophecy**, I brought out these points concerning the Parable of the Sower –

- the seed fell on 4 types of ground: wayside, stony, thorny and good
- these seed environments were like various conditions of a man's heart:
    1. not understanding
    2. joyful, but unrooted (untrained)
    3. distracted by cares of this world (trying to serve 2 masters)
    4. understanding

- there are impediments in the first 3 conditions – the wicked one, tribulation, riches – but what is left unstated is that group number 4 will also encounter and have to overcome tribulation and the cares of the world – all will be "proved"

We might question why "the wicked one" is able to have his way with the "wayside" hearer. Because at work here is the principle of culpable ignorance. Not only are some hearers of truth just plain ignorant, but some of these "received not the love of the truth" (2 Thes. 2:10). That is, the seed was sown, but they just did not care to receive it. This is the "I can't be bothered" attitude of those who refused the invitation to the Great Supper. The "stony ground" hearer had no root to withstand the winds of persecution. Why was that? As I indicate above, it was a failure to train for it. The "thorny ground" hearer has permitted riches or some other care to compete with his service to God. As you can see, the Parables look at the faults of "the called" in various ways, even as Jesus' criticisms of the seven assemblies do (Revelation chapters 2-3).

Two Elections

In addition to these various categories of failure, there is another consideration. There are at least two major divisions of Israel as the favored of God, and this is brought out in Romans –

> "For I desire you not to be ignorant of **this secret**, brothers, so that you may not seem prudent to yourselves, that hardness in part has come to Israel until when the fullness of the nations may enter. And so **all Israel will be saved**, even as it has been written, 'The Rescuer will come out of Zion. He will turn away impiety from Jacob.'" Rom.11:25-26

> "Indeed, according to **the gospel** *they are* **enemies** on account of you, but according to **the election** ('choosing') *they are* **beloved** on account of the fathers." Rom.11:28

Now here is quite a paradox. How can Israelites rejecting the gospel be both "enemies" and "beloved"? They are called "the election", and indeed God did choose them. But we also have –

> "So, therefore, even at the present season has come a **remnant** according to **an election of grace**. And if by grace, *it is* no longer from works, since grace becomes no longer grace." Rom.11:5-6

Note Paul's emphatic insistence about grace – this election of a gospel-believing remnant was not based on anything they had done, or were doing. Paul himself had been such an enemy, until he received a calling of grace. Also, these were a "remnant", just a portion of Israel. From this we can distinguish that not every remnant of Israel spoken of by the OT prophets is necessarily the same – they must be "rightly divided", certainly with respect to time, and perhaps with respect to their election. The remnant spoken of in Joel 2 is particularly interesting in this regard:

> "And it will come to pass everyone who calls upon *the* name of Yahweh **will escape** (Heb. *mâlaṭ*, *LXX sōzō* – 'be saved'), for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem will come an **escape** (Heb. $p_elêyṭâh$) – as what Yahweh has spoken – even among **survivors** (Heb. *shârîyd*) whom Yahweh *is* **calling**." Joe.2:32

The Heb. words for "remnant", "rest" or "residue" (Heb. $sh_erîyth$, and *yether*), and "survivor" or "escaped one" are used interchangeably, or together in many OT prophecies. In Joel the remnant is also a "calling", and based on the principle of the predestined (chosen) being called (Rom.8:30), then Joel's remnant must also be an elect remnant.

Additionally, the truth in Romans 11 concerning Israel and the nations is called a "secret" – i.e., OT prophecy alone would not lead you to this Acts-period realization. Joel spoke only of salvation for Israel, and his great emphasis was on "the day of the Lord", which is still future to us. So Joel's elect remnant may need to be distinguished from that of Romans 11. On the previous page, Rom.11:26 contains a quote from Isa.59:20 (*LXX* almost verbatim, underlined on previous page). That text continues (from the Heb.) –

> "'And I – this *is* My covenant with them,' said Yahweh. 'My spirit which is upon you, and My words I have put in your mouth – they depart not from your mouth, and from *the* mouth of your offspring, and from *the* mouth of *the* offspring of your offspring,' said Yahweh, 'from now and until an age.'" Isa.59:21

This is essentially the New Covenant promise of Jer.31:31-33. "My words" in Isa.59:21 become "My law" in Jer.31:33. Being put in your mouth in Isaiah 59, becomes being put in your mind and written upon your heart in Jeremiah 31.

Within just a few verses in Romans 11, two elections were spoken of regarding Israel, although the remnant election also included a "graft" out of the Nations. On this basis, Welch and others have spoken of an election out of an election. Welch identified the Old Covenant election with the Wife of Yahweh, and the New Covenant election with the Bride of the Lamb (see *The Bide and the Body*). Both of these had roots in the national covenant at Sinai, in effect Yahweh's marriage covenant with Israel. The Wife and Marriage metaphors play largely in OT prophecy, especially regarding Israel's adulterous relations with idols. On the other hand, an Overcoming, New Covenant Israel is seen as a Bride, and that group's relation to God will be as a chaste virgin to a Bridegroom. As *individuals* within a chosen remnant, Overcomers will be this chaste virgin to Yahweh. But where the whole history of the *nation* is concerned, it will be Yahweh taking back a backslidden wife whom He had previously divorced (Jer.3:8). Thus the Bride is also to be identified with the Wife, as Revelation suggests here –

> "And I saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, descending from the heaven from God, **prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband**.
>
> … Come here. I will show you **the bride, the Lamb's wife**." Rev.21:2, 9

So, as far as their own conduct is concerned, the Bride inheriting New Jerusalem will be a pure generation, whereas Israel's adulterous conduct nationally and historically will have been infamous. Two extremes.

That "remnant" of Israel that is found worthy of the New Jerusalem will have much to "live down", considering the apostasies of nearly every generation since the Sinai Covenant. The Overcomers will not only overcome a Satan-inspired world in their day, but the whole evil legacy of their own nation. The generation of Israel entering the Great Tribulation will, indeed, be choosing up sides.

Yes, there were some walking by faith under the Old Covenant, like faithful Abraham, who yearned for the heavenly city. Hebrews chapter 11 lists some of

these faithful, including Abel, Enoch and Noah, who preceded the covenants with Abraham, Moses and David.

Here is another distinction we should make – an earthly or a heavenly reward. The earthly rewards were the "basket and store" promises of Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28 and much of OT prophecy. Even so, one of the carrots put before the Old Covenant people was the prospect of a national "kingdom of priests" (Exo.19:6). That this was not achieved in OT times was a testimony to "the weak and beggarly" (*KJV* Gal.4:9) character of the covenant of law in relation to fleshly men. With the New Covenant having come in, and gradually supplanting the old (Heb.8:3), it became apparent that the change of spirit thus introduced by God was able to convert gospel-believing Israel into this "nation of priests" (1 Pet.2:5, 9; Rev.1:6; 5:10; 20:6). What began during Acts will continue during the *Sunteleia,* including the final "seven" of Daniel's "seventy sevens". For more evidence on this eclipse of the covenants, see **Appendix E: Supersession of the Mosaic Covenant**. Although revealed under the Old Covenant, the "kingdom of priests" promise appears to have been reserved primarily for New Covenant implementation. Only Overcomers will participate in this program.

I have already introduced some categories of believers who will not be Overcomers: the "saved as by fire", the lazy servant, the unworthy servant, the undisciplined servant, the fallen away servant, the willful sinner. While the rebellious appear to be those "enemies" who are nevertheless beloved on account of the fathers, there may be a distinction here between those rebelling against a New Covenant gospel and those generally rebellious against God. The former are potential candidates for the earthly promises that account for so many OT prophetic promises. To these we might add those resurrected "to reproaches, to abhorrence of an age", who, if they are grouped with those "saved as by fire", seem likely to have a resurrection of flesh and blood. No reward means no inheritance (1 Cor.3:14-15), and since "flesh and blood cannot inherit" (1 Cor.15:50), the association of the "saved as by fire" with "flesh and blood" seems very compelling. To these groups I should add the OT believers who were faithful to their covenant, but did not look beyond it, as Abraham did (Heb.11:10). So in one sense these OT promises of field and flock, and an earthly Jerusalem, were superseded – but only for the Overcomer, who had (and will yet have) a "better

substance" to receive (Heb.10:34). We may do well to observe here that the better does not necessarily negate the good.

Now recall Peter's question about rewards, and the Lord's answer –

> "Then Peter answering, said to Him, 'Behold, we left everything and followed You. Then what is there for us?' And Jesus said to them, '**Amen**, I say to you that you who have followed Me, **in the renewal**, whenever the Son of Man may sit upon *the* throne of His glory, you also will sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'" Mat.19:27-28

The Twelve will be in their resurrection glory in the kingdom, judging flesh and blood Israelites. I view a portion of Israel in the millennial age as enlightened (Isa.11:9), but still in the flesh and capable of sin (Isa.65:17-25). We might include here Ananias and Sapphira, who doubtless shared in the spiritual gifts of the period, but came under Peter's capital judgment for their duplicity (Acts 5:1-10). Do you picture them being with the Overcomers, or with those "saved as by fire"? They seem to have fallen into the thorny ground group.

In order to give you a sense of the great extent of promised earthly blessings (and the threat of their withdrawal), I have included an **Appendix C: The Prosperity (or Disaster) Doctrine**. The references in **Appendix C** do not cover the whole OT text, but they examine a large portion of it. I will not cite any examples here, but you might go back to the chapter **The Stick and the Carrot** for the lengthy quote from Leviticus 26. Primarily these OT promises were given to the generations of Israelites actually hearing them. But secondarily, which of these many prosperity texts might apply to the pre-millennium and which to the Millennium? My current sense is that the pre-millennium will be an extension of the Acts period, and thus it will emphasize spiritual rewards for the Overcomer. So physical prosperity will not play strongly as an incentive, except perhaps for those distorting the end-time gospel. Note that one of the categories of physical prosperity in **Appendix C** is "Safety, Security & Peace" – these are rewards promised throughout OT prophecy. But it is precisely the "peace and safety" crowd that will suffer destruction in the Tribulation (1 Th.5:3). So the "peace and safety" offered in the OT, only rarely given in OT times, must constitute a millennial blessing.

The fact that the OT earthly promises, with a few exceptions, are not repeated in the Gospels-Acts period books, and especially Revelation, show that God's focus had turned toward the Overcomer. Revelation makes many promises to the Overcomer (some are implicit), and in the table in **Appendix F: Rewards in Revelation** I also include threats of rewards that could be taken away. Note that many of these deal with privileged positions of reigning, access to the heavenly Throne, and access to the City, New Jerusalem. The necessities will be provided, when needed. For example, the Wife will be fed in the wilderness for three and a half years (Rev.12:6, 14). Then, Overcomers coming out of the Great Tribulation will no longer hunger or thirst (Rev.7:14-17). But there is no mention in Revelation of abundance of food or a well-watered, green land in regard to an Overcomer's inheritance. Then what remains is for the prosperity promised in the OT to apply to other groups – Israelites who continue in the flesh, and those nations that keep the law (like the mandate to observe the Feast of Booths in Zechariah 14).

Overview of the Revelation: Timing & Tense

Revelation is such a prophetic burst of visions – a kaleidoscope of them, making a chronological depiction of its events challenging in many particulars. For the most part, Revelation reveals a *chronology of visions*. Here is how John expressed them –

- "And I saw" (30 occs.) – this is typical OT narrative style, which could also be rendered "Then I saw".
- "And … (intervening words) … I saw" (5 occs.)
- "And I heard" (15 occs.)
- "And I saw and I heard" (2 occs.)
- "And when I heard and I saw" (1 occ.)
- "After this (*meta touto*) I saw" (1 occ.)
- "After these (*meta tauta*) I saw" (3 occs.)
- "After these (*meta tauta*) I heard" (1 occ.)

- "After these (*meta tauta*)" (4 occs.)
- "These things (*tauta*)" (2 occs.)

Additionally, John keeps mixing up his verb tenses in Revelation. At times he uses the present tense, as someone who is "in the moment". But to a large degree he used the aorist indicative, a form of the past tense that I would liken to a snapshot. The other past tenses, the imperfect, the perfect, and the pluperfect, are like video images in comparison with the snapshot aorist. Although John was writing a record of his visions as they came to him (the imperative 'Write', Gk. *grapson*, was spoken to him 12 times), his frequent use of the aorist indicative suggests to me that he later edited the whole account. From the perspective of John, the editor, he could have viewed them as past events – what "I saw".

This is what he says about the book at its start –

> "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave (aor. indic.) Him to show to His servants, even the things which must come to pass quickly. And He signified (aor. indic.) it, having sent by His angel to His servant John, who testified (aor. indic.) the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatsoever **he saw** (aor. indic.)." Rev.1:1-2

After this, John wrote about what he had written, thus –

> "Write (aor. imper.) therefore the things which you saw (aor. indic.), and what they are (present indic.), and <u>the things which are about</u> (present indic.) <u>to come to pass **after these**</u> (*meta tauta*)." Rev.1:19

Many have taken this statement simplistically to mean there is a past, present and future portion of Revelation's prophecy. But that is far too simple an explanation. I believe a better understanding would be that what "he saw" was the whole of the vision after he had written it all down. "What they are" is the Lord's or angels' *explanation* of the meanings of his visions. "<u>The things which are about to come to pass **after these**</u>" must be explained on the basis of this parallel text –

> "After these (*meta tauta*) I saw (aor. indic.), and, behold, a door having opened in the heaven, and the first voice that I heard (aor. indic.), as of a trumpet

> speaking with me, saying, 'Ascend (aor. imper.) here, and I will show (future indic.) you <u>the things which must come to pass</u> **<u>after these</u>** (*meta tauta*).'"
>
> Rev.4:1

The underlined clauses in 1:19 and 4:1 are saying the same thing. The "about to" in 1:19 is *mellō*, understood as Thayer's def. 2.d at p.397 - "in general, of what is sure to happen". And the "after these" of Rev.4:1 is pointing back to the state of the seven assemblies that Christ reviewed in Revelation chapters 2-3. Except for the future promises made to the Overcomers, I would place these seven assemblies in their current state in the time *before* Daniel's final seven. So <u>the things which are about to come to pass after these</u> are events *of* the final seven, as revealed from chapter 4 onward, after John's ascent into heaven in spirit.

Besides the above time distinctions, we also have the following –

- I John … came to be on the isle that is called Patmos (1:9)
- I came to be in spirit in the Lord's day (1:10)

John was "in spirit" for the whole vision, which was wholly future to him. So chapters 1-3 should not be separated from the rest of the visions as being a past experience. The whole book is future, even the experience of being on Patmos.

- The first Woe has passed away. Behold, there come yet two Woes after these (*meta tauta*). (9:12)

So Woes 2 and 3 must come after the first – this would imply that the whole sequence of the 7 trumpets are chronological.

- The 7 last plagues (7 bowls) complete the wrath of God (15:1)

We can safely infer that the 7 bowls follow the seals and trumpets, but might some of those seals and trumpets overlap in time?

- There will be a former and a second resurrection (20:5-6)

Obviously, the second succeeds the former.

- Satan thrown into the Abyss, completion of 1,000 years, after these (*meta tauta*) he must be loosed "a little time" (20:1-3)

The "little time" and final rebellion must follow the Millennium.

And I have given reasons earlier in this study (see chapter, **Conditions of "The Rapture"**) why the Two Witnesses being unopposed for 1,260 days (Rev.11:3) must take place during the first half-seven of the final "seven" of Daniel's prophecy. But the 1,260 days of the Wife's flight from the Dragon (Rev.12:6) must be the second half-seven, the Great Tribulation. The Wife's male child being caught up to God's throne has been difficult to interpret. I have explained earlier why the compound metaphor of the Wife would likely yield a compound metaphor of the male child, as the spiritual birth of the new nation – and possibly an early birth, before the Great Tribulation drives the Wife into the Second Exodus. Later in this section I will explore some of the apparent anachronisms in Revelation, including various presences "before the Throne".

Other time markers, such as "after these I saw" and "after these I heard" cannot be relied upon for a chronology of events – only the chronology of the visions, and John's recording of them. Some of their actual chronology can be fixed from various statements scattered across the book.

There are some events that are given early in the book as summary events, then spelled out in greater detail in later chapters. The Secret of Babylon the Great is contained in chapters 14, 16, 17 and 18. Seeing that her judgment will come "in one hour", the suddenness of her destruction will not be an event spread out over years. The period of her being seated upon the Scarlet Beast would seem to cover a period of seven rulers of the same kingdom (his "seven heads") – an unspecified length of time. Now the Beast is mentioned with varying degrees of detail, continuously from chapters 11 through 20. Of course, the Beast is actually multiple beings. As the Scarlet Beast, it is the succession of seven kings. But particularly he is the eighth, and as one of the first five, he is killed and then revived as the eighth. The other "person" of the Beast ascends from the Abyss, as Apollyon, and animates the corpse of the dead king in a mock resurrection that captivates a great part of the world. His exploits as this devil-corpse are the pinnacle of the Beast's story in Revelation. It is the Beast's ascent to power that brings about the death of the Two Witnesses (Rev.11:7), who prophesied during the first half-seven of 1,260 days. The persecution of the woman by the dragon for 1,260 days is the Great Tribulation – the second half-seven (Rev.12:6). These are two places where the half-sevens are described as 1,260 days, and they are *meant* to be compared. They are also termed "forty and two months" (Rev.11:2; 13:5), in order to make the

same comparison. And a third variation "time, times and half a time" (Rev.12:14) was meant to invite comparison with Dan.7:25 and 12:7.

If you infer chronology of events from the chronology of the 58 separate visions/hearings in Revelation, many anachronisms will appear in the book. The comparative sections in **Appendix F: Rewards in Revelation** will bring some of these to light. For example, take this portion of **Appendix F** –

Thrones & Sanctuary
I will make him a column in the Sanctuary of My God – 3:12
I will give to him to sit with Me on My throne – 3:21
And before the Throne as a glassy sea – 4:6
A large crowd – no one could number – out of every nation, tribes, peoples, tongues, standing before the Throne and the Lamb – 7:9
(those out of the Great Tribulation) are before the Throne of God, and they serve Him night and day in His Sanctuary – 7:15
Wife's male child caught up to God's Throne – 12:5
144,000 sing a new song before the Throne – 14:3
I saw as a glassy sea mixed with fire, and those overcoming the Beast – having stood upon the Glassy Sea – 15:2 (see 4:6)
No one was able to enter into the Sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed – 15:8
Thrones – they sat on them – the persons of those beheaded - they lived & reigned with Christ 1,000 years – 20:4
I saw the dead, the great and the small, having stood before the Throne – 20:12
A Sanctuary I saw not in her, for the Lord God the Almighty is her Sanctuary, also the Lamb – 21:22
A river of water, bright as crystal, going out from the Throne of God and of the Lamb – 22:1
The Throne of God and of the Lamb will be in her, and His servants will serve Him – 22:3

A large crowd – no one could number – out of every nation, tribes, peoples, tongues, standing before the Throne and the Lamb – 7:9
After these things, a loud voice of a large crowd in heaven, 'Alleluia…the salvation of our God.' – 19:1
Voice of a large crowd, sound of many waters, 'Alleluia…our Lord God the Almighty reigned.' – 19:6

NOTE: blue entries are related texts, but not directly about Overcomers; brown entries are addressed *to* Overcomers of the seven assemblies

First, note how often men, or a "large crowd" (also men), are pictured before the heavenly Throne or in the heavenly Sanctuary, often in the early chapters of Revelation. Then 15:8 has a specific observation that the Sanctuary was closed until the Seven Bowls were completed. Therefore, exclusion from the Sanctuary must delay any resurrected person from standing before the Throne until at least the *Parousia*.

Also, the nature of the promises made to the Overcomers in Revelation chapters 2-3 include promises of the City, the Sanctuary, the Tree of Life and Paradise. It seems to me these would be very-far-off promises, unless they become accessible to them at the beginning of the Millennium. I have made the point earlier that it seems likely that those perfect servants would *not* have to wait around a thousand years to receive their cherished "better country" (Heb.11:16). Will they need to be satisfied with "the good", until "the better" is delivered a millennium later? I doubt so.

Then take note in the following selection of the various ways in which reigning is portrayed –

Priestly Kingdom
He made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father – 1:6
He made us a kingdom and priests to our God, and we shall reign upon the earth – 5:10
They will be priests of God & Christ; they will reign with Him the 1,000 years – 20:6
The Lord God will enlighten upon them (His servants), and they will reign for

the ages of the ages – 22:5
The kingdom of the world became of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for the ages of the ages – 11:15
You have taken Your great power and reigned – 11:17
Now came the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ – 12:10
Our Lord God the Almighty reigned – 19:6

There will be a reign of 1,000 years, and also a reigning "for the ages of the ages", which would seem to include post-millennial times. There is a reigning "upon the earth", but how will access to the heavenly Throne accommodate this earthly reign for the Overcomers? Then note how Christ seems to have come to power in chapters 11, 12 and 19. Chapter 19 appears to record the final events leading up to His *Parousia*, while chapters 11 and 12 are only previews of it, regardless of the past tenses of the verbs. The Hebrew Perfect (past) tense often speaks futuristically in OT prophecy – hence the term "prophetic past" tense. John was reflecting his Hebrew (i.e., Aramaic) roots in some of the language of Revelation.

Conclusion

I will conclude this **Restoration of the Kingdom** chapter with these observations –

- The kingdom will be hierarchical, with rewards based on a man's works in his life in the flesh ("star differs from star in brightness" – 1 Cor.15:41).
- The highest places will be reserved for the Overcomers, the Perfecters – what the books of Revelation and Hebrews are principally about.
- The "saved as by fire" Covenant Christian will lose out on this privileged position – perhaps his position will be like the Levite in relation to the Priest under the Law. And note the position of the shamed Levite in the Restoration Temple of Eze.44:10-14. "He will bear his reproach" uses a different Heb. word, but the similarity to the resurrection "to reproaches" (Dan.12:2) is not to be overlooked.

- There will be places for the nations in dividing up the inheritance – the "sheep" nations of Mat.25:33-34 and the "Gentile graft" of Rom.11:17.

- The rewards extended to Overcomers in Revelation chapters 2-3 will be immediate. That would include access to the heavenly Jerusalem and its Zion. The Overcomers will partake of the former resurrection and will have the ability to move about as Christ did after His resurrection. Picture these as ascending and descending Jacob's ladder, as needed and at will.

- The physical blessings of abundance, long life, health, and freedom from preying beasts (Isa.11:6-9; 65:17-25) will be enjoyed by physical Israel and the nations – likely those surviving the Tribulation, but not reckoned as Overcomers. This would include OT faithful (not Overcomers) as resurrected "to each of the seeds its own body" (1 Cor.15:38). The resurrection of Eze.37:1-14 falls into this category – "I have given you rest upon your own ground", v.14. Likewise the resurrection of Isa.26:19, which leads into a description of the Great Tribulation (26:20-21), punishment of Leviathan (27:1), and descriptions of Israel as "vineyard" (27:2) and "Israel will blossom and bud" and "fill the face of the world with produce" (27:6).

- There will be many thrones on earth. Christ will have His "throne of glory" (Mat.25:31); the Twelve will have their thrones of judging (Mat.19:28); Overcomers will have thrones (Rev.3:21; 20:4); and David will be raised up to his throne (Jer.30:9; Eze.34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hos.3:5), and some Gentile kings will continue to reign upon earth (Rev.21:24). Likewise in heaven there are other thrones besides God's – e.g., the twenty-four elders have thrones and crowns (Rev.4:4; 11:16). Further, Col.1:16, speaking of things in heaven and upon earth, names "thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities".

There are still issues I am not yet equipped to explain. One of those mysteries is the function of "the Tree of Life". Why does it figure as a promise to Overcomers (Rev.2:7), whom I assume will have had part in the former resurrection prior to this? Since "flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom" (1 Cor.15:50), what will eating from the Tree of Life mean for heirs like the resurrected Overcomers (Rev.21:7)? Will its effect be merely tonic for an Overcomer? Or will this be a

privileged, symbolic eating, like the Lord's Table during Acts? This is one of the secrets of "aionian life" that I have failed to comprehend. We can readily understand that withdrawing the Tree from flesh and blood Adam meant his eventual death. But how does its presence figure in millennial and post-millennial times? It is mentioned that the leaves of the Tree will be for the healing of the nations (Rev.22:2), so at the season indicated, there will still be nations in the flesh, susceptible to disease. It seems too far-fetched that the Tree could convey spiritual healing. If that were its power, then fallen Adam would have benefited from such a balm. The fact that the obedient nations will have access to the Tree's healing after the descent of New Jerusalem (Rev.22:14) indicates that a period of time will follow before the session of the Great White Throne. By the way, the text says only that the dead will be judged at the Great White Throne (Rev.20:11-13). Will there be no judgment of the living coming out of the Millennium? I can find no reference to it.

And consider that the succession of the final visions in Revelation follows this sequence –

- Satan's release and the final rebellion (Rev.20:7-10),
- the Great White Throne and judgment (Rev.20:11-13),
- Death and Hades cast into the Lake of Fire, the Second Death (Rev.20:13-15)
- those not in the Book of Life cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev.20:15)
- new heaven and new earth (Rev.21:1),
- and New Jerusalem descending to earth (Rev.21:2). And afterward comes a list of sinners whose inheritance ("share") will be the Lake of Fire (Rev.21:8),
- then New Jerusalem descending, again (Rev.21:10),
- then a statement about the unclean, abominable and liars being excluded from the City (Rev.21:27 and 22:15) – but why speak of their exclusion from the City, if the Lake of Fire has already taken them in chapter 20.

And why would not the "iron staff" have purged them before this? And why is the descent of the New Jerusalem mentioned twice, with the Lake of Fire intervening?

- and note the interesting anomaly of Death being destroyed in the Lake (20:14) before any sinners are thrown in (20:15) – the implied meaning reinforces the thought that it is their works being burned up in the Lake

This set of apparent anachronisms would seem to be recursive – going back to an earlier subject to add more clarity. Also, the patchwork of visions might allow for a New Jerusalem descending before the end of the Millennium – or at least well before the Great White Throne. The picture is not as cut-and-dried as some expositors explain it.

I picture flesh and blood men (remnants of Israel and the nations) entering the Millennium and enjoying the prosperity and extended life that God will establish through Christ's long reign of peace. And it will include freedom from the noxious influence of demons, who have so bedeviled the world of man since Eve's deception (2 Cor.11:3). The Millennium could be viewed as God's thousand year experiment under these unique conditions –

- every physical blessing
- benign influence of Christ and His regime of Overcomers – no more malignant influence of demons or rebellious men
- universal knowledge of God and peace
- but men still corrupted by a sin nature
- unyielding justice (the "iron staff") in government

I used the word "experiment" above from a purely human perspective, because God already knows the end result of this test period. After many years of peace and prosperity, there will be a final release of Satan and a rebellion of the nations against the kingdom of God (Rev.20:7-9). This will be a last demonstration to mankind that concerning the flesh "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom.3:10).

This whole chapter might have been more logically presented, if I had used subsections labelled **What? Where?** and **When?** But these categories are so overlapped, I would have had to repeat a great many textual citations. Here in the summing up of **Restoration of the Kingdom**, I will break out these categories –

What?

- A premillennial period of evangelism, as an extension of the Acts period – the late harvest (*Sunteleia*). This will include evangelizing Israel (Rev.11:3-7; Mat.10:23) and the Nations (Mat.28:19-20; Rev.14:6-7). This "sowing" will immediately precede and be amid the Great Tribulation. But note that Jesus' command "disciple all the nations" (Mat.28:19) was not fulfilled by the Twelve – see **Appendix G: Did the Twelve Fail in "the Great Commission"?**
- Destruction of rebellious men; incarceration of Satan; and the demonic legions destroyed (Mat.25:41).
- *Parousia* of Christ and His judgment seat – judgment of the nations.
- Restoration of David's throne on earth – Jesus Christ reigning with many co-regents: David son of Jesse, the Twelve Apostles, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and Elijah, and many more.
- Israel's Overcomers fulfilling the "kingdom of priests" promise (Exo.19:16), teaching the things of God to the nations throughout the earth, and offering their gifts to God.
- Rebuilding Jerusalem, re-dedicating the earthly Temple (or building an entirely new Temple, or both in succession) for offering the gifts of the nations, and as an international house of prayer.
- Earthly prosperity – peace, long life, and abundance to satisfy basic bodily needs.
- Prior resurrection for Overcomers. Also an early resurrection for "some to reproaches".

- Heavenly Jerusalem access for Overcomers, including access to the Tree of Life.
- Threat of an "iron staff" to govern/guide trouble-makers.
- Great White Throne – resurrection of "rest of the dead". Judgment and Lake of Fire.
- New heaven and new earth.
- Descent of New Jerusalem to earth, now with access for the nations – and their access to the Tree of Life.
- The last enemy Death destroyed – the Second Death.
- The "end", when the Son delivers up the kingdom to the Father.

Where?

- New heavens and new earth (2 Pet.3:13).
- On earth and in earthly Jerusalem.
- In Heavenly Jerusalem.
- New heaven and new earth (Rev.21:1).
- In Heavenly Jerusalem on earth.

When?

- Premillennial phase – a continuation of the Acts period. Daniel's final "seven", perhaps with a prelude.
- Millennium.
- The "little season" – Satan freed to stir up a final rebellion.
- Post-millennium – Heavenly Jerusalem meets new earth, but perhaps this will come earlier.

- The ages of the ages

You can see that many entries under **What?** also apply to the **Where?** and the **When?** of the kingdom.

Is Today Part of “the Coming Age”?

If God ceased His covenant relations with Israel forever at AD 70, as many preterists believe, then where exactly are we today in God’s overall program? Consider that the Gospels-Acts books speak of a coming age. Then followed Paul’s last seven epistles, revealing a secret hidden since time immemorial. Assuming no further covenant dispensations, the sequence above would make today’s “dispensation of the secret” (Eph.3:9) the coming, or next age, by default. Prior to this late revelation of “the secret”, Paul was teaching a covenant message “to the Jew first and also the Greek” (Rom.1:16). Contemporaneously the Twelve were taking the New Covenant message to the circumcision (Jews, Samaritans and proselytes only). What did these Acts period witnesses have to say about their coming age? Is what they said identifiable with today’s age? If not, then there must be an additional covenant period following the current dispensation. The discussion below shows there must be “more to come” concerning Israel’s covenants.

I have already explained in a previous chapter, **Urgency in Prophecy**, that Gk. *mellō* (“about to be”) often has less to do with immediacy than with what “comes next”. And in some of the “coming age” texts we find the usual verbs “come” (Gk. *erchomai*) and “become” (Gk. *ginomai*), rather than “about to be” (*mellō*), but the sense here is the same. And *ginomai* is itself often translatable as “come”.

First, let us eliminate some texts that are not relevant to the times we are considering. Some of the Gospels-Acts period witness about “things to come” relates back to the types and shadows of the Old Covenant, as pointing to then-current New Covenant realities. Here are a few of these texts –

- “And if you are willing to receive *it*, he himself is Elijah **who *is* about to come**.” – Mat.11:14. In a previous chapter, **Christ in the Old Testament, and the New**, I gave reasons why John the Baptist was only a typical fulfillment of Mal.4:5.

- “Adam, who is a type of **the Coming One**” – Rom.5:14. Thus Christ came as “the last Adam” (1 Cor.15:45).

- "Christ having arrived *as* High Priest of **the coming good things**, by the greater and more complete Tabernacle (lit., 'Tent')" – Heb.9:11. That High Priesthood had begun, "and on account of this, He ***is*** Mediator of a new covenant" (Heb.9:15).

- "For the law having a shadow of **the coming good things**" – Heb.10:1.

- "By faith and concerning **things to come**, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau" – Heb.11:20. Jacob's blessing at Gen.27:28-29 is general enough to apply to later OT times, and is consistent with the blessings of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. But it may also apply beyond both OT times and Gospels-Acts to Daniel's final "seven".

- "Therefore, let not anyone judge you in food and in drink, or in matter of a feast or new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of **the coming things**, but the body is of Christ." – Col.2:16-17. This particularizes the thought above in Heb.10:1. This may look beyond "the dispensation of the secret" to Daniel's final "seven" and what follows it.

The next examples were looking at future events and circumstances from the current perspective of a Gospels-Acts speaker or writer –

- "Who warned you to flee from **the coming wrath**?" Mat.3:7; Luk.3:7.

Comment: There is no warning of wrath for believers of the current "dispensation of the grace of God" (Eph.3:2). Wrath comes as a judgment upon the generations entering the Great Tribulation. On the other hand, our current dispensational relations with God are characterized by grace, the opposite of judgment. "The coming wrath" is not a warning to our dispensation, but it is a warning to others – the Sons of Disobedience (Eph.5:6; Col.3:6) are rebellious, apostatizing Israelites. Was the "wrath of God" spoken of in Eph.5:6 and Col.3:6 fulfilled at AD 70? If so, that would make the current dispensation one of blessing for Gentiles, but a curse for Jews. And that seems to have been the view of many "Christian" anti-Semites for the past two millennia. But it is not the message of the rest of Ephesians and Colossians. Colossians and Philippians (also Titus) are anti-Judaistic-religion as far as Christian practice is concerned, but they are not anti-Israelite. The Christian leadership at the start of our dispensation was largely of Jewish background,

including Paul himself. There is far too much wrath-preaching in the Christian churches today – and too little on the grace of God, which characterizes our dispensation (Eph.3:2). Rather, those Sons of Disobedience, as doers of the unrighteous deeds listed (Eph.5:3-7; Col.3:5-9), will receive wrath like all other "children of wrath" (Eph.2:2-3) at the Judgment Seat. Paul said further, "there is not Greek and Jew" (Col.3:11) where the "one new man" (Eph.2:15) is concerned. Does that make a Christianized Jew not a Jew, while a stubborn, ungospelized Jew is a cursed Jew? I believe that would be a distortion of the gospel message. Remember that Judaistic Christians were Paul's nemesis throughout Acts, and even more so afterwards. These were people who acknowledged Jesus Christ as Savior, but also clung to Mosaic Law – were they accursed too?

- "And whoever says a word against the Son of Man it will be forgiven him, but whoever may speak against the Holy Spirit it will not be forgiven him either **in this age or in the coming one**." Mat.12:32

Comment: If the coming age meant our current "dispensation of the grace of God", then how can God's unforgiveness and grace coexist? They are mutually exclusive. The coming age must be one in which God will be actively judging sin again. Note how this blasphemy had to do with powers of an age to come (see below), such as exorcising demons. Typically, a Jew might be guilty of such blasphemy. So ask yourself, 'Is God judging the Jews during the current dispensation?' I know there are some who would like to think so, but there are also many Christians who have failed to "rightly divide the Word of Truth".

- "…even if they may not receive a hundredfold now in this season – houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields with persecutions, and **in the age which** *is* **coming aionian life**." Mar.10:30

Comment: Worldly things and tribulation now, but next comes aionian life. Are we now in that age (Gk. *aiōn*) of aionian life? Did aionian life begin somehow at AD 70, or before? The suggestion itself is absurd.

- "… who may not get back many more times in this season, and **in the age which** *is* **coming aionian life**." Luk.18:30

Comment: If the coming age in the two previous Gospels texts is the current dispensation, how do you explain it as a time of "aionian life" for Covenant believers? See the next two texts from 1 Timothy (and the Comment below them), written for our dispensation, and the "life" mentioned there is still a future expectation for us. I continue to stand on my interpretation that the "age" indicated by "aionian" is the next, or millennial age. Believers of our dispensation will be alive in resurrection during that age, but we will be "in the heavenlies" ("the things above", Gk. *ta anō*, per Col.3:1-4), rather than New Jerusalem or anywhere on earth. If God has cancelled "the next age", then there will be no Millennium, no new earth, and no New Jerusalem, when the body of Christ appears with our Lord in the heavenlies. Then the prophecies of "new heavens and new earth" went too far, and they should have excluded "new earth". Was this prediction a divine mistake? If no mistake, then who gets the "new earth"? Was not dominion in the earth part of the divine prophecy to Abram (Gen.12:1-3)? Or will the earth revert back to the angels, who preceded mankind here?

- "For bodily exercise is profitable for a little *while,* but piety is profitable for all things, having a promise of **life** which *is* now, and **which** *is* **about to be**."
  1 Tim.4:8

- "treasuring up to themselves a good foundation for **the coming** *time,* so that they may lay hold on **the <u>really life</u>**." 1 Tim.6:19

Comment: In both these texts from 1 Timothy, a future life, that which is "*<u>really</u>* <u>life</u>", was the prize Paul was putting before Timothy. Although we find here some unique expressions of the next life, Paul also spoke of "aionian life" to Timothy (1 Tim.1:16). But these are perspectives from today's "dispensation of the secret", and not from the Acts period.

- "But whenever That One, the Spirit of Truth may come, He will lead you by the whole truth. For He will not speak from Himself, but whatsoever He will hear He will speak. And He will proclaim to you **the coming things**."
  Joh.16:13

Comment: What "coming things" did the Holy Spirit proclaim to the Apostles during Acts? Besides prophetic insights revealed by Peter and John in their Epistles, we have the whole book of Revelation. Also, Paul was gifted with

insights of the future in 1 Cor.15:22-28; 1 Thes.4:13-17; 2 Thes.2:1-12 and many other places. Was "the dispensation of the grace of God" revealed to anyone at any time during Acts? Not at all. For we have it in Eph.3:1-5 – "which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it was now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit" (v.5). So "the coming things" of the coming age that John mentioned in his Gospel have nothing whatsoever to do with today's dispensation. They must be about another dispensation – the Acts period and things yet to come that did not materialize during Acts.

- "But his reasoning concerning righteousness and self-control and **the judgment which** *is* **coming**, Felix becoming frightened, answered, 'For the present go, but sharing an opportunity, I will summon you.'" Acts 24:25

Comment: "The judgment which is coming" would include John the Baptist's "wrath to come" as a judgmental sentence for some. Has that sentence been carried out during this "dispensation of grace"? Could AD 70 have fully satisfied that wrath for Israel, considering that most Jews were widely dispersed throughout the world? And because Paul preached such a judgment to the Roman Felix, would not that judgment have applied to the whole world, and not just Israel? When did this wrath fall upon the whole world? That little scene of destruction in Jerusalem in AD 70 cannot even begin to satisfy such a requirement.

- "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor **things coming** nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other created thing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom.8:38-39

Comment: What "things coming" might be thought to separate a covenant Christian from God's love? The revelation of "the secret"? Surely not. It was the possibility of stumbling during the Great Tribulation that must have worried Christians during Acts. Was AD 70 the Great Tribulation? Well it had some common points, like "Jerusalem surrounded by armies" (Luk.21:20), but did the Roman siege last three and a half years? Did the Man of Sin enter the Holy Place and demand to be worshipped as God (1 Thes.2:3-4)?

- "Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or world or life or death or things present or **things coming** – all *are* yours, and you are Christ's and Christ is God's." 1 Cor.3:22-23

Comment: This is very like the Rom.8:38-39 text above, except it is stated in positive terms, and overlaps some of its elements, including "things coming". What might the "things coming" be? The great resurrection chapter 15 must surely include some of them. And 1 Cor. 15:23 qualifies their resurrection to a great extent – "But each one in his own order – First-fruit Christ, then those of Christ at His *Parousia*." Is His *Parousia* in any way related to our dispensation? Paul's last seven Epistles are silent on the *Parousia* of Jesus, so His *Parousia* has nothing to do with our blessings in the current dispensation. Rightly divide His *Parousia* from your thinking, when you claim your blessings in Christ.

- "and to await expectantly His Son out of the heaven, Whom He raised from the dead ones, Jesus Who is rescuing us from **the Coming Wrath**."
  1 Thes.1:10

Comment: Are "rescue" and "wrath" any part of our gospel today? This 1 Thessalonians text reinforced John the Baptist's warning to the Jewish officials. Later in this same epistle, Paul taught about the expectation for those "remaining until the *Parousia* of the Lord", His descent from heaven, "the trumpet of God", the dead in Christ rising (1 Thes.4:16-17) – all features of the Revelation. Are we today living in the times depicted by the Revelation? You can imagine yourself into the Revelation, if that is your wish – but show me the Scripture parallels between Revelation and Paul's last seven Epistles. "Compare spiritual *things* with spiritual *things*" (1 Cor.2:13) and see what you come up with.

- "For not to angels did He subordinate **the Coming World**, concerning which we speak." Heb.2:5

Comment: No, He subordinated it to a Man, Christ Jesus, and those who will reign with Him. "World" here is *oikoumenē*, the earth as inhabited. Do we now live in an age in which the world of man is subordinated to Christ? To say so would be a great insult to the justice of God. Further, there is no mention of *oikoumenē* in the Epistles of the Secret (Paul's last seven). Therefore, the world today is not "the Coming World" looked forward to during Acts. There must be another world

coming after today's. Then whose world will that be? Where in Scripture is its promise? Its promise is explained through many prophesies of the OT and the Gospels-Acts-period books. I might describe this as myriad points-of-light illuminating what is to come yet, after the current dispensation is completed.

- "For *it is* impossible *to* those once having been enlightened, and having tasted the Heavenly Gift, and having become partners of *the* Holy Spirit, and having tasted a good word of God, and **powers of a coming age**, and having fallen away to renew *them* again to repentance, having crucified again to themselves the Son of God and ridiculing *Him*." Heb.6:4-6

Comment: "Powers" is the plural of *dunamis*, often translated "miracle". Were the spiritual gifts of the Acts period a foretaste of even greater powers today? The Apostles had spectacular healing powers during Acts (e.g., Paul in Acts 19:11-12), but with the change to "the dispensation of the grace of God", Paul could no longer heal (Phi.2:26-27; 1 Tim.5:23; 2 Tim.4:20). "Powers of a coming age" must refer to a different age than ours. So it is still future, or else God has cancelled it. Whose future is described in Hebrews, ours or Israel's?

- "For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek for **the coming one**." Heb.13:14

Comment: Heb.12:22 had previously referred to "city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem", so that must have been "the coming one". Neither a prospective "city", nor any kind of "Jerusalem", is mentioned in Paul's last seven Epistles. Has New Jerusalem been blotted out of the Book? Or have Christians in the dispensation of grace supplanted Israel? Judging by how many individual churches claim "Zion" in their name, a casual observer might think the latter, but what does the Scripture actually *say* about callings and promises of rewards? And do you obey the command, "Be diligent … rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Tim.2:15)?

- "John to the seven assemblies which *are* in Asia. Grace to you and peace from *Him* Who is, Who was and **Who** *is* **coming**…" Rev.1:4

- "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'Who is and Who was and **Who** *is* **coming**, the Almighty.'" Rev.1:8

- "…'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God the Almighty, Who was and Who is and **Who** *is* **coming**.'" Rev.4:8

Comment: Although the order is different in the third text, all three refer to the Coming One, Jesus Christ. Has Christ come to earth and manifested His *Parousia* to the world in the current age? Seeing that His coming will be as hidden as the lightning (Mat.24:27), it cannot have happened yet. Have the events of Rev.19:11-16 been reported in newspaper headlines? If you are going to explain this prophecy away, so as to de-materialize it, I can only imagine what you might do with the Flood narrative, the parting of the Red Sea, and the miracles of Jesus.

Besides these "coming" expectations from the Acts period and prior, there are two similar expectations that *do* relate to the current dispensation –

- "which ('operation of the strength of His might' in the previous verse) He made operative in Christ, having raised Him from *the* dead and having seated *Him* at His right in the heavenlies, up above every principality and authority and power and lordship and every name being named, not only in this age but also in **the coming one**." Eph.1:20-21

Comment: This speaks to the absolute dominion given Christ in the current age, as well as the next. I infer that His seating "in the heavenlies" up above every authority will continue through both these ages. This does not exclude His also having an earthly throne in the coming age – it just does not address such a possibility, because that would have been irrelevant to "the body of Christ". If a business executive can have more than one office, then why should we restrict Christ to one throne? I foresee His having thrones on earth, in New Jerusalem, and in the heavenlies – all concurrently.

- "and raised *us* together and seated *us* together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, so that He might show in **the ages which** *are* **coming** the surpassing wealth of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Eph.2:6-7

Comment: Here it is coming **ages** (pl.) in which God will display His grace and kindness toward us. This statement has the sense of eternity about it. This is somewhat analogous to the Overcomers reigning in New Jerusalem "for the ages of the ages" in Rev.22:5. If there is some "end" to either of these blessings, it is

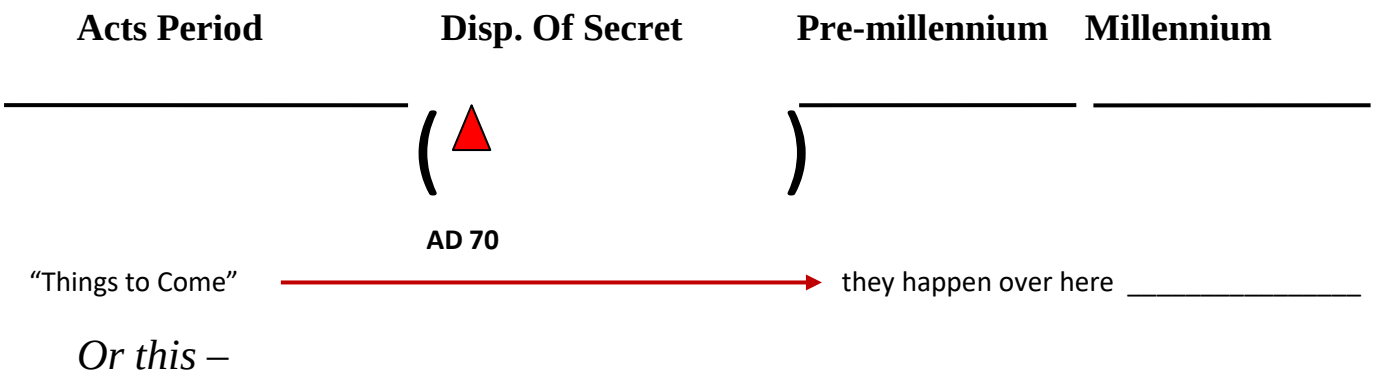
very far off. And knowing the goodness of God, such an “end” would likely be the beginning of even greater blessings in a far distant age.

Christ is seated at the highest authority in Ephesians chapter 1, and we are seated together in (or ‘by’) Him in Ephesians chapter 2. Our reigning with Christ in the heavenlies will be from that pinnacle of authority. I perceive the time extent of that blessing comparable with the time extent of the Overcomers reigning from New Jerusalem, a lesser pinnacle.

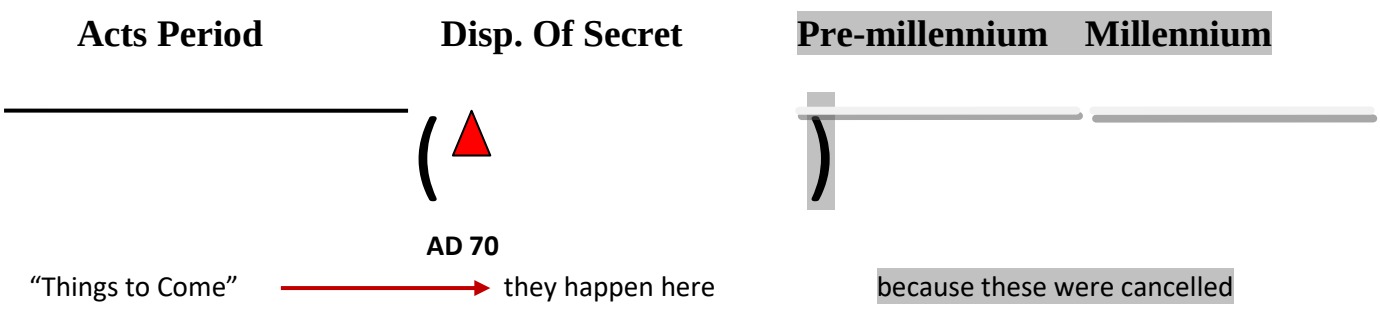
In conclusion, I can find no evidence of a Gospels-Acts declaration of “things to come” being applicable to our present dispensation. Those covenant things just have no place here and now. Since I cannot accept that God has rescinded His word concerning the many things to come which have not happened yet, then they must still be future. The “coming age” as anticipated back then will come after the conclusion of “the dispensation of the secret”, which has acted as a parenthesis in the covenant plans of God.

Here is a graphic depiction of the alternatives.

Either this is true –



Or this –



But I have shown from the abundant Gospels-Acts texts why the second alternative is impossible.

Prophecies for the Dispensation of Grace

Earlier in the book I said I would cover the few prophecies that do apply to the current dispensation. But first I must provide some background –

> "Therefore, then, you (nations) are no longer foreigners and aliens, but you are fellow-citizens of the Holies and householders of God, built up upon **the foundation of <u>the apostles and prophets</u>**, Jesus Christ Himself being Cornerstone, in Whom every building being fitted together increases into a holy sanctuary in *the* Lord, in Whom also you (pl.) are built together for a habitation of God by *the* Spirit." Eph.2:19-22

There are some who see in "<u>the apostles and prophets</u>" a reference back to the Acts period foundation, and even prior to that (i.e., OT prophets). What they fail to understand is that the current church required its own foundation, to get it off the ground. This church is a spiritual sanctuary with its own spiritual foundation – a wholly new building. The twelve apostles of the Acts period gave their names to the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev.21:14), but heavenly Jerusalem is not our sanctuary. We ourselves are the sanctuary of this church. Israel and our "grace" church are *separate* buildings, *separate* creations (Eph.2:15).

Further –

> "And He Himself gave, indeed, **<u>the apostles, and the prophets</u>**, and the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers, toward the mending of the holy ones, for a work of ministry, **for upbuilding the Body of Christ**, until the all of us may arrive at the Unity of the Faith and the recognition of the Son of God, for a perfect man, for a measure of the maturity of the Fullness of Christ."
>
> Eph.4:11-13

These "apostles and prophets", etc. were Christ's initial gifts to the church, the Body of Christ, needed to get it off to a strong start. They were new foundational appointments, not a continuation of Israel's foundation from the past. However, most of these individuals were called out of their Acts-period ministries for this new role. There are no longer any prophets in our day, but our dispensation began with some prophecies.

The specific prophecies in the Mystery Epistles are not as extensive as the covenant prophecies. Here is one of them –

> "And the Spirit says expressly that **in later seasons** some will abandon the faith, holding to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, in hypocrisy of liars, having been cauterized *as to* their own conscience, hindering to marry, to abstain from foods which God created for acceptance with thanksgiving by the faithful and those having recognized the truth." 1 Tim.4:1-3

So our dispensation has in common with the New Covenant the expectation of apostasy. This is an express prophecy attributed to the Holy Spirit for later times. How much later? The Montanist and Encratite heresies of the second cent. AD hindered marriage among their followers, as did the later Roman church for its "clergy". The Manicheans and various ascetic and monastic sects also eschewed marriage. Abstaining from foods could range from keeping religious fasts, practicing vegetarianism (to avoid idol-sacrificed meats), or keeping something akin to Jewish dietary laws. There appeared a variety of these practices even within Paul's time (note Col.2:16-23). Take note that observing Jewish dietary laws within the body of Christ amounts to a "teaching of demons". That is an effect of failure to "rightly divide the Word of Truth" (2 Tim.2:15).

A more futuristic prophecy was this one –

> "But recognize this, that **in last days** difficult seasons will be present, for men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, impious, inhuman, merciless, slanderers, uncontrolled, vicious, not loving good, traitors, reckless, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of piety but having denied its power, even avoid these. For of these are those entering slyly into the houses, and taking captive weak women weighed down with sins, being led by diverse passions, always learning and never able to come to a recognition of truth. And what way Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so also these resist the truth, men corrupted of the mind, disapproved concerning the faith. But they will not advance much, for their folly will be evident to all, as also theirs became."
>
> 2 Tim.3:1-9

"In last days" should take our attention out toward the end of this dispensation. The prophecy is general in scope, and the immoral inventory above is a list of human depravity. We might compare it to the days before the great flood, when "every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" and "the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen.6:5,11, *NKJV*). Another comparison could be "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book." (Dan.12:1, *NKJV*). So the "last days" of 2 Timothy 3 might well dovetail into OT prophetic "last days" of the Great Tribulation. The same Satanic spirit will be at work in the world of these various times, and it is likely that an unbelieving world will miss the dispensational change altogether. The character of the times will flow uninterruptedly where the flesh is concerned.

Next, 2 Timothy 3 continues into the issue of "persecution" –

> "But you followed closely my teaching, manner of life, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, **persecutions**, sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra. Such **persecutions** I endured, and out of all *of them* the Lord rescued me. And also all those desiring to live piously in Christ Jesus **will be persecuted**." 2 Tim.3:10-13

Note how general this prophecy is concerning the future – no "Man of Lawlessness" or any other specific threat. And because Paul was a prisoner at the time of writing 2 Timothy, his rescue at the end must be understood as a rescue from spiritual defeat. This was not a physical rescue, or escape, as so often promised to Tribulation Israel.

Somewhat surprisingly, the "disapproved" teachers will not advance, "for their folly will be evident to all". This is a bit difficult to understand because of the proliferation of "cults" that began as early as the apostolic era and has had a modern revival from the early nineteenth century onward. Although earlier Gnostic and Manichean cults died out long ago, some of their beliefs keep cropping up. Nowadays the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses have shown no signs of dying out. "Evident to all" must be understood as applying to all who have not been "corrupted of the mind". There seems to be a sharp divide here between the

apostate Christian and the faithful Christian who keeps his doctrine rightly divided. This may appear to run counter to "keeping the unity of the Spirit" (Eph.4:3), but with today's proliferation of opposing teachings, ecumenism is just another way of saying "doctrinal leaven".

Another short, prophetic statement is this –

> "… there will be a season when <u>they</u> will not endure the sound doctrine, but according to their own passions they will heap up to themselves teachers, those itching the ear." 2 Ti.4:3

Does that not characterize the post-apostolic period up to the present? It has been true of some who call themselves "Christian" going back to apostolic times – e.g., the various Gnostic sects. The "they" in Paul's statement implies a large bloc of dissenters, and their apostasy was to be expected during Timothy's lifetime. "The sound doctrine" above, like "the unity of the faith" (Eph.4:13), implies a single line of teaching – one truth, not many truths.

The Epiphanies

Within the body of doctrine applying to the church today there is no reference to the *Parousia* of Christ. However, some promises made to the church include an "appearing" (or lit. 'shining forth') of Christ. The Gk. words used are *epiphainō* (verb) and *epiphaneia* (noun). The dispensation of the secret is bounded by a divine "shining forth" at its beginning, and another at its end. The references are all in the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus), and they form one of their unifying themes. This first text covers the whole span of "the dispensation of the secret" –

> "For <u>the salvation-bringing grace of God</u> **<u>appeared</u>** (*epiphainō*) <u>to all men</u>, disciplining us that denying the impiety and the worldly passions, we should live sound-mindedly and righteously and piously **in <u>the present age</u>**, waiting for <u>the happy hope and</u> **<u>appearing</u>** (*epiphaneia*) of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself on our behalf so that He might redeem us from every lawlessness and purify to Himself a people for a possession, zealous of good works." Tit.2:11-14

Note how this one run-on sentence covers from the beginning of "the salvation-bringing grace of God" through "the present age" to its culmination in the **appearing** of Father and Son, when we will be brought into Their glory (Col.3:1-4). God's saving grace did not appear to all men at Christ's incarnation. Nor did it appear through His earthly ministry, because He came only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mat.15:24). Because the gospel of the uncircumcision was given to Paul, some might suppose that his ministry somehow marked that "appearing" (Gal.2:7). There are some who call themselves Acts 9 or Acts 13 dispensationalists to mark this as an early beginning of "the salvation-bringing grace of God … to all men". However, Paul preached to the "Jew first", and "for the hope of Israel" right up to Acts 28:20. After this final confrontation with resisting Jews, Paul declared himself free from preaching foremostly to Jews with this statement –

> "Therefore, let it be known to you that to the nations was sent the salvation-bringing of God and they will hear *it*." Acts 28:28

On this basis, others call themselves Acts 28 dispensationalists, but Acts 28 itself does not reveal the news of the new dispensation. Acts 28:28 is a sort of preview of coming changes. Paul spoke of the new dispensation here –

> "For this reason, I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you, the nations – seeing that you heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which was given to me for you, that **according to revelation He made known to me the secret** (even as I wrote before a little, on account of which you are able reading *it* to comprehend my understanding in the Secret of the Christ), which to other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as **now it was revealed to His holy apostles and prophets** by *the* Spirit." Eph.3:1-5

This "now" moment in the lives of Paul and his fellow-workers must constitute both the beginning of the new dispensation and the **appearing** of Christ that kicked it off. Paul's "as I wrote before a little" is a reference back to Ephesians chapter 1, which launches into this marvelous new truth – such as "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph.1:3).

This church-founding event is further elucidated in –

> "And He Himself gave, indeed, **the apostles, and the prophets**, and the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers, toward the mending of the holy ones, for a work of ministry, **for upbuilding the Body of Christ**…" Eph.4:11-12

These are a new order of "apostles and prophets" and their great unifying purpose was "for upbuilding the Body of Christ" (our 'edification').

Note that when the "salvation-bringing grace of God appeared" (per Tit.2:11-14), it was meant to discipline us "in the present age" – this covers the span of the new dispensation. And there is a subtlety of language in the latter "appearing" in Titus – there is a single definite article before the compound direct object "**the** happy hope and appearing". The implication is that these are intertwined – our happy hope *is* this **appearing**, which will bring us into Christ's heavenly glory.

There is another early epiphany text in Titus –

> "For once we were also foolish, rebellious, being deceived, serving passions and diverse pleasures, living in evil and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of man of our Savior God **appeared** (*epiphainō*), He saved us (not by works which *were* in righteousness which we did, but according to His mercy) by a washing of rebirth and a renewal of holy spirit, which He poured out upon us richly by Jesus Christ our Savior, so that having been acquitted by the grace of That One, we should become heirs according to *the* hope of aionian life." Tit.3:3-7

This text reads so generally, that we might mistake it for Christ's incarnation, or of one's personal acceptance of salvation ("washing of rebirth"). But the meaning of "appeared" in Titus 3 cannot be understood apart from its meaning in Titus 2. The earlier "salvation-bringing grace of God to all men" is summed up here as "the love of man of our Savior God."

And what are we the "heirs" of? Where will our "aionian life" be enjoyed? At the time when Paul was writing to Titus, our inheritance was aptly described here –

> "the wealth of the glory of His inheritance in the Holies" Eph.1:18

These are the heavenly "Holies", even as v.3 spoke of "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph.1:3). And this includes being "seated together in the

heavenlies in Christ Jesus" (Eph.2:6). Again, I infer that our Savior God's **appearing** per Titus 3 is a reference to His initial **appearing** to reveal "the Secret" to Paul, as well as to "the apostles and prophets" of the foundation of this church. But even if this is understood to be our personal acknowledgement of "grace truth", it all *began* with that great post-Acts revelation to Paul, who received it first and acknowledged it first.

A final reference to Christ's early "appearing" is in 2 Timothy –

> "Who (God) having saved us and having called *us* a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before age-times, but now having been manifested by **the appearing** (*epiphaneia*) of our Savior Christ Jesus, having indeed nullified the Death and having enlightened life and imperishability by the gospel, to which I was appointed a herald and apostle and teacher." 2 Tim.1:9-11

This "purpose and grace" given us "before age-times" (Gk. *pro chronōn aiōniōn*) is unique, and it expands upon "the salvation-bringing grace of God to all men". Its aspect "before age-times" is coincident with our election "before world's overthrow" (Gk. *pro katabolēs kosmou*) in Eph.1:4. "Before age-times" is found elsewhere only in Tit.1:2, where (and when) it relates to the promise to us of aionian life. This purpose, grace and promise were ours even before Adam appeared on earth – they were not manifested to mankind (Eph.3:5) until "the appearing" of Jesus Christ – i.e., the announcement of this gospel truth. That can hardly be connected with His incarnation, as there is no mention of our particular blessings in the accounts of the Gospels. It was a later gospel entrusted initially to Paul, then to other apostles and teachers.

The remaining "appearings" of Christ are all futuristic, like this one:

> "Fight the good fight of the faith. Lay hold on the aionian life to which you were called and professed the good profession before many witnesses. I command you before the God Who is giving life to all these things, and Christ Jesus Who witnessed before Pontius Pilate the good profession, you to keep the commandment spotless, without reproach until **the appearing** (*epiphaneia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will show **in its own seasons**, the happy and only Sovereign Power, the King of those reigning, and Lord of those exercising

> lordship, the Only One having deathlessness, dwelling in unapproachable light, Whom no one of men sees nor can see, to Whom be honor and aionian might. Amen." 1 Tim.6:12-16

There is nothing here about His appearing in the clouds or on earth – the whole sphere of description is heavenly. It is from this heavenly vantage that Christ will literally be "the King of those kinging and Lord of those lording" – this is in distinction from His earthly title "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev.19:16). This future appearing will have "its own ('peculiar') seasons" for its unfolding. God has chosen to provide us these few details about it, but we have no equivalent of the Olivet Discourse to guide us.

> The remaining "appearing" texts are in 2 Timothy –
>
> "I fully testify before God and Christ Jesus, Who is about to judge living and dead, even **His appearing** (*epiphaneia*) and His kingdom." 2 Tim.4:1
>
> "*As to the* rest, the Crown of Righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord the Righteous Judge will give me, and not only to me but also to all those having loved **His appearing** (*epiphaneia*)." 2 Tim.4:8

The first text correlates His appearing with His kingdom, and both texts relate to His being Judge. Entrance into "His heavenly kingdom" (Eph.4:18) can only be attained through resurrection. And this resurrection, like the resurrection of covenant believers in 1 Cor.15:51, will include both "living and dead". But note that in 2 Timothy there is no mention of trumpets, or the Lord descending with a shout. Those who fail to rightly divide the Epistles of the Secret from Paul's covenant epistles will be inclined to read the trumpets and His descent into 2 Timothy, nonetheless. But that would be reading into a text what we desire to see there.

I cannot ignore the fact that there are common elements between Acts-period doctrine and church-today doctrine. We will have similar experiences of resurrection. But the covenant faithful will meet the Lord in the air, while we will have already met Him in "the things above" (Gk. *ta anō*) glory at God's right hand

(Col.3:1-4). But here is an interesting passage that may indicate a connection, however tenuous, between the two events –

> "And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy by the breath of His mouth and abolish at **the appearing** (*epiphaneia*) of His *Parousia*." 2 Thes.2:8

The *Epiphaneia* of His *Parousia* at least conveys a suggestion that Christ's future epiphany for us, the Body of Christ, may precede His *Parousia* by no great length of time. There will certainly be a glory in common between these appearings. However, I have already remarked that the word *Parousia* is lacking from Paul's last seven epistles, so His kingly "presence" on earth is not our expectation.

Also noteworthy is Acts 2:20 (following the *LXX* of Joe.2:31) in applying the Gk. adjective *epiphanēs* to the "day of the Lord, the great and **illustrious**". We can infer that the glorious, brilliant character of the Lord's appearings will be the same in the heavenlies, as in the skies above earth. However, the witnesses to these appearings will differ. The heavenly will be witnessed by the heavenly hosts and us, while the earthly will be seen by "every eye" upon earth (Rev.1:7).

Our Reigning

For believers today, Christ Jesus "is about to judge living and dead" for "His kingdom" (2 Tim.4:1). This may suggest a certain abruptness for the close of this dispensation, because some will be taken alive into "His heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim.4:18). Although Christ's dominion will be universal, our part in it will be "in the heavenlies" – thus it is called "His heavenly kingdom". Note that the text, "<u>is about</u> to judge", uses Gk. *mellō*, understood in the sense of "next to come", or possibly "sure to come", rather than "soon to come".

Seeing that we are currently <u>seated together</u> (Gk. *sugkathizō*) in (or 'by') Christ in the heavenlies (Eph.2:6), that speaks to a future reigning for us. That reigning is further described here –

> "Faithful the word – for if we <u>died together</u> (Gk. *sunapothnēskō*), also we <u>shall live together</u> (Gk. *suzaō*). If we endure, also we <u>shall reign together</u> (Gk.

> *sumbasileuō*). If we will deny That One, He will deny us. If we are unfaithful, He abides faithful, for He cannot deny Himself." 2 Tim.2:11-13

This text invites comparison with some others. But first note how the Epistles of the Secret portray the Body of Christ in a most united way. "Be seated together", "die together", "live together" and "reign together" all use the prefix *sun*-, "together with", the strongest of the Gk. "with" prepositions. Now compare this text for the Overcomers of Israel –

> "… but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they <u>will reign with</u> (Gk. *basileuō meta*) Him the thousand years" Rev.20:6

This reigning depicts a weaker association with the King, and literally a reigning "after" ('behind') Him. And where the Lord promised the Overcomer "to sit <u>with</u> Me on My throne" (Rev.3:21) the text again uses *meta* for "with". Apparently a more united reigning will be possible in the heavenlies because of the super-reconciliation (Gk. *apokatallassō*) of heavenly principalities and powers and the earthly Body of Christ (Col.1:20). It is Christ "heading up" (Gk. *anakephalaioō*, *hapax*) "the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth" (Eph.1:10) that has made this unity and this "fullness of the seasons" possible. On earth the Millennium will include both a resurrected and a flesh and blood mankind, and "the Law of Sin and Death" (Rom.8:2) will not have been annulled. Christ will also reign on earth with His court of co-reigners (Overcomers, as His officials). We likely do not understand the full significance of reigning in either sphere, but on earth a "staff of iron" will be part of the equipage for those reigning over millennial earth. But there will be no enemies left to subdue in the heavenlies at that time.

The dying together of 2 Timothy 2 was our death with Christ (Col.2:20; 3:3) and it is an accomplished fact. Therefore, living together is assured. However, it is only the Endurer who will "reign together" ("with Christ" is implied). Note the conditional "if" that begins this reigning statement. This is similar to the prospect for Overcomers in the dispensation of the Millennium. So for the non-Endurer of the Body of Christ there is still the assurance of a blessed "living together", but its circumstances are not spelled out beyond Christ "denying" such a one (his reward

of reigning is implied). There seems to be an analogy here with the “saved as by fire” Christian of the New Covenant. No reward, no inheritance, just life.

I have hoped in reviewing these “things that differ” (Phi.1:10, *YLT*) between Paul’s Secret Epistles and the Acts-period Scriptures to show that any “things to come” anticipated by the Acts period must find their fulfillment in the *resumption* of the Acts period dispensation, and beyond it into the Millennium.

Failure to Rightly Divide

I have made it a practice throughout this study to "rightly divide the Word of Truth". It may prove helpful for some, if I develop this theme a little more. Where does it derive from? It is, indeed, Scriptural –

> "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, an unashamed worker, **rightly dividing** the Word of the Truth." 2 Tim.2:15

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, "be diligent" (imperative mood) is a commandment to Timothy and to us in the current dispensation. The result of such rightly dividing diligence will be divine approval, and no shame at our judgment. But this shows that shame will be possible at that judgment, and it is analogous to a Covenant Christian who is "saved as by fire", and to Daniel 12:2's resurrection "to reproaches, to shame of an age". A judgment of "well done" should be a faithful man's ambition, regardless of dispensation, regardless of God's gracious promises of reward, which differ according to His choosing (election).

"Rightly dividing" in 2 Tim.2:15 is the present participle of Gk. *orthotomeō*, which derives from *orthos* ("straight") and *temnō* ("cut"). Thayer's entry (p.453) for *orthos* includes –

- def. a. "upright",
- while def. b. offers "straight, i.e., not crooked".

Therefore, it seems the *KJV* word-choice "rightly" has conveyed quite well the sense of how one should "cut" or "divide" God's word. The Gk. *temnō* is also a root of the word *peritomē* ('circumcision'), so translating this verb as "handling", as some versions do, digresses too far from the mark to be a good translation.

Although *orthotomeō* is a NT *hapax* word, it is found twice in the *LXX* –

> "Be seeking approval from God with a whole heart, and be not raised up upon your own wisdom. In all your ways make Him known, so that He may **rightly divide** your ways, and your foot may in no wise stumble." Pro.3:5-6 (*LXX* translated)

"Rightly divide" makes ample sense with the choosing of ways, or paths. Paths do sometimes divide ahead of us, and we may be tested in choosing either the correct moral or the correct doctrinal path. Stumbling may result from an improper choice of these ways.

There is also this *LXX* example –

> "Righteousness **rightly divides** blameless ways, but irreverence falls by injustice." Pro.11:5 (*LXX* translated)

These OT examples show that discerning and choosing would be involved in "rightly dividing". Can we find any guidance on applying discernment to our Bible studies?

Here follow some helpful "discernment" texts, and the best of these is this next one –

> "For what man knows the things of the man, except the spirit of the man which *is* in him. Thus also the things of God **no one has discerned** except the Spirit of God. But we received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, so that we might know the things freely given us by God. Which things we even speak, not by *words* taught from human wisdom, but by those taught of *the* Spirit, **comparing spiritual *things* to spiritual *things***. But a natural (lit. 'soulish') man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot know *them*, because they are **spiritually evaluated** (Gk. *anakrinō*, 'examined', or *KJV* 'discerned'). And the spiritual one **discerns** (*anakrinō*) **all these things**, but he himself **is examined** (*anakrinō*) by no one." 1 Cor.2:11-15

"Comparing spiritual *things* to spiritual *things*" is a major first step in "rightly dividing" Scripture. This method uses Scripture to explain Scripture. The "spiritual *things*" (Gk. *pneumatika*) in that phrase may refer back to "the things freely given us by God", or "*words* taught of the Spirit". These two categories of things are not mutually exclusive.

To make these spiritual comparisons, we collect texts using the same or similar words, then evaluate their common spiritual traits or differences. In this way we may draw spiritual conclusions. Most of us apply this method to an extent, just

from analytical habit. But using 1 Cor.2:13 as a first principle of interpretation will get you better results, faster.

There are lots of "soulish" conclusions drawn from Scripture, due to failure to search for God's spiritual meanings. These are arrived at by comparing the "spiritual *things*" to "words taught from human wisdom". If we treat His word in a high-handed manner, as if it were just the vague words of some pious men, we will likely fail to find the right path of interpretation. Unfounded allegorical interpretation fits this mold, and it leads to stumbling in the way.

Decades ago comparative word studies, using Gk. and Heb. concordances, would often take months to accomplish. But now in these modern computerized times, Bible searches using Bible database software, and cut-and-paste word processing, has reduced those months to mere minutes or even seconds. This leaves us today without any excuse for *not* doing comparative studies. Throughout the ages many people have been multi-lingual for practical reasons. Then why should we think that learning a little Greek and Hebrew, to aid our Bible study, is some sort of academic feat?

1 Cor.2:13 is a principal text for guiding interpretation, but a few others will enlighten us also –

> "And He was also saying to the crowds, 'Whenever you may see the cloud rising in the west, immediately you say that a shower is coming, and so it happens. And whenever a south wind *is* blowing, you say that there will be heat, and it happens. Hypocrites! The face of the earth and of the heavens you know **to discern** (Gk. *dokimazō*), but **this season you know not how to discern** (*dokimazō*). And why even from yourselves do you not **judge the righteous *matter***?" Luk.12:54-57

Judging the prophetic season and things relating to righteous conduct are more important than a weather-wariness. My purpose in writing this book has been to raise levels of discernment about prophetic seasons.

There were "varieties of gifts" (1 Cor.12:4) for believers during Acts, and these included "discernment (or 'discrimination', Gk. *diakrisis*) of spirits" (1 Cor. 12:10). Without that discerning gift, an assembly was apt to be misled by a deceiving spirit attempting to pass himself off as the Spirit of Truth. Although we

are not living in the age of such gifts today, we may be misled by our own thinking if we leave the tools of spiritual discernment out of our hermeneutics. We need to "be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (*KJV*, Eph.6:11), as he wages his psychological warfare against the minds of the faithful.

Discernment is also required for right conduct –

> "For everyone who partakes of milk *is* inexperienced with *the* word of righteousness, for he is a baby. But solid food is for *the* perfect (or 'mature'), who on account of the use, **the perceptions** (Gk. *aisthētērion*) having been exercised**, having for discernment** (Gk. *diakrisis*) **both of good and of evil**." Heb.5:13-14

A strongly recurring theme in Hebrews is the striving by "the perfect" for the perfect. Those who remain babies can expect to receive the rewards of babies, including a spiritual milk. If you have persevered with me this far in the book, I assume your preference is for the "solid food" (*KJV*, "strong meat"). I hope I have provided you some spiritual morsels in these pages.

We have already applied the principle of comparison in examining Greek Bible texts that use *orthotomeō*, in order to gain a sense of how to apply it. And now returning to the 2 Tim.2:15 quote above, take note that I underlined "the Word of the Truth". This phrase may sound a bit odd, but it is literally what the Greek says. The presence of both definite articles makes this phrase very emphatic. If it had only said "the word of truth" we could easily apply it to the whole Bible. In 2 Timothy, Paul was urging Timothy to keep some portion of that truth distinct from the rest. Now comparing spiritual *things* with spiritual *things*, here are the only other texts using that same unique phrase –

> "In Whom even you having heard the Word of the Truth, the gospel of your salvation, in Whom even having believed, you were sealed by the Holy Spirit of the Promise." Eph.1:13

> "because of the hope which is stored away for you in the heavens, which you heard before in the Word of the Truth of the gospel" Col.1:5

Note how this expression is found only in Ephesians, Colossians and 2 Timothy – three of Paul's last seven Epistles. Ephesians and Colossians have such remarkably

different teaching from the rest of the Pauline corpus, as to distinguish them as new revelation – that is, distinct from Acts-period doctrine. In fact, many dispensational teachers have come to refer to this pair of Epistles as "the Secret", to distinguish their doctrine from all of the rest. 2 Timothy mostly contains practical instruction, but it has some unique doctrinal phrases like "heavenly kingdom" (*hapax*, 2 Tim. 4:18). Some have disputed whether 2 Timothy was written to us today. But this emphasis on "the Word of the Truth" draws 2 Timothy into doctrinal affiliation with the chief "Secret Epistles", Ephesians and Colossians. And its usage in 2 Tim. 2:15 demonstrates there is more than one major Truth in Scripture, and these must be kept distinct, if we are to understand and apply these truths correctly. Covenant Truth is another distinct truth of Scripture, that applies to earthly families and the Overcomers inheriting Heavenly Jerusalem.

Whenever an infrequent word or expression is found, it should capture our attention and invite comparisons with other words and expressions of a similar nature. How else can we tell whether such things belong together, or should be separated? The fact that "the Word of the Truth" is found in 2 Timothy draws it tightly into the orbit of "the Secret Epistles" (or as some prefer, "Mystery Epistles"), the unique gospel message to us today. Of course, we can gain insights from "all Scripture" (2 Tim.3:16), but the Mystery Epistles are the personal message for the Body of Christ today.

Then again, phraseology similar to "the Word of the Truth" are found here –

> "And He Himself gave, indeed, the apostles, and the prophets, and the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers, towards the Mending of the Holy Ones, for a work of ministry, for the edification of the Body of the Christ, until the all of us may arrive at the Unity of the Faith, so that we may no longer be babies, being wave-tossed and carried about by every wind of the teaching, by the Trickery of the Men, by craftiness for the Scheming of the Error."
>
> Eph.4:11-14

The underlined genitive phrases all use the double article, like "the Word of the Truth" does. "The Mending of the Holy Ones" was required before edification of "the Body of the Christ" could proceed. That mending was the adjustment out of covenant truth into new dispensational truth, fit for "the dispensation of the secret"

(Eph.3:9). "The Unity of the Faith" concerns "the Word of the Truth" being held faithfully by *all* in "the Body of the Christ". Note that it is neither "a unity of the faith", nor "the unity of faith", either of which could mean any old faith-unity. And note also the *contrasts* between "the Unity of the Faith", versus "the Trickery of the Men" and "the Scheming of the Error". All of these expressions are emphatic because every noun has the definite article. There were specific men and certain errors being called to mind here. Given what Col.2:21 and its context say about "you may not touch, neither taste, nor handle", it appears that Paul's long-standing nemesis, the Judaizers, were at work undermining "the Faith" of the recently revealed Secret. These Judaizers had become a sort of establishment Christianity in their day, and they were not going to give up their works-based faith without a fight.

Another piece of guidance, similar to 1 Cor.2:11-15 above, is this –

> "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more **in recognition and every perception** (Gk. *aisthēsis*), for **you to prove the things differing**, so that you may be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ." Phi.1:9-10

Paul's prayer was that they would prove, or test, the things that differ. An alternate translation "to approve the excellent things" is how the *KJV* has handled the Gk. expression *to dokimazein … ta diapheronta*. You can discern how such proving would naturally lead to the approving of the more excellent part. And one can easily deduce from this text, that failing to discern will lead to blame in the day of Christ, when He judges our works.

Quite in this same vein of proving and approving, Paul said later in the same letter –

> "But what things were gains to me these I have considered loss on account of Christ. But on the contrary, I even consider all things to be loss on account of the surpassingness of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, because of Whom I suffered loss of all these things, and I consider *them* dung, so that I might gain Christ." Phi.3:7-8

The previous gains that had become loss to him were all the advantages he had previously enjoyed under the law (vv.4-6). The faith of the Judaizers was clinging

to some of this doctrine. In effect, Paul labeled such a faith as "dung" – and might that not also be the Lord's judgment of our faith, if we fail to rightly divide? So separating oneself from Jewish legalism is one of the great aims of "rightly dividing the Word of the Truth". The multinational Church today is not Israel. Neither is it the Gentile graft into Israel's root (Rom.11:17-18). We practice our faith in a dispensation of "no covenants".

Now let us rightly divide a covenant statement that was similar to Phi.1:9-10 above –

> "And if you are being named 'Jew' and take rest in law and boast in God, and recognize the desire *of God*, and **prove the differing things**, being informed out of the law…" Rom.2:17-18

Even the law was full of differing things, often making distinctions between the clean and the unclean. Thus, some Jews were punctilious about keeping ritually clean, while others neglected weightier matters like "Justice and Mercy and Faith" (Mat.23:23). Jewish covenant Christians of the Acts period were proving "differing things" within the law, but we today need to place ourselves outside of Mosaic Law, which is now itself altogether "the differing things".

This brings us to another key point – contextual study. Although both Romans and Philippians use virtually the same phrase "prove the things that differ", they are applied differently in their contexts. Romans 2 rather reinforces the Lord's teaching in Matthew 23 about hypocrisy in "the weightier *matters* of the law", while Philippians sets aside the ritual law altogether. During the Dispensation of the Secret Paul's legal standing had become as excellent as "dung", by his own estimation. We cannot reconcile Romans with Philippians, nor should we try, as they apply differently to the law. And what is the more excellent choice for us is to remove ourselves from the religion of Judaism – that includes all its modifications during the Acts period: water baptism, laying on hands, foot washing, anointing with oil, Lord's Supper, sabbath-keeping, holy days and the like, which all have their basis in the practices of Judaism. Just look at the contrast of these "do nots" in Colossians 2:

> "Therefore, indeed, let no one judge you in food and in drink, or in matter of feast or new-moon or Sabbaths." Col.2:16

> "If you died with Christ from the elements of the world, why as living in *the* world are you dogmatized – touch not, neither taste nor handle – which are all for corruption in being used, according to the Commandments and Teachings of Men." Col.2:20-22

Do you see how Colossians 2 rightly divides these doctrines – Judaistic covenants from the doctrine of no covenants?

Another aspect of contextual study that deserves mention is the structural analysis of texts. By noting how the language of a text flows, we can recognize similarities and differences that the Holy Spirit uses to reinforce His teaching. I have listed my own use of these structures in **Appendix L: List of Structures**. And the Companion Bible notes are full of these same didactic diagrams. In case you are not familiar with these, *Figures*, p.549, in the article on Parallelism introduces many of them, like this one –

Matt. vi. 19, 20

a | "Lay not up for yourselves **treasures** upon earth,
  b | where **moth and rust** doth corrupt
    c | and where **thieves** break through and steal;
a | But lay up for yourselves **treasures** in heaven,
  b | where neither **moth nor rust** doth corrupt,
    c | and where **thieves** do not break through nor steal."

Some of these can be very complex and quite challenging to search out. I wish I had discerned more of these for this book, and I will try to add to them in future editions.

To treat right division on a grand scale, I will repeat what I was instructed long ago by a teacher of mine. You can divide Bible doctrine into three main divisions: Old Covenant, New Covenant, and No Covenant. Each has its own calling and blessings. Even as the New Covenant revealed "better things" to its adherents than the Old, these "better things" became the more excellent things of the Gospels-Acts dispensation. But now God has revealed a secret, hidden in His "purpose of the ages" (Eph.3:11), with the expectation of our being seated in the heavenlies to

rule there with Christ. This is a calling that is open to all mankind – there is no "Jew first" in our assembly. Despite the excellence of New Covenant blessings in their covenant context, Paul himself chose the non-covenant spiritual blessings in the heavenlies over "the better things" of the book of Hebrews (see Phi.3:7-9).

In general there has been a massive failure in Christendom to rightly divide present things from past things. Thus, on the whole, we have a greatly homogenized, Judaized, covenantal Christianity today. The principal failure of preterism is not a lack of rightly dividing the present dispensation from the past, but thinking that the present dispensation has overridden or wiped out the greater part of unfulfilled covenant prophecies. Regarding that, I would classify my understanding of the Bible as both dispensational (as to the larger distinctions of God's program for mankind) and also covenantal (as to how He has developed His relations with earthly peoples in the past, and will resume them in the future). To treat the current dispensation as an annulment of the covenants is as much an error as believing that the whole Bible teaches nothing but a progression of covenants (Covenant Theology).

Summation

The principal thing that strikes me in the preterist literature is the sloppy translations of certain texts, upon which some of their critical arguments depend. Some of the blame here must fall on the lexicographers and translators who treat certain Greek particles as "untranslatable". One such is the conditional particle *an*, especially in texts like this one –

> "**Amen**, I say to you, 'This generation **may** (not 'will', as in many English versions) in no wise pass away, until maybe (*heōs an*) all these things **may** come to pass." Mat.24:34

Why do the major translations say "will not pass away" for a verb in the subjunctive mood? And they fail to apply conditionality to the preposition "until". And one should note the conditionality in the final verb, which is also a subjunctive. Why did Jesus hold out such a conditional promise concerning His great *Sunteleia* prophecy? Its purpose was to motivate "this generation", which had the potential to undergo the greatest trial ever faced by Israel. In other words, it was a "carrot", like other examples that I cited in the chapter, **The Stick and the Carrot**.

The greater part of OT prophecy alternates between promises of blessings and threats of punishments. Throughout those centuries Israel mostly hung in the balance, receiving either a little good or a little bad from Yahweh. Prophecy was meant to evoke a moral response on the part of Israel and the nations. And prophecy was meant conditionally, which is the sound teaching of Jer.18:7-10, as well as the example of Jonah's prophecy against the Ninevites. Prophecy was never meant to be taken as history written beforehand. However, this conditionality applied to the generation hearing it. Could a prophecy be both conditional and unconditional? Yes, definitely. And that was also the nature of some of the covenants – with Abraham, David, and the New Covenant. God had certain plans for His covenant nation Israel, and He will bring His purpose to fulfillment in spite of their worst apostasies. In one of its darkest days, Israel still had its seven thousand who were faithful to Yahweh (1 Ki.19:18).

The examples of how the Lord Jesus and the Apostles used OT prophecy in

their teaching demonstrated that some of these texts were meant to be interpreted in multiple ways – an immediate circumstance applying to its first hearers, with types and shadows of meaning and even greater fulfillments for later generations. What an early generation failed to do, some future generation would eventually achieve, with God's help.

You might agree with me that a great portion of prophecy remains unfulfilled. So the key question has to be, has God rescinded all of that prophecy? Seeing that God's bedrock covenant concerning Israel is as revocable as His covenant with day and night (Jer.33:25-26), then that proposal is just not tenable. At least, not until day and night cease.

If you believe in the literal Exodus account of the salvation of Israel, why would you allegorize the rest of the prophets when they spoke similar things about the future works of Yahweh? But if you do allegorize the prophets, is that not a case of stretching the territory to fit the map? Your map says all covenant prophecy was completed by AD 70, so you must downplay the prophets to make them fit that conviction.

Then has God replaced His covenants with something better? In one sense the answer is "Yes". Paul, whose spiritual upbringing was in the covenants, saw the great superiority of pressing "toward the goal for the prize of the above-calling (Gk. *hē anō klēsis*) of God in Christ Jesus" (Phi.3:14). For him and others of our dispensation, this calling has superseded the callings of Israel. But is that supersession a permanent replacement of other callings? One could infer it, but only by dismissing the great bulk of unfulfilled covenant prophecy. I submit that a better understanding lies in such OT prophecy as –

> "And I said to her, 'You will remain for me many days. You will not commit harlotry, nor become for *another* man – and also I *will be* toward you. For many days *the* sons of Israel will remain – not a king, nor a prince, nor a sacrifice, nor a pillar, nor an ephod, nor terraphim. Afterward the sons of Israel will turn back and will seek Yahweh their Elohim and David their king. And they will be in awe toward Yahweh and toward His goodness at *the* end of the days."
>
> Hos.3:3-5

Summation

Here we should let Scripture interpret Scripture. We have in Hosea 3 a forecast of times with the people stripped of worship, both idolatry and the true worship. It is also a time without a national identity. It is a prophecy that fits post-AD 70 times very well. Note that there is no hint whatsoever of God doing something else in these times (namely, "the dispensation of the secret"). But it does conclude with the happy note of Israel returning and seeking both God and king "at *the* end of the (many) days." Has God *really* rescinded this happy ending for Israel? Either "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom.11:29, *NKJV*), including the unfulfilled OT promises, or we cannot put our trust in any Biblical promise. Remember, God may withdraw a covenant promise from any given generation, but the promise is sure to some future generation – He will fulfill it in His own good time. To believe anything else is to ascribe to Satan the victory in his contest with God over the chosen Nation. That puts preterism in the same category of belief as "eternal hellfire" doctrine, which is to say – "Satan wins".

Having gone through as much OT and NT prophecy as I have in this study, I realize how difficult it is to compose a prophetic picture that incorporates *all prophecy*. I know that I have left out much of it. And perhaps there are some essential truths in what I have left out, or not gone into as deeply as I might have. There is plenty more spade-work to do in prophetic study. And I have no doubt that others, and particularly the generation of faithful Israel entering the final "seven", will have a better grasp of God's prophetic word than I have presented here.

I will leave you with this final word from an OT prophet –

> "And *the* word of Yahweh came to me to say, 'Son of man, what *is* this, your proverb concerning *the* land of Israel, saying, "The days are prolonged and every vision has failed." Therefore, tell them, "Thus says Lord Yahweh, 'I have laid to rest this proverb, and no longer will they use it in Israel'. For yet say to them, 'The days have drawn near – and the word of every vision.'"'"
>
> Eze.12:21-23

The "every vision has failed" part of this proverb is more or less what preterism teaches about unfulfilled prophecy concerning Israel.

Appendix A: Urgent Expectations of the Gospels and Acts

The principal reason I cannot accept the doctrine of a long pre-millennial "kingdom of the heavens", as taught by Sellers, is that the great majority of "Watch out!" texts, as taught by Jesus, then by His apostles, are looking for the Apostasy, the Tribulation, the *Parousia* of Jesus Christ, His judgments that follow, and a spiritual bounty of blessings during the millennial rest. If anything, this was a time of extreme tension among the faithful. I have attempted to collect the widest possible array of the texts following. With the possible exception of a single ambiguous text, I was unable to discern any "what next?" texts indicating a long period of peace and prosperity in the immediate future – at least not until the time called "Jacob's trouble" is behind them.

> "who showed you to flee from **the coming wrath**?" Mat.3:7; Luk.3:7

> "And now **the ax is laid to the root of the trees**. Therefore, every tree not making good fruit **will be cut off** and **will be thrown into** *the* **fire**." Mat.3:10

> "Whose **winnowing** shovel is in His hand and He will clean out His threshing floor and will gather together His wheat into the storehouse, but **the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire**." Mat.3:12

John the Baptist's prophetic vision was a firestorm of divine wrath, which is to be identified with the Great Tribulation.

> "your reward is great **in the heavens**" – conclusion of the Beatitudes in Mat.5:12 – this must be the New Jerusalem, the reward Abraham looked for (Heb.11:10), and the reward for Overcomers (Rev.3:12) – the time of this reward is millennial, not pre-millennial.

> "and whoever may say, 'Fool!' will be liable to **the Gehenna of Fire**" Mat.5:22

> "and your whole body may not be cast into **Gehenna**" Mat.5:29, 30

"Gehenna" is a feature of end-time (*Sunteleia*) judgment of the wicked.

> "But I say to you, 'Love your **enemies**, and pray for those **persecuting** you.'" Mat.5:44

Persecution, not peace and safety, was the byword for Jesus' disciples. This was not just for the Acts period, because the resumption of Israel's Covenants will pick up where the Acts left off, and move swiftly to "the end".

> "Treasure not up to yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and eating are destroying, and where a thief digs through and steals. But treasure up to yourselves **treasures in heaven** where neither moth nor eating is destroying, and where thief neither digs through nor steals." Mat.6:19-20

"Treasures in heaven" points to the Overcomers' reward in New Jerusalem, but this will be millennial, not pre-millennial.

> "Therefore, be not anxious for the morrow, for the morrow will be anxious of its own. Sufficient for the day *is* **its own evil**." Mat.6:25

The evil day was their expectation.

> "A good tree is not able to make bad fruit, nor a rotten tree to make good fruit. Every tree not making good fruit is **cut off** and is **thrown into fire**." Mat.7:18-19

More fiery judgment in the day of the Lord.

> "And whoever may not receive you, nor hear your words, coming out outside that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. **Amen**, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for *the* land of Sodom and Gomorrah in a **day of judgment** than for that city." Mat.10:14-15; Luk.10:11-15 (Luk.10:12 reads "in that day" – formulaic in OT prophecy – e.g., 20 occs. in *LXX* of Zechariah)

Judgment was their near-to-come expectation.

> "But brother **will deliver up** brother **to death**, and a father a child, and children will rise up against parents and **will kill them**. And you **will be hated** by all on account of My name, but **the one enduring** to *the* end, this one **will be saved**. But whenever they may **persecute** you in this city, **flee** into the other. For

> **amen,** I say to you in no wise may you have completed the cities of Israel, until perhaps **the Son of Man may come**. " Mat.10:21-23

Persecution, treachery, but finally salvation when Jesus Christ comes again to earth. I perceive no sense of intervening centuries of "peace and safety" here.

> "Be not afraid from those killing the body, but *are* not being able to kill the life. But fear rather the One being able to destroy both life and body **in Gehenna**." Mat.10:28

Fiery destruction was to be expected for those not fearing God.

> "Do not suppose that I came to cast peace upon the earth. I came not to cast peace, but **a sword**. For I came to turn a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And the man's **enemies** *will be* those of **his own household**. The one loving father and mother above Me is not worthy of Me. And the one loving son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me. And one who **takes** not **his cross** and follows after Me, is not worthy of Me. The one having found his life **will lose it**, and **the one having lost his life because of Me will find it**." Mat.10:34-39

A time of great peril and suffering would come next, and not centuries of peace and safety, which will be millennial rather than pre-millennial.

> "… and **beggars** are evangelized." Mat.11:5

The poor and beggars will be first in the kingdom, not those trusting in their earthly riches. Peace and plenty were promised to those keeping the covenant of the law (Lev. 26; Deu.28), but they were not the expectation of the faithful who kept Jesus' commandments. A long period of peace and prosperity seems nowhere in sight.

> "Nevertheless, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in *the* **day of judgment** than for you. … Nevertheless, I say to you it will be more tolerable for *the* land of Sodom in *the* **day of judgment** than for you." Mat.11:22, 24

These were warnings to that generation to shape up, because such a "day of judgment" was potentially imminent.

> "Come to Me all those laboring and burdened, and I **<u>will refresh</u>** (Gk. *anapauō*) you. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble of the heart, and you will find **<u>rest</u>** (Gk. *anapausis*) for your lives."
>
> Mat.11:28-29

This is the prospect of the millennial rest, as the citations from Hebrews several pages below attest to.

> "And having answered, He said to them, 'To you it has been given to recognize the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens, but to those it has not been given. For whoever has, to him it will be given and **he will be overflowed**. But whoever has not, **even what he has will be taken away from him**."
>
> Mat.13:11-12

Judgment was the immediate prospect of this generation. Many would lose even the little they had, while others would perish altogether.

> "And the one having been sown upon the rocky places, this is the one hearing the word and immediately with joy receiving the same. But he has not root in himself but is temporary, and **tribulation** or **persecution** having come because of the word, immediately he is made to stumble. And the one having been sown into the thorn-bushes, this is the one hearing the word and the anxieties of the age and the **Love of Wealth** choke the word and it becomes unfruitful."
>
> Mat.13:20-22

Tribulation and persecution will test the faithful, while love of riches will consume some of them. With the theme of prosperity so prominent in OT prophecy (see **Appendix C: The Prosperity (or Disaster) Doctrine**), why does the NT warn against the pursuit of riches? Because it was not the time for that. It was rather a time for vigilance and frugality.

> "Allow both to grow together until the harvest, and in *the* season of the harvest I will say to the harvesters, 'Gather first the **Tares** and bind them into bundles for their **burning up**. But the wheat gather together into my granary. … And the enemy who was sowing them is the devil, and the harvest is *the* **end** (Gk. *sunteleia*) **of** *the* **age**, and the harvesters are angels. Therefore, even as the **Tares** are gathered and **are burned up by fire**, thus it will be at **the end**

> (*sunteleia*) **of the age**. The Son of Man will send out His angels and will gather out of His kingdom all the causes of stumbling, and those working the lawlessness. And He will throw them into **the Furnace of Fire**. There will be **the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth**." Mat.13:30, 39-42

The Furnace of Fire, and the Gehenna of Fire, both speak to a fiery (i.e., destructive, purgative) judgment coming upon Israel – definitely *not* centuries of peace and safety in a pre-millennial kingdom.

> "Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a dragnet having been thrown into the sea, and *it was* gathering up from every sort, which when it was filled, their having drawn *it* upon the shore and having sat, they gathered the good into containers, but **the worthless they threw away**. Thus it will be at **the end** (Gk. *sunteleia*) **of the age**. The angels will come out and separate the wicked from the midst of the righteous, and **they will throw them into the Furnace of Fire**. There will be **the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth**." Mat.13:47-50

This is more judgment and punishment.

> Feeding the 5,000 in Mat.14:16-21. Feeding of the 4,000 "in the wilderness" in Mat.15:32-38.

These feasts in the wilderness were previews of the **Hidden Manna** for those who will escape into the wilderness during the Great Tribulation (Rev.2:17; 12:14).

> "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, **let him disown himself**, **take up his cross**, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life **will lose it**, but whoever may lose his life because of Me **will find it**. For what will a man be profited, if he should gain the whole world, but **may forfeit his life**, or what will a man give *as* an exchange for his life? For the Son of Man **is about to come** in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He **will render to each according to his practice**. **Amen**, I say to you, 'There are some of those having stood here who may in no wise taste death until perhaps they may see the Son of Man **coming in His kingdom**."
>
> Mat.16:24-28, also Mar.8:38-9:1

Testing, then judgment at the coming of the Lord, and potentially in the lifetimes of those who heard Him.

> "**Woe** to the world because of the causes of stumbling, for *it is* necessary for the causes of stumbling to come. Nevertheless, **woe** to the man through whom the stumbling comes. And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw *it* from you. It is good for you to **enter into Life** crippled or lame, rather than having two hands or two feet to be **thrown into the Aionian Fire**. And if your eye causes you to stumble, pull it out and throw *it* from you. It is good for you to **enter into Life** one-eyed, rather than having two eyes to be **thrown into the Gehenna of Fire**." Mat.18:7-9; Mar.9:42-49 (v.49, "everyone will be **salted with fire**")

This message of "Woe" was not a prelude to the peace and safety of a pre-millennial kingdom. This was a warning of testing and judgment.

> "And his master having been angry, he **delivered him up to the torturers** until he should render all that is being owed. **Thus also My heavenly Father will do to you**, if each may forgive not his brother from your heart." Mat.18:34-35

A time of judgment and pay-back was coming next.

> "And **behold**, one having approached said to Him, 'Teacher, what good shall I do in order that I may have **aionian life**?' But He said to him, 'Why do you ask me concerning the good? The good is one. And if you desire to **enter into Life**, keep the commandments.' … Jesus said to him, 'If you desire to **be perfect**, go, **sell your possessions and give to the poor**, and you will have **treasures in** *the* **heavens**. And come, follow Me.'" Mat.19:16-17, 21

Note the distinction between life in the coming *aiōn* and treasures in that *aiōn*. Again, seeking to lose one's earthly possessions and becoming poor in that regard would yield heavenly treasures (New Jerusalem) in the *aiōn*. This is not a picture of pre-millennial earthly plenty.

> "And Jesus said to them, '**Amen**, I say to you, that you having followed Me, **in the regeneration**, whenever the Son of Man **may sit upon** *the* **throne of His glory**, even you will sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or fields because of My name, will receive a hundred-fold and **will inherit aionian life**.

> But many first *will be* last, and last first.'" Mat.19:28-30; Mar.10:30 ("**in the age, the coming one**")

This seating upon the throne of His glory is consequent upon **His coming** in Mat.25:31. Jesus' *Parousia* is in view here.

The Lukan variant of this reads –

> "And He said to them, '**Amen**, I say to you that there is no one who has left house or wife or brother or parents or children because of the kingdom of God, who may in no wise get back many times more in this season, and **in the age which** *is* **coming**, **aionian life**.'" Luk.18:29-30

How did they get back many times more "in this season"? Luke was anticipating the Acts period in various ways in his Gospel, and this was a forecast of that period. Insofar as the Apostles had wealth laid at their feet for distribution to others, this phrase was fulfilled (Acts 4:34-35). And in the same sense that Jesus declared "behold, My mother and My brothers" (Mat.12:49), so the Apostles received a great family of faith as they preached and converted fellow-Israelites. The "coming" or "next" age would be the *Aiōn* of the Millennium.

> "He says to them, '**You will, indeed, drink My cup**, but to sit at My right and at *My* left is not Mine to give, but it is for whom it has been prepared by My Father." Mat.20:23

First comes suffering (tribulation – the "cup"), then the reward of reigning with Him, which will be millennial. One wonders about other candidates for Jesus' right and left hand – Moses and Elijah, or the Two Witnesses of Rev.11:3-12? The Twelve were offered twelve thrones for judging the twelve tribes – these must be flesh and blood Israel, necessitating the twelve thrones and Christ's throne to be on earth. This will begin at His *Parousia*.

> "But the king having come in to observe those seated, he saw there a man not clothed with a wedding-cloth. And he says to him, 'Friend, how did you enter here not having a wedding-cloth?' But he was silenced. Then the king said to his servants, 'Bind him foot and hand. **Throw him out into the Outer Darkness**.' There is **the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth**. For **many are called, but few chosen**." Mat.22:11-14

The judgment of the murderers (death) in this parable was far worse than that of the unprepared guest (humiliation and exclusion). The "chosen" are also "called", but they are fewer in number – this will be the case of those with Jesus at His *Parousia*, who will be "called *and* chosen *and* faithful" (Rev.17:14).

> "**Woe** to you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut the kingdom of the heavens in front of the men. For you enter not, neither do you let those entering to enter. **Woe** to you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, because you go around the sea and the dry land to make one proselyte, and whenever it comes, you make him more double a **son of Gehenna** than yourselves."
>
> Mat.23:13-15

More fiery woe threatened – this is the day of the Lord.

> "Snakes. Offspring of vipers. How will you flee from **the judgment of the Gehenna**? On account of this, **behold**, I am sending to you prophets and wise ones and scribes. From them you **will kill and crucify**, and from them you will **whip in your synagogues** and **persecute from city to city**. So that **may come upon you** all righteous blood being poured out upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous up to the blood of Zachariah, son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. **Amen**, I say to you, all these things will come upon **this generation**. **Jerusalem, Jerusalem**, who is killing the prophets and stoning those sent to her. How often did I desire to gather up your children, which way a hen gathers up her chicks under the wings, and you would not. **Behold**, your **house** is left to you **deserted**. For I say to you, you may in no wise see Me from now on, until you may say, "Blessed, **the One coming** in the name of the Lord.'" Mat.23:33-36.

"This generation" condemned as "Jerusalem, Jerusalem" was the ruling elite – it was their house that would be emptied. This was foreshadowed at the AD 70 re-conquest of Jerusalem, but the greater emptying of their house will come just before His *Parousia*. I have pointed out previously how the crowd had already shouted the closing doxology (Mat.21:9). At its second utterance, Jesus will be recognized as Son of God with the reverence due Him. This will come after another pouring out of the righteous blood of Overcomers during Daniel's last half-seven, followed by His Parousia.

"And His sitting upon the Mount of the Olives, the disciples approached Him privately, saying, 'Tell us when these things will be and what is the sign of **Your *Parousia*** and **end-time** (*Sunteleia*) **of the age**?' And having answered, Jesus said to them, 'Beware, that not anyone **may deceive** you. For **many will come by My name, saying, "I am the Christ,"** and they **will deceive many**. And you will be about to hear of wars and reports of wars. See, *but* become not alarmed, for it must come to pass, but **the end** is not yet. For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be **famines and earthquakes in places**. But all these *are* a **beginning of birth-pains**. Then they **will deliver you up to tribulation** and they **will kill you**, and **you will be hated by all the nations on account of My name**. And then **many will be made to stumble**, and they **will deliver up one another** and they **will hate one another**. And many false-prophets will arise and they **will deceive many**. And on account of **the lawlessness increasing**, **the love of the many will grow cold**. But the one having endured **to** ***the*** **end**, this one **will be saved**. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed in the whole habitable-world for a witness to all the nations, and then will come **the end**. Therefore, whenever you may see **the Abomination of Desolation**, which was spoken by Daniel the prophet, having stood in *the* holy place (the one reading, let him understand), then those in Judea **let them flee** into the mountains. The one on the housetop, let him not descend to take the things from his house. And the one in the field, let him not turn back behind to take his clothing. But **woe** to those having *a child* in *the* womb, and those nursing in those days. And pray that your flight may not come *in* winter, neither on a sabbath. For then will be **great tribulation such as has not come since world's beginning**, until the present, neither may *it* in any wise come *again*. And **except those days were cut short, perhaps all flesh was not saved**, but on account of the chosen, **those days will be cut short**. Then if anyone may say to you, 'Behold, here *is* the Christ, or here,' do not believe *it*. For **false-christs and false-prophets will arise** and will give **great signs and wonders**, so as **to deceive**, if possible, even the chosen ones. **Behold**, I have foretold *it* to you. Therefore, if they may say to you, 'Behold, he is in the desert,' go not out – 'Behold, in the inner-room,' believe *it* not. For just as the lightning comes out from *the* east and shines up to *the* west, thus will be **the *Parousia*** of the Son of Man. Wherever the corpse may be, there the eagles will be gathered together. And **immediately after the**

> **tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened and the moon not give its light, and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken**. And then **the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven**, and then all the tribes of the earth will wail, and they will see **the Son of Man coming upon the clouds of the heaven, with power and much glory**. And He will send forth His angels with a **great trumpet-blast**, and **they will gather together His chosen ones**, from ends of heavens up to the ends of them." … "**Amen**, I say to you that this generation may in no wise pass away until perhaps all these things may come to pass."
>
> Mat.24:3-31, 34, sim. in Mark 13; Luke 17, 21

If a multi-century pre-millennial kingdom were next on God's agenda, why would the Apostles be leaping over such a prolonged period to ask about His *Parousia*? Further, why would Jesus answer such a question, if it were out-of-place? He refused to answer their kingdom question at Acts 1:6-8, so it seems obvious that He would give them to know only what they needed to know in order to get their current task done. Part of that work was *potentially* to shepherd believing Israel through the Great Tribulation until "the end".

> "For just as the days of Noah, thus will be **the *Parousia* of the Son of Man**. For as they were in those days which *were* before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until what day Noah entered into the ark. And they realized not until the flood came and swept away everyone, thus even will be **the *Parousia* of the Son of Man**. Then two will be in the field. One is taken and one is left. Two (women) *will be* grinding at the mill. One is taken and one is left. Therefore, **watch** (imper.), because **you know not what day your Lord comes**. But know this, that if the householder had known what watch the thief comes, he would keep awake and would not allow his house to be broken into. Because of this, even you **become** (imper.) **prepared**, because **in what hour you suppose not**, **the Son of Man comes**." Mat.24:37-44; Mar.13:33-37 (v.37 adds, "what I say to you, I say to all, **Watch** (imper.)"); a parallel passage in Luke 21 adds this:
>
> "For as **a snare** it will come upon all those sitting upon *the* face of the whole land. And **watch** (imper.) **in every season**, praying that you may have strength

> **to escape** all these things which are about to come, and **to stand before the Son of Man**." Luk.21:35-36

Why did He give these commands on watchfulness, unless the *Parousia* were imminent? And His tribunal? The Parable of Ten Virgins (Mat.25:1-13) followed the Olivet prophecies, and it provided an object lesson on watchfulness for the Bridegroom's coming.

> "Who then is the faithful servant and wise, whom the master appointed over his household, to give them the nourishment in season? Happy that servant, whom, his **master <u>having come</u>**, he will find thus doing. **<u>Amen</u>**, I say to you that **he will appoint him** over all his possessions. But if that evil servant should say in his heart, 'My master delays,' and he should begin to beat his fellow-servants, and he should eat and drink with those being drunk, the master of that servant **<u>will come</u>** in a day which he does not expect, and in an hour which he does not realize. And he will **cut him in two**, and **he will appoint his share** with the hypocrites. There will be **the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth**."
>
> Mat.24:45-51

The Master "<u>will come</u>" and judge, unexpectedly for some of His servants. Would a misbehaving servant last very long in any kingdom, and a pre-millennial kingdom in particular? Note how the master <u>comes</u> suddenly and judges such a one. Will Christ be making appearances throughout a pre-millennial kingdom to weed out such bad actors – i.e., well before His *Parousia*? No, there is no compelling reason to interpret this as a prolonged, episodic judgment of unworthy servants – they will be judged and expelled speedily and summarily at Christ's *bēma* at Millennium's start. To believe in a pre-millenniual kingdom at this time would be equivalent to saying, "my Master delays," and it could well be fatal for anyone believing this.

The one ambiguous exception, possibly indicating a long-delayed coming, is found in the Parable of the Talents –

> "And ***<u>after much time</u>*** **the master of those servants <u>came</u>**, and he <u>settles account</u> with them." Mat.25:19

The settling of accounts points to judgment and rewards. This "after much time" (*meta polun chronon*) is not specified, but a similar, comparative use of the Greek expression at Acts 18:20 has the Ephesian Jews requesting Paul to stay "for a longer time" (*epi pleiona chronon*) – i.e., longer than the hours he had already spent there. In the *LXX* of Job 12:12, "by much time (*en pollō chronō*) *is* wisdom" can only mean a portion of an adult lifetime, but this would vary from man to man. Because Daniel and Revelation point to a final seven years for "this age", it may point to the extended time-frame (about 30 years) of the Acts period. However, I think no firm conclusions about time-span can be drawn from Talents, but the parable's conclusion shows the overriding expectation was the Judgment Seat of Christ at His coming –

> "For to everyone having, it will be given, and he **will be overflowed**. And to the one not having, **even what he has will be taken away from him**. And the worthless servant **cast out** (imper.) **into the Outer Darkness**. There is **the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth**. And **whenever the Son of Man may come in His glory**, and all the angels with Him, then **He will sit upon the throne of His glory**." Mat.25:29-31

The judgments from that Seat of Christ will include the sheep and goat nations–

> "Then the King will say to those at His right, 'Come, those blessed of My Father, **inherit the kingdom** prepared for you since *the* overthrow of *the* world.'" Mat.25:34

and –

> "Then He will say even to those at *the* left, 'Go away from Me, **the cursed**, **into the Aionian Fire** which has been prepared for the devil and for his angels.' … And these will go away into **aionian pruning**, but the righteous ones into **aionian life**." Mat.25:41, 46

This inheriting of the kingdom presupposes resurrection (1 Cor.15:50), and resurrection follows His *Parousia* (1 Th.4:15-16). Note that "the cursed" will be judged based on their lack of charitable deeds toward Jesus' brothers, Israelites. Murder, robbery, adultery, idolatry, and similar crimes do not even enter into it. "Pruning" is the literal meaning of the Gk. *kolasis*, and what is pictured here is a

hemming in of their freedom during the *Aiōn* of the Millennium. The Aionian Fire will have a purging effect on these, much as we might picture it for the "saved as by fire" saints of 1 Cor.3:15. They will suffer loss, and will not enjoy that overflowing that comes to the righteous. If you saw your fellow-servants honored, while you were being humbled, that might be cause for some weeping and gnashing of teeth, would it not?

> "But I say to you, 'I will in no wise drink from now on out of this, the harvest of the grapevine, until that day whenever **I may drink it with you new in My Father's kingdom**." Mat.26:29, and its Lukan parallel –
>
> "For I say to you that I may in no wise eat it until whenever **it may be fulfilled in the kingdom of God**. … For I say to you that I may in no wise drink from now on from the harvest of the grapevine until **the kingdom of God may come**." Luk.22:16, 18

These can only be fulfilled on earth, and a future Passover feast is indicated here. From this perspective, the kingdom of God will be in force when His personal presence is the experience of His people on earth.

> "Jesus says to him (Caiaphas), 'You said *it*. Nevertheless, I say to you, 'From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at *the* right of the Power, and **coming upon the clouds of the heaven**.'" Mat.26:64

Jesus spoke this to His enemies. Later, some of His followers did see Him again before His ascension, but not the Jewish leadership. There was a *potential* for His coming during that generation – thus His words to the high-priest.

> "And He said to them, 'Going into the whole world, proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. The one having believed and having been baptized will be **saved**, but the one not having believed will be **condemned**.'" Mar.16:16

This salvation will be through fire, to be preserved for kingdom ("aionian") life – that is, Tribulation, then millennial blessings.

> "And a certain one said to Him, 'Lord, *are there* few who are **being saved**?' And He said to them, 'Struggle to enter by the narrow gate, because many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be fit. From when the householder may

> have arisen and may lock the door, then you may begin to stand outside and to knock on the door, saying, "Master, open to us." And having answered, he will say to you, "I know you not, from where you are." Then you will begin to say, "We ate before you and drank, and in our plazas you taught." And he will say to you, "I have not known you, from where you are. Get away from me, all workers of injustice." There will be **the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth**, whenever you should see **Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God**, but you **being thrown out outside** *it*. And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and they will be **seated back in the kingdom of God**. And, **behold**, **there are last ones who will be first ones, and there are first ones who will be last ones**.'"
>
> Luk.13:23-30

The Weeping and the Gnashing, and the high and mighty leaders of Israel tumbling to last place will be the result of divine judgment, but this is dependent upon Christ's *Parousia*. And some of those expecting to gain entrance to the kingdom will not be admitted. There will be some who think they can get into the kingdom by a sort of salvation by association – being associated with the cities where Jesus preached, or being sons of Abraham by flesh. Abraham's expectation was the city, New Jerusalem (Heb.11:8-10). But will he have to wait another (extended) lifetime (during a centuries-long premillennial kingdom) before receiving it? That is not what this text says to me.

> "But whenever you may make a banquet, call poor ones, crippled, lame, blind. And happy you will be, because they have not *means* to repay you, for **it will be repayed you at the resurrection of the righteous** (just)." Luk.14:13-14

Therefore, resurrection will be the time of rewards. And the former resurrection will occur at His *Parousia* (1 Th.4:16).

> "Therefore, thus, every one of you **who does not give up all his own possessions cannot be My disciple**. Therefore salt is good, but if even the salt should become tasteless, by what will you season *it*? Neither for land, nor for dung-hill is it suitable. They **throw it out**. One having ears to hear, let him hear." Luk.14:33-35

The high price of discipleship, and I would add of being an Overcomer, will be to give up practically all that is of the earth. For some, this will mean their very lives during the Great Tribulation. The great focus of Gospels-Acts was on the rewards for the Overcomer, and I have suggested throughout this book that for them an early access to New Jerusalem seems indicated. That access makes their reward a circumstance of the Millennium, not of a pre-millennial kingdom.

> "And should not God in any wise **perform <u>retribution</u>** (Gk. *ekdikēsis*) for His chosen ones, who are crying out to Him day and night. And He will be patient with them. I tell you that **He will make their <u>retribution</u>** (*ekdikēsis*) **<u>with speed</u>**. Nevertheless, **the Son of Man <u>having come</u>**, will He even find the faith upon the earth?" Luk.18:7-8

Concerning this "<u>retribution</u>", which is literally an "outworking-of-justice", Luk.21:22 adds "these are days of <u>retribution</u> (Gk. *ekdikēsis*) to fulfill all things which have been written". That is a very broad statement. Luke chapter 21, like Matthew 24, lists components of the end-time (*Sunteleia*) judgment. The "<u>with speed</u>" (*en tachei*) aspect of this retributory (settling of accounts) judgment is a phrase that is common in the Revelation, used to describe the swiftness of the events that John recorded there. The last half-seven of the Great Tribulation will pass swiftly, compared to a man's lifetime. "Retribution" is an aspect of Christ's *bēma* at His *Parousia*, after He <u>has come</u>.

Parable of the Ten Minas in Luk.19:12-27 (cited in full, in the chapter **Parable as Prophecy**) is excerpted here –

> "Therefore, He said, 'A certain well-born man went into a distant country **to receive for himself a kingdom and to return**. And having called ten servants of his, he gave them ten minas and said to them, "Trade, until when **I <u>come</u>**." But **his citizens hated him** and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We do not want this one to reign over us." And it came to pass **at his return**, **having received the kingdom**, that he spoke, to summon to him these servants to whom he had given the silver, so that he might know what they profited."'" vv.12-15 ….. "I say to you that to everyone who is having, **it will be given**. But from one not having, **even what he has will be taken away**. Nevertheless,

> those enemies of mine, who were not wanting me to reign over them, bring here and slay them before me." Luk.19:26-27

The truth behind this parable is most evident – Jesus was the nobleman who went to heaven to receive a kingdom. At His coming again, there will be a reckoning, a judgment. The lesson of Ten Minas was an end-time expectation. But, are we rather to consider the trading time of the servants to be the pre-millennial kingdom? Will they be "trading" for a half-millennium while waiting for their King to come? Will His citizens be hating Him, also for that half-millennium? These activities of servants and citizens just do not fit well with Sellers' presumed 500-700 year kingdom. And note how the end-point in the story is the judgment of servants and citizens at the King's coming – this *must* be His *Parousia*.

> "Because days will come upon you, and **your enemies** will throw alongside you a barricade, and they will surround you, and they will hem you in on all sides. And they will level you and your children within you, and they **will not leave a stone upon a stone in you**, because of when you recognized not the season of your oversight ('visitation')." Luk.19:43-44

While this judgment does seem to anticipate the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem – and note here that it was Jerusalem He was weeping over – the "will not be left a stone upon a stone" part (repeated later against the Temple in 21:6) was not fulfilled then. Much of the city was destroyed, but not so wholly as the Temple was. Some would explain this as the figure *hyperbole*, but that would make Jesus' prophecy rather bombastic, in my judgment. I think a literal fulfillment must come at a future time. Such a time will not be a season of pre-millennial "peace and safety", but of turbulence, war and tribulation.

> "But you are those continuing with Me in My trials. And I appointed to you a kingdom, even as My Father appointed to Me, so that **you may eat and you may drink at My table in My kingdom**. And **you will sit upon thrones, judging** the twelve tribes of Israel." Luk.22:28-30

This kingdom table was appointed for twelve judges, and it will be earthly. But this is a millennial expectation (Rev.20:4), *after* their "trials" of the Great Tribulation are over. That they will eat and drink at the Lord's table in His kingdom implies an

earthly feast, with the Lord also present. This will be at His *Parousia* with His bench of twelve judges.

> "But turning, Jesus said to them, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. Because, **behold**, days come in which they will say, "Happy the barren and the wombs not giving birth, and breasts which nursed not." Then they will begin to **say to the mountains , "Fall upon us."** And to the hills, **"Hide us."**'" Luk.23:28-30

On the face of it, Jesus' statement could have been a warning of the pending AD 70 disaster. However, when we search and compare, the only other occurrence of "Fall upon us" spoken to mountains is in Rev.6:16 during the Great Tribulation. Rev.6:16 also says "Hide us", but uses Gk. *kruptō*, instead of the *kaluptō* used here in Luke. Even as Luke chapters 19 and 21 showed, the potential for the full disaster of the Great Tribulation was there at that time. I can find no basis for a prolonged period of peace in any of Jesus' prophetic warnings.

> "And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me whenever You may **come into your kingdom**.' And He said to him, '**Amen,** I tell you today, you will be with Me **in the Paradise**.'" Luk.23:42-43

Coming into His kingdom will include access to Paradise for the Overcomer (Rev.2:7). Therefore, His "coming into" His kingdom and the Millennium are equivalent because that is when the Overcomer will receive his rewards. Apparently Jesus meant to convey that this thief was an Overcomer. If it were otherwise, why did He jump over a pre-millennial reward, to tell the thief what would happen after those 500-700 years of the pre-millennial kingdom? If a pre-millennial kingdom were that important in the purposes of God, it ought to have had some fanfare in the word of God. To state categorically that "the kingdom of the heavens" and "the kingdom of God" are everywhere the same as the pre-millennial kingdom, and just leave it at that, is to ignore the many details that show these expectation texts were dealing with the Tribulation, the *Parousia* of Christ, the Overcomer, judgments and heavenly rewards.

> "**Amen**, **amen**, I say to you that the one hearing My word and believing the One having sent Me, **has aionian life**, and he comes **not into judgment**, but he **has crossed over from Death into Life**. "**Amen**, **amen**, I say to you that an

> hour comes **and now is**, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and **those having heard will live**. For even as the Father has life in Himself, so also He gave the Son to have life in Himself. And He gave Him **authority to execute judgment**, because He is Son of Man. Marvel not at this, because an hour comes in which all those in the graves will hear His voice. And they will go out, those having done the good things into a **resurrection of life**, but those having practiced the worthless things into a **resurrection of judgment**."
>
> Joh.5:24-29

These two types of resurrection appear to be those of Dan.12:1-2, as I discussed in the chapter, **Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?** But this is "the prior resurrection" (Rev.20:5-6; 11:18) of "all those in the graves" and it forms part of His *Parousia*. And it comes at the end of the age. Paul placed the resurrection change at Christ's *Parousia*, not centuries before it (1 Th.4:15-17). That also puts it after a colossal distress, described in terms of "a great tribulation such as has not come since world's beginning until the present" (Mat.24:21).

> "I have come in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me. **If another should come in his own name, that one you will receive**." Joh.5:43

This was a veiled reference to the Beast and the False-Prophet, who will appear and be active during the final "half-seven", also known as the Great Tribulation.

> "and I will **resurrect** him (or 'it') **at the last day**" Joh.6:39, 40, 44
> "that will **judge** him **at the last day**" Joh.12:48

These occurrences of "the last day" are the same as "the end", when He comes back to raise the former resurrection and to judge living and dead at the start of the Millennium.

> "In the house of My Father are many dwellings, and if not I would have told you, that I go to **prepare a place for you**. And if I should go and prepare a place for you, **I come again** and will receive you to Myself, that **where I am, even you may be**." Joh.14:2-3

There is some ambiguity about these details – "the house of My Father" and "dwellings" (Gk. *monē*). The Father's "house" would seem to be His kingdom, and the "dwellings" would indicate special places in the kingdom. Seeing that Jesus

will "come again" to "receive" them, the promises here are at the *Parousia* and during the Millennium, with "reservations" having been made beforehand. John is the only Biblical author using Gk. *monē,* ("dwelling") and its only other occurrence is instructive –

> "… 'If anyone may love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and **we will come to him**, and **we will make a dwelling** (Gk. *monē* **) beside him**." Joh.14:23

Here God does the dwelling. Note that both Father and Son "will come" to such a one. Father and Son dwelling "beside" (Gk. *para*) him conveys the sense of being dealt with as an equal. The middle portion of John's Gospel is full of these relationship statements – between Father and Son, and between men and God. The Son's coming in this text must be the prelude to His *Parousia*.

> "Yet a little *while* and the world sees Me no longer, but you see Me. Because I live, **you will live also**. In that day you will realize that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." Joh.14:19-20

"That day" will be a day of their living, their resurrection-day. This was the great blessing-expectation of the Overcomers of that generation – "the prior resurrection" of Rev.20:5-6 at Christ's *Parousia* on earth.

> "Peace I leave to you, My peace I give to you. Not according as the world gives, do I give to you. **Let not your heart be troubled, neither be afraid**." Joh.14:27

This is not the universal "peace and safety" of an unopposed pre-millennial kingdom, but the peace of Christ making His servants fearless in the face of trial, opposition, persecution and tribulation.

> "I go away, and **I come to you**." Joh.14:28

Like the rest of John 14, this "coming" is the Lord's *Parousia*. I am ruling out the intermediate death and resurrection of Jesus as the meaning here, as His resurrection is nowhere called His "coming". This fourteenth chapter is full of the expediency of Jesus' departure to heaven, in order to send the Holy Spirit, the

Encourager. So by context, His coming to them would necessarily follow such a period of their encouragement, the Acts period.

> "Every branch in Me not bearing fruit He **takes it away**. And every one which *is* bearing fruit, He **cleanses** (i.e., prunes) so that it may bear more fruit."
>
> Joh.15:2

This is a pithy statement. Jesus is the Vine, and His followers the branches. Some are unfruitful and taken away. How this is accomplished is explained in the next example. It adds to Paul's statement about the "saved as by fire" Christian. And it could be the Great Apostasy that this speaks to, as well. It would seem that the pruned fruitful branches will bear more fruit – probably the result of the same persecution that causes the unfruitful to be taken away. These unfruitful ones will be the "stony ground" hearers of Mat.13:20-21 (Parable of the Sower). Yet, there were some taken away by Acts-period persecutions, like the Apostle James, who was certainly fruitful. How about those Two Witnesses in Revelation 11? They will likewise be fruitful for the work given them, yet they will be taken away – but then, sometime after being resurrected they will be taken away to the throne in heaven (Rev. 12:5). John used a smaller vocabulary to put forth his Gospel message than other NT writers. That makes some of his individual statements difficult to understand because of ambiguity.

> "If anyone should not abide in Me, he was **cast out** as the branch and was **dried up**. And they gather them and throw them **into the fire, and they burn**."
>
> John.15:6

John does not mention "the Aionian Fire" or "the Gehenna of Fire" by name, but this text speaks to it, nonetheless. This also explains the unfruitful branches being taken away – for destruction. The "drying up" (Gk. *xērainō*) above gives us a link to the Parable of the Sower (not found in John), where "the stony ground" seed, representing the ones turned away by "tribulation or persecution", were "withered" (*xērainō* in Mat.13:6). So Jesus' message here was one of persecution, tribulation and destruction.

> "If **the world hates you**, realize that it has hated Me before you. If you were from the world, the world would have been loving its own, but because you are not from the world, but I chose you out from the world, because of this **the**

> **world hates you**. Remember the word which I spoke to you, 'A servant is not greater than his lord.' If they persecuted Me, they **will even persecute you**. If they kept My word, they will keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they have not known the One having sent Me." Joh.15:18-21

This speaks to persecution, not "peace and safety". And, yes, persecution was a circumstance of the Acts period, but this feature of it will continue until "the end" for the Jews. "World" is one of John's favorite words, and by it he often meant "the world of the Jews" (e.g., in Joh.12:19; 18:20). Those persecuting Christ and His Apostles in John's Gospel were the Jewish leadership, and others who blindly followed their lead.

> "These things I have spoken to you, so that you should not be made to stumble. They will make you **de-synagogued**, but an hour comes so that everyone who *is* **killing you** may suppose *himself* to offer service to God. And these things they will do because they recognized neither the Father, nor Me." Joh.16:1-3

This covers the tribulation of the Acts period *and* Daniel's last "half-seven". Why did Jesus not insert the comfort of an intervening 500 year kingdom of peace for Israel, if that is to follow the Acts period?

> "'A little *while* and you no longer observe Me. And **again a little** *while* **and you will see Me**.' Therefore, *some* of His disciples said to one another, 'What is this that He says to us, "A little *while* and you no longer observe Me. And **again a little** *while* **and you will see Me."** And "I go away to the Father"?' Therefore, they were saying, 'What is this that He says, "A little *while*"? We know not what He is saying.' Jesus realized they were wanting to ask Him, and He said to them, 'Concerning this you seek with one another, because I said, "A little *while* and you do not observe Me. And **again a little** *while* **and you will see Me**." **Amen**, **amen**, I say to you that you will weep and mourn, but **the world will rejoice**. You will **be grieved**, but your grief will become for joy. Whenever **the woman may give birth** she has grief, because her hour came. But whenever she may have born the child, she no longer remembers **the tribulation** on account of the joy that a man was born into the world. Therefore, also now **you have grief indeed**, but again I will see you. And your

> heart will rejoice, and your joy no one takes away from you. And **in that day** you will not ask Me nothing. **Amen**, **amen**, I say to you whatever you may ask the Father in My name, He will give to you.'" … "'These things I have spoken to you, that by Me you may have peace. **In the world you have tribulation**, but cheer up. **I have overcome** the world.'" Joh.16:16-23, 33

On the face of it, Jesus might have been cheering them up with the prospect of His resurrection. I have pointed out before that "in that day" is a formula for the most solemn of prophecies. Now does "you will not ask Me nothing" (double negative for emphasis) sound like the Apostles' mind-frame during the brief 40 day period when they saw Him periodically after His resurrection? That does not ring true (e.g., their question at Acts 1:6). Afterwards, those who saw Him after His ascension did have questions for Him – like Paul at Acts 9:6. If John (at Rev.1:10-18) had any questions during his Patmos vision he did not record them. When you compare John 16 with what he wrote about in the Revelation, more comes to light on tribulation and overcoming. The tribulation of the Acts period was *potentially* to culminate in the final "half-seven". The woman in travail giving birth is depicted in more detail in Rev.12:1-17. The world rejoicing over the death of the two prophets is the subject of Rev.11:8-10. One of Jesus' promises to Overcomers is to sit with Him on His throne, even as He overcame and sits on His Father's throne (Rev.3:21). Are these parallels with John 16 just accidents? But John wrote both books. The laissez-faire attitude of some of the Apostles after Jesus' resurrection ("going fishing" in Joh.21:3) shows they had not fully understood His instructions. They were made to fully understand when the Holy Spirit "Helper" was sent, but Jesus was out-of-sight by then. It seems that *all* the circumstances of the disciples seeing Him again, per John 16, will require their resurrection at His coming and *Parousia*. The "little while" until they saw Him again was to have been the Acts period, which it turned out did not culminate in Daniel's final "seven".

> "Father, those You have given to Me I desire that where I am, they also **may be with Me**, so that they may observe My glory, which You have given to Me, because You loved Me before world's overthrow." Joh.17:24

A curious thing about John's verb tenses – even his direct quotes of things that would be future, he puts in a present or a past tense, as a narrative writer from a

past perspective, rather than the perspective of when Jesus spoke. But the Twelve will be with Him in future, reigning for the thousand years (Rev.20:4).

> "Jesus says to him, 'If I should desire him to remain **until I come**, what is it to you? You follow Me.'" Joh.21:22

The disciples expectation of "What next?" was His coming and His *Parousia*. The potential was for some of them to remain alive until that time (Mat.16:28). And it was to be God's choice as to who remained alive until His *Parousia*, but these would not precede the dead being welcomed into His Presence (1 Th.4:16-17).

> "And having spoken these things – their beholding *Him* – He was taken up, and a cloud removed Him from their eyes. And as they were staring into the heaven at His leaving, then, **behold**, two men stood by them in white garments, who even said, 'Men, Galileans, why have you stood looking on into the heaven? This Jesus Who was taken up from you, thus He **will come** *by* what manner you observed Him going into the heaven." Acts1:9-11

His coming back to the Mount of Olives was to be their next expectation concerning Him, even as He had explained in the Olivet discourse (Matthew 24).

> "'And it will be **in the last days**' says God, 'I will pour out from My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, and your young men will see visions and your old will dream dreams. And even upon My men-servants and upon My maid-servants **in those days** I will pour out from My Spirit and they will prophesy. And I will give wonders in the heaven above, and signs upon the earth beneath, blood and fire and mist of smoke. The sun will be turned back into darkness and the moon into blood, before **the great and glorious day of the Lord coming**. And it will be, everyone who may call upon the name of the Lord **will be saved**.'" Acts 2:17-21

That Peter quoted the whole of Joel 2:28-32, except the last two sentences is significant. It showed the *potential* for the day of the Lord without much delay. The current "dispensation of the secret" was neither part of Joel's prophecy, nor of Peter's proclamation. However, if a centuries-long pre-millennial earthly kingdom for Israel was to intervene between Acts and the "day of the Lord", why is there no hint of it here?

> "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right until I may appoint **Your enemies a footstool of Your feet**."'" Acts 2:34-35

Is Jesus' subjugation of enemies part of a pre-millennial kingdom? The time indicated for this subjugation will be during His *Apokalupsis* and afterwards. Revelation depicts nations and kings first under the sway of Babylon, then of the Beast. This is hardly subjugation to the kingdom of Christ. Seeing that the end-time turmoil will include "the kings of the whole inhabited-world" gathered to "the battle of the Great Day of God Almighty" (Rev.16:14; also 19:19), will a five-century kingdom of learning the ways of the Lord have preceded this? If so, then such a pre-millennial kingdom would have been an utter failure. You might respond that a similar failure occurs after the Millennium (Rev.20:7-10), although there is no information there about how successful Satan's campaign will be at rousing another world rebellion at the end of it. One could argue that the major differences between these kingdoms, are along the lines of:

Pre-millennial

- Time of Holy Spirit influence
- Satan free to stir up trouble

Millennial

- Time of Christ and Overcomers wielding "rod of iron"
- Satan locked up

But the Acts-period showed the successes and failures of the first of these. What point would be served in adding another 500-700 years (according to Sellers) to such an almost completed experiment? The completion will be the final "sevcen".

> "Therefore, repent and turn back, for the wiping out of your sins, so that **seasons of refreshment may come** from before the Lord, and He **may send** to you the one hand-picked before, Christ Jesus, Whom heaven, indeed, must receive until **times of restoration of all things**, which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from the age. Moses indeed said, 'Your Lord God will raise up to you a Prophet from your brothers like me. You will hear Him according to all things as much as He may speak to you. And it will be every

> person whoever may not hear that Prophet, **he will be destroyed** from the people.'" Acts 3:19-23

So the expectation, right from the start of Acts, was for Christ to be sent back. This will be His *Parousia*, not a reigning from the heavens. Previously, both John the Baptist and Jesus had preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has come near." Note the different wording here in Acts – repent, be forgiven, receive "seasons of refreshment" when Christ is sent back. Those "seasons of refreshment" are the times of the kingdom of the heavens. Everything spoken in the OT concerning "times of restoration of all things" will be fulfilled at His coming. The consequence of disobedience will be destruction. "The Sons of Disobedience" will be judged like Dathan and his rebels.

> "Therefore, beware. May it not come upon *you* what *was* spoken by the prophets. **Behold**, the scoffers, and wonder and **be vanished**, because I work a work in your days, a work which you may no wise believe, even if someone should relate *it* to you." Acts 13:40-41

The threat for scoffer-opposers will be disappearance from the earth – i.e., disappearance from the living, the destruction of the wicked at the coming of the Lord. This threat was immediate during Acts, and it allowed for no preliminary, extensive kingdom of peace and security.

> "Both Paul and Barnabas having grown bold, they said, 'To you it was necessary to speak first the word of God. Since you reject it and judge yourselves **not worthy of the aionian life**, behold, we are being turned to the nations. For thus the Lord commanded us, "I have appointed you a light of nations, which is your being for salvation up to *the* end of the earth."' But the nations hearing, were rejoicing and were glorifying the word of the Lord, and they believed – as many as were **ordered for aionian life**. And the word of the Lord was being carried through the whole region. But the Jews incited the reverent, the respected women and the first ones of the city and they raised up **persecution** against Paul and Barnabas, and they threw them out from their territory. But they **having shaken off the dust of the feet** from them, they came to Iconium." Acts 13:46-51

The aionian life will be life in the Coming *Aiōn*, the Millennium. But before entering that life, first they had to endure persecution and tribulation. The nations "ordered for aionian life" were those "fullness of the nations" that Paul taught about in Rom.11:25. Still others will bring the gospel to the nations in the end-time, per Mat.24:14. The same persecution of Paul and his companions followed them to Iconium (Acts 14:4-5) and Lystra (Acts 14:9). And then on the return trip:

> "strengthening the lives of the disciples, encouraging *them* to abide by the faith, and that **by many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God**."
>
> Acts 14:22

Their outlook was tribulation, then kingdom. Such a kingdom could only be the Millennium, following thus after tribulation.

> "Therefore, indeed, the Times of Ignorance God having overlooked, He now **commands all the men everywhere to repent these things**, insofar as He set a day in which He **is about to judge the habitable-world** in righteousness by a Man Whom He marked off, having granted faith to all, having raised Him from *the* dead." Acts 17:30-31

Next on the divine agenda was a world-judgment, while grace to repent and believe was the present reality during Acts. If there was to be a pre-millennial kingdom, then the Acts period satisfied it. It was a time of tribulation and not peace. Also it was of short duration (about 33 years) and not the 500 year Utopia that Sellers taught.

> "But as both Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was being pressed by the word, fully testifying to the Jews – Jesus being the Christ. But on their opposing and blaspheming, having shaken out the garments, he said to them, '**Your blood *be* upon your head**. Clean *am* I. From now on I will go to the nations.'" Acts 18:5-6

The blaspheming Jews had brought "blood upon their head" – the destruction of the guilty foreseen by so many OT prophecies. Their judgment was looming at the day of the Lord. I would ask of the preterists how AD 70 could satisfy blood upon the head of Corinthian Jews? The Great Tribulation will be greater than just one city, Jerusalem, being surrounded by armies.

> "And as they came up to him, he said to them, 'You understand from *the* first day from which I came into Asia how I came to be with you all the time, serving the Lord with all humility and tears and **testings**, which were happening to me by **the plots of the Jews**. As I shrank back not at all, from the things bringing advantage, not to proclaim to you and to teach you publicly and from house to house, witnessing fully to both Jews and Greeks the repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things in it (Jerusalem) happening to me. Only that the Holy Spirit fully testifies to me, saying that **chains and tribulations** await me. But *it is* of no matter at all *to* consider the life dear to myself, as finishing my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus to fully testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that no longer will you see my face – you all among whom I passed through proclaiming **the kingdom**. Therefore, I witness to you in the day, today, that **I am pure from the blood of all**. For I held not back from not declaring the whole counsel of God to you. **Watch yourselves and the whole flock**, among whom the Holy Spirit appointed you overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He acquired by His own blood. I know that there will enter after my departure **weighty wolves** to you, **not sparing the flock**. And from your own will arise men, speaking a **perverting** *word*, **to lead off the disciples after them**. Therefore, **watch**, remembering that for three years, night and day, I ceased not with tears instructing each one. And *at* the present, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which *is* being able to build up and **to give the inheritance** among all the sanctified.'" Acts 20:18-32

Testing, tribulation, watchfulness, apostasy – all bywords of the Great Tribulation. Jesus sent His disciples out "as sheep amidst the wolves" (Mat.10:16). Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders was, in effect "the wolves are coming". The wolf was an OT metaphor for rapacious leaders (Eze.22:27). "Blood upon the head" was the judgment against the watchman who failed to warn the people of a coming disaster (Eze.33:2-9). This final word of the watchman Paul was a grim message, not one that proclaimed a kingdom of light that would draw all the nations toward it.

> "And after some days Felix having arrived with Drusilla his own wife, being Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. And

> he (i.e., Paul) discussing concerning righteousness and self-control and **the Judgment to Come**, Felix, having become afraid, answered, 'Having the present (Gk. idiom meaning 'for the present'), go, and receiving an opportune time I will summon you.'" Acts 24:24-25

"The Judgment to Come" (Gk. *tou krimatos tou mellontos*) is just a variation of "He is about to judge" (Gk. *mellei krinein*) in Paul's warning to the Athenians (Acts 17:31). It was still that end-time (*Sunteleia*) world-judgment that Paul was heralding to this Roman, Felix.

> "For **God's wrath is unveiled** (Gk. *apokaluptō*) **from heaven** against all impiety and injustice of men, who *are* holding down the truth by injustice. Because what *is* known of God is revealed among them, because God revealed *it* to them. For His invisible things, since world's creation, being perceived by the things-made, are seen clearly, both His abiding power and deity, for them to be **without excuse**." Rom.1:18-20

Here Paul accuses the culpability of paganism, and its deservingness of God's wrath, even as the Jewish rebels deserved it. That wrath will be shown at the unveiling (Gk. *apokalupsis*) of Jesus Christ, at His return "from heaven" (Rev.1:1-7). Jesus Himself will execute God's wrath per Rev.19:15. No "peace and safety" preaching here.

> "But according to your hardness and unrepentant heart, you are treasuring up to yourself **wrath in a day of wrath** and of **unveiling** (Gk. *apokalupsis*) **God's righteous judgment**, Who **will pay back** to each according to his own works – indeed, according to perseverance of a good work, seeking glory and honor and incorruption, **aionian life**. But to those from selfishness and being unpersuaded by the truth, but being persuaded by the injustice – **wrath and anger, tribulation and distress, against every life of man who is working out the evil**, both of Jew first and of Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who is working the good, both to Jew first and to Greek." Rom.2:5-10

Wrath, anger, tribulation and distress are hallmarks of the Great Tribulation and earthly judgment before the Millennium. Although the "glory and honor and peace" appear to be concurrent with "wrath and anger, tribulation and distress", I believe these are the rewards that will immediately follow the storm.

> "For as many as sinned without law, **will** even **perish** without law. And as many as sinned by law **will be judged** through law. For not the hearers of law *are* righteous with God, but the doers of law will be made righteous. For whenever nations, who *are* not having law, by nature may do the things of the law, these not having law are a law to themselves, whoever points out **the work of the law written in their hearts**, the conscience witnessing with them, and between one another the reasonings accusing, or else defending, **in a day when God judges the hidden things of Man, by Christ Jesus**, according to my gospel." Rom.2:12-16

Sinners perishing and the judgment seat of Christ will precede the Millennium. Also the law written upon the heart was part of the New Covenant promise to Israel. Even so, it had long been practiced by some of the nations, unenlightened by the Scriptures of Moses. Would not such as these be numbered with the sheep nations at Christ's judgment seat (Mat.25:33-34)? Indeed, Rom.2:25-29 says he (the heart-law Greek) would even be a judge of the law-breaking Jew, and "his uncircumcision will be reckoned for circumcision" (v.26).

> "But if our injustice commends God's righteousness, what shall we say? Is God unjust Who *is* **inflicting the Wrath**? (I speak according to man). May it not come to pass! Because how will **God judge the world**? But if the truth of God, by my untruthfulness, abounded to His glory, why yet am I **even judged** as a sinner? And not according as we are blasphemed, and according as some say we are speaking, 'Let us do the evil, so that the good may come', whose **judgment is just**." Rom.3:5-8

Judging the world will be a prelude to the Millennium, with Jesus Christ as the One sitting upon the earth in judgment.

> "And not only *so*, but we boast in **the tribulations**, knowing that **the Tribulation** works out endurance." Rom.5:3

The expectation (and reality) of Acts was tribulation, not "peace and safety". Endurance for Daniel's culminating "seven" was the goal of this Acts-period time of preparation.

> "Therefore, by much more having been justified now by His blood, we **will be saved** through Him **from the Wrath**. For if, being enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, by much more, having been reconciled, we **will be saved** by His life." Rom.5:9-10

Paul spoke of his personal tribulations even in his prison letters, which contain post-covenant doctrine. Even so, when this word "tribulation" appears so often in a context of general judgment and wrath, as here in Romans, the wrath of God as depicted in the Revelation is an inescapable parallel. Note also the emphasis above concerning salvation from wrath. What I picture here is wrathful judgments occurring all around, but believers saved from their effects – like Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego in the fiery furnace, an experience having prophetic significance for those who will go through the end-time test.

> "What will separate us from the love of the Christ? – **tribulation or distress or persecution or hunger or nakedness or danger or sword**? According as it has been written, 'On account of You **we are killed** the whole day. We were reckoned as **sheep of slaughter**.' But in all these things we **are <u>super-conquering</u>**, through the One having loved us." Rom.8:35-37

Not only does this text relate to tribulation and persecution, but "<u>super-conquering</u>" (Gk. *huper<u>nikaō</u>*) is a hyperbolic reference to the Overcomer (Gk. participle, *<u>nikōn</u>*) who figures so prominently in the Revelation. Paul was encouraging believers to prepare for the great trial, as described in chapters 1-19 of the Revelation.

> "Or has not the potter authority of the clay, from the same lump to make, indeed, the vessel for honor and the one for dishonor? And if God, desiring to point out **the Wrath** and to make known His powerfulness, bore with much patience **vessels of wrath fitted for destruction**, and so that He might make known the wealth of His glory upon **vessels of mercy which He prepared before for glory**, us whom He also called, not only from Jews but also from nations. As also He says in Hosea, 'I will call what *is* not My people, "My people", and what *is* not beloved, "Beloved."' And it will be in the place where it was said to them, 'You *are* not My people" there they will be called "sons of *the* Living God.' And Isaiah cries concerning Israel, 'If the number of the sons

> of Israel may be as the sand of the sea, **the Remnant will be saved**.' For a matter He *is* **concluding**, and *the* Lord will make **a cutting short** upon the earth. And according as Isaiah has spoken before, 'Unless Lord of armies **left behind** to us a seed, we would have become **as Sodom**, and **as Gomorrah** we would have been made like.'" Rom.9:21-29

We have seen in previous chapters numerous OT prophecies concerning the destruction of many in Israel in the day of the Lord, but the salvation of only a remnant. Here in Romans, that "day" is anticipated. And note that the "matter" He is drawing to its conclusion is the *Sunteleia* "end-time" of the Age (Note: "concluding" in Romans 9 above is the Gk. verb form *sunteleō*). Although the Greek for "cut short" (*suntemnō*) above is not the same word "shortened" (*koloboō*) as in Mat.24:22, the meaning is similar – this is the final "half-seven" of Daniel, the Great Tribulation. Note how a destruction as plenary as that of Sodom and Gomorrah will befall the non-remnant during this time of wrath. A kingdom of "peace and safety" was decidedly not on their horizon, when Paul penned Romans.

> "Therefore, thus also **in the present season a remnant** according to *the* election of grace has come to pass." Rom.11:5

The remnant that was present in Paul's day might be compared to the 7,000 faithful in Elijah's day, when Jezebel's influence had drawn many in the northern kingdom into apostasy. Even before his Romans Epistle, Paul had warned the Thessalonians that the day of the Lord would not come, "until the apostasy should come first" (2 Th.2:2-3). Only a remnant will be saved during the Great Tribulation. The expected apostasy had not come yet, so this cannot be referring to the ongoing resistance of an unbelieving Jewish leadership. What is left is an apostasy of faithful ones; thus Paul was warning the faithful.

> "in the hope rejoicing, in **the Tribulation** enduring, in the Prayer being attending to, to the needs of the saints sharing, the Hospitality pursuing. Bless those **persecuting** you. Bless and curse not, to rejoice with those rejoicing, to weep with those weeping, being minded the same to one another, not minding the high things, but being associated with the humble. Become not mindful with yourselves, giving back to no one evil for evil, being good minded before all men. If possible, what *is* from you, being at peace with all men. Beloved,

> avenge not yourselves, but give place to the Wrath, for it has been written, 'Vengeance *is* Mine. I will repay,' says *the* Lord. But if **your enemy** should hunger, feed him. If he should thirst, give him drink. For doing this, you will heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome by the Evil, but **overcome the Evil** by the Good." Rom.12:12-21

This was a good word to prospective Overcomers, who should expect tribulation and persecution by enemies. Their anticipation was a time of warfare, not half a millennium of "peace and safety". If possible, on their part they were to be at peace with all men, but that was no guaranty of reciprocity.

> "And this – knowing the Season, that it is already an hour for you to be roused from sleep, for **now** *is* **our salvation nearer** than when we believed. The night advanced, and **the day has drawn near**. Therefore, may we put off the Works of Darkness and may we **put on the Weapons of Light**. As in *the* day, may we conduct ourselves properly, not with revelry and drunkenness, not with sexual relations and vice, not with strife and jealousy." Rom.13:11-13

A warfare was coming, as "the day drew near". The cautions about sleep and drunkenness are reinforcements of the Lord's teachings (Mar.13:35-36; Luk.21:34). Eze.7:4 calls this "the day of trouble" (or, 'tumult', 'confusion', 'turmoil'). "The Weapons of Light" would be needed for their defense during this test.

> "For **the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking**, but righteousness and peace and joy by holy spirit." Rom.14:17

One might get an impression from the many prosperity prophecies in the OT that the kingdom will be one long feast. This idea might also derive from Jesus' statement "that many will come from east and west, and sit down (recline at table) with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Mat.8:11). Paul's statement above does not exclude eating and drinking, it is just that the kingdom is not *all about* eating and drinking. Again, Jesus said, "I will not drink of this produce of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." (Mat.26:29). But this remark is best understood as His celebrating the Passover again with His disciples in the kingdom – "'With desire I did desire to eat this Passover with you before My suffering, for I say to you, that

no more may I eat of it until it may be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." (Luke 22:15-16). After His resurrection, the Lord Jesus indulged an occasional eating and drinking with His disciples – the Overcomer in resurrection will share this same activity. Resurrection follows Tribulation, so this points to the Millennium.

> "And the God of Peace **will shatter Satan under your feet** quickly."
>
> Rom.16:20

Satan is one of the enemies to be put under the feet of Christ (1 Cor. 15:25), and as reigners with Him, the Roman saints will also have him under *their* feet. Satan's "shattering" ('breaking', 'bruising') will be the shattering of his kingdom and his incarceration at the beginning of the Millennium (Rev.20:2) And it is said to come "swiftly" or "quickly" (Gk. *en tachei*), a keyword used in Revelation for the swiftness of the Great Tribulation. Then according to the premillennial kingdom view, what will Satan be doing during the 500-700 years of it? Will he merely be a detached observer? There is an implication that Satan was hindered during Acts from revealing his Lawless One (2 Th.2:7-8), but that was a far cry from his being shattered, an expectation of Romans 16. A temporary hindering of the great Apostasy during Acts can hardly have been a harbinger of peace between Satan and God after that hindrance is removed – just the opposite of peace will follow that. How exactly could a premillennial kingdom enjoy centuries of peace, seeing that Satan will not be locked up until the start of the Millennium?

> "so that you *are* not to fall short in no gracious gift at all, **expectantly awaiting <u>the Apocalypse of our Lord Jesus Christ</u>**, Who will even strengthen you **<u>until</u>** ***the*** **end**, **<u>blameless</u>** **<u>in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ</u>**." 1 Cor.1:7-8

<u>The Apocalypse</u> was imminent (potentially) – this was the "unveiling" that is the first Greek word of the text of Revelation. Jesus spoke of "<u>the end</u>" three times in the Olivet discourse about His coming (Mat.24:6, 13, 14). John also calls the events of his visions as being "in the Lord's day" (Rev.1:10). In 1 Cor.1:8 above it is worded somewhat differently as "<u>in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ</u>", which reads like the previous verse's "<u>The Apocalypse of our Lord Jesus Christ</u>". That "day" will also be one of judgment for the saints, and by Christ's strengthening during their testing by fire, they will be found "<u>blameless</u>" in that judgment.

> "For the word which is of the cross is indeed foolishness to **those perishing**, but it is God's power to **those being saved**, us." 1 Cor.1:18

This contrast between perishing (Gk. verb *apollumi*, noun *apōleia*) and being saved (Gk. verb *sōzō*, noun *sōtēria*) is a keynote of doctrine in the Gospels-Acts period. These are the same Gk. words used of "losing" and "saving" one's life in Mat.16:25. We will see the contrast again below in 2 Cor. 2:15; 2 Th.2:10 and Jam.4:12. And note that both verbs in the above text are using present participles to bring home the imminent expectation of that day. The possibility of "perishing" implies threat and tribulation.

> "And if anyone builds upon the foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become manifest, for **the Day will show it**, because **it will be revealed by fire**. And **the Fire will prove** each one's work what kind it is. If anyone's work remains which he built upon, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work will be burned down, he will suffer loss and he will be saved, but thus as by fire." 1 Cor.3:12-15

"The Day" will be the day of the Lord, as indicated by the revealing (Gk. *apokaluptō*) fire. This will be the fire of testing – the baptism by fire that John the Baptist said would come (Mat.3:11), the human experience of the Great Tribulation.

> "Therefore, do not judge anything before *the* **season, until perhaps the Lord should come**, Who will both enlighten the hidden things of the Darkness, and will manifest the counsels of the hearts. And then **the Praise** will come to each one from God." 1 Cor.4:5

They looked forward to the season, when the Lord would come and sit in judgment, the appointed time of His *Parousia*. They all desired to hear His praise, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

> "…to deliver such a one to Satan for *the* destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit may be **saved in the day of the Lord**." 1 Cor.5:5

Next thing on the horizon was the day of the Lord, with all its perils. A temporary apostolic judgment now might spare a sinner a more severe judgment by the Lord

Himself later, at His *Parousia*. Could there be a half-millennium of peace and safety between these two events?

> "Or do you not know that **unrighteous ones will not inherit God's kingdom**? Be not deceived. Neither sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor greedy ones, nor drunkards, nor abusive ones, nor swindlers **will inherit God's kingdom**." 1 Cor.6:9-10

I thought to include this text to show that the kingdom expectations of 1 Corinthians 6 were concurrent with those fiery judgment expectations of the day of the Lord of 1 Corinthians 5. These were matters weighing upon the hearts of believers of that generation. There is no place here for centuries of peace and prosperity before the day of the Lord. And remember, inheriting the kingdom requires resurrection (1 Cor.15:50), which will occur at the Lord's coming and *Parousia* (1 Th.4:15-16).

> "Therefore, I suppose this to be good on account of **the present necessity**, because it *is* good for a man to be thus – are you bound to a wife? Seek not release. Have you been loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. But if even you should marry, you did not sin. And if the virgin should marry, she did not sin. But those such will have **tribulation in *the* flesh**, and I *would* spare you. But I say this, brothers, **the season is shortened** henceforth, so that even those having wives should be as not having *them.* And those weeping as not weeping. And those rejoicing as not rejoicing. And those buying as not held back. And those using the world as not making full use *of it*. For the form of this world is passing away." 1 Cor.7:26-31

"The present necessity" was preparing for the day of the Lord. Therefore, the faithful were to brace themselves for its severity, and not seek out bold new ventures, like marriage. The "tribulation in the flesh" would add to their burden in the Great Tribulation, if they were caring for spouses and children during their flight to safety, to escape being marked by the Beast. "Season" is Gk. *kairos*, which means an appointed time, or a time of specific character. That such a season will be "shortened" is indicative of the end-time (*Sunteleia*), and it is how the Lord spoke about the duration of the Great Tribulation (Mat.24:21-22).

> "But all these things (judgments) came together to them typically (i.e., as 'types'), and they were written for our admonition, to **whom <u>the ends of the ages</u>** have arrived." 1 Cor.10:11

This expression, "<u>the ends of the ages</u>", occurs nowhere else in the Greek Bible. This makes it one of those stand-out phrases to catch our attention. My interpretation would be that the ages that had continued up to that time were –

- The age of angels, since the fall of some of them
- The age of man, since his fall – or since the Flood

Although several such enduring ages might be found in earlier Biblical history, they were all converging to their ends with the great judgment at Christ's return to earth.

> "For as often as you may perhaps eat this bread and may drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord **until when He may come**. So that whoever may eat the bread or may drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, he will be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and thus let him eat from the bread and let him drink from the cup. For the one eating and drinking eats and drinks **judgment to himself**, not discerning the body. On account of this many among you *are* weak and sickly, and many sleep. But if we were discerning ourselves, we would not be judged. But being judged by the Lord, we are disciplined, so that we might not be **condemned with the world**."
> 1 Cor.11:26-32

Were they anticipating centuries of celebrating the Lord's Supper during His pre-millennial kingdom of the heavens? There is no hint of that here. There were judgments falling on some at that time for their discipline, lest they might fall under the general condemnation of the world – this was their urgent expectation. Noah's faith in building the ark was said to condemn the world of his day (Heb.11:7). A similar condemnation was looming during Acts, and some of its horror is depicted in the Revelation. And 2 Pet.3:3-13 brings out some parallels between these two world destructions very distinctly.

> "But each in his own order. First-fruit Christ, then those of the Christ **at His *Parousia***." 1 Cor.15:23

This is from the great resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15. If there is to be a pre-millennial kingdom, it will be apart from resurrection. Further, it appears that Christ's *Parousia* is what the saints of that age looked forward to – not centuries of peace and prosperity before it.

> "But this I say, brothers, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit *the* kingdom of God**, neither does the Corruption inherit the Incorruption. Behold, I tell you a secret. We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed. In a moment, in a blinking of an eye, **at the last trumpet-blast**, for it will blast and the dead will be raised incorruptible and we will be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. And whenever this corruptible may have put on incorruption, and this mortal may have put on immortality, then will come to pass the word which *is* written, 'Death was drunk down into victory.' 'Where, death, *is* your victory? Where, death *is* your sting?' But the Sting of Death *is* Sin, and the Power of Sin *is* the law. But thanks to God, Who *is* **giving us the Victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor.15:50-57

The two previous texts from 1 Corinthians 15 sum up the situation of Acts fairly well. Inheriting, that is ruling in the kingdom, can come only via resurrection, and resurrection was an expectation at Christ's *Parousia*. Ergo, the kingdom inheritance will begin at His *Parousia*. Further, "the last trumpet" (number seven in the Revelation) and "the Victory" (Gk. *nikē* will belong to the Overcomer, Gk. *nikōn*) provide additional links to "the Lord's day" of the Revelation. The two OT quotes in 1 Corinthians 15 are paraphrases of Isa.25:8 and Hos.13:14 (*LXX*), respectively. I have already examined the context of Isaiah chapter 25 in some detail in the chapter **Christ in the Old Testament, and the New**. Now here is some context for the Hosea quote –

> "Israel has destroyed yourself, for *you are* against Me, against your help. Where *is* your king, then – and has he delivered you in all your cities? And your judges of whom you said, 'Give to me a king and princes.' I give to you a king in My anger, and I took away in My fury. Bound *is the* iniquity of Ephraim; hidden *is* his sin. Pains of bringing forth will come to him. He *is* a son not wise, for he stays not a time for a breach of sons. From *the* hand of Sheol I will ransom them, from death I will redeem them. Where *is* your destruction, Sheol? Repentance will be hidden from My eyes." Hos.13:9-14 (transl. from Heb. txt)

What follows in Hosea 13 is more threat of destruction for Samaria, so this promise of ransom and redemption from death was a glimmer of good news, but ostensibly only after a punishment was suffered. But this was all a back-drop for the Acts period, and its continuation into the end-time.

> "If anyone loves not the Lord, let him be accursed. **Our Lord, come!**"
>
> 1 Cor.16:22

This closing salutation ends with an Aramaic phrase, *Maranatha*! (see Moulton & Milligan, p.388). Although some of the Corinthian church were Jews, the Greeks in that assembly probably became familiar with this word from Jewish evangelists, such as Paul. It clearly shows their expectant desire was for the Lord's return and His *Parousia*.

> "Who *is* encouraging us **upon the whole of our tribulation**, for us to be able to encourage those **in every tribulation**, by the encouragement which we are encouraged ourselves by God, because even as **the sufferings of Christ abound toward us**, so by Christ abounds also our encouragement. But whether **we are tribulated**, *it is* for your encouragement and salvation, or if we are encouraged *it is* for your encouragement, which is at work in **the perseverance of the same sufferings** which we also suffer. And our hope for you is firm, knowing that as you are **sharers of the sufferings**, so also the encouragement. For we do not wish you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning our **tribulation**, which having come in Asia, that extremely above *our* power we were weighed down, so as to our despairing even of Life. But we have had the Sentence of Death in ourselves, so that we might not be persuaded upon ourselves, but upon God, the One raising the dead, Who delivered us from so great a death and will deliver, to Whom we have expected that also **He will yet deliver**." 2 Cor.1:4-10

The expectation during Acts was that the current tribulation, such as the controversy against Christians at Ephesus, would ramp up to the Great Tribulation, culminating in the end-time (*Sunteleia*). The ultimate deliverance ("yet deliver") would be in the day of the Lord, with His "raising the dead". The expectation here is the *Parousia*, and not a pre-millennial kingdom.

> "For we write to you no other things, but what you either read or even recognize, and I expect that **until** *the* **end** you will recognize, even as you did

> also recognize in part, that we are your boast, even as also you *are* ours **in the day of our Lord Jesus**." 2 Cor.1:13-14

This mirrors Paul's declaration in 1 Cor.1:8 (above), but is a bit more succinct. Here it does not mention His Apocalypse, and "in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" is shortened to "in the day of our Lord Jesus". However, it is the same expectation of His *Parousia*.

> "because we are a fragrant aroma of Christ to God among **those being saved**, and among **those perishing**." 2 Cor.2:15

See comment above on 1 Cor.1:18 concerning this Acts period contrast between being saved (Gk. *sōzō*) and perishing (Gk. *apollumi*). The two "amongs" above contrast between being in the church, while at the same time being in the world. Is a "perishing" world an expectation of the premillennial kingdom?

> "Therefore, being confident always, and knowing that being at home in the body, we are abroad from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight, but we are confident and **we are well pleased rather to be abroad from the body and at home with the Lord**. Therefore, we also aspire, whether at home or abroad, to be well pleasing to Him, for it is necessary all of us to be manifested in front of **the judgment-seat** (Gk. *bēma*) **of Christ**, so that each one may receive the things *done* by means of the body for what things he practiced, whether good or worthless." 2 Cor.5:6-10

We saw in 1 Corinthians 15 that a necessary precondition for inheritance in the kingdom will be resurrection – and that resurrection will happen at His *Parousia*. The above text says roughly the same thing – "at home with the Lord", that is, sharing both His kingdom and His resurrection. But this at-home-ness will come with the prelude of His *Bēma* judgment and His giving of rewards. Now if a multi-century kingdom on earth was the expectation before His *Parousia*, with the Lord away in heaven for the duration, then why would not Paul have taught being content to be *at home in the body* for those centuries of peace and prosperity? But we find just the opposite here.

> "But indeed, he who *is* from the slave-girl has been born according to *the* flesh, but he who *is* from the free-woman – by promise, which are spoken

> allegorically. For these are two covenants, one indeed from Mount Sinai, giving birth to slavery, which is Hagar. And this is Hagar-Mount Sinai in Arabia, and it corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for it is enslaved with her children. But **the above-Jerusalem is free, which is our mother**." Gal.4:23-26

> "But what says the Scripture? 'Throw out the slave-girl and her son, for the son of the slave-girl will by no means **inherit** with the son of the free-woman.'" Gal.4:30

The hope of Acts period believers was this inheritance – "the above-Jerusalem", that is, New Jerusalem. Any hope directed toward earthly Jerusalem would have been an enslaving legalism, and not the promised inheritance – at least not in accordance with the New Covenant. But an earthly Jerusalem must figure in any supposed premillennial kingdom.

Recall from the earlier chapter, **Conditions of the "Rapture"**, that much of Revelation revolves around three cities – old Jerusalem, Babylon the Great, and New Jerusalem. Here in Galatians New Jerusalem is referred to as "our mother", that is the mother of the free children. In Revelation, Babylon is "the mother of the prostitutes and the abominations of the earth", while New Jerusalem is depicted as "the bride, the Lamb's wife". The expectation of the Galatian saints was New Jerusalem, and the Millennium.

> "and **to await His Son out of the heavens**, Whom He raised out from the dead, Jesus, **the One rescuing us out of the Coming Wrath**." 1 Th.1:10

Jesus "out of the heavens" will be the introduction to His *Parousia*. "The Coming Wrath" (both articles present) is a reference to Rev.11:18 – "and Your wrath has come, and the season of the dead to be judged, and to give the reward to Your servants, the prophets and the saints". All of this is "end-time", i.e., millennial.

> "forbidding us to speak to the nations so that they might be saved, for filling back up their sins always, but **the Wrath came upon them** to *the* end." 1 Th.2:16

Those "forbidding" were the Jews. This is the second mention of "the Wrath" in this letter. Seeing that "the one enduring to *the* end, this one will be saved" (Mat.24:13), there seems to be a connection here to the Olivet Discourse. And this

suggests that the verb is using a Prophetic Past tense for the future wrath, already introduced at 1:10 as "coming". Then follows this context just a few verses later –

> "For what *is* our hope or joy or crown of boasting – or not even you **in front of our Lord Jesus at His *Parousia***?" 1 Th.2:19

Being "in front of our Lord Jesus" suggests His *Bēma*, and the Judgment that will occur is at the beginning of His *Parousia*.

> "no one to be upset by these **tribulations**, for you yourselves know that we are destined for this, for even when we were with you, we said before to you that we are about to **suffer tribulation**, just as it even happened, and you know *it*." 1 Th.3:4

The two Thessalonian letters make frequent reference to tribulation (Gk. *thlipsis*) and suffering tribulation (Gk. *thlibō*), and I have not included every such text in this survey. As noted previously, the current tribulations of the Acts period were expected to reach their climax in the Great Tribulation, which would affect Judea principally.

> "for the strengthening of your hearts, blameless in holiness, in front of God and our Father, **at the *Parousia* of our Lord Jesus** with all His saints." 1 Th.3:13

The Lord's *Parousia*, His kingly presence on earth in company with His holy ones, is a recurring theme of the Thessalonian letters. It forms a grand context for understanding what their hope was.

> "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those falling asleep, lest you might grieve even as also the rest, those having no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and arose, thus also God will bring those having fallen asleep in Jesus, with Him. For this we say to you by the Lord's word, that we the living, those **remaining until the *Parousia* of the Lord** should in no wise come sooner than those having fallen asleep, because **the Lord Himself by shout, by voice of archangel, and by God's trumpet-blast will descend from heaven**. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we the living, those remaining, together with them, will be caught up in *the* clouds for **meeting the Lord in *the* air**. And so we will always be with *the* Lord. Therefore encourage one another by these words." 1 Th.4:13-18

This is one of the principal "return of the Lord" passages, which I expounded earlier in the chapter, **Conditions of the "Rapture"**. Note how "meeting the Lord in *the* air" is preparatory to "the *Parousia* of our Lord Jesus with all His saints" (3:13). To "encourage one another by these words" implies that they were living in expectation of the *Parousia* and of meeting the Lord in the air. Nothing *else* was on their horizon, and certainly not a premillennial kingdom of 500-700 year duration. The text above continues into this next one –

> "But concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, I have not need *for it* to be written to you. For you yourselves know accurately that *the* **day of *the* Lord so comes as a thief in** *the* **night**. Whenever they may say, 'Peace and security', then **unexpected destruction** stands near them, even as the **birth-pain** to her that has *a baby* in the womb. And **they may in no wise flee out**. But you, brothers, are not in darkness, so that the day should overtake you as a thief. For all you are sons of light and sons of day. We are neither of night nor of darkness. Therefore, then, let us not sleep as the rest, but **let us watch and be sober**. For those sleeping sleep *at* night, and those getting drunk get drunk *at* night. But us, being of *the* day, let us be sober, having put on a breastplate of faith and love, and a helmet of expectation of salvation. Because **God appointed us not for wrath**, **but for possession of salvation** through our Lord Jesus Christ, the One having died for us, so that whether we may keep awake or may sleep, **together with Him we may live**." 1 Th.5:1-10

This recalls the warnings and parables of the Lord Jesus about watchfulness in the end-time. The warnings and hallmarks of the day of the Lord show that the Great Tribulation will have its effect even in Greece. Note that the underlined "peace and security", which Sellers construed as hallmarks of a pre-millennial kingdom, are precisely what is *not* to be expected. Wrath and salvation are contrasted, and "with Him we may live" shows their expectation of resurrection, a *Parousia* event.

> "And may the God of the Peace Himself sanctify you wholly, even your whole spirit, and the life and the body may He keep blamelessly **at the *Parousia* of our Lord Jesus Christ**." 1 Th.5:23

Being kept whole until Christ's *Parousia* was their wish – not being found "naked" in the metaphor of 2 Cor.5:3. "The God of the Peace" is to be contrasted with the

frail "peace and security" of human guaranty (1 Th.5:3). Thus, to teach that the dispensation following ours should expect a half-millennium of peace and safety, is to set up that generation for the trap that 1 Thessalonians warned against.

> "So that, we ourselves *are* to boast in you among all the assemblies of God, for your perseverance and faith **in all your persecutions and in the tribulations** which you endure, evidence of the righteous judgment of God **for your being made worthy of the kingdom of God**, for which you even suffer, since *it is* righteous with God **to pay back tribulation to those tribulating you, and to you being tribulated, a rest with us at the Apocalypse of the Lord Jesus from heaven**, with angels of His power, **in fire of flame giving out retribution** to those not knowing God, and those not obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus, who will **suffer punishment, aionian destruction from the face of the Lord** and from the glory of His strength, **whenever He may come** to be en-gloried by His holy ones and to be marveled at by all those having believed, because our witness was believed among you – in that day." 2 Th.1:4-10

The underlined portion was used by Sellers as a key argument for an extensive pre-millennial kingdom. How are they to know God or obey the gospel without having heard? – indeed, Paul says many such things in Rom.10:14, including "How might they hear without one preaching?" Then a few verses later he adds, "But I say, 'Did they in no wise hear? On the contrary, into the whole earth their voice went out, and to the boundaries of the habitable-world their words.'" (Rom.10:18). What had happened during the thirty or so years of Acts (up to the writing of Romans) could happen today much more quickly. A man may get to know God in an instant, and to learn the basics of the gospel in a few days. However, learning the deep things of God is a lifetime endeavor. There is no necessity for centuries to pass in order to get the word out, so that only the guilty are destroyed in the day of the Lord.

But look rather at the focus of this text – it is all dealing with tribulation, leading into the Apocalypse and judgment. If centuries of peace and safety will precede the day of the Lord, then this and many other expectation texts that we have examined are strangely silent about it.

"But we ask you, brothers, concerning **the *Parousia* of our Lord Jesus Christ**

> **and our assembling around Him**, for you not to be shaken quickly from the mind nor to be alarmed, neither by spirit nor by word nor by letter, as by us, **as that the day of the Lord has arrived**. Let no one lead you away in no way, because unless **the apostasy should come first and the Man of Lawlessness, the Son of Destruction**, **should be unveiled** (Gk. *apokaluptō*), who is opposing and puffing himself up against all being called god or reverence, so that he *is* to sit in the temple of God, claiming himself that he is God … *then the day of the Lord has not arrived* (a possible ellipsis to complete the sentence). Remember not that I being yet with you was telling you these things? And now you know what *is* restraining, until **his having been unveiled** (*apokaluptō*) in his own season. For **the Secret of Lawlessness is already at work**, only what is restraining now, until it should come out of *the* midst. And then **will be unveiled** (*apokaluptō*) **the lawless one**, whom **the Lord Jesus will destroy by the breath of His mouth, and He will nullify by the shining forth of His *Parousia***. **The *parousia* of him is according to** *the* **in-working of Satan**, by every power and signs and lying wonders, and by every deception of injustice to those perishing, because **they received not the love of the truth for them to be saved**. And on account of this God will send them an in-working of deception, for them to believe the lie, **so that all who believed not the truth, but took pleasure in the injustice, might be judged**." 2 Th.2:1-12

Paul's warning here was not to look for the day of the Lord before the Man of Lawlessness was unveiled and the great apostasy that he will lead. There will be two *apocalypses*, two *parousias*, the lie and the truth, and the two men – first the Lawless One, then the Righteous One. These are to occur in rapid succession, as Daniel (9:27) and the Olivet Discourse (Mat.24:22) have informed us. Then, finally, the Righteous One will judge all the lawless. Apparently, some Thessalonians were jumping the gun in their expectation of the day of the Lord. But where is the expectation of centuries of peace and light in this text? It is absent, because no one was expecting any such thing – that is, until *after* the time of testing, which was their great focus during Acts. Also note Paul's commands to shun certain ones who kept not the word which they had received (2 Th.3:6,14). Because a great apostasy was coming, this was a time of discerning among those who called themselves "Christian", a time of division, and a time of choosing up sides.

> "**<u>At these last days</u>** spoke to us by a Son, Whom He appointed <u>Heir</u> of all things" Heb.1:2

The expression, "<u>at these last days</u>", is Gk. *ep' eschatōn hēmerōn <u>toutōn</u>*. This same expression, without the emphatic "<u>these</u>", is found in:

- the *LXX* in Balaam's prophecy against Edom (Num.24:14),
- in Moses' general prophecy against the disobedience of Israel (Deu.4:30),
- in Israel's return to Yahweh and seeking "David their king" (Hos.3:5),
- and twice in Daniel's exposition of Nebuchadrezzar's dream (Dan.2:28, 45).

Peter also describes it as a time of scoffers (2 Pet.3:3), and by continuing his argument into the day of the Lord coming as a thief (3:10), he implied those "last days" were already present.

> "And You in *the* beginning, Lord, founded the earth, and the heavens are works of Your hands. They will perish, but You continue, and all will grow old as a garment, and **like a cloak You will <u>roll</u> them <u>up</u>**. As a garment they will even be changed, but You are the same and Your years will not fail." Heb.1:10-12

While this Hebrews text does not specify a time, here is where comparative analysis pays off. "<u>Roll up</u>" (Gk. *elissō*) is found elsewhere here:

> "Come near, nations, to hear – and, peoples, to give attention. The earth and its fullness, hear – *the* world and all of its offspring. For **wrath** *is* to Yahweh **against all the nations**, and rage against all their warfare. He has devoted them (to destruction). He has given them to slaughter. And their pierced He will throw out, and their corpses – they will bring up their stench. And mountains will be dissolved from their blood. And all *the* army of the heavens will be decayed, and **the heavens <u>will be rolled up</u>** (*LXX elissō*) **as a scroll**. And all their warfare will wither, as withering of a leaf from a vine, and as a withering from a fig-tree." Isa.34:1-4

> "And I looked when He opened the sixth seal. And there came a great earthquake, and the sun became black as hairy sack-cloth, and the whole moon as blood. And the stars of the heaven fell to the earth, as a fig-tree throws its unripe figs, by a shaking of great wind. And **the heaven was taken apart as a**

> **scroll <u>being rolled up</u>** (Gk. *elissō*). And every mountain and island moved from their place." Rev.6:12-14

While the Hebrews text seems indeterminate in itself, when combined with Isaiah 34 and Revelation 6, we can see it as a harbinger of the day of the Lord. If a premillennial kingdom of half a millennium or more is to precede the Millennium, one would naturally expect many more prophetic words to be spoken about it as the *next* great thing on God's agendum. But by far, I have shown that the great abundance of prophetic words deal with the day of the Lord and Christ's *Parousia*. The reality of prophetic utterance is entirely opposite what I would expect, if a pre-millennial kingdom of any great duration were coming next.

> "For if the word spoken by angels became confirmed, and every transgression and disobedience received a **<u>just recompense</u>**, **how will we <u>escape</u>** (Gk. *ekpheugō*), having neglected **<u>so great a salvation</u>**? – which a beginning having received, to be spoken through the Lord by those hearing *Him,* it was confirmed to us." Heb.2:2-3

This, of course, compares the word of the two covenants. Israel had received a salvation at the Red Sea, and also afterwards in all the perils of the Sinai desert. The rebels in the wilderness did not escape their "<u>just recompense</u>" – death. The present circumstance of Hebrews offered an <u>even greater salvation</u>, out of the Great Tribulation. Luk.21:36 also speaks about this "<u>escape</u>" (Gk. *ekpheugō*), so as "to stand before the Son of Man". Those practicing lawlessness during this season will certainly not escape death. The word "<u>recompense</u>" is Gk. *misthapodosia*, which is a combination of *misthos* (wage, or reward) and the abstract noun form of the verb *apodidōmi* (pay back). This word is emphatic, and is found three times in Hebrews but nowhere else in the Gk. Bible. A variant noun, *misthapodotēs* (recompenser), is found only in Heb.11:6. This rather establishes Judgment as a leading theme in Hebrews. But judgment will be executed by a combination of wrath during the Great Tribulation and the adjudication of Christ's *Bēma* at His *Parousia*.

> "For not to angels did He subordinate **the habitable-world which *is* <u>coming</u>** (*mellō*), concerning which we speak," Heb.2:6

Here it is the "coming" world, while Heb.6:5 speaks of a coming age, and Heb.13:14 the coming city (New Jerusalem). All these prospects are aligned with each other, and with the millennial age.

> "For if Joshua **gave** them **rest** (Gk. *katapauō*), he would not have spoken concerning another day after these things. Therefore, there is left behind a **sabbath-keeping** (*hapax*, Gk. *sabbatismos*) for the people of God. For one having entered into his **rest** (Gk. *katapausis*), the same one even **rested** (*katapauō*) from his works, even as God from His own. Therefore, may we be diligent to enter into that **rest** (*katapausis*), lest anyone by the same example may fall by the dissuasion (Gk. *apeitheia*)." Heb.4:8-11

This "rest", which we might render literally a "pause-down", is here equated with the "sabbath-keeping" (another 'rest'). This rest had also been mentioned in Heb.3:11,18; 4:1,3(2),4,5. What exactly should we understand about this "rest"? The cited text makes it plain that Joshua leading Israel to take possession of Canaan did not provide this rest.

Perhaps an understanding of this rest can be gained from some OT Scriptures, here translated from the *LXX* –

> "And on the sixth day God completed (Gk. *sunteleō*) His works which He did, and He **rested** (Gk. *katapauō*) the seventh day from all His works which He did. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it (i.e., set it apart), because in it He **rested** (*katapauō*) from all His works which God began to do." Gen.2:2-3

This is the divine pattern, which became the template for sabbath-keeping under the law. And we know that the law was a tutor, to bring Israel to Christ. This points to the Christological age, the sabbath-age, i.e., the Millennium as the Rest for believing Israel. Thanks to the curse of sin that Adam brought upon the human race, men have had to toil to stay alive in the flesh. This toil will no longer be necessary in resurrection life – and the Millennium will be the resurrection-age, even the rest-age, for the heirs of the promises. Also note how God's completed (*sunteleō*) work in Gen.2:2 resonates with the end-time (*sunteleia*) of the age in Mat.24:3.

Here is another insightful text –

> "For until the present you have not come into the **rest** (*katapausis*) and into the inheritance, which *the* Lord your God gives to you. But you will cross over the Jordan, and will dwell upon the land which *the* Lord your God makes you inherit. And He **gives** you **rest** (*katapauō*) from all your enemies, and you will dwell with security." Deu.12:9-10 (*LXX* translated)

So security, safety from enemies will be part of their rest. Note how "rest" and "inheritance" are put on an equivalent basis. A measure of that rest might have come, if Israel had continued to conquer their Canaanite enemies after Joshua's death. But Judges chapter 1 recounts several of their failures to drive them out.

Hosea describes a different kind of rest, actually an "arrest" –

> "And *the* Lord said to him, 'Call his name Jezreel, because yet a little *while* and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and I **will cease** (Gk. *katapauō*) the kingdom of the house of Israel.'" Hos.1:4 (*LXX* translated)

I included this Hosea text to show that "rest" includes the idea of an "end", a "completion" (think – *sunteleia*). The way that Sellers taught the pre-millennial kingdom would imply such a rest for some five or more centuries. But just as Israel had entered a rest under Joshua (Jos.23:1), it was only a typical rest, because some Canaanites remained in the land. And later, when Israel committed their idolatries, Yahweh raised up even more enemies to scourge them. If a pre-millennial kingdom of extended peace is to come, it must still be followed by the Great Tribulation. So if a pre-millennial kingdom were to come, would it not be another version of Joshua's incomplete rest? The full and final rest will be the Millennium for the Israel of God. And is that not "the rest" that Hebrews teaches? Everything in Hebrews touts the "better" over the former. For believing Israel, it does not get any better than this.

Resuming our NT survey of expectation texts –

> "and having tasted God's good word, and powers of a **coming age**" Heb.6:5

Three times in the NT we meet with expressions (slightly different) which reference the coming age. Here are the other two –

> "And whoever may speak a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit it will not be forgiven him, neither in this **age**, nor in **the coming one**." Mat.12:32

> "which (energizing) was at-work in Christ, having raised Him from *the* dead and having seated *Him* at His right in the heavenlies, up above every principality and authority and power and lordship and every name named, not only in this **age**, but also in **the coming one**" Eph.1:20-21

So we have three witnesses to this sharp distinction between the present age and the next one. Although the letter to the Ephesians speaks to a different dispensation of believers, the timing coincidence of a coming age is still observed. So the pertinent question is whether the coming age is pre-millennial or millennial. Were the powers exercised during Acts and the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Spirit a prelude to a pre-millennial kingdom, or to the Millennium? These texts in themselves cannot prove the issue one way or the other. But seeing that all the other expectations of Hebrews appear to be millennial, that likely colors the meaning of "<u>the coming age</u>" in whatever text it is spoken.

Here is another interesting point – Christ's priesthood according to the order of Melchisedek is said to be "for the age" (Heb.5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21). It is clear from Hebrews 5-7 that this priesthood had already begun for believers. Will this "for the age" be merely the remainder of the age that began at Christ's resurrection (see Heb.5:5 with Acts 13:33) and ending at His *Parousia*, or is it also for "the coming age"? Hebrews seems to offer an answer –

> "If indeed He was upon the earth, neither was He perhaps a priest, *there* being the priests, those offering the gifts according to the law." Heb.8:4

Elsewhere in Hebrews the High-Priest Christ is depicted as making offerings in the heavenly Sanctuary (Heb.8:1-2). Thus, upon His coming to earth and His *Parousia*, logically such a priesthood might end. But will He be on earth for the entire Millennium? Will He still have a role to perform in heaven as well? His high-priesthood "for the age" suggests a continuing role – but also a heavenly role.

And how might such a high-priesthood be enacted to span a pre-millennial kingdom? Because Christ will remain in heaven during this time, whatever its length, His High-Priesthood would also continue.

More urgency texts follow –

> "(concerning those fallen away, Heb.6:6) but yielding thorn-plants and briars *is* disqualified and **near to a curse**, whose end *is* **for burning**." Heb.6:8

Now is being accursed and burnt a prelude to a pre-millennial kingdom, or to the Millennium? The Furnace of Fire (i.e., Gehenna) judgments of the Gospels, and the whole book of Revelation lead me to conclude the latter.

> "since it <u>was</u> (the sense here is "would have been") necessary for Him to suffer often since world's overthrow, but now once **at <u>the end-time</u>** (*Sunteleia*) **<u>of the ages</u>**, for *the* removal of sin through His sacrifice, He has been manifested." Heb.9:26

"<u>The end-time of the age</u>" is mentioned five times in Matthew, including the apostles' question that led to the Olivet Discourse (Mat.24:3). Here, "ages" is plural, showing that multiple ages were coming to their conclusion concurrently. Since the Olivet Discourse dealt with matters of the Great Tribulation and Christ's *Parousia*, it seems relevant to classify the persecution and sufferings of Christ and His ministers during Acts as part of this concluding period of the ages. How could a multi-century pre-millennial kingdom of peace fit into this picture? Such a long, drawn-out conclusion of the present age *without tribulation and testing* is simply out-of-character with the Gospels-Acts-period doctrine – it just does not produce a good fit with the rest of the evidence of Scripture.

> "And according to how it is laid up to men <u>once to die</u>, but after this, **<u>judgment</u>**, thus also Christ, <u>once having been offered</u> to take up sins of many, **will appear <u>a second time</u>** apart from sin, to <u>those eagerly awaiting Him</u> **for <u>salvation</u>**." Heb.9:27-28

Death followed by judgment is the general sequence of things for every man. And since the judgment of covenant saints is part of the *Parousia*, then any pre-millennial period (short or long) cannot include a resurrection. I equate the

"salvation" of Heb.9:28 with rescue of the living and resurrection of the dead. This is the salvation of 1 Th.5:9-10.

But this text adds more. There is an obvious parallel here between "judgment" for men, and Christ appearing "a second time" (at His *Parousia*). There is no expectation here of a pre-millennial kingdom, by "those eagerly awaiting Him". Is there something else they should eagerly await, before awaiting Christ?

> "But This One, having offered one sacrifice for sins for the perpetuity, sat at the right of God, henceforth waiting until His enemies may be set *as* a footstool of His feet." Heb.10:12-13

He sat, He waits – for what? Not a lengthy kingdom of pre-millennial blessings, but the subjugation of His enemies (taken from Psa.110:1). One could infer that such a subjugation will be a pre-millennial blessing, but look at the rest of the context in Psalm 110 – Yahweh will send the rod of His (Christ's) strength from Zion, ruling in the midst of His enemies (v.2); He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath (v.5); He will judge among nations, fill with corpses, shatter a head upon a broad country (v.6). This is the "iron rod" of Psalm 2 used in warfare in the day of the Lord. It is not a peaceful persuasion type of subjugation, but quite a forceful one. The Sellers model of a pre-millennium has the Holy Spirit ruling men, but the Spirit wields no iron staff.

> "Not abandoning the assembling of yourselves, according as a custom of some, but encouraging, even so much more, as much as you see **the Day nearing**." Heb.10:25

"The Day" is a specific sort of reference, although it is not precisely specified here. I believe it to be the same day drawing near in Rom.13:11-13 (see comment above), i.e., the day of the Lord. Also 1 Cor.3:13 spoke of "the Day" declaring each one's work, revealing it by fire – again the day of the Lord. This is confirmed by the context in this next Hebrews passage –

> "For we sinning willingly, after receiving the recognition of the truth, there is no longer left behind a sacrifice concerning sins, but **a certain fearful expectation of judgment**, and a **jealousy of fire about to consume the opposers**." Heb.10:26-27

This is an expectation of the day of the Lord ("the great and the fearful" Mal.4:5 calls it). Fiery judgment – not peace and prosperity.

> "But remember the former days, in which having been enlightened, you endured much conflict of sufferings, this, indeed, **by both reproaches and by tribulations** being made a spectacle, and this – having become sharers of those so living. For you also sympathized with my bonds, and the plunder of your goods you received with joy, realizing yourselves to have a better and abiding property. Therefore, may you not throw off your boldness, which has great recompense. For you have need of perseverance, so that having done the desire of God, you may receive the promise. For **yet a very, very little *while* and the Coming One will come**, and He will not delay." Heb.10:32-37

The Hebrew Christian readers to whom this Epistle was addressed were already undergoing tribulation. Their expectation was for Christ to come again *very* shortly, and then they would receive the promised reward. A pre-millennial kingdom adds nothing but confusion to this expected sequence of events. The "very, very little while" were the "shortened" days of Mat.24:20 – i.e., the final half-seven of the Great Tribulation.

> "But **you have come to** Mount Zion and to a **city of *the* living God, heavenly Jerusalem**, and to myriads of angels, a festive gathering, and **to an assembly of firstborn, enrolled in *the* heavens**, and to God, **Judge of all**, and to spirits of righteous ones being perfected, and to a mediator of a **new covenant**, Jesus, and to a blood of sprinkling speaking better than that of Abel. **Beware** lest you refuse the One Speaking. For if those did not escape, their having refused one warning upon earth, **much more we who *are* turning away from the One from *the* heavens**, Whose voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, '**Yet once, I will quake not only the earth, but also the heaven**.' But the 'yet once' indicates the removal of the things being shaken, as of things having been made, so that the things not shaken might remain. Therefore, taking over an **unshaken kingdom**, may we have grace, by which we may serve God well-pleasingly with reverence and awe. For **our God is even a consuming fire**." Heb.12:22-29

The context just before this passage dealt with Moses and the quaking, smoking Mount Sinai. Everything in the above text is meant to contrast the Mosaic experience with heavenly "Mount Zion", "heavenly Jerusalem", heavenly assembly, "new covenant", shaking of heavens, an unshaken heavenly kingdom which will be the outcome after God's consuming fire (third time spoken – see also Deu.4:24; 9:3) burns down the rest. Where could a pre-millennial kingdom of earthly peace and safety fit into all this? But that was not the expectation of New Covenant Overcomers until *after* the shaking took place. It would be millennial, not pre-millennial. Or will there be two shakings of the kingdom, one to precede the pre-millennium and one to precede the Millennium? But where are the Scriptures to support such a view? Then again, this Hebrews 12 text qualifies "yet once" (Gk. *eti hapax, i.e. "one more time"*), so there will only be one such shaking and one such "unshaken kingdom". Thayer's def. b for *hapax* includes "used of what is so done as to be of perpetual validity and never need repetition, *once for all*" (p.54).

> "Accordingly, let us go out to Him, outside the camp bearing His reproach. For **we have not here an abiding city, but the one about to be we seek after**."
> Heb.13:13-14

The writer seemed to have had no desire whatsoever for earthly Jerusalem; only the heavenly Jerusalem held any interest for him. His prospect was entirely millennial. That expectation permeates the book of Hebrews. If a pre-millennium of comparable length to the Millennium is to come first, why do we not have a Pre-Hebrews book to explain it?

> "Happy a man who perseveres *through* **testing**, because having become approved, he will receive **the Crown of Life**, which He promised to those loving Him" Jam.1:12

Both articles are present in "the Crown of the Life". This emphatic promise is given elsewhere only in Rev.2:10 – a promise to Overcomers in "the Lord's day". "Testing", then "approved", then "crown" – but will a pre-millennial kingdom be such a time of "testing" for a man to "persevere" through? Will a judgment and approval precede a pre-millennial kingdom? Will later observers distinguish between pre-millennial crowns and millennial crowns? Christ is said to wear

"many diadems" (Rev.19:12), but the believer's crown is always mentioned in the singular. It will become the singular possession of the Overcomer during the Millennium.

> "And the tongue *is* a fire, the World of Unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, which *is* defiling the whole body and setting on fire the course of life, and **is being set on fire by the Gehenna**." Jam.3:6

I remarked on the judgment of Gehenna under Mat.5:22 above. This will be the end-time punishment of the very wicked. James was warning of such a punishment for those who failed to curb their tongues. Calling a brother "Fool!" (Mat.5:22) would be such a failing to curb the tongue. Gehenna will be a prelude to the Millennium, according to James' expectation.

> "Your gold and silver have been corroded, and their poison will be for a witness toward you, and **it will eat your flesh as a fire**. You treasured up **in <u>last days</u>**." Jam.5:3

Acts had begun with a "<u>last days</u>" quote from Joel 2 by Peter. The Acts period itself was these "<u>last days</u>", falling a little short of Daniel's final seven years.

> "Therefore, be patient, brothers, **until the *Parousia* of the Lord**. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient for it until he may receive early rain and late rain. Be patient, you also. Establish your hearts, because **the *Parousia* of the Lord has neared**. Brothers, do not grumble against one another, lest you may be judged. Behold, **the Judge has stood before the door**." Jam.5:7-9

The *Parousia* was the expectation here. And note the mention of "the door", an oblique reference to the door into the wedding feast (Mat.25:10), also "the narrow door" of Luk.13:24-25. The Judge Jesus will judge their fitness to "enter the kingdom of the heavens", and judgment is a component of His *Parousia*. And if the Parousia had "neared" already, would they not have been presently in the pre-millennial kingdom. But that is my conclusion – the Acts period and its resumption will be what God has in store for such a kingdom. Its entire span will be 40 to perhaps 100 years (not 500 to 700), and it will be characterized by testing and apostasy. Yes, the Spirit will be active then, but He will be opposed by many,

including finally the Beast, the False Prophet and their entourage. The pre-millennial kingdom will be the time of the Tares maturing alongside the good seed.

> "Blessed *is* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the One having begotten us again according to His great mercy for a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ out from dead ones, to an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading **inheritance**, having been kept **in *the* heavens** for you, who *are* being guarded by God's power through faith, for **salvation ready to be revealed** (Gk. *apokaluptō*) **at the last season**, in which you are very glad, if a little *while* now it being necessary to be made to grieve **by diverse trials**, so that the proof of your faith – more costly than gold which *is* perishing, and being **proved by fire** – may be found to praise and glory and honor **at the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ**. … Therefore, having girded up the loins of your mind, being sober, hope perfectly upon the grace being brought to you **at the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ**." 1 Pet.1:3-7, 13

The "inheritance … in the heavens" (heavenly Jerusalem) would be theirs after being "proved by fire". This was the baptism by fire that John the Baptist had foretold (Mat.3:11), culminating in the Great Tribulation. Here it is not "at the last day", but "at the last season" when salvation would be revealed at the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. These time expressions are equivalent. The Apocalypse will be Christ's coming again to the earth, and His *Parousia* following.

> " (Christ) foreknown, indeed, before world's overthrow, but **manifested at the last times for you**." 1 Pet.1:20

So far in this first chapter, Peter has spoken in terms of both "last seasons" and "last times", while James had used "last days". These should all be construed as the "end-time" (*Sunteleia*). The implication is that not much time would intervene between the writings of James and Peter, and Christ's Apocalypse and *Parousia*. If you try to insert another half-millennium or so into this end-time, does that not distort the meaning of an end-time? Also, there is an implied character of those times, and a "peace and plenty" pre-millennial kingdom just does not fit the character of the "end-time". I will offer this analogy. It would be like calling the time between Christ's *Parousia* and the Great White Throne an "end-time". Well, both are at the end of something else, but would this be a reasonable perspective in

speaking of the Millennium as a whole? And what common ground is there between the *Parousia* and the Great White Throne? Is there enough in common between them to label such a great period an "end-time"? If not, then how could a 500 to 700 year period (pre-millennial kingdom) be seen as an "end-time"? But this phrase "end-time" is exactly how Scripture describes the period leading up to Christ's *Parousia*.

This "end-time" is Gk *sunteleia*, whose verb form is *sunteleō*, a combination of *sun-* ("together with") and *-teleō* ("reach a goal, an and"). Thayer (p.606) gives two definitions of *sunteleō*, either of which may apply to this end-time –

1. to end together, or at the same time my note: (this is the force os the *sun-* prefix in its prepositional sense)
2. to end completely; bring to an end, finish, complete (J.H. Moulton, Grammar of New Testament Greek, vol.II Accidence and Word-Formation (p.324) classifies the preverb sun as a "perfective", amplifying the meaning of the verb to which it is attached)

To these definitions I would add a third – the *LXX* uses *sunteleia* of the fall-time harvest, and this gives meaning to the calendar of Jewish feasts as to their prophetic significance. Can you discern any connection between Day of Atonements, Tabernacles or Trumpets with a pre-millennial kingdom? No, these are "day of the Lord" feasts. A *sunteleia* is, as it were a "final finsh", because it will include a resurrection for the Lord's Overcomers. Overcomers will have a role to play during the Millennium and afterwards, but for them personally, they are God's finished product for Israelites. But the pre-millennium, as Sellers saw, it is hardly a finished product for anyone.

> "having your conduct among the nations good, so that in what they slander you as evildoers, observing from the good works, they may glorify God **in a <u>day of oversight</u>**." 1 Pet.2:12

And what is this "<u>day of oversight</u>"? – none else than the day of the Lord. The *LXX* mentions it also –

> "And what will you do in **the <u>Day of Oversight</u>**? For **the tribulation** will come to you from afar. And to whom will you flee away for the Help, and where will you abandon your honor?" Isa.10:3 (transl. from *LXX*)

The next verse in Isaiah (10:4) is the fifth occurrence of the warning – "For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still." (*KJV*). The *NKJV* translates this day of oversight as "the day of punishment", and the context of Isaiah chapters 9 and 10 certainly supports that reading. This is nothing less than the Great Tribulation.

> "who will render an account to the One being **ready to judge living and dead**. For, for this *reason*, even to dead ones it was evangelized, so that **they may be judged**, indeed, according to men in flesh, but they may live according to God in spirit. But **<u>the end of all things has neared</u>**. Therefore, be sound-minded and be sober toward prayers." 1 Pet.4:5-7

The <u>nearness</u> of "<u>the end of all things</u>" is couched in a context of judgment. This is "the end" that Jesus spoke about in Mat.24:14 – "the end" is Gk. *to telos* in both texts, and it is at the root of the "end-times" (Gk. *sun<u>tel</u>eia*). The dead being evangelized should be understood as those faithful who had died already, not having received the promise. As Judge of "living and dead", Jesus will first raise "the dead in Christ" (1 Th.4:16) – this will not be a judgment of the dead *in absentia*. This will be the resurrection at His *Parousia* – then the judgment.

> "Beloved, be not surprised at **the <u>burning</u>** among you, coming to you **for a <u>test</u>**, as *if* a strange thing *is* happening to you, but insofar as you **share the sufferings of Christ**, rejoice, so that **at the Apocalypse of His glory** you may rejoice, being greatly glad." 1 Pet.4:12-13

This "<u>burning</u>" "<u>test</u>" is the baptism of fire that John the Baptist warned his hearers about. And the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ was their next expectation – whether alive at the time, or raised from the dead to experience it (see 1 Pet.4:5-7, cited previously).

> "because it is **<u>the season of the judgment</u> to begin** from <u>the house of God</u>, and if first from us, what will be the end of those being <u>unpersuaded</u> toward the

> gospel of God? And if the righteous one **is scarcely saved**, the irreverent and sinful – where will he appear?" 1 Pet.4:17-18

Here is another time marker, "season of judgment", pointing to "the Lord's day", just as "last seasons", "last times", and "last days" (Jam.5:3) did. Although "the house of God" is frequently a reference to the Sanctuary, here it is an obvious reference to the faithful, "Whose house are we" (Heb.3:6). I have translated Gk. *apeitheō* above as "unpersuaded", while others have rendered it "disobedient". It is a strong word, conveying an unwillingness to be persuaded – "rebellious" may capture the emphasis even better. Dathan, the opponent of Moses, was such a one. Will a pre-millennial kingdom be preceded by a time of judgment for Israelites, including the "unpersuaded" among them? Will it begin with a time when "the righteous one is scarcely saved"? No, this remnant salvation is an earmark of "the day of the Lord" leading into the Millennium. So then, a millennial salvation was Peter's expectation.

> "Therefore, I encourage elders among you, the fellow-elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, the sharer even of **the glory about to be revealed** (Gk. *apokaluptō*), shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not compulsorily, but willingly according to God, neither greedily but eagerly, nor as overpowering those *given* shares, but becoming patterns for the flock, and **the Chief-Shepherd having appeared**, you will receive **the unfading crown of the glory**." 1 Pet.5:1-4

A crown was twice promised to Overcomers (Rev.2:10; 3:11), whose reward will be in the Millennium. "The glory about to be revealed" (or 'unveiled') will be the glory of Jesus Christ at His Apocalypse, when the Chief Shepherd appears (Gk. *phaneroō*). Note that 1 Joh.2:28 (see below) equates His appearing (*phaneroō*) with His *Parousia*. This expectation applied during Acts, and it will resume at Daniel's final "seven".

> "for thus will be richly supplied to you **the entrance into the aionian kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ**. Therefore, I will always be about to remind you concerning these things, although you *are* knowing *them* and having been established in the present truth. And I consider *it* right, as long as I am in this dwelling to awaken you by remembrance, knowing that swiftly is the

> removal of my dwelling, according as also our Lord Jesus Christ indicated to me. And I will be diligent even at all times to have you making to yourselves the remembrance of these things after my exit. For not having followed cleverly-made myths, we made known to you **the power and *Parousia* of our Lord Jesus Christ**, but having become eyewitnesses of That One's majesty."
>
> 2 Pet.1:11-16

The unifying context here was Peter's reminding his hearers of "the present truth" – the implication being its relevance, and perhaps also its imminence. The "aionian kingdom" which they waited for was to include His kingly presence, or *Parousia*. Peter's "eyewitness of That One's majesty" at His *Parousia* was his presence at the Transfiguration vision – a preview of His *Parousia* majesty. Peter used an interesting play on words between their "entrance" (Gk. *eisodos*) into the kingdom, and his "exit" (Gk. *exodos*) from earthly life. And His *exodos* is what the transfigured Jesus conferred about, in the vision of Moses and Elijah (Luk.9:31).

The text above continued the eyewitness report here –

> "For having received from God *the* Father, of such a voice validating Him, by the majestic glory, 'My Son, My Beloved, This One is *He* in Whom I was well-pleased.' And we heard this voice, having validated from heaven, being with Him in the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word founded, which we do well heeding, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until when a day may dawn and a morning-star (*KJV*, 'day-star') may arise in your hearts."
>
> 2 Pet.1:17-19

Peter continued to recount his experience at the Transfiguration, where Christ appeared in "majestic glory". The glory there shown to men was a prophetic representation of Christ at His *Parousia*. Although "morning-star" above may bring to mind the Revelation, it is the Gk. *phōsphoros* (*hapax*), literally "light-bearer", while in Rev.2:28; 22:16 it is Gk. *astēr prōinos,* literally "morning star". The connection between the two is tenuous, at best. Thayer and Moulton & Milligan both indicate *phōsphoros* could be a reference to the planet Venus, and Thayer cites some non-Biblical sources for this. Since this star arises in their hearts, we must treat it metaphorically as a bringing of light upon all the dark

sayings of prophecy. All will be made clear when the Transfiguration vision becomes glorious reality. But that will be millennial.

The next verse says something generally true of prophecy –

> "Realizing this first, that <u>every prophecy</u> of Scripture comes not of <u>its own</u> (Gk. *idios*) <u>explanation</u>." 2 Pet.1:20

"<u>Explanation</u>" (Gk. *epilusis*) has the equivalent verb *epiluō*, used concerning how Jesus taught – "He **was explaining** (*epiluō*) <u>all things</u> to <u>His own</u> (Gk. *idios*) disciples" (Mar.4:34 – i.e., "the secret of the kingdom of God" in v.11). Another parallel between these two texts is: "<u>every prophecy</u>" (Gk. *pasa prophēteia*) and "<u>all things</u>" (Gk. *panta*). My impression is that even the enlightened apostles struggled at times to understand the things spoken by the prophets. Paul, in his final letter of Scripture, requested Timothy to bring him "the books, especially the parchments" (2 Tim.4:13). Is it any wonder that since the time of Holy Spirit enlightenment of "apostles and prophets", we ordinary men have come up with such diverse explanations for prophecy? Indeed, we continue to struggle with "<u>every prophecy</u>".

> "But there came also false-prophets among the people, as also among you **there will be false-teachers**, who will bring in *secretly* divisions of destruction, and denying the Master having bought them, **bringing upon themselves <u>swift</u> destruction**. And many will follow after their sensualities, on account of whom **the way of the truth will be blasphemed**. And in greed they **will exploit you with invented words**, to whom **<u>the long ago condemnation</u> is not idle and their destruction sleeps not**. For if God spared not angels having sinned, but having Tartarized *them* by chains of gloom, He delivered *them*, being **kept for judgment**. … *then the* Lord knows how to **deliver** *the* reverent **from testing**, but the unjust to be kept, **being <u>pruned for a day of judgment</u>**." 2 Pet.2:1-4, 9

These pseudo-teachers will be teachers of the lie, who will initiate the great apostasy that Paul warned about (2 Th.2:3-11). Their destruction is described as "<u>swift</u>" (Gk. *tachinos*), one of the characteristics of the Revelation visions. "<u>The **long ago** (Gk. *ekpalai*) **condemnation**</u>" began with the angels who sinned and were jailed in Tartarus (another name for the Abyss), awaiting their destruction. A similar condemnation awaited these false-teachers, who apparently had not arisen

yet. All such sinners will find their part in the Furnace of Fire. Those on the Lord's left at His judgment of the nations will go "into aionian fire which *is* prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mat.25:41), and this is also referred to as going away "into aionian pruning (Gk. *kolasis*)" (Mat.25:46). The metaphorical sense of this word "prune" is to curb or restrain, and it is a disciplining punishment that is often meant. Here in 2 Peter the unjust Jew will be kept, "**pruned** (Gk. *kolazō*) **for a day of judgment**". One can picture a grapevine being pruned, with the prunings tossed into a fire. The Gehenna of Fire will be fed with such prunings. The "pruning" could apply to either the useless branches pruned off, or to the vine being pruned back. From the vine's perspective, a pruning may be painful, but it is ultimately corrective and beneficial. Is pruning an expectation before a pre-millennial kingdom? No, the Millennium is in view here in 2 Peter.

> "knowing this first, that **at the last days** will come mockers with mocking, conducting themselves according to their own passions, and saying, 'Where is **the promise of His *Parousia***? For from when the fathers slept, all things remain thus from creation's beginning.' For this is hidden to them willingly, that *the* heavens were long ago and earth, having consisted out of water and through water by the word of God, by which the then-world by water having been flooded was destroyed. But the present-heavens and the earth, by the same word having been treasured up, are being kept **for fire for a day of judgment and destruction** of the irreverent men. But let this one thing not be hidden to you, beloved, that one day with the Lord *is* as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. *The* Lord is not negligent of the promise, as some consider negligence, but He waits patiently for us, not intending any to **perish**, but all to make room for repentance. But ***the* day of *the* Lord comes as a thief**, in which **the heavens will pass away loudly, and elements being burned will be dissolved, and earth and the works in it will be discovered**. Thus **all these being dissolved**, what sort ought you to be in holy manners and reverences, looking for and striving for **the *parousia* of the day of God**, by which **heavens being on fire will be dissolved and elements burning up will melt**? But **we look for new heavens and new earth according to His promise**, in which righteousness dwells." 2 Pet.3:3-13

More "last days" reminders from Peter here – fiery destruction, judgment, *Parousia*, day of the Lord coming "as a thief" (see Rev.3:3). Although some

expositors interpret "*the* day of the Lord" differently from "the day of God", the context above is one run-on text about fiery destruction. What has caused the confusion here is the reference to "new heavens and new earth", bringing some to the conclusion that "the day of God" comes after the Millennium. Just because "new heaven and new earth" are mentioned at Rev.21:1, after the mention of the thousand years in which Satan will be chained, does not mean they will be post-millennial. What John recorded in Revelation was a succession of visions, and not typically a chronology of events. Else why is the destruction of Babylon spread across chapters 14, 16, 17 and 18? Principally, John said such things as "after these things I saw (or heard)". Chronology can be established where John numbered the seals, trumpets, and bowls (plagues) of judgment – also in chapter 20 concerning the thousand years and its aftermath of "the little season". "New heavens and new earth", along with a new Jerusalem, are the subjects of Isa.65:17-18; 66:20-22, but these are in a context of regathering Israel from their dispersions. Their gathering will be before the Millennium, with new heavens and new earth replacing those marred by fiery destruction in the day of the Lord. Also, New Jerusalem is the hope of the Overcomer during his Great Tribulation (Rev.3:12), as well as Abraham's hope (Heb.11:9-10). Must they wait around another thousand years after resurrection, before they receive their reward? Despite where in Revelation John recorded his vision of "the bride, the Lamb's wife", its being called out as one of the Overcomers' rewards indicates a more immediate occupancy. Peter's opening quote of the mockers, "Where is the promise of His Parousia?" shows the millennial perspective of this text, and its fiery judgment (Great Tribulation) beforehand.

> "I write to you, young men, because you **have overcome** the wicked one"
>
> 1 Joh.2:13, 14

I have included this text, because "overcome" (Gk. *nikaō*, or "be victorious") and "victory" (Gk. *nikē*) are favorite words of John, occurring 7 times in 1 John and 17 times in Revelation. Being an Overcomer is an end-time (*Sunteleia*) ambition, and what they will overcome is tribulation, testing and finally, persecutions of the Beast.

> "Little ones, it is *the* **last hour**, and according as you heard that **Antichrist comes**, even now many antichrists have come, from which you recognize that it

> is *the* **last hour**. They went out from us, but they were not from us, for if they were from us, they had remained perhaps with us – but so that they might appear that they are not all from us." 1 Joh.2:18-19

Their expectation of Antichrist was being preceded by many antichrists – that is, false-apostles of the lie, the beginning of the great apostasy. "Hour" is John's favorite time marker, occurring twice in the text above, 26 times in his Gospel, and 10 times in Revelation. "Last hour" belongs with "last days", "last season" and "last time" as indicators of the end-time (*Sunteleia*). John may appear to contradict himself about those going out from him, but interpret his words this way – they went out "from us" (i.e., physically, and of their own volition), but they were "not from us" (i.e., sent by us). John does more with fewer words than most of the NT writers. For example, his Gospel is not the shortest in word-count, but it uses the smallest lexicon (1,010 words) of the four.

> "And now, little children, remain in Him, so that **when <u>He may appear</u>** (Gk. *phaneroō*), we have boldness and may not be ashamed **at His *Parousia***." 1 Joh.2:28

His kingly Presence on earth was their expectation, and it was equivalent to <u>His appearing</u>.

> "Beloved, now we are children of God, and not yet does it appear (Gk. *phaneroō*) what we will be. We know that **when <u>He may</u> <u>appear</u>** (*phaneroō*), we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." 1 Joh.3:2

This anticipates being like Him at the "former resurrection" (Rev.20:5-6), and recall that His future "<u>appearing</u>" per 1 John 2:28 is also His *Parousia*. This is the beginning of the Millennium, not a pre-millennium.

> "And every spirit which professes not Jesus is not from God. And this is that **from the Antichrist**, whom you have heard that he comes. Even now it (i.e., *spirit of Antichrist*) is <u>already in the world</u>." 1 Joh.4:3

The spirit of the Antichrist "<u>already in the world</u>" is equivalent to Paul's warning, "the Secret of Lawlessness is already at-work" (2 Th.2:7). These were an immediate prelude to Daniel's final "seven".

> "Love has been perfected with us by this – that **we may have <u>boldness</u> in <u>the Day of Judgment</u>**, because just as That One is, even are we in this world."
>
> 1 Joh.4:17

"<u>The Day of Judgment</u>" is emphatic, with definite articles before both nouns. This is a reference to God judging the world after the final "half-seven". This text repeats the hope for "<u>boldness</u>" (not shame) at His *Parousia*, as above in 1 Joh.2:28.

> "because **many deceivers** have gone out into the world, who *are* not professing Jesus Christ coming in *the* flesh. This is **the deceiver and the antichrist**."
>
> 2 Joh.1:7

Great deception was to precede "the day of Christ", including the *parousia* of "the lawless one", when "God sends them an energizing of deceit, for them to believe the Lie." (2 Th.2:1-12). These are activities of the Great Tribulation. No pre-millennial peace and prosperity are to be found.

> "But you, beloved, remember the words which *were* spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they said to you that **at the last time there will be mockers**, going according to their own passions of the irreverences." Jud.1:17-18

This is like Peter's warning, "**at the last days** will come mockers with mocking, conducting themselves according to their own passions, and saying, 'Where is **the promise of His *Parousia***?" (2 Pet.3:3-4). So we need to infer the Lord's *Parousia* in Jude's testimony also.

I have chosen not to include here practically the whole of the Revelation, which is principally about "the Lord's day". The greater part of the Revelation deals with the Tribulation and the *Parousia*, and it was written with urgency for the Overcomer. If a pre-millennial kingdom is to be so prominent and prolonged, as Sellers taught, why is there no mention of it in Revelation? If a whole book was devoted to the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, including details of the Great Tribulation culminating in His *Parousia*, then why do we not find a similar book or amount of Scripture devoted to a pre-millennial kingdom? Additionally, the events of Revelation were said to be "near" (Rev.1:3; 22:10), and they were potentially

near for believers during the Acts period. That nearness would necessitate that any pre-millennial aspect of the kingdom must be short, not centuries long.

Appendix B: The Number of His Name

Apart from Antiochus Epiphanes' desecration of the Temple, which triggered the Maccabean Revolt, when did an "abomination of desolation" ever stand in the holy place? (Mat.24:15) This "holy place" (Gk. *topos hagios*) must refer to the Temple, as all of its seventeen *LXX* occurrences apply to it, except Psa.24:3, which has God's heavenly habitation in view. Because Jesus' prophecy concerning "the abomination of desolation" reinforces Daniel's prophecy (Dan.11:31; 12:11), it demands validated testimony as to its having been fulfilled, not hearsay evidence, which is how I would characterize preterism's use of Josephus' *Wars*. By the way, Josephus is silent about the abomination of desolation – both in his account of the invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes, and in that of the Roman destruction of the Temple.

Some in Israel wished to see Daniel's prophecy "fulfilled" by Antiochus Epiphanes. They were wrong. So, when did "the Man of Sin" ever sit in God's temple making out that *he* was God? (2 Thes.2:1-4). Or where is there credible testimony that this happened between 30 and 70 AD? Jesus in Matthew 24 and Paul in 2 Thessalonians spoke futuristically, so you cannot apply these to the historical figure Antiochus Epiphanes, who was at best a typical fulfillment. However, one can see the association between the "Man of Sin" and the Satanic Beast of Revelation 13, healed of a mortal wound (appearance of resurrection), mouth full of blasphemies against God, great power to work miracles through his prophet, having the worship of men, and having a name which by Gematria computes to 666. Revelation does provide these specific criteria to verify its fulfillment, whenever it may occur.

By an ingenious transliteration into Hebrew consonants, *nrwn qsr* (the equivalent in Heb. would be נרון קשר) has been derived from the Gk. *Nerōn Kaisar*, which is equivalent to the Latin *Nero Caesar* – to provide a total of 666. But I must point out that this solution conveniently ignores the *iota* (*yôd*) in *Kaisar*, and uses a Heb. *qôph* for the Gk. *kappa* rather than a Heb. *kaph*, which is the more natural choice. Further, it ignores the fact that final-*nûn* (ן) is written differently than *nûn* (נ), and its Gematria value is 700, instead of 50. So this path to 666 is a sleight-of-hand solution. *Nrwn kysr* would be the natural Hebrew equivalent, if one were seeking an unbiased solution. Depending on whether "s" is transliterated as *sâmêk*

(ס) or *sîn* (ש), one gets for the number of this name in Hebrew either 1,246 or 1,486.

Given that John wrote the Revelation in Greek, his Gematria solution will likely be found in the Hellenization of some name, and not a Hebraization of a Hellenization of a Latin name. Further, the Gk. Gematria of *Nerōn Kaisar* is actually 1,337, and not the required 666.

Decades ago I created a Gematria engine to analyze words, phrases and sentences taken from the Greek and Hebrew Bible texts – and I have performed many such studies over the years. The reason you have not seen any Gematria evidence or interpretations for texts in this book is that I found most of this effort inconclusive. What I have striven for in Bible study is clarity, not ambiguity. My ambition as a teacher is much like Paul's –

> "I desire to speak five works through my mind, so that I might also instruct others, rather than ten thousand words in a 'tongue'" 1 Cor.14:19

Massaging words to match numbering schemes is folly.

But the real crux in analyzing the identity of the Beast is this –

- Whenever did Nero recover from a mortal wound? (Rev.13:3)
  - His mortal wound was the suicidal plunge of a dagger into his own throat.

- When did Nero ever enjoy the worship of the people? (Rev.13:4)
  - He was greatly unpopular among the ruling classes, who plotted against his life on at least two occasions, and those who knew him best considered him a fop.

- When did Nero sit in the temple of God pretending to be God? (2 Th.2:4)
  - Nero was dead years before Roman soldiers entered and burned the Jerusalem temple. No Roman set himself up as "God" there at any time.

The account of the Beast beginning at Rev.13:2 aligns with Dan.7:3-7, especially the fourth beast with the 10 horns and the mouth speaking great things – and particularly "Little Horn". Little Horn will be judged by the "Ancient of Days", slain, and his body given to the flame (Dan.7:9-12). When was this fulfilled with Nero? No, Nero no more fulfilled end-time prophecy than any other Roman emperor. The prophetic type here was Antiochus Epiphanes, a Greek ruling

Palestine from Syria. And Syria together with Egypt are the successors of Alexander's empire – as explained earlier in this book (chapter, **"Mystery, Babylon the Great"**), these are the two iron legs of Nebuchadrezzar's dream image. The real "Man of Sin" has yet to appear. It seems to me that some people have attached their Beast preference to Nero, first because they have already misinterpreted the iron legs of Nebuchadrezzar's dream as the Roman empire. And Nero was its emperor – albeit an absentee emperor – at the beginning of the Jewish Revolt in AD 68. But Nero is a poor choice for the Beast on *every* count.

Appendix C: The Prosperity (or Disaster) Doctrine

The following texts are a partial listing of OT references describing the earthly blessings promised to Israel under the Mosaic covenant. And they include texts where Yahweh either threatened to withdraw, or did withdraw those blessings. Thus the promises of abundance, when withdrawn, meant poverty and famine. And the promises of peace, security and conquest of enemies, when withdrawn, meant war, dissolution, depopulation and captivity for the Nation.

I culled the lists below from Leviticus 26, the later chapters of Deuteronomy, Psalms, a few examples from Proverbs, and both the Major and Minor Prophets. As extensive as they may appear, they are hardly complete. I am hoping that the sheer magnitude of this incomplete inventory will demonstrate to you how thoroughly ingrained in the Mosaic covenant are the physical, earthly promises. And given the abundance of these OT texts, if a pre-millennial kingdom of peace and prosperity for 500 to 700 years was the next expectation of Acts-period believers, why is the NT so silent about it. The NT corroboration of these OT texts is in the very last chapters of Revelation – but that concerns millennial and post-millennial blessings.

Red citations must pertain to a resurrected people

Prosperity, Abundance

In General: **Deu.**28:2-3,6,8,11,16,19-20,29,30-32,47; 29:5,9; 30:5,9; 31:17,21,28; 32:35; 33:11,13-16,19,24; **Psa.**25:13; 68:6,9,13,19; 84:11; 85:12; 90:17; 106:4-5; 112:2-3; 113:7-9; 115:14; 118:25; 144:13-14; 149:4; **Isa.**3:7,18-24; 5:17,24; 23:18; 24:1-9; 32:13-14; 33:9; 51:2; 58:12,14; 60:5-9,11,13,16-17; 61:4,6; 65:10,13,17,21-23; 66:11; **Jer.**6:12; 7:23; 9:19; 10:20-21; 15:8,13; 16:9-10; 17:3,7-8; 18:9-10,15-16; 20:5; 22:21,30; 31:4,8-10,14; 31:27-28; 32:15,41-44; 33:6-7,9,12-13; 42:8-12; 44:22-23; 45:4-5; **Lam.**3:17,38; 5:21; **Eze.**7:20-22; 16:10-13,17-18; 23:26,28-29,46; 28:26; 34:26-27; 36:4-5,10-11,33,35-36; 37:26; 38:12; **Dan.**9:11; **Hos.**2:5-12,15,22-

23; **Amo.**4:10; 6:1,11; 9:13-15; **Mic.**1:6-7; **Zep.**1:13; **Hag.**1:5-7; **Zec.**1:17; 2:4; 5:1-4; 7:7; 14:14; **Mal.**4:2

Food: **Lev.**26:4-5,10,16,20,26; **Deu.**28:4-5,11-12,17-18,24,48,51; 29:6; 30:9; 31:20; 32:13-15,22,24; 33:28; **Psa.**22:26,29; 23:1; 34:9-10; 37:19,25; 67:6; 72:16; 81:10,16; 103:5; 104:14-15; 107:9,36-38; 111:5; 125:5-6; 128:2; 136:25; 145:15-16; 146:7; 147:14; **Isa.**1:19; 3:1,10-11; 4:2; 5:10,13; 8:21; 9:20; 14:30; 17:4-6; 25:6; 30:20, 23-24; 32:10-12,15-16; 33:16; 49:9-10; 51:19; 62:8-9; **Jer.**2:7; 3:3,24; 5:7,17,24-25; 7:20; 8:13; 11:5,22; 14:1-18; 15:2; 16:4; 18:21; 19:9; 21:7; 24:10; 27:8,13; 29:17-18; 31:5,12; 32:22,24,36; 34:17; 37:21; 38:2,9; 40:12; 42:16-17,22; 44:12-13,27; 52:6; **Lam.**1:11,19; 2:12,19-20; 4:5,8-10; 5:9-10; **Eze.**4:16-17; 5:10-12,16-17; 6:11-12; 7:15,19; 12:16; 14:13,21; 16:13,19; 20:6,15; 34:29; 36:8-9,29-30,34-35; 44:29-30; 47:10,12; 48:18-19; **Hos.**4:10; 9:2; 11:4; 13:6; **Joe.**1:2-20; 2:14,19,22-26; 3:18; **Amo.**4:6-9; 5:11,16-17; 7:1-2; **Mic.**6:14-15; 7:1; **Hag.**1:9-11; 2:15-19; **Zec.**8:12; 9:17; 10:1; **Mal.**3:9-11

Health & Healing: **Lev.**26:16,25; **Deu.**28:21-22,27-28,35,59-61; 29:22; 32:24; 34:7; **Psa.**31:3-4,8; 88:1-18; 91:3,6,10; 103:3; 146:8; 147:3; **Isa.**3:17; 33:24; 35:5-6; 38:1-5; 42:7; 58:8,11; **Jer.**21:6-7; 24:10; 27:8,13; 28:8; 29:17-18; 32:24,36; 34:17; 38:2; 42:17,22; 44:13; **Eze.**5:12,17; 6:11-12; 7:15; 12:16; 14:19-21; 33:27; 47:12; **Dan.**1:11-16; **Mic.**6:13; **Hab.**3:5

Natural Hazards: **Lev.**26:6,22; **Deu.**28:38-40,42,59; 29:22-23; 32:23-24; **Psa.**91:10-15; 107:28-29; **Isa.**11:6-9; 35:9; 65:25; **Jer.**5:6; **Eze.**5:17; 14:15-16,21; 33:27; 34:25; **Hos.**2:18; 7:1-2,4-5

Long Life: **Exo.**20:12 (Deu.5:16); **Lev.**26:29-30; **Deu.**4:1,4,26,40; 5:33; 6:2; 11:9; 17:20; 22:7; 25:15; 28:20,22,24,45,61-63,66; 29:20; 30:6,15-16,18-20; 31:17; 32:24,47; 33:6; 34:7; **Psa.**21:4; 34:12-13; 61:6; 91:16; 103:5; 119:17; 133:3; **Pro.**3:1-2,16; 28:16; **Isa.**1:30-31; 5:14,25; 25:7-8; 26:19; 38:16-20; 55:3; 65:20,22; **Jer.**8:3; 20-22; 9:21-22; 14:15-18; 16:4-7; 19:7,11-13; 21:8-9; 27:10,12-13,15,17; 28:15-17; 29:21-22; 33:5; 36:30; 38:2,17,20; 44:7,11-14; 51:5-6,50; **Lam.**1:19; 2:12,21; 3:4,43; **Eze.**3:17-21; 9:5-8; 13:14,22; 14:8-10; 15:7-8; 18:4-32; 20:25; 21:3-4,10-12,14-15; 23:9-10,47; 24:21; 33:2-16,18-19;

Dan.3:17,28; 6:16-22,27; **Hos.**6:5; 13:1-3; **Amo.**5:2-6,14; 6:9; 8:3; **Zep.**1:17-18; 8:4

Offspring & Growing Population: **Lev.**26:9,22,29; **Deu.**28:4,11,18,41,53,55,57; 30:9; **Psa.**89:3-4,29,35-36; 92:14; 102:28; 107:38; 127:3-5; 128:3-4,6; 132:11-12 (David's); 144:12; **Isa.**27:6; 39:7; 44:3-4; 48:19; 66:22; **Jer.**3:16; 9:21; 10:20; 11:22; 14:16; 15:7,9; 16:2-5; 18:21; 22:30; 29:6,32; 30:19-20; 33:20-22 (David's); 36:30; 39:6; **Lam.**2:19-22; **Eze.**16:20-21; 23:47; 24:21; 36:10-11,37-38; **Hos.**9:12-14,16; 13:16; **Zec.**2:4; 8:5; 10:8-10

Inheritance: **Lev.**26:42; **Deu.**4:1,21-22,38,40; 28:8,21,63; 29:7-8,23,28; 30:5,16,18,20; 31:7,13,23; 32:8,49,52; **Psa.**25:13; 37:9,11,18,22,29,34; 47:4; 69:35-36; 105:8-15; 111:6 (for the Nations); 135:10-12; 136:17-22; **Isa.**14:1-2; 26:15; 54:2-3; 57:13; 60:21; 61:7; 65:8-10; **Jer.**3:18-19,24; 7:3-7; 12:15-16 (for the Nations); 16:13-15; 17:4; 22:10,26-27; 23:8; 24:6; 25:5; 27:10-11 (incl. the Nations); 29:10-14,32; 30:3; 31:16-17,21-24; 32:22,41; 33:11-13; 35:15; 42:12; 44:14; 49:1-2; 50:19; 52:27; **Lam.**1:3,18; 5:2; **Eze.**11:17; 20:6,15,28,38,42; 28:25; 33:24-26; 34:27; 35:15; 36:2-5,12,17-19,24,28; **37:14**,21-22,25; 38:8; 39:28; 45:1,4-8; 46:16-18; 47:13-14,21-23; 48:10-14, 21-29; **Dan.**9:11; **Hos.**8:14; 9:3; 11:11; **Joe.**2:18; **Oba.**1:19-20; **Mic.**2:4-5

Good Government

In General: **Psa.**67:2-4; 96:10,13; 101:8; 103:19; 110:1-6; 133:1-3; 144:14; 148:14; **Isa.**9:6-7; 11:13,16; 22:21-25; 55:3-4; 60:17; **Jer.**23:1-5; 30:21; 50:6,8: **Eze.**20:33-38; 37:22,24-25; **Hos.**3:5; 8:4; **Amo.**9:8; **Oba.**1:21; **Mic.**2:12-13; 5:4-5; 7:14

Being Above the Nations: **Deu.**28:1,10,12-13,36-37,43-44,64,68; 30:1,3-4; 32:21; **Isa.**11:10-14; 14:2; 19:17,24-25; 23:18; 45:14; 60:12,14; 61:5-6,10-11; 62:2,7,11-12; 66:12,19-21; **Jer.**3:17; 9:16,25-26; 10:22,25; 12:14; 13:9-11; 15:4,14; 20:4; 21:4,7,9-10; 22:8; 24:1,5,9; 25:9-11; 26:6; 27:7-8; 28:14; 29:4,18; 30:8-9,11; 31:7,36; 32:43; 33:9,24-26; 34:1-2; 44:8,12,22; 51:20; **Lam.**1:1,3; 2:15-16; 3:45-46; 4:15,20; 5:1-6,8; **Eze.**4:13; 5:5-8,14-15; 6:8-9; 7:24; 11:9,16; 12:10-15; 16:14,27,37-40; 17:9-14; 19:10-14; 20:9-10,13-14,22-

23,41; 22:4-5,15-16; 23:23,32; 25:14; 28:24-26; 29:21; 34:28-29; 35:15; 36:4-7,15,19-24,30,36; 37:28; 39:7,27-28; **Dan.**9:16; **Hos.**9:17; 10:10-11; **Joe.**2:17,19; 3:1-8,17; **Amo.**6:1-2,14; 9:7-8,11-12; **Mic.**4:11-13; 5:8,15; 6:16; 7:16-17; **Hab.**1:5-10; **Zep.**2:7-11; 3:19-20; **Hag.**2:21-23; **Zec.**1:21; 2:8,11; 8:13,20-23; 12:9; **Mal.**3:12,17

Jerusalem, Zion, the Sanctuary at its Center: **Psa.**2:6; 14:7; 20:1-2; 48:1-3,8-13; 50:2; 51:18; 53:6; 68:29; 69:35-36; 74:2-7; 76:2-3; 78:68-69; 87:1-7; 102:13-16,21-22; 122:1-9; 125:1-2; 128:5; 129:5; 132:13-18; 134:1-3; 135:21; 137:5-6; 146:10; 147:2,12-14; **Isa.**1:8,26-27; 2:2-4; 4:3-6; 8:14; 14:32; 18:7; 24:10-13,23; 27:13; 30:19,29; 31:9; 33:5,20; 35:10; 37:32-33; 38:6; 40:2,9-11; 44:26,28; 45:13; 46:13; 49:14-23; 51:3,11,16-17; 52:1-2,7-9; 56:4-7; 57:13; 60:7,10-11,13-15,18; 62:1-7,10-11; 64:10-11; 65:18-25; 66:7-14; **Jer.**1:15; 3:14-17; 4:5-6, 31; 6:8,23; 8:5; 9:11;13:27; 14:16,19,21; 15:5-6; 17:24-25, 27; 19:3,7,11-13,15; 22:8; 23:14,39; 25:29; 26:9, 11-12,20; 30:18; 31:6,12,38-40; 32:28-29,31-32; 33:5,16; 34:1-2,22; 39:8; 43:18; 44:2-6,9,21; 50:4-5,28; 51:10-11,24,34-35,50-51; 52:3; **Lam.**1:1,4-11,17; 2:1,4,8-10,13,15-17; 4:11-12; 5:11-12,16,18; **Eze.**4:1-8; 14:22; 15:6-8; 16:6-14,61; 21:22; 22:3-4,19-20; 24:6-10,21-25; chs.40-48; **Dan.**9:12,16-20,24-26; **Joe.**2:32; 3:16-17,21; **Amo.**1:2; 6:7-8; **Oba.**1:17,21; **Mic.**1:12; 3:10-12; 4:1-3,6-13; **Zep.**1:4; 3:1,11,14-17; **Zec.**1:14-17; 2:1-12; 3:2; 6:13; 8:2-8,15,22; 9:8-10; 12:3,8-9

Justice for the Poor & Oppressed: **Psa.**68:5; 72:4,12-14; 75:10; 76:9; 82:2-4; 94:1-6,12-23; 98:9; 99:4; 103:6; 107:39-42; 109:1-31; 119:80-81; 125:3-5; 140:8-13; 141:5-10; 142:1-7; 145:14,19-20; 146:7-9; 147:6; **Isa.**1:15-17,21-27; 3:5,12-15; 4:4; 5:7-8,23; 9:7,17; 10:2-3; 11:3-5; 12:6; 14:30,32; 16:5; 25:4; 26:6-7; 28:5-6,17; 29:19-21; 32:7-8,16; 33:5,15; 41:17; 51:4; 56:8; 59:11; 66:2; **Jer.**5:1,28-29; 6:13; 7:5-7; 8:10; 9:3-9; 11:20; 12:1; 17:11; 20:13; 21:12; 22:3-5,13-17; 23:5; 31:23; 33:14-18; **Lam.**3:33-36,59-66; **Eze.**7:23; 8:17; 9:9; 11:6-7; 12:19; 13:18-23; 18:5-32; 22:6-7,12-13,25,27,29; 33:14-15; 34:2-24; 44:24; 45:9-12; **Hos.**4:1-3; 5:1-2,10; 6:8-9; 7:2-5; 10:12-13; 12:6-7; 14:3; **Amo.**2:6-8; 3:9-10; 4:1; 5:7,10-15,24; 6:3,12-13; 8:4-7; **Mic.**2:1-2,7-9; 3:1-4,8-11; 6:8-12; 7:2-6; **Hab.**1:3-4; 2:6,8-12,17; **Zep.**1:3,9; 2:3; 3:3-5,13; 7:9-14; 8:16-17; 11:15-17; **Mal.**2:4-9; 3:5,18; 4:1

Peace, War & Strife

Salvation from Enemies: **Lev.**26:6-8,16-17,25,31-39, 41,44; **Deu.**4:27, 37-38; 28:7,22,25-26,29,32-34,48-57,68; 29:7-8; 30:7; 31:3-6; 32:25,30-31,40-43; 33:7,11,17,25,27,29; **Psa.**3:6-8; 5:11-12; 6:4-10; 7:1-2,6,10; 9:3-4,13-14; 10:14-15; 13:2-3; 14:6-7; 16:10-11; 17:7-13; 18:1-5,14-19,27,33-48,50; 20:1-2,5-9; 21:1,4-5; 22:4-5,19-21; 23:3-4; 24:5,8; 25:2,5,15,19-22; 26:9; 27:1-3,6,9-14; 28:1-3,6-9; 30:1-3,9-11; 31:1-5,11-13,15-7,22-23; 32:6-7; 33:18-19; 34:4-7,17-22; 35:1-10,15-17,19-26; 36:11-12; 37:7-10,12-17,23-24,31-34,39-40; 38:12-22; 40:10-17; 41:1-2,5-11; 42:5,9-11; 43:1-2; 44:1-7,16,22-26; 46:5-11; 47:1-3; 50:15,23; 51:18; 53:4-6; 54:1-7; 55:3-23; 56:1-13; 57:1-4,6-7; 58:2-10; 59:1-17; 60:1-12; 61:1-4,7; 62:1-8; 63:7-10; 64:1-8; 66:9; 68:12,19-23; 69:1-4,12-19,29,35; 70:1-5; 71:1-5,7,9-16,20-21,23-24; 74:1-12,18-23; 76:2-6; 78:53-55,66; 79:6-12; 80:1-7,14-19; 81:14; 83:2-17; 85:4-7,9; 86:1-7;13-17; 89:19-28,49-51; 91:3-7; 92:9-15; 98:1-3; 102:19-20; 103:4; 106:8-11,43-47; 107:2-7,13-14,19-20; 108:6-13; 112:7-8; 115:9-11; 116:1-9,13,16; 118:5-17,21; 119:81-88,92-95,114-119,121-123,153-159,169-170, 173-174,; 120:1-7; 121:1-8; 124:1-2; 129:1-8; 132:18; 136:23-24; 137:7-9; 138:7-8; 139:19-22; 140:1-7; 143:3-12; 144:1-2,5-8,10-11; 149:6-9; **Isa.**1:7-9,20; 3:2-3,25-26; 5:5-6,9,13,17,25-30; 6:11-13; 7:17-25; 8:4-10; 9:11-21; 10:5-12,17-34; 11:13-14; 13:1-9; 14:4-6,25; 17:9-14; 22:1-4; 24:3; 25:5,9-12; 26:1-6,12; 27:10-13; 28:2-3,5-6,15-22; 29:1-8; 30:16-17,25-26,30-33; 31:4-5,8-9; 32:17-18; 33:1-4,6,16,19,22; 34:2-3,5-17; 35:3-4; 37:6-37; 38:6; 39:6; 40:1-2,29,31; 41:2,8-16,25; 42:13-15,22-25; 43:1-19,28; 45:1-3,7-8,15,17,21-22; 47:6; 48:10-11,14-18,20-22; 49:1-9,12-13,24-26; 50:2,6-10; 51:5-14,17-23; 52:2-5,7-12; 54:7-8,10-17; 55:12-13; 57:18-21; 58:8; 59:1,11,16-20; 60:18,22; 61:10; 62:11-12; 63:1-64:5; 64:9-12; 65:11-12,14-15; 66:4-6,12-18; **Jer.**1:8,13-19; 2:3,15-17, 27-28; 3:23-24; 4:1,4-9,11-31; 5:9-19; 6:1-30; 7:20,32-34; 8:11-22; 9:1,10-22; 10:18-22,25; 11:11-17,21-23; 12:3,7-14; 13:13-14,16-22,24-27; 14:12-19; 15:2-21; 16:4-5; 17:4,17-18; 18:7-8,11,17,18-23; 19:3,6-9,15; 20:4-12,16; 21:4-10,13-14; 22:6-8,11-12,22,24-28; 23:8,12,19-20,39-40; 24:8-10; 25:9-11,15-38; 26:3-6,9; 27:8,13,17; 28:8; 29:17-18; 30:6-11,14,16,20; 31:2,7,11; 32:3-5,23-24,28-29,36-37; 33:5; 34:1-3,17-22; 36:26,29-31; 37:5-10,17; 38:2-3,17-18,23,28; 39:1-9,16-18; 40:1-3; 42:13-22; 43:11; 44:11-14,27-30; 45:4-5; 46:27-28; 50:20,33-34; 51:19-24; 52:4-11,24-27; **Lam.**1:3-10,12-17,20-22; 2:2-

11,15-17,21-22; 3:26,46-48, 52-58; 4:19; **Eze.**5:12,17; 6:2-8,10-14; 7:14-15,24-26; 11:8-10; 12:14-16; 14:17-18,21; 16:40-41; 17:15-21; 21:2-27; 23:22-25,46-47; 24:6-10,21; 33:27-29; 35:5-6,10-13; 38:14-23; 39:1-6,17-21,23-28; **Dan.**1:1-2; 9:11-14,26-27; 11:14,16,28,30-33,41-42; 12:1,7; **Hos.**1:4-5,7; 2:3-4,18; 5:8-9; 7:12-16; 8:1-3; 10:14-15; 11:5-6; 12:13-14; 13:4-16; **Joe.**2:1-11,20-21,32; 3:1-17,19-20; **Amo.**1:2-2:16; 3:8-15; 4:10; 7:7-9,17; 9:1-4,9-10; **Oba.**1:17-18; **Mic.**2:3-4; 3:12; 4:10; 5:5-15; 6:14; 7:7-13; **Nah.**1:12-13; 2:13; **Hab.**1:5-10,17; 3:12-18; **Zep.**1:2-18; 2:4-11; 3:15-19; **Hag.**2:21-23; **Zec.**2:6-9; 7:14; 8:7,10; 9:8-10,12-16; 10:3-8,11-12; 12:2-9; 13:8-9; 14:1-5,9-15; **Mal.**4:3

Safety, Security & Peace: **Lev.**26:5-6; **Deu.**28:65-67; 32:15; 33:12,28; **Psa.**4:8; 9:9-10; 12:5-7; 16:1,8-9; 17:1; 18:30-31; 23:2; 27:5; 28:1; 29:11; 30:6-7; 31:20-21; 33:20; 36:6-7; 37:11,28,37; 40:2; 43:5; 46:1; 47:8; 48:3,8; 97:10; **Isa.**8:14-15,22; 9:3-5; 11:10; 12:1-6; 14:3,7,30,32; 25:4; 44:8; **Jer.**16:19; 23:6; 29:7; 32:37; 33:16; **Lam.**3:17; **Eze.**28:26; 34:25-31; 37:26; 38:8,11,14; **Dan.**1:9; **Mic.**4:4; **Nah.**1:7,15; **Zep.**3:13; **Hag.**2:9; **Zec.**2:4-5

Appendix D: NT Expressions Using “Kingdom”

The **Table of “Kingdom” Expressions** following this introductory discussion contain all NT usages of “kingdom” which apply to God’s kingdom. Therefore, it excludes such texts as Mat.24:7, which speaks of man’s “kingdom against kingdom”.

What exactly is the significance of the various ways in which God’s “kingdom” is described in the NT? They could mean –

1) separate aspects of God’s reign – i.e., dispensationally and temporally separate
2) different perspectives or emphases of God’s overall kingdom

Perhaps the most noteworthy expression is the first in the **Table** below – “the kingdom of the heavens”, found 32 times in Matthew but nowhere else. What is the meaning or emphasis here? Sellers equates this expression with a pre-millennial kingdom (*Sorting Prophetic Material*, p.15), conforming to definition 1) above. Let us see if this interpretation stands up under scrutiny.

First, the lexical emphasis of “kingdom of the heavens” appears to be a reigning from the heavens. Seeing that the Acts period ushered in such a reign from heaven, then this appears to be a good basis for explaining the phrase. In support of this interpretation, look at the way in which Matthew expresses the so-called “Lord’s prayer” –

> “**Your kingdom** come, Your desire come to pass, **as in heaven even upon earth**.” Mat.6:10

Luke does not provide this clarification, but surely his record of a similar prayer is about the same kingdom aspect –

> “**Your kingdom** come.” Luk.11:2 (ABS text and *NAS*)

The Father’s desire being applied upon earth, as well as in heaven, provides the key to understanding Matthew’s unique expression. And a change did come in the

Acts period, as God poured out His spirit upon believers (Joe.2:28; 1 Cor.14:31). But will the Father's desire cease to apply on earth during the Millennium? We might be led to such a conclusion, if "the kingdom of the heavens" is the name uniquely identifying a pre-millennial dispensation of God's kingdom. However, usage of "the kingdom of the heavens" appears to be both pre-millennial and millennial, conforming rather to definition 2) above. This will become apparent as you review the individual "kingdom" texts below.

Note that Matthew also uses "the kingdom of God" a few (5) times, and 16 parallel passages in Mark and Luke use "the kingdom of God" in place of Matthew's "the kingdom of the heavens". Sellers correctly observed that these terms are equivalent.

Whereas Sellers limited "the kingdom of the heavens" and "the kingdom of God" to a pre-millennial kingdom, I believe the evidence shows this to be an artificial definition. For example, examine these parallel passages –

> "many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in **the kingdom of the heavens**, but the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out into the Outer Darkness. In that place will be the Weeping and the Gnashing of Teeth." Mat.8:11-12

> "whenever you may see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in **the kingdom of God**, but yourselves thrown out outside, and they will come from east and west and from north and south and recline at table in **the kingdom of God**" Luk.13:28-29

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets must be resurrected to receive this kingdom, and we have already examined the timing of resurrection as just before the Millennium –

> ""But each one in His own order – First-fruit Christ, afterwards those of the Christ **at His *Parousia***." 1 Cor.15:23

> "But this I say, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit **God's kingdom**…" 1 Cor.15:50

So this reclining at table with the fathers must be millennial, seeing that it requires resurrection, and that resurrection must follow His *Parousia*. And consider that the

"many…from east and west" in distinction from "the sons of the kingdom" will be the nations. Their blessed judgment by the returning Christ is declared at Mat.25:31-34. Is there to be another judgment of nations before this, to accommodate a pre-millennial kingdom? Where is it spoken of?

Then there are these parallel texts –

"some may no wise taste death until perhaps they may see **the Son of Man coming in His kingdom**" Mat.16:28

"some may no wise taste death until perhaps they may see **the kingdom of God having come in power**" Mar.9:1

"who may no wise taste death until perhaps they may see **the kingdom of God**" Luk.9:27

But the coming of the Son of Man (Mat.24:30) *immediately precedes* His *Parousia* (Mat.24:3, 27, 37, 39). In these texts "His kingdom" is "the kingdom of God" and it begins at His *Parousia* – so this expectation must also be millennial.

On the other hand, many other texts on "the kingdom of God", and its equivalent "the kingdom of the heavens", deal with the pre-millennial aspect of the kingdom (e.g., the parables of "the secrets of the kingdom" in Matthew 13). Thus, "the kingdom of God" and "the kingdom of the heavens" express a certain perspective or emphasis of God's overall kingdom, per definition 2) above.

But we can draw out even more equivalences. Based on the expressions of "the Lord's prayer" examined above, then "Your kingdom" is not only the same as "the kingdom of the heavens" but also the kingdom of the Father, because "You(r)" is addressed to Him in prayer. And here are more texts relating to the Father's kingdom:

"the righteous will shine as the sun in **the kingdom of their Father**" – Mat.13:43 (conclusion of Tares)

"I may no wise from the present drink from this product of the vine until that day whenever I may drink it new with you in **the kingdom of My Father**" Mat.26:29

I have earlier drawn out the parallel between the post-Tribulation, post-resurrection shining of the wise in Dan.12:1-3 and the conclusion of Tares. I have also shown that Jesus eating and drinking with His disciples is an earthly undertaking, so He must come back to earth to do so. Both of the Matthew texts above are millennial.

And note these texts that parallel Mat.26:29 above –

> "no longer in any wise may I drink from the product of the vine until that day whenever I drink it new in **the kingdom of God**." Mar.14:25
>
> "I may in no wise eat it until it may be fulfilled in **the kingdom of God** …from the present I may in no wise drink from the product of the vine until when **the kingdom of God** may come" Luk.22:16, 18
>
> "you may eat and drink at My table in **My kingdom**, and <u>you will sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel</u>" Luk.22:30
>
> "you who have followed Me, in **<u>the regeneration</u>**, whenever the Son of Man may sit upon <u>His throne of glory</u>, <u>you will also sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel</u>." Mat.19:28

I have pointed out earlier in this book that the Luk.22:16 fulfillment will be Christ eating the Passover again with His apostles. These feastings and Christ's table will be on earth, and therefore must be millennial. Note here that "<u>the regeneration</u>" (or 'rebirth') must refer to resurrection as the necessary prerequisite for kingdom entry (1 Cor. 15:50), and Christ on His throne of glory is what Mat.25:31 pictures of "the Son of Man coming in His glory" when He will sit upon "<u>His throne of glory</u>". This will be His *Parousia* glory at the beginning of the Millennium. Although the Twelve, and particularly Peter in the matter of Ananias and Sapphira, may have exercised extraordinary authority during Acts, they are not described at that time as being enthroned. Their twelve thrones will be visible seats of judgment, and they must *follow* the very visible enthroning of Christ upon His earthly *Bēma*. To judge Israel from twelve thrones implies that the Nation will recognize the Twelve as authorities in the kingdom. During Acts, only a believing remnant recognized them as authorities.

While it is easy to lay down a few proof-texts as the basis for your doctrine, it is much more difficult to do systematic study that covers the whole of a topic.

Table of "Kingdom" Expressions

Red – *necessarily pertaining to Parousia or after*

1. "**the kingdom of the heavens**" – (32 occs.); "**…**" abbreviates "the kingdom of the heavens" in the citations below

…has drawn near, per John the Baptist – Mat.3:2

…has drawn near, per Jesus – Mat.4:17

…has drawn near, disciples instructed to preach – Mat.10:7

happy the poor in the spirit, because theirs is**…** – Mat.5:3

the persecuted for righteousness, theirs is**…** – Mat.5:10

whoever may break one of the least of these commandments, he will be called least in**…** – Mat.5:19

whoever may do and may teach *them*, this one will be called great in**…** – Mat.5:19

unless your righteousness surpasses greatly that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you may no wise enter into**…** – Mat.5:20

not everyone saying 'Lord, Lord' will enter into**…**, but those doing My Father's desire – Mat.7:21

many from east & west will recline with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in **…** but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the Outer Darkness – Mat.8:11

the lesser in **…**, is greater than he (John the Baptist) – Mat.11:11

from the days of John the Baptist, **…** suffers violence – Mat.11:12

to you has been given to know the secrets of**…** – Mat.13:11

Parable of Tares – Mat.13:24

Parable of Mustard Seed – Mat.13:31

Parable of Yeast – Mat.13:33

Parable of Hidden Treasure – 13:44

Parable of Precious Pearl – Mat.13:45

Parable of Dragnet – Mat.13:47

Parable of Discipled Scribe – Mat.13:52

Peter will be given the keys of**…** – Mat.16:19

who is greater in**…**? – Mat.18:1

unless you become like children, you may not enter into**…** – Mat.18:3

whoever may humble himself as this child is the greater in**…**– Mat.18:4

Parable of the Unforgiving Servant – Mat.18:23

made themselves eunuchs on account of**…** – Mat.19:12

of the like (children) is**…** – Mat.19:14

a rich one with difficulty will enter into**…** – Mat.19:23

Parable of Landowner Hiring Laborers – Mat.20:1

Parable of the Wedding-Feast – Mat.22:2

you (scribes & Pharisees) shut **…** before men – Mat.23:13

Parable of Ten Virgins – Mat.25:1

2. “**the kingdom of God**” – (63 occs.) Blue quotes are *equivalent to “the kingdom of the heavens” texts in Matthew.*

seek first the kingdom of God -- all these will be added – Mat.6:33
see below Luk.12:31 under “His (Father’s) kingdom”

if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God overtook you – Mat.12:28

easier for a camel to pass through a hole of a needle, than a rich one to enter into the kingdom of God – Mat.19:24

the publicans and the harlots go before you into the kingdom of God – Mat.21:31

the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation producing its fruit – Mat.21:43

the kingdom of God has drawn near, per Jesus – Mar.1:15

has been given to know the secret of the kingdom of God – Mar.4:11

Parable of Sprouting Seed – Mar.4:26

Parable of Mustard Seed – Mar.4:30

some may no wise taste death until perhaps they may see the kingdom of God having come in power – Mar.9:1

it is good for you to enter one-eyed into the kingdom of God – Mar.9:47

of the like (children) is the kingdom of God – Mar.10:14

whoever may not receive the kingdom of God as a child – Mar.10:15

how with difficulty those having the possessions will enter into the kingdom of God – Mar.10:23

how difficult it is to enter into the kingdom of God – Mar.10:24

easier for a camel to pass through the hole of the needle, than a rich one to enter into the kingdom of God – Mar.10:25

you are not far from the kingdom of God – Mar.12:34

I may no wise drink from the produce of the vine until that day whenever I may drink it new in the kingdom of God – Mar.14:25

who (Joseph of Arimathea) was himself waiting for the kingdom of God – Mar.15:43

it is necessary for Me to evangelize the kingdom of God – Luk.4:43

happy the poor, because yours is the kingdom of God – Luk.6:20

the lesser in the kingdom of God is greater than he – Luk.7:28

(Jesus) proclaiming and evangelizing the kingdom of God – Luk.8:1

to you has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God – Luk.8:10

He sent them to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick – Luk.9:2, see “the gospel of the kingdom” below

He spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and He was healing – Luk.9:11

who may no wise taste death until perhaps they may see the kingdom of God – Luk.9:27

you having gone away, publish the kingdom of God – Luk.9:60

no one having put the hand to a plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God – Luk.9:62

say to them, ‘the kingdom of God has drawn near to you’ – Luk.10:9

know this, that the kingdom of God has drawn near – Luk.10:11

if I cast out the demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has reached to you – Luk.11:20

Parable of Mustard Seed – Luk.13:18

Parable of Leaven – Luk.13:20

whenever you may see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves thrown out outside – Luk.13:28

and they will come from east and west and from north and south and recline at table in the kingdom of God – Luk.13:29

happy whoever will eat bread in the kingdom of God – Luk.14:15

the kingdom of God is evangelized, and everyone forces himself into it – Luk.16:16

when the kingdom of God comes -- the kingdom of God comes not with watchfulness – Luk.17:20 (2)

behold, the kingdom of God is within you – Luk.17:21

of the like (children) is the kingdom of God – Luk.18:16

whoever receives not the kingdom of God as a child may no wise enter into it – Luk.18:17

how with difficulty those having the possessions may go into the kingdom of God – Luk.18:24

easier a camel to enter through a hole of a needle than a rich one to enter the kingdom of God – Luk.18:25

no one who left house or wife or brothers or parents or children because of the kingdom of God – Luk.18:29

and their supposing that immediately the kingdom of God is about to appear – Luk.19:11

whenever you may see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near – Luk.21:31 NB this parallels the Matthew 24 *Parousia* prophecy

I may in no wise eat it, until it may be fulfilled in the kingdom of God – Luk.22:16

from the present I may in no wise drink from the product of the vine until when the kingdom of God may come – Luk.22:18;
see below “the kingdom of My Father” – Mat.26:29

who was waiting for the kingdom of God – Luk.23:51

except one may be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God – Joh.3:3

except one may be born from water and spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God – Joh.3:5

for 40 days appearing to them, and speaking the things about the kingdom of God – Ac.1:3

they believed Philip, evangelizing about the kingdom of God – Acts 8:12

by many tribulations must we enter into the kingdom of God – Acts 14:22 NB: Great Tribulation just before *Parousia*; and “enter into” is equivalent to “inherit”, and flesh and blood cannot inherit it (1 Cor.15:50)

reasoning and persuading the things about the kingdom of God – Acts 19:8

to whom he explained, earnestly testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them about Jesus and from the law of Moses and the prophets – Acts 28:23

heralding the kingdom of God and teaching the things about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered – Acts 28:31

the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy by holy spirit – Rom.14:17

the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power – 1 Cor.4:20

these *are the* only fellow-workers for the kingdom of God who became a comfort to me – Col.4:11

for your being counted worthy of the kingdom of God – 2 Th.1:5

3. “**the kingdom of our God**” (Father)

now came to pass the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ – Rev.12:10

4. "**God's kingdom**" (or "kingdom of God")

unrighteous ones will not inherit God's kingdom – 1 Cor.6:9

… nor slanderers nor graspers will inherit God's kingdom – 1 Cor.6:10

flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom – 1 Cor.15:50

those practicing the like will not inherit God's kingdom – Gal.5:21

5. "**the kingdom of the Christ and God**"

…or greedy, who is an idolater, has no inheritance in the kingdom of the Christ and God – Eph.5:5

6. "**the kingdom of the Son of His love**" (or "kingdom of His beloved Son")

and removed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love – Col.1:13

7. "**the aionian kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**"

richly will be supplied to you the entrance into the aionian kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – 2 Pet.1:11 (Peter was speaking futuristically – ergo, the Aion is the Millennium)

8. "**My kingdom**" – equivalent to "the Kingdom of God" in part

you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel – Luk.22:30

My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of the world, My servants were fighting… But now My kingdom is not from here.
– Joh.18:36 (3)

9. "**Your kingdom**"

Your kingdom come … as in heaven, even upon earth – Mat.6:10

(Father's)

my two sons may sit at Your right and Your left in Your kingdom – Mat.20:21 (Jesus')

Your kingdom come – Luk.11:2 (Father's)

Jesus, remember me whenever You may come into Your kingdom – Luk.23:42 (Jesus')

The Staff of Justice is staff of Your kingdom – Heb.1:8 (Jesus')

10. "**the kingdom of their Father**" – equiv. "the kingdom of the heavens"

the righteous will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father – Mat.13:43 (conclusion of Tares)

11. "**the kingdom of My Father**" – equivalent to "the kingdom of God"

I may no wise from the present drink from this product of the vine until that day whenever I may drink it new with you in the kingdom of My Father – Mat.26:29

12. "**His kingdom**" (Jesus') – equiv. "the kingdom of the heavens" in part

They (angels) will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks and those doing Lawlessness – Mat.13:41 (conclusion of Tares)

some may in no wise taste death until perhaps they may see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom – Mat.16:28

Gabriel to Mary: the throne of His father David -- of His kingdom there is not an end – Luk.1:33

Christ Jesus Who is about to judge living and dead, and His appearing and His Kingdom – 2 Ti.4:1

13. "**His own kingdom**" (Jesus')

the One calling you into His own kingdom and glory – 1 Th.2:12

14. "His heavenly kingdom"

He will save *me* for His heavenly kingdom – 2 Ti.4:18

15. "His kingdom" (Father's) – equivalent to "the Kingdom of God"

seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you – Luk.12:31
see above Mat.6:33 under "kingdom of God"

16. "the kingdom"

inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the overthrow – Mat.25:34 (to inherit requires resurrection, which will be at Christ's return "in the clouds")

your Father was well-pleased to give you the kingdom – Luk.12:32
this continues v.31 concerning "His (Father's) kingdom"

Parable of Minas – on his returning having received the kingdom
– Luk.19:15

Lord, surely at this time You do restore the kingdom to Israel? – Acts 1:6

all you among whom I went through heralding the kingdom
– Acts 20:25

whenever He may deliver up the kingdom to the God and Father
– 1 Cor.15:24 (after subjugating all enemies)

17. "a kingdom"

Parable of Minas – into a distant country to receive to himself a kingdom
– Luk.19:12

I covenant to you a kingdom, just as My Father covenanted to Me
– Luk.22:29

He made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father – Rev.1:6

I, John, your brother and fellow-participant in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance – Rev.1:9

He made us to God a kingdom and priests – Rev.5:10

18. "The coming kingdom of our father David"

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. Hosanna! – Mar.11:10

19. "an unshaken kingdom"

therefore receiving an unshaken kingdom, let us have grace – Heb.12:28

20. "the kingdom of the world"

the kingdom of the world became our Lord's and His Christ's – Rev.11:15

A. "the gospel of the kingdom" –

proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease – Mat.4:23; 9:35 (but "kingdom of God" in Luk.9:2)

this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world – Mat.24:14 – Note: the *Sunteleia* gospel during Daniel's final "seven"

B. "the word of the kingdom"

hears the word of the kingdom, without understanding it – Mat.13:19

C. "the sons of the kingdom"

The sons of the kingdom will be thrown out into the Outer Darkness – Mat.8:12

the good seed in Parable of the Tares – Mat.13:38

D. “heirs of the kingdom”

did not God select the poor of the world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those loving Him? – Jam.2:5

(again, inheritance require resurrection, which will come at Christ’s return)

Appendix E: Supersession of the Mosaic Covenant

A key to understanding the New Covenant calling of Israel is the fulfillment of Mosaic ritual types by the sacrificial work of Christ. He Himself said –

> "Suppose not that I came to tear down the law or the prophets. I came not to tear down, but **to fulfill**." Mat.5:17

But once a truth has been filled full, it is complete and needs not be added to.

There are various covenants in Scripture, some unconditional and some conditional. The covenant with Abraham was unilateral, unconditional. God alone passed between the bisected sacrificial pieces, while He put Abraham into a deep sleep (Gen.15:8-21). However, this did not preclude Abraham keeping the covenant, by executing the covenant sign of circumcision (Gen.17:2-11). But even further, God attested this about him –

> "For I have known him, on account of which he will command his sons and his house after him, and they will keep *the* way of Yahweh to perform righteousness and judgment, in order that Yahweh may bring in upon Abraham what He has spoken concerning him." Gen.18:19

And Abraham, besides performing what justice demanded of him, obeyed Yahweh in some hard commandments, like leaving the comfort of his home for a nomad's life. And further, the sacrifice of the son of his old age must have been a very difficult command to obey. Indeed, Abraham was tested to the uttermost.

Although the Abrahamic covenant was unconditional in its solemn ritual of initiation, there seem to have been conditions (requirements) which Abraham was faithful to fulfill. So while his covenant was unconditional in terms of God fulfilling His general promise to Abraham's posterity ("seed"), it was conditional in terms of Abraham's personal blessings from God.

The Mosaic covenant was quite different in that the whole nation ratified it, when it was offered to them by Moses on behalf of Yahweh (Exo.19:5-8). This

covenant was a mutually agreed-upon deal between Yahweh and Israel. If Israel kept their part of this covenant, Yahweh would pour out for them immense earthly blessings.

Afterward, the New Covenant was given unconditionally, as it was first revealed here –

> "Behold, days *are* coming – an utterance of Yahweh – and I will cut *the* house of Israel and house of Judah a **new covenant**, not like *the* covenant which I cut their fathers, in *the* day of My strengthening by *the* hand to bring them out from *the* land of Egypt, when **they broke My covenant** although I married them – an utterance of Yahweh. For this is the covenant which I will cut with *the* house of Israel after those days – an utterance of Yahweh – I have given My law within them and upon their heart I will write it. And I will become to them for Elohim, and they will become to Me for people. And they will not teach each his fellow, and each his brother, to say, "Know Yahweh", for all of them will know Me, from least of them up to greatest of them – an utterance of Yahweh – for I will pardon their guilt, and their sin I will not remember any longer." Jer.31:31-34

We could sum up the first part of this statement by, "I will give you a new covenant, not like the old Mosaic covenant which you broke." In other words, God would provide a better covenant to replace the previous one. If ever we feel inclined toward a replacement theology, this is certainly one such. The New would replace the Old. In fact, there is a prophetic type for this in the stone tablets which Moses broke in anger because of the idolatrous behavior of the people (Exo.32:19), and afterward Yahweh wrote His law upon another set of tablets (Exo.34:1).

This New Covenant replacement of the Old is abundantly manifested in the teachings of the NT. I have attempted to provide a robust set of texts below to demonstrate this. Note the contrasts in the cited texts between **Christ** and Moses, **life** and death, **remaining** and perishing, **aionian life** and perishing, **aionian life** and corruption, **the bread of life** and manna in the wilderness, **freedom** and slavery, **righteousness** and sin, **holiness** and uncleanness/ lawlessness, **newness** and oldness, **faith** and works, **faith** and law, **faith** and sin, **promise** and law, **free-gift** and payment, **spirit** and flesh, **spirit** and letter, **mind** and fleshy members, **justification** and condemnation, **blessing** and curse, **heavenly** and earthly, **the**

above-Jerusalem and the present Jerusalem, **rest** and fall, **perfection** and elements – these 24 pairs constitute various means of distinguishing the two covenants.

Additionally, the book of Hebrews is full of comparatives to note the excellence of the New Covenant – **the better things, more excellent ministry, better covenant, better promises, better sacrifices, better hope, better property, better resurrection**. I have flagged these 8 comparatives (and more) with a **bold dark red** font in the texts cited below. When one is offered something "better", will he settle any longer for that which is merely "good"? A Major point of Hebrews is that this "better" had superseded much of the "good" spoken by the old prophets of Israel. And I have used **bold green** font to highlight **those laws that were alternative to Mosaic Law**.

Another feature of Hebrews is its many references to "heavens" (Gk. *ouranoi*) and "heavenly" (Gk. *epouranios*). They appear collectively 16 times in Hebrews, which equals their frequency in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians combined. This heavenly emphasis in Hebrews contrasts with the earthly blessings promised in Lev.26:3-13, Deu.28:1-14 and in many OT prophecies (see **Appendix C: The Prosperity (or Disaster) Doctrine**). For the New Covenant believer (the Overcomer), the heavenly blessings superseded the earthly. That is, the "better" superseded the merely "good". I have flagged the **heavenly** references below with **bold blue** font.

But now, a word of warning. Do not confuse the "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies" (Eph.1:3) with blessings in the New Jerusalem. Although the promise of "the dispensation of the secret" (Eph.3:9), and the New Covenant calling both have a heavenly character, yet they are different. The New Covenant promise belongs "to the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (Jer.31:31), and also to a "graft" from the nations (Rom.11:24). These nations had a specific purpose to provoke Israel to jealousy during Acts (Rom.11:11), and they also had a limited number ("the fullness of the nations" in Rom.11:25). The "dispensation of the secret" blessings belong to "the nations" (Eph.3:6) without respect to the nation Israel. Here is where I must take exception to the common translation of Gk. *ethnoi* ("Nations") as "Gentiles". While a Gentile is a non-Jew, that is not quite the meaning of *ethnos*. In fact, *ethnos* is used of Israel in several places. *Ethnoi* in

Ephesians is a neutral word, whose sense is “peoples”. It even includes Israelites, but not in their covenant relation to God. Therefore, “nations” in Paul’s late-apostleship letters should be given the widest latitude of interpretation, to include Israelites, who have now reverted back to being sons of Eber or Peleg. Peleg is the last of his line listed in the table of nations (Gen.10:25). There is no “Jew first” relationship during “the dispensation of the secret”, as there was during Acts (Rom.1:16; 2:9,10).

Here follow the New Covenant texts that seem to me to bring out the covenantal contrasts most distinctly – I have highlighted in a **larger bright red** font those statements that more clearly indicate the supersession that had come into effect.

Joh.6:27 Work not for the food which is perishing, but **the food which is remaining for aionian life**, which the Son of Man will give to you, for the Father, God, sealed This One.

Joh.6:48-58 “I am **the Bread of Life**. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and died. This is the bread which is descending out of the heaven, so that **anyone may eat of it and may not die**. I am **the Living Bread** which *is* having descended from the heaven. **If anyone may eat from this bread he will live for the *Aiōn*, and the bread also that I will give is My flesh on behalf of the life of the world**.” Therefore, the Jews fought with one another, saying, “How can This One give us His flesh to eat?” Therefore Jesus said to them, “**Amen**, **amen**, I say to you, unless you should eat the flesh of the Son of Man and should drink His blood, you have not life in yourselves. **The one eating My flesh and drinking My blood has aionian life**, and I will raise him at the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. The one eating My flesh and drinking My blood remains in Me and I in him. According as the Living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, and the one eating Me, even that one will live because of Me. This is the bread which was descended from the heaven, not according as the fathers ate and died. **The one eating this bread will live for the *Aiōn***.”

Comment: John introduces his readers to a new food, a new Bread, which was Christ Himself. And of course eating and drinking Him must be taken as

spiritual metaphors. Above all, He became a spiritual, imperishable food for Israel.

Rom.3:19-23 [19] But we know that as much as the law says, it speaks to those **in the law**, so that every mouth may be silenced, and **the whole world may come under-judgment to God**. [20] Therefore **from works of law no flesh will be justified** before Him, for **through law *is the* recognition of sin.** [21] But now **apart from the law, *the* righteousness of God** has been revealed, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, [22] even ***the* righteousness of God, through faith *in* Jesus Christ**, to all those believing, for there is no difference; [23] for all sinned and are fallen short of the glory of God.

Rom.3:27-28 [27] Therefore, where *is* the boasting? It is excluded. By **what law**? **Of works**? No, but **by *the* law of faith**. [28] For we reckon a man to be **justified by faith apart from works of law**.

Comment: Romans 3 introduces this "law of faith" as the basis for justification (righteousness), "apart from works (Gk. *erga*) of law". Note how even that great supersession letter, Hebrews, harks back to the old justification for certain ones under the law – "who (Gideon, Samuel, David, et al.) by faith wrestled down kingdoms, **worked** (Gk. *ergazomai*) **righteousness**, obtained promises" (Heb.11:33). This Hebrews example combines faith and works in a manner similar to Jam.2:21-25. According to Psa.15:1-2, it was one "working righteousness" who had access to the Tent on Mount Zion (earthly). "Law of faith" is mentioned only here in the Bible, but the principle can be seen operating as far back as Abraham's faith ("and he trusted in Yahweh, and it was accounted to him righteousness", Gen.15:6).

Rom.6:4-12 [4] Therefore, we were buried together with Him through Baptism into Death, so that just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, so also we might **walk in newness of life**. [5] For if we have become planted-together in the likeness of His death, rather also we shall be *in* the resurrection. [6] Recognizing this, that **our old man was crucified with *Him***, so that the Body of Sin might be done away with, **us to no longer be enslaved to Sin**. [7] For **the one having died has been justified from Sin**. [8] But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, [9] knowing that Christ, having been raised from

the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion *over* Him. [10] For He died – He died to sin once for all. But He lives – He lives to God. [11] So also you **reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to Sin, but living to God** by Christ Jesus. [12] Therefore, let not sin reign in your mortal body, to obey *it* in its passions.

Comment: In order to attain "newness of life", we must first die. This death comes by being "planted-together in the likeness of His death" and by our reckoning it so. One who has died in any sense (physically, or by spiritual reckoning) "has been justified from Sin". Physical death achieved this under the Law, as Rom.7:1-3 teaches concerning "the law of the husband". Baptism (i.e., the spiritual reckoning of crucifixion, death and burial "with Him") achieved this "by *the* law of faith."

Rom.6:14 [14] For sin will not lord over you, for you are **not under law but under grace**.

Comment: Besides "law of faith", we will see below other expressions of this principle – "the law of God", "the law of my mind", "the law of the Spirit of Life by Christ Jesus", and simply "the law of Christ". These stand in contrast with "the law of Sin" and "the law of Sin and Death". "Law" above in Rom.6:14 is contrasted with "grace", as opposing principles. Hence we find no "law of grace" in Scripture. Law means doing something, while grace means receiving something undeserved. Not all grace is the same, as John's Gospel teaches –

"that out of His fullness we all received, and grace instead of grace, because the law was given through Moses, the Grace and the Truth came through Jesus Christ." (Joh.1:16-17)

All the covenants were gracious gifts from God, and even the law itself was a form of grace – a favor not shared with the nations. But the ultimate grace, "the true grace" (Hendiadys, *Figures*, p.663) came by the sacrifice of Christ. Rom.6:14 expresses even more of this contrast between "law" and "grace". And there is an inferred contrast here, that if sin is not your lord, then Jesus is surely your Lord.

Rom.6:18-23 [18] And having been **freed from Sin**, you were **enslaved to Righteousness**. [19] I speak humanly because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* **slaves of Uncleanness**, **and of Lawlessness** for Lawlessness, so now present your members *as* **slaves of Righteousness for holiness**. [20] For when you were **slaves of Sin**, you were **free from Righteousness**. [21] Therefore, what fruit were you having then, in what things you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death. [22] But now having been **freed from Sin**, and having been **enslaved to God**, you have your fruit to holiness, and **the end, aionian life**. [23] For **the pay of Sin *is* death**, but **the free-gift of God *is* aionian life** by Christ Jesus our Lord.

> Comment: The text here turns on the contrasts between enslavement and freedom, before and after (i.e., 'then' and 'now'), payment and gift, death and life. Sin, uncleanness and lawlessness are the former enslavement, but righteousness and holiness the current service. Picturing this latter service as an enslavement may sound too harsh, but it is literally what applies. Like the Lord's parable about not being able to serve two masters, we serve either the Savior, or Satan and Sin. Each type of service will have its own recompense – either aionian life or death.

Rom.7:1-23 [1] Or are you ignorant, brothers, (for I speak to those recognizing *the* law) that **the law lords over the man for as much time *as* he lives**? [2] For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. [3] So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. [4] So that, my brothers, you also **became dead to the law** through the body of Christ, for you **to become for another, the One raised from *the* dead**, so that we might bear fruit to God. [5] For when we were in the flesh, the passions of the sins that *are* by the law were at-work in our members to bear fruit to Death. [6] But now we have been **released from the law**, having died to what we were held by, so that we may serve **in newness of spirit** and **not *in* oldness of letter**. [7] Therefore, what shall we say? *Is* the law sin? May it not come to pass! But, I did not recognize sin except by *the* law. For even covetousness I had not known, unless the law said, "You will not covet." [8] But sin,

having taken opportunity by the commandment, worked out in me every passion. For **apart from *the* law sin *is* dead**. [9] And I was living apart from *the* law at one time, but **the commandment having come, Sin revived and I died**. [10] And the commandment which *is* for life was found by me, the same *is* for death. [11] For Sin, having taken occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it murdered *me*. [12] So that the law indeed *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. [13] Therefore, has my good become death? May it not come to pass! But Sin, so that it may appear *as* sin, by my good worked out death, so that sin might become exceedingly sinful by the commandment. [14] For we know that **the law is spiritual**, but I am fleshly, sold under Sin. [15] For what I work out, I do not recognize. For not what I desire, this I practice; but what I hate, this I do. [16] And if not what I desire this I do, I agree with **the law that *it is* good**. [17] But now, *it is* no longer I *who* works it out, but Sin dwelling in me. [18] For I know that dwells not in me (that is, in my flesh) *any* good; for to desire is present with me, but not to work out the good. [19] For the good that I desire, I do not; but the evil I desire not, this I practice. [20] And if what I desire not, this I do, *it is* no longer I *who* works it out, but Sin dwelling in me. [21] I find then **the law, in my desiring to do the good, the evil is present with me**. [22] For I delight in **the law of God** **according to the inward man**. [23] But I see **another law in my members**, warring against **the law of my mind**, and taking me **captive to the Law of Sin** which is in my members.

> Comment: "Dead to the law" was quite a radical change for those who had been raised under its "lordship". While the law was both "spiritual" and "good", a man in the flesh is captive to "the Law of Sin" – therefore, death is the only solution, so that "newness of spirit", "the inward man" and "the law of my mind" might rise up in its stead.

Rom.8:2-14 [2] For **the Law of the Spirit of Life by Christ Jesus** has freed me from **the Law of Sin and Death**. [3] For what the law was unable *to do* in that it was weak through the flesh, God having sent His own Son in likeness of flesh of sin, and concerning sin, condemned Sin in the flesh, [4] so that **the righteous requirement of the law** might be fulfilled by us, those walking not according to flesh but **according to spirit**. [5] For those being according to flesh, **mind** the things of the flesh, but those according to spirit, **the things of the spirit**. [6] For **the mind of the flesh *is* death**, but **the mind of the spirit *is* life and peace**. [7] Because **the**

mind of the flesh *is* hatred toward God; for it is **not subordinated to the law of God**, for neither can it be. [8] And those being in flesh cannot please God. [9] And you are not in flesh but in Spirit, since *the* **Spirit of God dwells in you**. But if anyone has not *the* **Spirit of Christ**, that one is not His. [10] And if Christ *is* in (or 'among') you, the body indeed *is* dead because of sin, but **the spirit *is* life because of righteousness**. [11] But if the Spirit of the One having raised Jesus from *the* dead dwells in you, the One having raised Christ from *the* dead will also **make alive your mortal bodies by His spirit indwelling in you**. [12] Therefore then, brothers, we are debtors -- not to the flesh, to live according to *the* flesh. [13] For if you live according to *the* flesh you are about to die; but if **by *the* spirit you put to death the practices of the body**, you will live. [14] For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are **sons of God**.

> Comment: This chapter introduces additional contrasts – two opposing laws, "the Law of the Spirit of Life by Christ Jesus" and "the Law of Sin and Death", because Christ "condemned Sin in the flesh". These bring in the warring factors of flesh and spirit, death and life, hatred and peace. These are at war in the man of faith because he is also yet in the flesh. Note that there is a "walk" required to put the spirit into effect – an *effort of mind* is involved to "put to death the practices of the body".

Rom.9:30-32 [30] Therefore, what shall we say? – that nations, who *are* not pursuing righteousness, obtained righteousness, but a righteousness which *is* from faith; [31] but Israel, pursuing **a law of righteousness**, did not attain to **law**. [32] Why? Because **not from faith**, but as **from works**. For they stumbled at **the Stone of Stumbling**.

> Comment: And here is that great contrast between faith and works. Of course the faith is not faith in oneself, but in Christ as the One Who has effected the New Covenant. Note that the "from" (faith and works) here is Gk. *ek*, and it conveys a sense of "on the basis of".
>
> What are we to make of "the Stone of Stumbling" (both articles, therefore, very emphatic)? Peter combined "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense" with "a stone which the builders rejected" (1 Pet.2:7-8), which Jesus applied to Himself

(Mat.21:42). So Israel "stumbled" at the Christ. The OT source is from the *LXX* of Isa.8:12-14 –

"You will not say 'Conspiracy' to all whom this people say 'Conspiracy'. And you will not fear their fear, nor will you be awed. Yahweh of armies, Him you will sanctify and He *is* your fear, and He *is* your awe. And He will become for a sanctuary, but for **a stone of striking and for a rock of stumbling** to *the* two houses of Israel, for a trap and for a snare to one dwelling *in* Jerusalem." (transl. from the Heb.)

All occurrences of "you" and "your" in this text are plural, indicating a group faithful to Yahweh, not following the crowd in Israel. So Yahweh-Jesus is "the Stone of Stumbling". Without faith in Christ, a "law of righteousness" is unattainable. Even as the law was engraved in stone, it became a "stone of stumbling" to any who tried to keep it by their own efforts, apart from a Christ-directed awe.

Rom.10:4-5 [4] For **Christ *is the* end of *the* law** for righteousness to everyone who *is* believing. [5] For **Moses writes *about* the righteousness which is from the law**, "The man having done those things will live by them."

Comment: A possible translation is, "Christ is the goal of the law" for believers seeking righteousness. One having/ believing in Christ has achieved the law's goal.

Rom.13:8-10 [8] Owe nothing to no one, except to love one another, for **the one loving the other has fulfilled *the* law**. [9] For this, "Commit not adultery," "Murder not," "Steal not," "Bear no false witness," "Covet not," and if *there is* any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, in this, "Love your neighbor as yourself." [10] Love to the neighbor works not evil; therefore **love *is* fulfillment of law**.

Comment: Alternatively we might translate, "love *is* the **fullness** (or completion) of the law". Moses taught the basis of this in Deu.6:5 (love of Yahweh) and Lev.19:18 (love of neighbor). However, it took a New Covenant enlightenment for this "summing up" to touch Israel's heart. Most of the legal

requirements of Mosaic Law become just so much busy work, without this love basis.

Rom.14:1-8 [1] And accept the one being weak in the faith – not to disputes *over* opinions. [2] The one indeed has faith to eat all things, but the one being weak eats vegetables. [3] Let not the one eating despise the one not eating, and let not the one not eating judge the one eating; for God accepted him. [4] Who are you who *is* judging another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. But he will be made to stand, for God is able to stand him up. [5] For one indeed judges a day above a day; but *another* one judges every day *alike.* Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. [6] The one minding the day, minds *it* to *the* Lord; and the one eating eats to *the* Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and the one not eating, eats not to *the* Lord, and he gives thanks to God. [7] For **no one of us lives to himself**, and **no one dies to himself**. [8] For if so we may live, **we live to *the* Lord**; and even if we should die, **we die to *the* Lord**. Therefore, whether we may live or we should die, we are the Lord's.

Comment: Keeping the dietary laws and festival observances during the Acts-period was secondary. Walking by faith was what mattered, and also accepting a brother who had a different practice in these matters. Paul's anti-Judaistic controversies during Acts had to do with the Nations being exempt from the ritual law, principally circumcision, according to the ruling of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:28-29).

Rom.14:14-23 [14] **I know and have been persuaded by *the* Lord Jesus that nothing *is* unclean by itself**; but to the one reckoning anything to be unclean, to that one *it is* unclean. [15] For if because of food your brother is grieved, you **no longer walk according to love**. Destroy not by your food that one for whom Christ died. [16] Therefore let not your good be blasphemed; [17] for **the kingdom of God is not food and drink**, but righteousness and peace and joy by holy spirit. [18] For he who serves Christ in these things *is* acceptable to God and approved by men. [19] Therefore, then, let us pursue the things of the Peace, and the things of the Upbuilding, the one to another. [20] Tear not down the work of God because of food. All things indeed *are* pure, but evil *it is* to the man who is eating by stumbling. [21] Good *it is* to neither eat meat nor to drink wine **nor *anything* by which your brother stumbles**. [22] The faith which you have, have according to yourself before

God. Happy *is* the one not judging himself by what he approves. [23] But the one doubting if he should eat is condemned, because *it is* not from faith. But **all that *is* <u>not from faith</u> is sin**. **Rom.15:1-2** [1] **But we the able ought to carry the weaknesses of the <u>unable</u>, and not to please ourselve**s. [2] Let each of us please the neighbor for the Good, toward upbuilding.

<u>Comment</u>: Again, love was paramount. Although faith rendered all things intrinsically clean to the believer in Christ, some of those believers were weak in faith and still leaning upon Mosaic purification rituals. Here we also find a new definition of "sin" – doing whatever is "<u>not from faith</u>". Implied by the "good" of 14:21 is the sin of anything causing a brother to stumble. The opposing "good" is the edification (upbuilding) of an "<u>unable</u>" brother.

1 Cor.7:17-24 [17] Only as the Lord divided to each one, as the Lord called each one, so let him walk. And so I command in all the churches. [18] Was anyone called being circumcised? Let him not remove circumcision. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. [19] **Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing**, but **keeping God's commandments**. [20] **Each one in the calling in which he was called – in this let him remain**. [21] Were you called a slave? Let it not be a care to you, but if you can even become free, rather make use of *it.* [22] For the one having been called in *the* Lord *while* a slave is *the* Lord's freedman. Likewise the one having been called *while* free is Christ's slave. [23] You were bought at a price; become not slaves of men. [24] Each in what he was called, brothers, in this let him remain with God.

<u>Comment</u>: This "remain as you are" doctrine was because of the "present <u>distress</u>" ('trouble', or 'necessity' – 7:26-27) – it grew out of the urgency of the times regarding the day of the Lord. But note how the New Covenant had rendered a key component of the Law, circumcision, as "nothing". Beyond the Law, it was also the sign of Abraham's covenant. It had now become a triviality compared to the grand expectations of the *Parousia*. There is also an interesting contrast here between (the commandment of) circumcision, and "keeping God's commandments". Although circumcision the eighth day was a commandment of the Law, the New Covenant was concerned with matters of the heart (Jer.31:33 – "My law in their inward part"). Thus it was "circumcision of heart in spirit, not by letter" (Rom.2:29) that had superseded the old fleshy

commandment. Further, that commandment of circumcision was typically done by parents for the male child, before he had any inkling of obedience to God. So putting one's trust in fleshy circumcision for God's favor was rather like putting faith in his own helplessness – futility, indeed.

1 Cor.9:19-22 [19] For being free from all *men,* I enslaved myself to all, so that I might gain the more. [20] And **I became to the Jews as a Jew**, so that I might gain Jews, **to those *who are* under the law, as under the law** (not being myself under law), so that I might gain those under law. [21] **To those <u>un-lawed</u>, as <u>un-lawed</u>** (not being <u>un-lawed</u> of God, but en-lawed of Christ), so that I might gain the <u>un-lawed</u>. [22] I became to the weak *as* weak, so that I might gain the weak. To the all *of them* I have become all things, so that by all means I might save some.

<u>Comment</u>: Concerning the Law, Paul was prepared to keep it or discard it, whatever the advantage was to his hearers. What I have freely translated above as "un-lawed" (Gk. *anomos*) is usually translated "lawless", which I have not used, because the English usually conveys antinomianism (or an "outlaw" attitude).

Gal.2:3-4 But neither Titus who *was* with me, being Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. [4]And because of <u>false-brothers</u> secretly brought in (who slipped in to spy out our **liberty** which we have in Christ Jesus), so that they will **enslave** us,

<u>Comment</u>: Despite his adaptive attitude toward the Law regarding Israelites, Paul was adamant with his Greek disciples to shun circumcision. In the matter of Greek believers, for them to enslave themselves to Jews under the law was wholly unacceptable. These Christian Judaizers he labelled as "<u>false-brothers</u>", one step away from false-prophets.

Gal.2:16 but knowing that a man is **not <u>justified</u> by works of law, if not by faith *in* Jesus Christ**. Even we believed into Christ Jesus, so that **we might be justified by faith *in* Christ and not from works of law**; because **by works of law no flesh <u>will be justified</u>**.

<u>Comment</u>: Being "<u>justified</u>" (Gk. *dikaioō*) was a technical term for being "cleared" or "acquitted" by a judge. The ultimate Judge concerning Mosaic Law would be God. Because of sin in the flesh, there is no acquittal for men

according to their legal compliance under the Mosaic covenant. Only faith in Christ can provide the acquittal needed – but there were also those non-Jews with "the work of the Law written on their heart", their conscience either accusing or excusing their actions (Rom.2:14-16). Paul also wrote of "having no confidence in flesh", but if some had such confidence then he had more – he reasoned that he was "according to law, having become blameless" (Phi.3:3-6). But this was really a sham argument against the false righteousness of the Judaizers – he could out-Jew them all on the basis of such righteousness. Thus, we can begin to appreciate God's unique calling of Paul, as one who was well equipped in the extreme to take on Judaizing adversaries.

Gal.2:19-21 "For **I <u>by law</u> died <u>to law</u>,** so that **I might live to God**. [20] I have been crucified together with Christ. And I live no longer, but Christ in me. And what I now live in *the* flesh **I live by faith *in* the Son of God**, who *was* loving me and delivering up Himself on my behalf. [21] I set not aside the grace of God, for **if righteousness *is* through law, <u>then Christ died for nothing</u>**.

<u>Comment</u>: The death "<u>by law</u>", and "<u>to law</u>" rather repeats the previous thought – "the commandment having come, Sin revived and I died" (Rom.7:9). "<u>Then Christ died for nothing</u>" is about as strong a statement as one can imagine for recognizing the futility of legal righteousness. This put the law thoroughly behind the back of a New Covenant believer as a means of improving his standing before God. It also said, in effect, that for a follower of Christ to hold onto the covenant of law was to toss aside the New Covenant – to refuse its gracious gift. This also makes of a "Mosaic Christianity" a form of apostasy. The lesson here for us all is to be careful in the spiritual truths that we try to follow in our practice. Taking the whole Bible, as our grab-bag of personal promises and commandments, would be a mistake.

Gal.3:2-7 [2] This only I want to learn from you, **did you receive the spirit from works of law**, **or from hearing of faith**? [3] Are you so mindless, having begun by spirit, do you now end by flesh? [4] Have you suffered so many things in vain -- if indeed it was in vain? [5] Therefore the One supplying to you the Spirit and working miracles among you, *is it* from works of law, or from hearing of faith? [6] Just as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. [7] Then recognize that **those from faith – these are sons of Abraham**.

Comment: So stark is the difference between spirit and flesh, faith and works.

Gal.3:10-14 [10] For as many as are from **works of law are under a curse**; for it has been written, "Accursed *is* everyone who continues not in all things which *are* written in the book of the law, to do them." [11] But that no one is justified by law with God *is* evident, because "the just will live from faith." [12] And **the law is not from faith**, but "the one doing them will live by them." [13] **Christ bought us out from the curse of the law**, having become a curse on our behalf (because it has been written, "Accursed *is* everyone who *is* hanging upon a tree"), [14] so that the blessing of Abraham to the nations might come by Christ Jesus, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through the Faith.

Comment: Another stark contrast – living from faith versus living by works of law; being blessed versus accursed.

Gal.3:17-21 [17] And this I say, **a covenant enacted before by God**, **the law** having come after four hundred and thirty years **does not cancel to nullify the promise**. [18] For **if the inheritance *is* from law*, it is* no longer from promise**, but God has granted *it* to Abraham by promise. [19] Therefore, **why the law?** It **was added by reason of the transgressions**, until when might come the Seed to Whom it has been promised, having been commanded through angels by *the* hand of a mediator. [20] Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one. [21] Therefore, is the law against the promises of God? May it not come to pass! For **if there was given a law which is able to make alive**, truly righteousness were perhaps from law.

Comment: The irrevocable promise of inheritance from God – versus the law, which was a later addition to address the failings of those receiving the promise. This gets to *the reason for the law*. The law convicts a man, so that he might see his need for forgiveness by God's grace. Again, the law brings the realization of death, while only God Himself is "able to make alive."

Gal.3:23-25 [23] But before the coming of the faith, we were **being guarded by the law**, being kept prisoner for the faith being about to be revealed. [24] So, **the law has become our pedagogue toward Christ**, so that we might

have been justified from faith. [25] But the faith having come, **we are no longer under a pedagogue**.

Comment: The time of pedagogy had passed, with the coming of faith. This law-pedagogy is likened to a prison-watch. Understanding this, what believer would want to stay in the prison-house of law-keeping?

Galatians 4:3-5 [3] So also we, when we were infants **under the elements of the world, we were enslaved**. [4] But when the fullness of the time came, God sent out His Son, having come from woman, having come under law, [5] so that **He might buy out those under law**, so that we might get back **the adoption**.

Comment: From slaves bought out by Christ to the status of adopted sons. Who would want to stay under law, if he really understood this?

Galatians 4:9-10 [9] But now having recognized God, or rather recognized by God, **how are you turning again upon the weak and poor elements**, to which again from above you desire **to be enslaved**? [10] You observe days and months and seasons and years.

Comment: Those desiring to be under the law were seeking slavery again. What rational man seeks things that are "weak and poor elements", when something more effective is known to him? Would a man attempt to cut down a tree with a pen-knife, if he were given an axe to do the job?

Galatians 4:23-26 [23] But the one, indeed, from the slave-girl has come according to **flesh**, and the one from the free-woman by **promise**, [24] which things are allegorizing. For these are two covenants − one indeed from Mount Sinai giving birth to **slavery**, which is Hagar − [25] and Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia. And it corresponds to **the present Jerusalem**, for it is **enslaved** with her children. But **the above Jerusalem** is **free**, which is our mother.

Comment: More contrasts: fleshy enslavement versus promise of freedom; earthly Jerusalem and "the above Jerusalem". Is it not preferable for us to choose the higher over the lower?

Gal.5:1-6 [1] Stand fast therefore by **the freedom** Christ made us free, and do not be subject again by a yoke of **slavery**. [2] Listen. I, Paul, say to you that if you should be circumcised, **Christ will profit you nothing**. [3] And I testify again to every man being circumcised that he is **a debtor to perform the whole law**. [4] **You were nullified from Christ**, who are justified by law. You **fell away from the Grace**. [5] For we eagerly await hope of righteousness by spirit from faith. [6] For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision exerts power for anything, nor uncircumcision, but **faith being at-work through love**.

Comment: No profit in Christ, "nullified from Christ" – these are more strong statements negating the effectiveness of circumcision – except to enslave. To desire such was literally a "falling away from the Grace", an apostasy. This was a powerless circumcision against a faith working by love (summation of "the whole law").

Gal.5:13-14 [13] For you were called **for liberty**, brothers, only not the liberty for an opportunity to the flesh, but through Love **serve one another**. [14] For **the whole law has been fulfilled in one word**, in this, "**You will love your neighbor as yourself**."

Comment: Liberty, not license. Service and love fulfill (fill up) the law (i.e., its legal requirements).

Gal.5:16-25 [16] And I say, walk by spirit, and you may in no wise accomplish passion of flesh. [17] For **the flesh lusts against the spirit**, and the spirit against the flesh, for these oppose one another, so that not the things you may wish – these you do. [18] But **if you are led by spirit, you are not under law**. [19] Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, [20] idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, contention, jealousy, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, [21] envies, murders, drunkennesses, revelries, and the likes of these; of which I tell you beforehand, just

as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. [22] But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, [23] humility, self-control. **Against the like of these there is no law**. [24] And those of Christ Jesus **crucified the flesh with the passions and the desires**. [25] If we live by spirit, let us also walk by spirit.

Comment: Flesh versus spirit is a warfare. Only the spirit can lead to doing what one desires (i.e., righteous deeds listed above as "the fruit of the spirit"). There is a law against the deeds of the flesh, but against the works of the spirit there is no law. And note how inheritance in God's kingdom depends on a "practice" – this is a pragmatic faith. There is nothing *laissez-faire* about Paul's New Covenant teaching. "Grace" does not mean letting God do it all.

Gal.6:2-5 [2] **Carry the burdens (weights) of one another**, and so **fill up the law of Christ**. [3] For if anyone supposes *himself* to be something, being nothing, he deceives his own mind. [4] But let each one test his own work, and then he will have the boasting for himself alone, and not for another. [5] For each one will carry his own load.

Comment: Carrying the burdens of others completely fills ('satisfies') this new "law of Christ". This is not a case of "you carry mine, and I'll carry yours", because additionally each should "carry his own load". All are not equally endowed with the same strength to carry burdens. The weaker brother will need help with his burdens.

Gal.6:8-10 [8] Because the one sowing to his own flesh, from the flesh will reap corruption, but **the one sowing to the spirit, from the spirit will reap aionian life**. [9] And doing the good, let him not become discouraged, for in its own season we shall reap, not giving up. [10] Therefore, then, as we have opportunity, **let us work out the good to all**, but especially to the householders of the faith.

Comment: Note the two sowings and two reapings. Flesh versus spirit, and corruption versus aionian life. This is not a case of faith instead of works, but works performed from faith to grow the spirit.

Gal.6:15-16 [15] For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but **a <u>new creation</u>**. [16] And as many as will walk by this rule, peace *be* upon them and mercy, and upon **<u>the Israel of God</u>**.

> <u>Comment</u>: The irrelevancy of circumcision is seen here from the perspective of the "<u>new creation</u>" and "<u>the Israel of God</u>". This "Israel of God" I interpret to mean New Covenant Israel, in distinction from Israel in the flesh. Paul had the nations very much in view in his epistles, and "<u>the Israel of God</u>" seems to answer to the olive tree with its wild, engrafted branch (Rom.11:17).

Heb.1:3 … Himself having made **purification of the sins**, He sat at the right of the Majesty in *the* heights

> <u>Comment</u>: Compare Exo.30:10, *LXX*, where Aaron made atonement "by the blood of the <u>purification of the sins</u>". Aaron wrought thus continually by rivers of animal blood, but Christ once for all by His own blood.

Heb.1:9 [9] You loved righteousness and You **hated lawlessness** (Gk. *anomia*). On account of this, God, Your God, anointed You *with* oil of gladness apart from ('from beside') Your companions.

> <u>Comment</u>: This lawlessness which Christ hated was at its root rebellion against God and His good. This had not to do with breach of the Mosaic Law rituals, but the heart-law of loving God and neighbor.

Heb.1:14 [14] Are they not all serving spirits sent forth for ministry on account of those being about to **inherit salvation**?

> <u>Comment</u>: This inheritance of salvation needs to be understood in the light of Heb.2:3 below.

Heb.2:1-3 [1] On account of this it is necessary more so for us to give earnest heed to the things having heard, **lest we might drift away**. [2] For if the word spoken by angels became firm, and every **transgression and disobedience received a just reward** (Gk. *misthapodosia*), [3] how shall we **<u>escape</u>** (Gk. *ekpheugō*), having neglected **<u>so great a salvation</u>**, which having received a beginning to be spoken by the Lord, having been confirmed to us by those having heard *Him.*

Comment: This compares the punishment of those under the law of Moses, the Sinai wanderings in particular, with what might be expected for those transgressing under the New Covenant – "so great a salvation". Note the emphatic "escape" (*ekpheugō*), which Luk.21:36 used of escaping the tribulations expected by that generation. Paul also used this word in 1 Th.5:3 to contrast the sudden destruction (no "escape") that would come upon the "peace and safety" crowd in the day of the Lord.

Heb.2:17 [17] Therefore, He ought to be made like all the brothers, that He might become a **merciful** and faithful **High Priest** *in* the things to God, to **pardon the sins** of the people.

Comment: This is the introduction of the high-priesthood of Christ, the new order of priesthood under the New Covenant. Note how I have altered the *NKJV* "propitiation" to "pardon", as I believe that "pardon" makes more sense in today's English than the archaic "propitiation". To propitiate implies a payback, as if men were ransoming their sins back from God.

Heb.3:1-6 [1]Whence, holy brothers, **sharers of a heavenly calling** (*hapax*, then cp. Joh.3:12, 1 Cor.15:49), consider the Apostle and **High Priest** of our profession, Jesus, [2] Who being faithful to the One having established Him, **as also Moses** *was* **in His whole house**. [3] For this One was considered worthy of **more glory** than Moses, as **much more honor** has the one building it, than the house *itself*. [4] For every house is built by someone, but the One having built all things *is* God. [5] And Moses indeed *was* faithful in His whole house as an attendant, for a testimony of the things which would be spoken *in future*, [6] but **Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house are we**, if only we may hold fast the Boldness and the Boast of the Hope.

Comment: This introduces the heavenly aspect of New Covenant blessings, continues with the high-priesthood of Christ, and compares His "house" with that of Moses – a house of "more glory" and "more honor" than Moses' house. Implied in this is that Christ's high-priesthood applies to the heavenly Sanctuary, while the earthly sanctuary falls under the Aaronic priesthood.

Heb.3:12-19 [12] Beware, brothers, lest there will be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief in the falling away** (Gk. *aphistēmi*, meaning 'apostatize') from *the* living God. [13] But encourage themselves each day, as long as when it is called "Today," lest any of you may be **hardened by *the* deceitfulness of Sin**. [14] For we have become **sharers of Christ** if only we may **hold fast the beginning of the confidence firm until *the* end**. [15] In the saying, "Today, if you may hear His voice, may you not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." [16] For who, having heard, rebelled? But *was it* not all those coming out of Egypt, by Moses? [17] But with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those having sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? [18] And whom did He swear **not to enter into His rest**, but to those having been unpersuaded? [19] And we see that **they could not enter because of unbelief**.

> Comment: Examples from Moses and the Exodus are used to exhort the "sharers of Christ" to hold fast until the end. Endurance was required by both covenants, but apostasy was also a possibility for both.

Heb.4:8-11 [8] For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. [9] Then a sabbath-rest is left behind for the people of God. [10] For the one having entered into His rest, himself also rested from his works, just as God *did* from His own. [11] Therefore let us **be diligent to enter into that rest**, lest by the same Example of Unpersuadedness anyone may fall.

> Comment: The "rest" that Joshua could not provide in his day became the expectation of the New Covenant Overcomer – the Greater Sabbath of the Millennium. Although Overcomers will have roles in the millennial reign of Christ, it will not be the laborious work that they had experienced in the flesh. Compared to fleshy "works", it will be experienced as a "rest" and not as arduous toil.

Heb.5:9-10 [9] And having been perfected, He became *the* cause of **aionian salvation to all those obeying Him**, [10] **having been designated by God as High Priest** according to the order of Melchizedek,

> Comment: Here is more on the new order of Christ's high-priesthood, and His offer of "aionian salvation" – the *Aiōn* of the Millennium was their expectation.

Christ's perfection was explained back in Heb.2:10 "to make perfect the Leader of their salvation through sufferings". He was a thoroughly tested "Leader of their salvation".

Heb.6:1-9 [1] Therefore, having left the word of the beginning of Christ, let us bring *it* to the Perfection, not again laying down a **foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God**, [2] of **doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on hands, and of resurrection of dead ones, and of aionian judgment**. [3] And this we will do if only God may permit. [4] For *it is* **impossible** *for* those having once been enlightened, and **having tasted the Heavenly Gift**, and having become partners of the Holy Spirit, [5] and having tasted *the* good word of God **and powers of an age about to be**, [6] **and their having fallen away, to renew *them* again to repentance**, crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making an example of *Him*. [7] For *the* earth having drunk the rain that is often coming upon it, and is giving birth to herbs useful for those by whom it is even cultivated, partakes of blessing from God. [8] But bringing out thorns and thistles, *it is* disqualified and **near *to* a curse**, whose end *is* for burning. [9] But we have been persuaded concerning you, beloved, **the better things**, even **things having salvation**, if even thus we speak.

Comment: The Heavenly Gift, powers of the coming age, were such a great benefit, that falling away from it left the door of repentance closed. Here the things relating to salvation have become "the better things" – this is the first of several such comparatives, as they relate to the two covenants.

Heb.6:12-20 [12] so that you may not become lazy, but imitators of those, by **faith and patience, inheriting the promises**. [13] For God having promised to Abraham, because **He has no one greater to swear against**, He swore against Himself, [14] saying, "Surely, indeed, blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." [15] And so, having patiently endured, **he attained to the promise**. [16] For men swear against **the greater**, and the oath for confirmation *is* for them an end of every dispute, [17] in which God, determining **to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel**, guarantied *it* by oath, [18] so that by two immutable matters, in which *it is* impossible *for* God to lie, we might have strong encouragement, those having fled to grasp the hope set before *us*, [19] which we have as an anchor of the Life, both sure and steadfast, and **entering into**

the inward *part* of the curtain, [20] where **a Forerunner entered on our behalf**, Jesus, having become **High Priest to the *Aiōn*, according to the order of Melchizedek**.

Comment: The superiority of Christ's Melchizedekan priesthood was guaranteed by divine oath. How are we to understand the "two immutable matters"? It seems here to be God's promise ('counsel'), followed by His oath.

Heb.7:4-7 [4] But observe how great this one *was,* to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. [5] And those, indeed, from the sons of Levi, who *are* receiving priesthood, have a **commandment to collect a tenth from the people according to the law**, that is, from their brothers, although having come from the loins of Abraham; [6] but he not being descended from them has collected a tenth from Abraham and has blessed the one having the promises. [7] And apart from every contradiction **the lesser is blessed by the better**.

Comment: "The better" blesses "the lesser". Thus Christ, after the pattern of Melchizedek, was also greater than Abraham. This hardly needs saying to a faithful Christian, but the Jewish reader of Hebrews needed to hear this statement, plainly and bluntly.

Heb.7:11-28 [11] Therefore, **if indeed perfection** (Gk. *teleiōsis*) **were through the Levitical priesthood** (for the people under it received the law), what need *was there* still **another priest** to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not to be spoken according to the order of Aaron? [12] For **the priesthood being changed, of necessity also a change of the law comes**. [13] For upon the One *Whom* these things are spoken, He has belonged to another tribe, from which no one has attended the altar. [14] For *it is* clear that our Lord has arisen from Judah, to which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. [15] And it is yet **more abundantly** evident if, according to **the likeness of Melchizedek**, there arises another priest [16] Who has come, **not according to a law of fleshly commandment, but according to power of an indestructible life**. [17] For He testifies, "You *are* a priest for the age according to the order of Melchizedek." [18] For indeed **there comes an annulling of *the* preceding**

commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, [19] **for the law perfected** (Gk. *teleioō*) **nothing**, but bringing in **a better hope** *did*, by which we draw near to God. [20] And inasmuch as *He was* not without an oath [21] (for indeed they are become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by the One saying to Him: "*The* Lord swore and will not repent, 'You *are* a priest for the age.' "), [22] according to a **so much better covenant**, Jesus has become security. [23] And the priests, indeed, are become many, because of the hindering by death to continue. [24] But He, on account of His continuing until the age, **has the unchangeable priesthood**. [25] Whence also **He is able to save to the uttermost** (Gk. *pantelēs*) those coming by Him to God, always living to intercede on their behalf. [26] For such a High Priest was even fitting for us, pious, guileless, undefiled, separated from the sinners, and **having become higher than the heavens**; [27] Who has not daily necessity, even as the high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for those of the people, for **this He did once for all, having offered up Himself**. [28] For the law appoints men high priests having weakness, but **the word of the oath, which *was* after the law, *appointed* a Son, perfected** (Gk. *teleioō*) **until the age**.

> Comment: The Levitical priesthood and the Law could perfect nothing, but Christ's priesthood was able to perfect – therefore, there has been a change of priesthood and a change of law. The New Covenant described here as a "so much better covenant", brings with it "a better hope". The One "higher than the heavens" offered one sacrifice, once for all. We should infer from this text that the New Covenant and its oath are that "change of law".

Heb.8:1-13 [1] But *the* sum of the things being said *is*, we have such a High-priest Who sat at the right of the throne of the Majesty **in the heavens**, [2] a Minister of the Holies and of the True Tent which the Lord put up, not man. [3] For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, whence *it is* necessary this One also to have something which He may offer. [4] Therefore, indeed, if He were on earth, neither would He have been a priest, **there being the ones**

offering the gifts according to law; [5] **who serve *as* an example and shadow of the heavenly ones**, even as Moses was warned being about to complete the tent. For He says, "See *that* you will make all things according to the type which was shown to you on the mountain." [6] **But now He has obtained a more excellent service, how much He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which has been legislated by better promises**. [7] For **if that first one was faultless, no place would have been sought for a second**. [8] For finding fault with them, He says: "**Behold**, days come, says *the* Lord, and I will accomplish upon the house of Israel and upon the house of Judah a **new covenant**, [9] not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in *the* day of My having taken them by their hand to lead them out from *the* land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says *the* Lord. [10] Because this *is* the covenant that I will covenant to the house of Israel after those days, says *the* Lord, putting My laws into their understanding and I will write them upon their hearts; and I shall be to them for God, and they will be to Me for a people. [11] And each may in no wise teach his neighbor, and each his brother, saying, 'Recognize the Lord,' because all will know Me, from *the* small up to *the* great of them. [12] Because I shall be merciful to their injustices, and their sins I may in no wise remember again." [13] In the saying, "**new**" **He has made the first old**. **But the one having become old and growing old *is* near disappearing**.

> Comment: Levitical sacrifices and gifts were a mere "shadow of the heavenly ones". If the old covenant had been faultless, a New Covenant would not have been needed. And the Old was "near disappearing" for that generation as these words were written. In a sense the Old was waning, as the New gained adherents.

Heb.9:7-15 [7] But into the second *part* the high priest *went* alone once a year, not without blood, which he offers on behalf of himself and of the errors of the people; [8] the Holy Spirit indicating this, the way into the Holies not yet to have appeared, the first tent having yet a standing. [9] Which *is* **a parable for the season which *is***

having come, according to which both **gifts and sacrifices are offered, not being able to perfect** (Gk. *teleioō*) **those serving in regard to conscience** -- [10] only **concerning foods and drinks, and various baptisms, regulations of flesh being imposed until a season of a new order**. [11] But Christ having come along *as* High Priest of the coming good things, by **the greater and more perfect** (Gk. *teleios*) tent not hand-made, that is, not of this creation. [12] Neither by blood of goats and bulls, but **by His own blood He entered the Holies once for all**, having found **aionian liberation**. [13] For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling on those being made unclean, sanctifies to the purification of the flesh, [14] **by how much rather** the blood of Christ, Who by the Aionian Spirit offered Himself spotless to God, **will cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve *the* living God**? [15] And on account of this He is **Mediator of a new covenant**, so that, death having come, for **redemption of the transgressions concerning the first covenant, *that* those called may receive the promise of the aionian inheritance**.

> Comment: The Old Covenant was a "parable", but now a "new order" had come – and perfection had been achieved by the offering of the Spotless One. Cleansing of the flesh was the effect of "the blood of goats and bulls", but the blood of Christ could cleanse the conscience from (the need for) "dead works".

Hebrews 9:22-28 [22] And according to the law almost everything is cleansed by blood, and **without bloodshed there comes not forgiveness**. [23] Therefore *it is a* necessity, indeed, the copies of the things **in the heavens** to be purified by these, but **the heavenly things themselves by better sacrifices than these**. [24] For Christ entered not into holy places made-by-hand, antitypes of the true, but **into the heaven itself**, now **to appear in the presence of God on our behalf**; [25] nor that He should offer Himself often, even as the high priest enters into the Holies every year with another's blood -- [26] since it would have been necessary Him to suffer often since the overthrow of the world; **but now, once at the end-time (*Sunteleia*) of the ages, He has appeared to set aside Sin by the sacrifice of Himself**. [27] And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the Judgment; [28] so Christ having been offered once

to bear the sins of many, **to those expectantly awaiting Him He will appear a second *time*, apart from sin, for salvation**.

Comment: Earthly sacrifices are depicted as antitypes of the one heavenly sacrifice (note – "better sacrifices" is a plural of majesty, *Figures*, p.531, *Heterosis* of Number). What had applied often since the overthrow of the world to cover men's sins, was now bettered by one sacrifice at the *Sunteleia* of the ages. "To set aside" (Gk. *athetēsis*) applies typically to a nullification of law. Seeing that Sin is also a law ("the law of Sin and Death" – Rom.8:2), then we understand that Christ's sacrifice has nullified this law for those who believe in Him.

Heb.10:1-6 [1] For **the law having a shadow of the coming good things**, not the very image of the deeds, **by the same sacrifices** which they offer continually year by year, **never can perfect** (Gk. *teleioō*) **those approaching**. [2] Since would they not have ceased to be offered? On account of **no one any longer having conscience of sins, those serving once having been cleansed**. [3] But by the very *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year. [4] For *it is* **impossible blood of bulls and goats to take away sins**. [5] Therefore, entering into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You prepared for Me. [6] **By burnt offerings and concerning sin-offering You were not pleased**.

Comment: The Law first as "**parable**", then as "**antitype**", now as a "**shadow** of the coming good things" – these good things are the implied *perfect* cleansing from Sin.

Heb.10:8-22 [8] Previously saying, "Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings, and concerning sin-offering You did not desire, neither were You pleased with *them"* (which things are **offered according to law**). [9] Then He has said, "**Behold**, I come to perform Your desire." **He abolishes the first so that He may establish the second.** [10] By which desire we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. [11] And every priest indeed has stood daily serving and **offering the same sacrifices often, which can never**

remove sins. [12] But **this One, having offered one sacrifice for sins continuously**, sat at the right hand of God, [13] as to the rest, expecting till He may place His enemies as His footstool [14] for **by one offering He has perfected** (Gk. *teleioō*) **continuously those being sanctified**. [15] And testifies to us also the Holy Spirit, for after having said, [16] 'This *is* the covenant that I will covenant to them after those days, says *the* Lord, giving My laws upon their hearts, and upon their understanding I will inscribe them,' [17] and 'their sins and their lawlessnesses I will in no wise remember again.' [18] And **where forgiveness of these *is, there is* no longer an offering for sin**. [19] Having, therefore, brothers, **boldness for the entrance of the Holies**, by the blood of Jesus, [20] which way He initiated for us -- new and living, through the curtain, that is, His flesh -- [21] and a great priest over the house of God, [22] may we approach with true heart, in certainty of faith, **the hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience**, and the body washed with pure water.

> Comment: Abolition of the imperfect sacrifices, to be replaced by the perfect, continuous sacrifice. No more sacrificial offerings for those under the New Covenant, for "those being sanctified" (set apart). Access to the Holies for all the faithful – each such Israelite became, as it were, his own high-priest "for the entrance of the Holies". But "as to the rest" a subjugation of enemies applied. This makes for an election of those under the New Covenant, and not a universal application. Therefore, even the Millennium is not exactly a period of New Covenant for all.

Hebrews 10:26-31 [26] For our sinning willfully after receiving the Recognition of the Truth, **there is no longer left behind a sacrifice concerning sins**, [27] but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a zeal of fire, being about to devour the opposers. [28] Anyone having set aside (Gk. *atheteō*) ***the* law of Moses**, apart from mercies, by two or three witnesses dies. [29] By how much **worse punishment** do you suppose he will be found worthy who was trampling the Son of God, and was regarding a common thing the Blood of the Covenant, by which he was sanctified, and having insulted the Spirit of Grace? [30] For we know the One having said, 'Vengeance *is* Mine, I will repay,' and again, '*The* Lord will judge His people.' [31] Fearful *it is* to fall into *the* hands of *the* living God.

Comment: Even as the blessing side of the New Covenant is so much better (than the Old), so much "worse" is the "punishment" for the willful sinner who has acknowledged that covenant – such a one is seen as "trampling the Son of God", but the position at one's feet is the place for enemies.

Hebrews 10:34-39 [34] For also you sympathized with the prisoners, and the plunder of your possessions you received with joy, realizing **yourselves to have a better property, and abiding**. [35] Throw not away, therefore, your boldness, which has great reward (Gk. *misthapodosia*), [36] for you have need of endurance, so that **having done the desire of God, you may receive the promise**. [37] For yet a very, very little *while*, the One coming will come, and will not delay. [38] But My righteous one will live by faith, and if he should draw back, My soul is not pleased by him. [39] But we are not of timidity for destruction, but of faith for possession of life.

Comment: These New Covenant believers were expecting "a better property" at the coming of the Lord – better than one might expect under the Law, per Lev.26:3-13; Deu.28:1-14. But it was possible to lose out on this "great reward", by drawing back, and not enduring.

Heb.11:13-16 [13] **According to faith all these died, not having received the promises**, but from afar having seen and having acclaimed them, and having professed that they are foreigners and sojourners upon the earth. [14] For those saying such things make manifest that **they seek after a fatherland.** [15] And if, indeed, they remembered that from which they went out, they might have had an opportunity to return. [16] But now they long for **a better**, that is, **a heavenly *one***. Therefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for **He prepared for them a city**.

Comment: A better, heavenly "fatherland" (a city – Heavenly Jerusalem) was the expectation of all Overcomers. The amazing thing is that this applied even to Overcomers who lived before the revelation of these better things. Abraham is one OT exception we know about, who looked for this city (Heb.11:10), and the list of others in Heb. 11 includes others who looked for a better, heavenly fatherland.

Heb.11:35 [35] Women received their dead from resurrection, and others were tortured, not having accepted the deliverance, so that they might obtain **a better resurrection**,

> Comment: "Better resurrection" distinguishes "the former resurrection" (Rev.20:5-6) from the latter ("rest of the dead" in Rev.20:5). And it may further separate the Overcomer from the "saved as by fire" believer (1 Cor.3:15), because Dan.12:1-2 distinguishes two classes of people at the former resurrection, "some to age-abiding life, some to reproaches to age-abiding abhorrence".

Heb.11:39-40 [39] And these all, having been witnessed by the faith, **received not the promise**, [40] God having foreseen concerning us **something better**, lest apart from us **they might be perfected** (Gk. *teleioō*).

> Comment: That "something better" was perfection for the Overcomer, which included a "better resurrection" and attainment of the heavenly fatherland.

Heb.12:2-4 [2] looking away toward Jesus, **the founder and perfecter** (Gk. *teleiōtēs*) **of the faith**, Who against the joy being set before Him, endured a cross, having despised *its* shame, and He has sat at *the* right of the throne of God. [3] For consider the One having endured such hostility from the sinners toward Himself, lest you may become weary, discouraged in your lives. [4] You did not yet resist up to blood, struggling against the Sin.

> Comment: Christ founded this perfection for the Overcomer – endurance for suffering tribulation, followed by sitting with Him on His throne (Rev.3:21). Thus, a New Covenant believer had the advantage of the exampleship of Jesus to spur him on.

Heb.12:22-29 [22] But you have approached Mount Zion and to a city of *the* living God, **heavenly Jerusalem**, to myriads of angels, to a festive gathering [23] and assembly of firstborn **enrolled in *the* heavens**, and to God Judge of all, and to **spirits of just ones having been perfected** (Gk. *teleioō*), [24] and to Jesus **Mediator of a new covenant**, and to **blood of sprinkling speaking a better *thing* than that of Abel**. [25] See that you may not refuse the One speaking. For if those ones did not escape, having refused the One speaking on earth, **much rather** we who are

turning away from the One **from heaven**, [26] Whose voice then shook the earth. But now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more **I will quake not only the earth, but also the heaven**." [27] And the, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of the things being shaken, as of things having been made, so that the things not being shaken may remain. [28] Therefore, **taking along an unshakeable kingdom**, may we have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and awe. [29] For our God *is* even a consuming fire.

Comment: This "assembly of firstborn" ones would have access to heavenly Jerusalem, seeing they were perfected by better blood than Abel's sacrifice. This would be the beginning of their "unshakeable kingdom". The quaking of the heaven and the "consuming fire" here match what Peter proclaimed –

> "But the present heavens and the earth, by His word are treasured up for fire, being kept for a day of judgment and destruction of the impious men." 2 Pet.3:7

Thus, the day of the Lord will have an effect like the day of the Flood in Noah's time. Although, there will be a warfare "in the heaven" in the day of the Lord (Rev.12:7-9), there is no mention of destruction there – only an expulsion. The heavenly destruction that Hebrews and 2 Peter mention appears to be "in the sky", not in the angelic domain. In our time we view the atmosphere as part of the earth, and, indeed, even the Bible uses phrases like "under the heaven" (e.g., Gen.6:17) and "from ends of heavens" (Mat.24:31) to describe the extent of the earth.

Hebrews 13:8-16 [8] Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and for the ages. [9] Do not be carried away by diverse and foreign doctrines. For *it is* good, the heart to be established by grace, not by foods in which those *so* occupied were not profited. [10] **We have an altar from which those serving in the tent have not authority to eat**. [11] For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the Holies by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. [12] Therefore Jesus also, so that He might sanctify the people by His own blood, suffered outside the gate. [13] Thus let us go out to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. [14] **For we have not here a continuing city, but we seek for the one about to be**. [15] Therefore by Him **may we offer up a sacrifice of praise always to God, that is, a fruit of lips**

professing His name. [16] But neglect not the well-doing and fellowship, for **with such sacrifices God is well pleased**.

Comment: Overcomers had a better "altar" and a "continuing city", and their sacrifices for their time in the flesh were spiritual (praising God, doing well and fellowship). That "continuing city" had previously been named as "heavenly Jerusalem" (see previous text), and it implied that the earthly Jerusalem would not continue forever. The "altar" that the Levitical priesthood had no "authority to eat" at was the "Lord's table" (1 Cor.10:21), a New Covenant institution reserved for those for whom Christ's blood had taken away their sin. There is no hint in Hebrews that a Messianic Jew should continue with Levitical sacrifices. Paul did so on occasion, not from necessity, but as a pragmatic matter so as to keep a dialogue open with unrepentant Jews (1 Cor.9:20).

1 Pet.3:20-21 having been unpersuaded once, when the forbearance of God waited in *the* days of Noah, preparing an ark, into which few, that is, eight lives were saved through water, which antitype even now saves you – **baptism**, not removal of dirt from flesh, but **an appeal of a good conscience** toward God by *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Comment: The Great Flood antitype pointed forward to a cleansing of conscience, the spiritual effect of Christ's baptism of death and resurrection.

2 Pet.1:9-11 [9] For *the one* to whom these things (spiritual virtues of vv.5-8) are not present is blind, shortsighted, having taken forgetfulness of **the cleansing of his old sins**. [10] Therefore rather, brothers, be diligent to **make firm your calling and election**, for doing these things you may in no wise ever stumble, [11] for thus richly will be supplied to you **the entrance into the aionian kingdom of our Lord** and Savior Jesus Christ.

Comment: "Not present" (Gk. *pareimi*) invites comparison with Christ's *Parousia*, or Presence, which was their expectation. The cleansing of old sins was the basis for their "entrance into the aionian kingdom" of the Lord Jesus Christ. But their "calling and choosing (election)" needed firming up for them to make it through the time of testing without stumbling. "Election" might best be understood here as being chosen to undergo the test, but not necessarily

chosen to enter the kingdom. To pass the test would require diligence on their part.

1 Joh.2:2 And **He Himself is *the* <u>pardon</u> concerning our sins**, and not concerning ours only but also concerning the whole world.

1 Joh.4:10 Love is in this, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *as* ***the*** **<u>pardon</u> concerning our sins**.

<u>Comment</u>: "<u>Pardon</u>" in both texts of 1 John is Gk. *hilasmos* and was accomplished by Christ. This is the same word in the *LXX* in Lev.25:9 for the day of **atonement** (in relation to the blast of the Jubilee ram's horn), and in Num.5:8 for the ram of **atonement**. Under the Mosaic covenant the first mention of **atonement** was the effect of a bullock for a sin offering (Exo.29:36). So the blood of bulls and rams (Old Covenant) became superseded by the blood of Christ (New Covenant).

Appendix F: Rewards in Revelation

(texts in blue are auxiliary to the major Rewards texts)
(texts in brown were spoken to the 7 assemblies)

Positions of reward for overcomers –	
	Priestly Kingdom
	He made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father – 1:6
	He made us a kingdom and priests to our God, and we shall reign upon the earth – 5:10
	They will be priests of God & Christ; they will reign with Him the 1,000 years – 20:6
	The Lord God will enlighten upon them (His servants), and they will reign for the ages of the ages – 22:5
	The kingdom of the world became of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for the ages of the ages – 11:15
	You have taken Your great power and reigned – 11:17
	Now came the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ – 12:10
	Our Lord God the Almighty reigned – 19:6
	Thrones & Sanctuary
	I will make him a column in the Sanctuary of My God – 3:12
	I will give to him to sit with Me on My throne – 3:21
	And before the Throne as a glassy sea – 4:6
	A large crowd – no one could number – from every nation, tribes, peoples, tongues, standing before the Throne and the Lamb – 7:9
	(those out of the Great Tribulation) are before the Throne of God, and they serve Him night and day in His Sanctuary – 7:15
	144,000 sing a new song before the Throne – 14:3

	I saw as a glassy sea mixed with fire, and those overcoming the Beast – having stood upon the Glassy Sea (i.e., before the Throne – see 4:6) – 15:2
	No one was able to enter into the Sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed – 15:8
	After these things, a loud voice of a large crowd in heaven, 'Alleluia…the salvation of our God.' – 19:1
	Voice of a large crowd, sound of many waters, 'Alleluia…our Lord God the Almighty reigned.' – 19:6
	Thrones – they sat on them – the persons of those beheaded - they lived & reigned with Christ 1,000 years – 20:4
	I saw the dead, the great and the small, having stood before the Throne – 20:12
	A Sanctuary I saw not in her, for the Lord God the Almighty is her Sanctuary, also the Lamb – 21:22
	A river of water, bright as crystal, going out from the Throne of God and of the Lamb – 22:1
	The Throne of God and of the Lamb will be in her, and His servants will serve Him – 22:3
	Shepherding the Nations
	Authority over the nations to shepherd with an iron staff – 2:26-27
	A male about to shepherd all the nations with an iron staff – 12:5
	With a sharp sword He may strike the nations; He will shepherd them with an iron staff – 19:15
	"with Him" (the Lamb)
	The Lamb stood upon Mt. Zion, and "with Him" 144,000 – 14:1
	Ten Horns battle the Lamb, Who overcomes them. He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those "with Him" called, chosen & faithful – 17:14

Appendix F: Rewards in Revelation

	Crowns
	Faithful up to death, I will give you the Crown of Life – 2:10
	Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown – 3:11
	A Wife arrayed … upon her head a crown of twelve stars – 12:1
	Purchased
	Purchased to God, out of every tribe, tongue, people, nation – 5:9
	144,000 purchased from the earth – 14:3
	Purchased from men, first-fruit to God & Lamb – 14:4
	144,000
	144,000 servants of our God sealed on foreheads – 7:3-4
	The Lamb on Mt. Zion; with Him 144,000 with His and His Father's name on their foreheads – 14:1
	144,000 sing a new song before the Throne – 14:3
	First-fruit to God & Lamb – blameless – 14:4-5
	Names
	White pebble with a new secret name – 2:17
	I will profess his name before My Father & His angels – 3:5
	I will write upon him … My new name – 3:12
	The Lamb on Mt. Zion; with Him 144,000 with His and His Father's name on their foreheads – 14:1
	Having a name written which no one knew, except Himself – 19:12
	They will see His face, and His name *will be* upon their foreheads – 22:4
	Songs
	144,000 sing a new song before the Throne – 14:3
	Overcomers of the Beast sing the Song of Moses, the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb – 15:2-3

	Dinner
	I will come in to him, and I will dine with him – 3:20
	Happy *are* those called to the dinner of the marriage-feast of the Lamb – 19:9
	Misc.
	I will make those of the synagogue of Satan… to bow before your feet, and they will recognize that I loved you – 3:9
	Palm branches in hand – 7:9 (interpret by Joh.12:13)
	The one overcoming will inherit these things, and I will be to him God and he will be to Me a son – 21:7
Specific rewards and good works for overcomers –	
	New Jerusalem
	The One sitting upon the throne will tent with them – 7:15
	The Holy City, New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband – 21:2
	The Tent of God *is* with men & He will tent with them. They will be His peoples, and God Himself is with them – their God. – 21:3
	The Holy City Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God – 21:10
	They may enter by the gates into the city – 22:14
	Tree of Life
	Access to the Tree of Life – 2:7
	On the sides of the river a tree of life, yielding every month – leaves of the tree for healing the nations 22:2
	Happy those washing their robes - their authority over the Tree of Life – 22:14
	Thirst/ Water of Life, Sun, Tears
	(those out of the Great Tribulation) – no hunger, thirst, no sun or heat – the Lamb will shepherd & lead them upon springs of water of life – wipe

	away every tear from their eyes – 7:16-17
	He will wipe away every tear from their eyes – 21:4
	It has come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give to one thirsting from the Spring of Water of Life freely – 21:6
	The City has not need of the sun – 21:23
	They have not need of *the* light of lamp and *the* light of sun, because the Lord God lightens upon them – 22:5
	The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' The one thirsting let come. The one willing let receive water of life freely – 22:17
	Book of Life
	I will not wipe out his name from the Book of Life – 3:5
	I saw the dead, the great and the small, having stood before the throne, and books were opened and another book opened, which is of Life. And the dead were judged from the things written in the books, according to their works – 20:12
	There may in no wise enter into her anything profane, and the one doing abomination and falsehood – except those written in the Book of Life of the Lamb – 21:27
	Resurrection & the Second Death
	In no wise harmed from the Second Death – 2:11
	Spirit of life from God entered in them (Two Witnesses) – they ascended into heaven in the cloud – 11:11-12
	This is the Former Resurrection. Happy & holy the one having part in the Former Resurrection – 20:5-6
	Over these (Former Resurrection) the Second Death has not authority – 20:6
	Fed in the Wilderness
	The Hidden Manna – 2:17

	The Wife fled into the wilderness – a place prepared by God – they feed her 1,260 days – 12:6
	The Wife flew into the wilderness, her place where she is fed a seasons, seasons and a half-season – 12:14
	Bride
	The marriage of the Lamb came, and His Wife prepared herself – 19:7
	The holy city, New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband – 21:2
	Come. I will show you the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb – 21:9
	The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' – 22:17
	Morning Star
	I will give him the Morning Star – 2:28
	I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright, the Morning Star – 22:16
	White Garments, or Robes
	In Sardis those who defiled not their garments – 3:4
	Arrayed in white garments – 3:4-5
	Buy from Me…white garments – 3:18
	A white robe given – 6:9-11
	A large crowd – no one could number – arrayed in white robes – 7:9
	Arrayed in white robes – washed their robes – whitened by the blood of the Lamb – 7:13-14
	Happy the one watching and keeping his garments – 16:15
	(the Wife) arrayed *in* fine-linen, bright, pure, for the fine-linen is the just acts of the holy ones – 19:8
	Perseverance
	Because you kept the word of My perseverance, I will keep you from the

	Hour of Testing… about to come upon the whole earth to test them – 3:10
	Here is the perseverance and the faith of the holy ones – 13:10
	Here is the perseverance of the holy ones, those keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus – 14:12
	The Prophecy
	Happy the one reading and those hearing the words of the prophecy, and keeping the things written in it, for the season is near – 1:3
	Happy the one keeping the words of the prophecy of this book – 22:7
	Misc.
	Great earthquake in Jerusalem – 7,000 killed – the rest became afraid and gave glory to the God of Heaven – 11:13
	Your anger came, and the season of the dead to be judged, and to give the reward to Your servants, to the prophets and the holy ones and those fearing Your name, the small and the great – 11:18 (cp. 20:12 above)
	The curse will no longer exist (context of the Holy City) – 22:3
Tribulation –	
	Tribulation
	John…sharer in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance of Jesus – 1:9
	I know your tribulation and poverty. Fear not what you are to suffer - prison, to be tested - you will have tribulation ten days - become faithful up to death – 2:9-10
	Jezebel – those committing adultery with her will enter into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works – 2:22
	Those coming from the Great Tribulation – washed their robes – 7:14
	The Wife and Her Birthing
	The Wife cries out in labor, pained to give birth – 12:2 (interpret “labor”

	from Mat.24:8)
	The Wife is about to give birth – Dragon stands before her to eat up her child – 12:4
	She brought forth a male – caught up to God and His throne – 12:5
	The Dragon persecuted the Wife who brought forth the male – 12:13
	The Snake sent out a river to sweep away the Wife, but the earth drank it down – 12:15
	The Dragon battled the rest of the Wife's seed, who keep the commandments of God and the witness of Jesus – 12:17
	War & Death
	Beneath the Altar, the persons of those slain for the word of God & the witness they held – 6:9-10
	The Beast ascending from the Abyss will battle, overcome and kill the Two Witnesses – 11:7
	They overcame the Accuser… because of the word of their witness…they loved not their lives up to death – 12:11
	The Beast battled the holy ones – 13:7
	Happy the dead who *are* dying in the Lord from now on – they will be rested from their troubles, for their works follow after them – 14:13
	Woman (Babylon) drunk from the blood of the holy ones and from the blood of the witnesses of Jesus – 17:6
	In her (Babylon) was found blood of prophets and holy ones, and of all those slain upon the earth – 18:24
	Rejoice over her (Babylon)…the holy ones and the apostles and the prophets, because God judged your judgment from her – 18:20
	True and just *are* His judgments, because He judged the Great Whore …He avenged the blood of His servants from her hand – 19:2
	I am your fellow-servant and of your brothers, those having the witness of Jesus…the witness of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy – 19:10
	Called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and battles – 19:11

	The persons of those beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God – no Beast affiliation – lived & reigned with Christ 1,000 years – 20:4
Positions of loss –	
	Christ will battle unrepentant Nicolaitans – 2:15-16
Specific losses –	
	Penalties for Altering Prophecy
	Anyone removing words from this prophecy, God will remove his part from the Tree of Life – 20:19
	I witness to everyone who *is* hearing the words of the prophecy of this book, if anyone may add to them, God will add to him the plagues which *are* written in this book – 22:18
	If anyone may remove from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will remove his part from the Tree of Life, from the Holy City, which are written in this book – 22:19
	The Second Death/ Lake of Fire vs. the Book of Life
	All those dwelling upon the earth will worship him (Beast), whose name not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb from world's overthrow – 13:8
	Those dwelling upon the earth will marvel at the Beast – whose name not written upon the Book of Life from world's overthrow – 17:8
	Death and Hades thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the Second Death, the Lake of Fire. – 20:14
	Anyone not found written in the Book of Life was thrown into the Lake of Fire – 20:15
	Cowardly, unfaithful, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, all the liars – their part in the lake, burning with fire and sulphur, which is the Second Death – 21:8

	There may in no wise enter into her anything profane, and the one doing abomination and falsehood – except those written in the Book of Life of the Lamb – 21:27
	Exclusion from the City
	Outside (the City) are the dogs and the sorcerers and the sexually immoral and the murderers and the idolaters and those loving and doing falsehood – 22:15
Positions of reward for the nations –	
	All the nations…will worship before you, because Your just acts were revealed – 15:4
	The kings of the earth bring their abundance into her (the City) – 21:24
	They will bring the abundance and the value of the nations into her (the City) – 21:26
Specific rewards for the nations –	
	The nations will walk by her (the City) light – 21:24
	The leaves of the Tree for *the* healing of the nations – 22:2

Appendix G: Did the Twelve Fail in “the Great Commission”?

By “the great commission” I mean the command given the Eleven at the end of Matthew’s Gospel –

> “And having approached, Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Every authority in heaven and upon the earth was given to Me. Therefore, having gone, **disciple all the nations**, baptizing them to the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all whatsoever I commanded you. And, **behold**, I am with you all the days until the end-time (Gk. *suntelei*a) of the age.’” Mat.28:18-20

This is the very end of Matthew’s account of the life of Jesus. Let us analyze it in some detail. Because “every authority” (heavenly and earthly) was given to Jesus, *therefore* He was giving them this new commission, along with an inferred authority of their own. If we allow that His pre-glorification authority was more limited, then we must also consider that Jesus’ commissions to His disciples were more limited before His resurrection. In other words, this final word from the Master was a change from what went before.

He had previously commanded them –

> “These twelve Jesus sent out, having commanded them, saying, ‘**You may not go away into the way of nations**, nor enter into a city of Samaritans, but go rather to the Lost Sheep of *the* house of Israel. And going, proclaim, saying, “The kingdom of the heavens has come near.”’” Mat.10:5-7

There was nothing in the final commandment of Matthew 28 about “the Lost Sheep of the house of Israel”. Matthew 28 was strictly an evangelizing campaign for “all the nations”. And note that the Lord’s presence would enable them right up to “the end-time (Gk. *sunteleia*) of the age”. Presumably this commandment would be exercised at some time during the very end – during either Daniel’s last “seven” or the last “half-seven”. In one sense, the Twelve did come short of this commission, because the Acts-period did not advance as far as Daniel’s final “seven”.

There are some who try to explain that this command was fulfilled by the Twelve ministering to Jews "out of all nations" (a similar expression is used of Jews in Rev.5:9; 7:9; 11:9). These would include such diaspora Jews as those listed at Acts 2:9-11. But this argument is special pleading, because the Twelve did not "go" to them in the straightforward manner of the commission. But rather they went to the Twelve in their going up to Jerusalem. Further, the command is very specific as to "the Name" (note, singular) to which they were to baptize – one name in three parts: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is no record of such a baptism being done by anyone at any time during Acts.

Seeing that the Lord would be with them "until the end-time of the age", what else had He spoken to them about this *Sunteleia*? Well the extensive prophecy of Matthew 24 was in answer to their question about the timing His *Parousia* and the *Sunteleia* of the age (v.3). Here is part of what He said about it –

> "And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed in the whole habitable world (in that day understood as the Roman Empire) as a witness to **all the nations**, and then will come the end." Mat.24:14

This appears to be the same evangelizing campaign as the discipling command of Matthew 28. Peter would later write from Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13), but there was still a sizable Jewish diaspora there in his day, and diaspora Jews are the ones to whom he addressed his letter (1 Pet.1:1). Further, the Twelve seemed very comfortable ministering to Jews in Jerusalem throughout much of Acts (see Acts 15:6-7).

Elsewhere, the Matthew 24 *Sunteleia* prophecy provides details of "wars and news of wars", and "famines and earthquakes in various places" (Mat.24:6-7), but no Acts-period Scripture says anything about such things having coming to pass. So apparently the Twelve and the Acts-period did not advance *that* far into the prophetic future.

Matthew 24 continues –

> "But all these *are* a beginning of birth-pains." Mat.24:8

So, if the beginning of the *Sunteleia* did not arrive by Acts 28, we can hardly expect its completion to have been fulfilled –

> "Then they will deliver you to affliction and they will kill you, and you will be hated by **all the nations** on account of My name. And then many will be made to stumble, and they will deliver up one another, and they will hate one another." Mat.24:9-10

Yes, there were Acts-period persecutions against the Twelve by Herod, but he hardly represented "all the nations". This was only a preview of a much greater tribulation to come.

We also have –

> "And many false-prophets will arise, and they will deceive many. … Then, if any should say to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ', or 'there,' you should not believe *it*. For false-christs and false-prophets will be arisen, and they will provide great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the chosen ones. **Behold**, I have foretold *it* to you." Mat.24:11, 23-25

John warned about "many antichrists" having come (1 Joh.2:18), but there is no account in Scripture of anyone claiming to be *the* Christ. Paul mentioned "the apostasy" and "the Man of Lawlessness", "proclaiming himself that he is God" (2 Thes.2:3-4), but Scripture, ecclesiastical writers, and profane history all fail to confirm any of this as having come to pass. Where were the "great signs and wonders" of these false-christs and false prophets? They were nowhere to be found. Not yet.

There is also this benchmark prophecy –

> "Therefore, whenever you may see **the Abomination of Desolation**, which, having been spoken by Daniel the prophet, having stood in *the* holy place (let the one reading understand), then let those in Judea flee into the mountains. Let the one on the roof not descend to take away the things from his house. And the one in the field let not turn back to take his clothes." Mat.24:15-18

Not one of the Acts-period writers gave witness that Daniel's Abomination of Desolation was seen during their lifetimes. Further, post-Apostolic writers of the first three centuries AD universally identified the Abomination of Desolation as the Antichrist, whose career was still future to them (many of these writers are quoted in *The Abomination of Desolation*, pp.5-12).

Appendix G: Did the Twelve Fail in "the Great Commission"?

Although Jesus was discoursing privately to "His disciples" in Matthew 24, and He constantly referred to them as witnesses of these things, it was a potential only. Another set of "you" "disciples" will be the first-hand witnesses of these things at some future date.

I have seen Matthew's Gospel described by some as the most Jewish of the Four Gospels. If so, then note this paradox – Matthew has more to say about blessings for the nations than Mark, Luke and John combined. The "great commission" text (Mat.28:18-20) and its affiliated commission (Mat.24:14) are among these. But we also have –

> "But when the Son of Man should come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit upon the throne of His glory. And will be gathered together before Him **all the nations**, and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." Mat.25:31-32

This special tribunal will lead to the right-hand nations inheriting the kingdom alongside faithful Israel (v.34). These will be part of the "many coming from east and west" to share the kingdom of the heavens with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Mat.8:11).

I have had difficulty finding stand-out OT parallels to this *Sunteleia* mission toward the nations. However, blessings for the nations was not suddenly introduced by Matthew's Gospel. It is a recurring theme in the OT, in such texts as – Gen.18:8; 22:18; 26:4; Psa.22:27; Isa.2:1-4; 11:9-10; 25:6-8; **49:6**,22-23; 56:6-7; **60:1-3**; 61:11; **62:1-2**; **66:18-20**; Jer.3:17; 33:8-9; Mic.4:1-3; Hag.2:6-7; Zec.2:11; 8:20-23; 9:10; and Mal.3:12. Of these texts, the ones in **bold**, and especially **Isa.66:18-20**, come closest to prophecies of a Jewish evangelism toward the nations.

And what of "the kingdom of priests" concept, as first promised in Exodus?

> "'And now, if you will surely listen to My voice and keep My covenant, then you will become to Me **a possession** from **all the peoples**, for the whole earth *is* Mine. And you will become to Me **a kingdom of priests and a holy nation**.' These are the words which you will speak to the sons of Israel." Exo.19:5-6

We might have wished for more specificity here. There is an implied relation to "all the peoples", but what is the exact nature of this priesthood? As the Aaronite priests were mediators between Israel and Yahweh, then what is implied here is that all Israel will one day become the mediators between "the nations" and Yahweh. What rituals they will perform are not listed, unlike the Aaronic rituals of Mosaic Law.

Although "kingdom of priests" and "holy nation" appear only in the Heb. of Exodus 19, Gk. phrases in the *LXX* of Exo.19:5-6 were used in the NT (see bolded words below) –

> "But you are a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood, a holy nation**, a people for **a possession**, so that you might declare the excellence of the One having called us from darkness into His wonderful light." 1 Pet.2:9

The context also speaks of "a spiritual house for holy priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices" (1 Pet.2:5), so this was not an extension of the Levitical priesthood. The context also mentions the stumbling of the disbelieving and disobedient, who were also "appointed" for such (1 Pet. 2:8). I conclude that during Acts this priestly kingdom ministered to unbelieving Israel and *not* the nations. But Peter's teaching above continued –

> "Keeping your conduct upright **among the nations**, so that in what they speak against you as evildoers, observing from the good works, **they may glorify God in a day of oversight** (*KJV*, 'visitation')." 1 Pet.2:12

So here was an ultimate ministry to the nations, its fruit for a future day of oversight ('visitation' or 'punishment'). Isaiah 10:3 asks the oppressors in Israel, "What will you do **in the Day of Oversight**?" (emphatic, both definite articles). Great calamity will be visited upon rebellious Israel and the nations, but some among the nations will respond to the witness of believing Israel as a royal priesthood.

It is interesting that the fulfillment of Israel's royal priesthood is mentioned only in 1 Peter and Revelation. Although this message belonged to the Twelve, Peter and John were its leaders – even as we find them in the lead evangelizing Samaria (Acts 8:14). Paul had an apostleship mostly devoted to the nations, but it

is nowhere called a priesthood. If we suppose that Paul had a hand in authoring Hebrews, even there amidst prolific blessings, the royal priesthood is not mentioned as one of them. Hebrews deals with the priesthoods of Levi and Melchisedek, and the high priesthood of Christ, but not the fulfillment of Exo.19:6. I find this an amazing omission. But then Hebrews makes no mention of “nation” or “nations” (Gk. *ethnos*), and its use of “people” (Gk. *laos*, 13 occs.) is always singular and refers to the people Israel. Hebrews is an exceedingly Judeo-centric book.

In the larger scheme of things, the command of Matthew 28 was less a failure of the Twelve than a failure of end-time prophecy to ripen, as it were, within the lifetimes of “that generation”. It was not a failure of prophecy in any absolute sense – just a failure to meet all the conditions required for its fulfillment *at that time*. This means that a future fulfillment will find all such conditions met.

Appendix H: The Seventy Sevens of Daniel 9

The latter half of Daniel, chapters 7-12, is a most complicated series of prophecies, which built upon Nebuchadrezzar's dream interpretation in chapter 2. They are diverse in terms of native language, the time when the prophecy was given, and how the prophecy was given. Here is a profile of the chapters concerned-

- Chapter 2; Aramaic from the middle of v.4 to the end; second year of Nebuchadrezzar (BC 604); Daniel given insight to discern and interpret Nebuchadrezzar's dream image
- Chapter 7; Aramaic; first year of Belshazzar (BC 552); Daniel's dream; an angel interpreted part of the dream
- Chapter 8; Hebrew; third year of Belshazzar (BC 549); another vision like Daniel's first; Gabriel explained the vision
- Chapter 9; Hebrew; first year of Darius (BC 538); Daniel in prayer and fasting concerning Jeremiah's 70 years; Gabriel visited and presented the prophecy of 490 years
- Chapter 10; Hebrew; third year of Cyrus (BC 539); Daniel was fasting, then put to sleep and received a vision; an angel presented the vision of latter-days – this appears to run right into chapters 11-12
- Chapters 11-12; Hebrew; first year of Darius (BC 538); an angel presented the prophecy – Daniel told twice to "**shut up** (*ṣâtham*) the words and **seal up** (*châtham*) the book until *the* time of *the* end" (12:4, 9)

The intersecting points between these visions are complex, but perhaps the greatest challenge is dealing with the mixture of both minute detail and vagueness.

The language of chapter 9 presents some distinct problems because of ambiguity as to how to group clauses and phrases. Just compare a few English translations and you will note how differently certain expressions have been translated. The concatenation of clauses in Dan.9:26 has stymied some translators, many of whom have followed the *KJV* with "shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary". I prefer how Young's Literal Translation groups the phrases – "cut off is Messiah, and the city and the holy place are not his, the Leader who hath come doth destroy the people". Ozanne makes the point in *The Fourth Gentile Kingdom*

(p.41) "that elsewhere it is not said of the Antichrist that he will destroy either the city or the sanctuary". I would add to this argument that the Coming Ruler (Antichrist) can hardly receive the worship he seeks *without* the city and its Temple. He will profane it, but not destroy it in any physical sense. He will ruin it in a spiritual sense, so that it becomes unusable for its holy purpose in the worship of the true God. I believe that the didactic structure I have outlined on the next pages rather makes this point. But let us take it from the beginning. I offer the following in explanation of the structure –

A_1 a prophetic word goes forth to answer Daniel's prayer
A_1 part of this prophetic word concerns a word going forth to restore Jerusalem (that is, a word within a word, going forth)

A_2 commands to discern
A_2 commands to know and ponder

B_1 … **B_5** – the various time divisions, beginning with 490 years, then with subdivisions of 483, 434, 7 and 3.5 years contained within the 490 (various years within years)

a. concerning your people
b. concerning your holy city

Structure of Daniel 9:22-27 (Heb. translated)

A_1. In *the* beginning of your supplications the **word** **went forth** (*yâtsâ`*),
and I have come to declare *it*, for desirablenesses *are* you.
A_2. Then discern (imper.) *the* **word**, and discern (imper.) *the* **sight** (*mar`eh*).
B_1. Seventy sevens have been divided (*châthak*)
a. concerning your people and
b. concerning your holy city
a_1. to complete (or 'restrain') (*kâlâh*) the rebellion (*pesha`*)
a_2. to **seal up** sins
a_3. and to cover iniquity
a_4. and to bring in a righteousness of ages
a_5. and to **seal up** **vision** (*châzôwn*) and prophet
b_6. and to anoint holy of holies.

***A*$_2$.** Then know and ponder (both imper.),
***A*$_1$.** from *the* **going forth** (*môwtsâ`*) of *the* **word**
b. to bring back (*shûwb*) and to build Jerusalem
a. until *an* **Anointed One - Ruler** (*nâgîyd*)
B$_2$. *will be* seven sevens and sixty and two sevens.
b. Will return (*shûwb*) and be built plaza and trench even in *the* distress of the times.
B$_3$. Then after the sixty and two sevens
a. will be cut off *the* **Anointed One,**
b. but not his *will be* both the city and the holy *place*.
a. *The* ruler (*nâgîyd*) who *is* coming will bring to ruin (*shâchath*) *the* people
a$_1$. and its (people's) end *will be* by a flood,
a$_2$. and until *the* end of war desolations (*shâmêm*) *are* being decided (*chârats*).
a$_3$. Then he will make strong a covenant for many
B$_4$. *at* one seven
B$_5$. and *at* half the seven
a$_4$. he will make cease sacrifice and gift,
b$_6$. and upon a wing of abominations (*shîqqûwts*) *will be a* desolating one (*shâmêm*),
a$_5$. and up to completion (*kâlâh*) even a strict decision (*chârats*) will be poured out upon *the* desolating one (*shâmêm*).'

So the gist of the prophetic message here has these two primary concerns – **a.** "your people" and **b.** "your holy city". The next portion of the prophecy lists six subordinate things, using verbs in an infinitive form. The first five are "people" related, and the sixth concerns a "city" aspect ("holy of holies"). The dividing line between a "people" item and a "city" item can be a bit murky. For example, "desolations" can apply to both. And indeed the city Jerusalem is typically dealt with prophetically as both a physical place and the people inhabiting it.

Let us examine that list of six things –

a$_1$. to complete (or 'restrain') (*kâlâh*) **the** rebellion (*pesha`*)
a$_2$. to **seal up** sins
a$_3$. and to cover (*kâphar*) iniquity

a_4. and to bring in a righteousness of ages
a_5. and to **seal up** **vision** (*châzôwn*) and prophet
b_6. and to anoint holy of holies.

In item **a_1**, and throughout this book, I have translated Heb. *pesha`* as "rebellion" because I find the usual English translation, "transgression", a bit too polite as if it were a mere breach of etiquette. This is a strong word in the Hebrew. Note how it is "**the** rebellion" here, indicating it has an antecedent somewhere in the previous text. That antecedent reference is actually multiple references in chapter 8 –

> "And an army will be given against the continuously (*tâmîyd*) in rebellion (*pesha`*), and it will throw down truth *to* earth. And it will perform and succeed. Then I heard one holy one speaking. Then said another holy one to a certain one speaking, 'Until when *is* **the vision** (*châzôwn*) of the continuously (*tâmîyd*) and the desolating rebellion (*pesha`*) to give both holy *place* and army *for* a trampling?'" Dan.8:12-13

This text connects "rebellion" with the "desolatings" in the second set of **a_1** … **b_6** subordinate elements down in 9:27. But "the rebellion" also connects to this Daniel 8 text –

> "Then in the latter-end of their kingdom, according to the filling up of the rebellious (*pesha`*), a **king of insolent face** will stand up and *will be* understanding enigmas." Dan.8:23

Daniel's prophecies make constant reference to "the end" and "the latter-end", and 8:23 speaks to the final-end of the four kingdoms that sprang up after Alexander's death. Here it is "the filling up of the rebellious" (pl. participle), while in 9:24 it is understood as either "to complete" or "to restrain the rebellion" (noun). These "rebelling ones" will become affiliated with a "king of insolent face" – he is elsewhere called "little horn" (7:8), "horn from insignificance" (8:9), "the ruler who is coming" (9:26), a "contemptible one" (11:21), and "the king will do according to his desire" (11:36). His characteristics and works are dealt with by degrees across this collection of four prophecies. Were it not for these contextual connections back to Daniel 8, we might infer that "the rebellion" to be completed per Dan.9:24 will be the whole history of Israel since the Exodus. If this latter sense were true, then the alternative translation I have given, "to restrain the

rebellion", could be applied to millennial flesh-and-blood Israelites, in distinction from most of their previous history. Indeed, restraining rebellion does express the character of the Millennium for all nations in the flesh. But I believe the context of chapter 8 is the correct way of interpreting "the rebellion" of 9:24.

Then an Isaiah text may also shed some light upon this "completion":

> ""And they will go out and look upon the corpses of the men who *were* rebelling (*pesha`*) against Me, for their worm will not die and their fire will not be quenched. And they will become an abhorrence to all flesh." Isa.66:24

The context in Isaiah suggests this will be a disgusting view from Jerusalem – perhaps of Tophet in the latter-day, when the rebellion has been "completed". But Isa.66:16 speaks of Yahweh's judgment upon "all flesh" and their slain being many. So this rebellion will be largely from the nations, while the rebels in Daniel 9 will be from "your people".

The next item of the list is a little difficult to interpret –

a_2. to **seal up** sins

How does the action "seal" apply to sins? One might seal something to preserve it, or to show ownership of it, but those ideas could hardly apply to sins. The book of Job helps explain it –

> "Who speaks to *the* sun and it rises not, and He **seals** about the stars."
> Job 9:7

> "My rebellion is **sealed up** in a bag, and you cover over my iniquity."
> Job.14:17

On the basis of parallelism, stars hidden by clouds (their light restrained) would answer to an unrisen sun. And the sense of "hiding" certainly applies to sins in the bag of the second Job text. Moreover, Job 14:17 also touches the third element of Dan.9:24, although with a different "cover" word (Heb. *ṭâphal*, "smear over") –

a_3. and to cover (*kâphar*) iniquity

The covering of iniquity was behind the whole fabric of sacrificial law, for example –

> "And he will support his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted for him to cover (*kâphar*) for him." Lev.1:4

The translation "to atone for him" is archaic and gives the false sense that a man's sacrifice was paying God back for his sins, like payment of a debt. Rather, it was a covering for sins to hide them, so that God might forget them. And that is the very point of the New Covenant –

> "for I will pardon their iniquity, and toward their sin I will not remember *it* any longer." Jer.31:34

The next element in the list is also a "people" item –

a_4. and to bring in a righteousness (*tsedeq*) of ages

In many places in this book I have given an alternate English translation of "justice" for *tsedeq*, because the word was as much a social norm as a personal ethic for Israel. I quoted extensively from Isaiah chapter 60 in the chapter **Yahweh Fighting the Nations – His Defense of Zion and Jerusalem**. One verse in that chapter confirms this millennial blessedness of aionian righteousness –

> "And your people – all will be **righteous** ('just') **for an age**. They will inherit *the* land, a sprout of His planting, a work of My hands to glorify Myself." Isa.60:21

Isaiah chapter 61 continues the millennial promises of chapter 60, and it contains a related thought –

> "I Yahweh *am* loving **judgment** (Heb. *mishpât*, another "justice" word), hating robbery in wickedness. And I will appoint their reward in truth, and a **covenant of an age** I will cut for them." Isa.61:8

A bringing in of "a righteousness of ages" will come with the fullness of the New Covenant promise. A remnant of Israel entered that covenant during Acts, but bringing in the full harvest is still future. The preterist view is just too restrictive, if it believes that Dan.9:24 has already been fulfilled "concerning your people". As yet, there has been no greater harvest in Israel – only a trickle of a remnant has believed in Messiah Jesus so far.

The fifth "people" item in the list –

a_5. and to **seal up** **vision** (*châzôwn*) and prophet

appears to be speaking about the end, or completion of all prophetic visions. When current prophecy has been fulfilled with the arrival of the kingdom, what further need will there be for prophecy? This will be the time spoken of in Zec.13:1-5. The only prophecy one could possibly hear "in that day" will be false prophecy, and it will be one of those egregious crimes punishable by death, as it was under Mosaic law (Deu.13:5).

But if "seal up" means "hide" in **a_2**, that may also be its meaning here concerning prophetic vision. However, seeing that the Scriptures of the prophets were not locked in a vault in Daniel's time, then a derivative meaning of "hiding the sense" of a prophecy is more likely. So as we approach the day of the final "seven", the ambiguities of prophetic utterances should be whisked away. Thus, if I have stumbled into any end-time truth in this book, it is only what the Lord has permitted to be seen at this time. Further detail about Daniel's visions will be forthcoming. Indeed, the Revelation speaks about the reward of various "holy ones", "witnesses", "servants", "apostles" and "*prophets*" in a contemporary sense. And Daniel 12, which records commandments to Daniel to seal the book (12:4, 9), also speaks to a future "time of distress" (12:1). But this will also be a time of enlightenment (12:3). When Daniel asked the angel, "What is the latter-end of these?" (12:8), he was told the second time to seal the book. I interpret that to mean, "keep and preserve what you have, and ask no more questions." The unsealing of more details awaited a future day. Some of that detail came from the Lord Jesus (Matthew 24-25), the Apostle John (Revelation) and the Apostle Paul (1 and 2 Thessalonians), but there still remain secrets reserved for those who will be preserved through the Great Tribulation.

The next element is "concerning your holy city" –

b_6. and to anoint holy of holies

A variety of things were called "holy of holies" (Heb. *qôdesh qâdâshîym*) under the Law – the altar of burnt offering (Exo.29:37; 40:10), its utensils (Exo.30:28-29), the incense (Exo.30:36), and the various offerings themselves (Lev.2:3; 6:25;

7:1; 27:28). Of these the altar and its utensils were anointed. Besides these, there was a more emphatic "**the** holy of holies" (Heb. *qôdesh* ***ha****qadâshîym*) which applied to the inner Sanctuary, and this was also anointed (Exo.23:33-34; 40:9). Although Dan.9:24 does not use the definite article in "holy of holies", the Sanctuary is what it must refer to because chapter 8 already spoke of this –

> "Then I heard one holy one speaking. Then said another holy one to a certain one speaking, 'Until when *is* **the vision** (*châzôwn*) of the continuously (*tâmîyd*) and the desolating rebellion (*pesha`*) to give both holy *place* and army *for* a trampling?' And he said to me, 'Until evening-morning two thousand and three hundred – then will be put right the holy *place*.'" Dan.8:13-14

The defilement of the holy place, its "trampling" by outsiders like "Little Horn", will necessitate its cleansing (being "put right") afterward. And the final touch will be this anointing.

Now let us compare the second set of subordinate elements –

a_1. and its (people's) end *will be* by a flood,
a_2. and until *the* end of war desolations (*shâmêm*) *are* being decided (*châra*ts).
a_3. Then he will make strong a covenant for many
a_4. he will make cease sacrifice and gift,
b_6. and upon a wing of abominations (*shîqqûwts*) *will be a* desolating one (*shâmêm*),
a_5. and up to completion (*kâlâh*) even a strict decision (*châra*ts) will be poured out upon *the* desolating one (*shâmêm*).'

The second **b_6.** element above, which is "concerning your holy city", is this "wing of abominations" – a corner or wing of the Sanctuary where the abomination of desolation will sit. The presence of this abomination, and of the king doing according to his desire (11:36), as well as the presence of other Gentiles will render the Sanctuary "common and unclean" (Acts 10:14). In order to "sanctify" it again (Heb. *qâdash*, "make holy"), it must be cleared of all the trappings of idolatry, especially of "the Man of Sin" (2 Th.2:3-4), then anointed again per the earlier **b_6**.

Preterism has painted itself into a corner when it declares that God is done with Israel as His chosen, covenant people. If that were so, then all of Daniel must have been fulfilled in the past. That means the fulfillment of all these subordinate

elements, including "to anoint holy of holies". Seventh Day Adventism gets around this timing difficulty by applying that anointing to Christ entering the heavenly holies with His own blood. But Heb.9:7-15 speaks of the cleansing of sins by His blood, thus offered, while there is no mention of anointing the holy place. Nor does Daniel 7-12 mention a *heavenly* "holy place" or "holy of holies". Daniel's Jewish readers would have understood all these references as the holy place in earthly Jerusalem. Anything else is an inference and a "spiritualizing" of the text. Adventism posits that the Ancient of Days will sit in judgment in the heavenly Sanctuary, but look what the text actually says –

> "I kept seeing in **visions** (Aram. *chezûw*) of the night, and **behold**, with *the* clouds of the heavens *was* coming *One* like a Son of Man. It came to pass, and up to the Ancient One of days He reached, and they presented Him before Him." Dan.7:13

But Jesus coming with the clouds will be his coming again to earth (Mat.24:30; 26:64). His coming, then reaching the Ancient of Days, shows that this judgment will be upon earth. Can preterism become as inventive as Adventism in creating a myth that will explain away both Dan.7:13 and 9:24 as completed prophecies?

And here are all the **a.**, **b.** elements set apart by themselves –

a. concerning your people and
b. concerning your holy city

b. to bring back (*shûwb*) and to build Jerusalem
a. until *an* **Anointed One** - Ruler (*nâgîyd*)

b. Will return (*shûwb*) and be built plaza and trench even in *the* distress of the times.
a. will be cut off *the* **Anointed One,**

b. but not His *will be* both the city and the holy *place*.
a. *The* ruler (*nâgîyd*) who *is* coming will bring to ruin (*shâchath*) *the* people

If it seems strange my classifying the Anointed One as a "concerning your people" element, recall that He too *is* one of the people as the Son of David. I have

concluded that this reference to an "Anointed One" is Messianic, based on Christ's anointing (Luk.4:18) and His rulership (Rev.1:5). He is called "Ruler" here, and His antithesis will be an unanointed "ruler who is coming" – the Antichrist. But it seems likely that the Antichrist may also be "anointed", by the False-Prophet.

Also take note how the $\mathbf{B_1}$ through $\mathbf{B_5}$ time elements are scattered irregularly through the structure – although their insertion points were chosen logically. Their irregular placement likely reflects their irregular time periods.

Other interesting points concern this "ruler who is coming". He will initially gain influence by flatteries, then hold his position by force of arms –

> "Then will stand up into his place a **contemptible one**, and they have not given to him *the* royal splendor, but he will come in by quietness and he will grasp the kingdom by **flatteries**. And *with the* arms of the flood (*sheṭeph*) they will be flooded (*shâṭaph*) from before him. They will even be broken, yes also a ruler (*nâgîyd*) of a **covenant**." Dan.11:21-22

I would identify the "ruler who is coming" with the "contemptible one" above, who will break a "ruler of a covenant". Note the points of intersection with 9:26-27:

> "*The* ruler (*nâgîyd*) who *is* coming will bring to ruin (*shâchath*) *the* people and its (people's) end *will be* by a flood, and until *the* end of war desolations (*shâmêm*) *are* being decided (*châra*ts). And he will make strong (*gâbar*) a **covenant** for **many** one seven and *at* half the seven he will make cease sacrifice and gift."

So the Coming Ruler will make a seven year covenant with "many". Is it just a coincidence that seven years is the term length for an Israeli president today? Then midway he appears to break the covenant by halting sacrifices. This covenant will have some sort of guaranty of religion, it seems. On the other hand, Dan.11:22 does not say he will break the covenant, but will break "a ruler of a covenant" (*hapax*). Would this be the signer of the covenant on the part of the "many", possibly a religious ruler, like "Azariah the ruler of the house of God" (2 Chr.31:13)?

Daniel 11 has more on the Contemptible One's rivalry with "the holy covenant" (vv.28, 30), which appears to be faithful Jews – perhaps even Messianic Jews –

> "And arms from him, they will stand, and they will profane the sanctuary (*miqdâsh*), the refuge. And they will take away the continuously (*tâmîyd*), and they will appoint the desolating (*shâmêm*) abomination (*shîqqûwts*). Those condemning **the covenant** he will corrupt by **flatteries**, but a people knowing their Elohim will be made strong and perform." Dan.11:31-32

This appears to be a tale of two covenants, one between corrupted Jews and the Coming Ruler, and another between faithful Jews and their God. That Ruler will cut off "sacrifice and gift", which includes those sacrifices offered daily "continuously". He will appoint "the desolating abomination" in "a wing of abominations" in the Temple sanctuary, just as Jesus prophesied he would (Mat.24:15).

Besides the Structure of the Seventy Sevens of Daniel 9:22-27, other such structures can be found in this rich brocade of prophetic truth. For example, take the following –

"Holy Ones", "People" in Daniel 7-12

A.1. But *the* holy ones of Elyon **will receive the kingdom** (Aram. *malkûw*).
2. And they **will possess the kingdom** until *the* age, even until *the* age of the ages." (7:18)

B. I kept seeing and this horn *was* making war with holy ones and *was* prevailing against them, (7:21)

A.1. until when the Ancient One of days came, and the **judgment** (Aram. *dîyn*) **was given to** *the* holy ones of Elyon.
2. And the season came, and *the* holy ones **possessed the kingdom**. (7:22)

B. And he will speak words against the Most High, and he will wear away at *the* holy ones of Elyon. And he will intend to change seasons and law. And they will be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time. (7:25)

A.1 But the court (**judgment** - *dîyn*) **will be seated**, and his **dominion** (Aram. *shâlṭân*) they will remove to annihilate and to destroy until the end. (7:26)

2. Then the **kingdom** and the **dominion** and the greatness of **kingdoms** under the whole heavens **have been given to** a people, holy ones of Elyon. **His kingdom** *will be* a **kingdom** of an age, and all the **dominions** will minister to Him and obey *Him*. (7:27)

B. And his strength will be mighty, but not by his own strength. And he will bring to ruin (Heb. *shâchath*) extraordinary things. And he will succeed and perform and bring to ruin (*shâchath*) mighty ones, even *the* people of *the* holy *ones*. (8:24)

C. Seventy sevens have been divided concerning your people and concerning your holy city to complete (Heb. *kâlâh*) the rebellion (Heb. *pesha`*) to seal up sins and to cover iniquity and to bring in righteousness of ages and to seal up **vision** (Heb. *châzôwn*) and prophet and to **anoint** holy of holies. (9:24)

B. Then after the sixty and two sevens will be cut off *the* **Anointed One,** and not His *will be* both the city and the holy *place*. *The* ruler who *is* coming will bring to ruin (Heb. *shâchath*) *the* people and its (people's) end *will be* by a flood, and until *the* end of war desolations *are* being decided. (9:26)

C. Now I have come to make you understand what will befall your people in *the* latter-part of the days, for yet *is* the **vision** for days. (10:14)

C. And in those times many will stand against *the* king of the South, and sons of violent ones of your people will lift themselves up to make stand *the* **vision**, but they will stumble. (11:14)

B. And at that time Michael the great prince (Heb. *sar*) will stand up, who *is* standing for *the* sons of your people. And will come a time of distress, which has not come since the coming of a nation until that time. And at that time your people will escape, those found written in *the* book. (12:1)

B. And I heard the man clothed *with* the white linen, who *was* up above *the* waters of the river, and he raised his right hand and his left to the heavens and he swore by *the* Living One of the age that at an appointed time, appointed times and a half, then according to completing (Heb. *kâlâh*) *the*

> shattering of *the* power (‘hand’) of *the* holy people, all these will be completed (*kâlâh*). (12:7)

Concerning the elements –

A.1. and **A.2.** – these are two-part statements about the rewarding of the holy people. The “holy ones” are variously described as receiving, possessing and being given “the kingdom” or “the judgment”. But the authority to judge is the essence of ruling in the kingdom (Mat.19:28).

B. – these statements are about the exploits of the coming ruler against the people, and the people’s time of great distress.

C. – these statements concern the completion of “the rebellion” and the vision.

Only in chapters 7, 8 and 12 are the people dealt with exclusively as “holy ones”. In chapters 9, 10 and 11 “your people” is more inclusive as being both “wheat” and “tares”. Thus it includes those violent ones in 11:14 who will try to force the vision to completion – i.e., force the kingdom into coming to pass, like some whom Jesus condemned (Mat.11:12).

Appendix I: The Latter-Day Leviathan

The principal Leviathan text that I wish to build upon is from Isaiah –

> "**In that day**, Yahweh will visit with the hard and the great and the mighty sword upon **Leviathan** (*LXX drakōn*) *the* **fleeing serpent** (Heb. *nâchâsh bâriach, LXX ophis pheugontos*), and upon **Leviathan** (*LXX drakōn*) *the* **twisting serpent** (Heb. *nâchâsh `aqallâthôwn, LXX ophis skolios*). And He will kill the **sea-serpent** (Heb. *tanîyn, LXX drakōn*) which *is* in the sea." Isa.27:1

First take note of the time marker, the formulaic "in that day". This is repeated a few verses down in –

> "And it will come to pass **in that day**, Yahweh will beat out ('thresh') from *the* channel of the River (i.e., 'Euphrates') up to the wady of Egypt. And you will be gathered up one by one, sons of Israel. And it will come to pass **in that day**, it will be blown with a great horn, and there will come those perishing in *the* land of Assyria, and those scattered in *the* land of Egypt. And they will subject themselves to Yahweh **in the holy mountain in Jerusalem**." Isa.27:12-13

The gathering of homeland and dispersed Israel, accompanied by the blowing of a horn – is this not the prophetic fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets? The linkages given by the phrase "in that day" make the punishment of Leviathan part of the day of the Lord. In v.1 Leviathan is equated with "fleeing serpent" and "twisting serpent". The connection between Leviathan and the "sea-serpent" is strong in the *LXX*, because both use the Gk. *drakōn* ('dragon'), but it may be a bit tenuous in the Heb. text. The Heb. here is *tanîyn*, which is not the Serpent that deceived Eve in the garden – he was a *nâchâsh* (Gen.3:1), like the fleeing and twisting serpent above in Isa.27:1.

BDB derives the etymology of Leviathan (Heb. *livyâthân*) from *lâvah*, 'turn', 'twist', 'wind' (BDB, p.532), and this rather confirms the "twisting serpent" descriptor. What seems possible to me is that the final syllable of Leviathan – *thân* – may be a contraction of Heb. *tanîyn*, which BDB, p1072 defines as a 'serpent' or 'sea-monster', derived from a Heb. root *tânan*, 'howl'. While an ordinary serpent cannot howl, this is no common snake that is used to accent Satan's identity – and his agents.

Appendix I: The Latter-Day Leviathan

There does appear to have been a real Leviathan creature (as well as a Behemoth) at some ancient time. Job spoke of him in straightforward language (Job 3:8), as did Psa.104:3. Yahweh also challenged Job with the whole of chapter 41, devoted to the great marvels of His Leviathan. Whether this was one of those prehistoric monsters who lived before the first flood (Gen.1:2), or who perished in the second flood (Gen.7:10-12) and left only his giant bones as a reminder of him – one can only speculate. Some have tried to make of Leviathan the crocodile or hippopotamus, but these creatures do little justice to Yahweh's discourse in Job 41. What does seem obvious from all the accounts is that Leviathan and *tanîyn* were aquatic, and this is a significant feature that correlates with much that I will provide below.

The first mention of *tanîyn* was an aquatic creature –

> "And Elohim created the great **sea-creatures** (*tanîyn, LXX ta kētē ta megala*) and every living being that moves, which the waters swarmed according to their kind." Gen.1:21

The *LXX* translates this as "the Great Whales" (*ta kētē ta megala*), but "whale" is a later meaning we derive from the Latin *cetus*, used in Jerome's Vulgate. Greek mythology depicted the *kētos* in various monstrous forms. And much of ancient mythology was a distortion of truth that God had revealed to Adam through the stars. Among those star signs were the constellations Draco (dragon), Serpens (serpent), Hydra (serpent) and Cetus (sea monster) (see *Stars*, pp. 24-27), all of them depicting draconian or serpentine versions of Satan.

Besides sea-going creatures there were the riverine – and here is a slightly different environment for the *tanîyn* –

> "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, "Show for yourselves a miracle," then you will say to Aaron, "Take your staff and throw it before Pharaoh, and let it become for a **sea-serpent** (*tanîyn, LXX drakōn*)." So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as Yahweh commanded. And Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh, and it became for a **sea-serpent** (*tanîyn, LXX drakōn*) before his servants. But Pharaoh also called to *the* wise men and to *the* sorcerers, and they did likewise. The magicians of Egypt by their enchantments *did* in like manner, for they threw down each one his staff and they became for

> **sea-serpents** (*tanîyn, LXX drakōn*). But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs." Exo.7:9-12

Sea-serpents of the Indian Ocean have not been well-studied, even in modern times, but they have been known to "invade" fresh water. Aaron's demonstration to Pharaoh was likely at a bank of the Nile, since v.15 indicates a daily ritual there by Pharaoh. Whatever the variety of this serpent, the sorcerers of Egypt were acquainted with it. In the events of Exodus the *tanîyn* was used as a sign to Pharaoh and his counsellors of the superior power of Yahweh.

In recounting events of the Exodus, Psalm 74 applies a greater significance to the *tanîyn* –

> "And Elohim *is* my King from of old, working salvation in *the* midst of the earth. You divided by Your strength *the* sea. You broke *the* heads of **sea-serpents** (*tanîyn, LXX drakōn*) upon the waters. You smashed the heads of **Leviathan** (*LXX drakōn*). You give him *as* food to a people regarding a wilderness. You broke open a fountain and a flood. You dried up enduring rivers." Psa.74:12-15

After dividing the Red Sea, Yahweh broke the heads of the Egyptian army upon the water. As a tool of an evil head, this army was identified with both *tanîyn* and Leviathan. Another of "the heads of Leviathan" that was smashed was Pharaoh. Other heads smashed by the wilderness people were Og of Bashan, and all the kings of the Canaanites. And through Moses' staff Yahweh opened a fountain in the desert. Later He dried up the Jordan so Israel might pass over on dried ground. The "heads of Leviathan" here have an analog in Revelation, where both the Dragon and the Beast have seven heads.

> Another text recalling the Exodus is this –
>
> "Awake! Awake! Put on strength, arm of Yahweh. Awake as *in* **days of old**. *Was* it not You Who cut to pieces **Rahab**, piercing *the* **sea-serpent** (*tanîyn*, not in *LXX*)? Are You not the One drying up *the* sea, waters of the great deep *that* made *the* depths of *the* sea a road *for the* redeemed to cross over." Isa.51:9

Both *tanîyn* and Rahab are references to Egypt. Here they are depicted as "pierced" and "cut to pieces". This call for Yahweh to awake is in a text dealing with Israel's

final deliverance and restoration – a day when "the heavens will vanish away like smoke, the earth will grow old like a garment" (Isa.51:6).

More *tanîyn* texts show a copyist's confusion between this word and "jackal" (*tannîym*). In the oldest unpointed Hebrew text these words differ by a single letter. Evidently the *LXX* translators understood the occurrences in the next texts correctly as *tanîyn*, which is an aquatic creature. Texts concerning jackals, often coupled with ostriches and daughters of ostriches, are descriptions of wilderness wastes. But the following texts speak of water, not wilderness –

> "Speak and say, 'Thus says Adonai Yahweh, "Behold, I *am* against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great **sea-serpent** (Heb. *tannîym*, but *LXX drakōn*) who *is* lying in *the* midst of his rivers, who said, 'My river is my own. I made it for myself.'"'" Eze.29:3

> "Son of man, take up a lament for Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him, 'You are like a young lion of nations, and you are as a **sea-serpent** (*tannîym*, but *LXX drakōn*) in the seas. And you burst forth in your rivers and you troubled waters with your feet and you fouled their rivers.'" Eze.32:2

Here again we find Pharaoh as one of "the heads of Leviathan".

> Another text in Isaiah that firmly connects Rahab with Egypt is –
>
> "But Egypt in vain and to no purpose will help. Therefore, I have called this one **Rahab**-Hem-Shebeth ('Rahab the one who sits still')." Isa.30:7

BDB (p.923) relates the name Rahab to the Heb. root *râhab*, meaning 'to storm', 'to rage defiantly'. Two more texts with an Egyptian flavor are –

> "Glorious things are being spoken of you, city of God. Selah. I make mention of **Rahab** (*LXX*, *Raab*) and Babel to those knowing me. Behold, Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopia, this one was born there. And to Zion it is said, 'This one and that one were born in her. And He establishes her. Most High Yahweh records in *His* registering peoples this one was born there. Selah." Psa.87:3-5

> "You rule in *the* raging of the sea. In *the* rising of its waves You still them. You smashed as a slain one **Rahab** (*LXX*, *huperēphanos*, "arrogant one"). With your mighty arm You scattered Your enemies." Psa.89:9-10

The second text above rather plays on the stormy temperament that is natural to 'Rahab', and the stormy sea and waves. This presents a unified picture of a raging enemy defeated by Yahweh's rage.

Then there are these texts from Job that indicate Rahab was also an ancient name for a sea-monster –

> "Eloah withdraws not His anger. Beneath Him, allies of **Rahab** (*LXX*, *kētos*) were prostrate." Job 9:13

> "By His power He stirred up the sea, and by His understanding He broke **Rahab** (*LXX*, *to kētos*). By His Spirit He adorned *the* heavens. His hand pierced *the* **fleeing serpent** (*nâchâsh bâriach*, *LXX drakōn apostatēs*)." Job 26:12-13

The *LXX* translators saw the *kētos* sea-serpent in these references to Rahab, and note again the "fleeing serpent" as in our foundation text of Isa.27:1.

One can easily see the equivalence of these terms Leviathan, sea-serpent, dragon, sea-monster and Rahab. While they had reference to once-living creatures, their greater significance in many texts is to the one identified as the Serpent in Eden, Satan. In the case of his heads, these are his surrogates on earth, and Rahab specifically is a reference to Egypt and its head, Pharaoh.

In the NT, Revelation provides the book-end to these OT revelations. It begins with John's visions in chapter 12 –

> "And another sign appeared in the heaven. And, **behold**, a great red **dragon** (Gk. *drakōn*), having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. And his tail drags the third of the stars of the heaven and it threw them into the earth. And the **dragon** (*drakōn*) stood before the woman, who is about to give birth, so that whenever she might give birth he might eat up her child." Rev.12:3-4

> "And there came to be war in the heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the **dragon** (*drakōn*), and the **dragon** (*drakōn*) and his angels fought. And they had not strength, nor was found their place any longer in the heaven. And **the Great Dragon** (*drakōn*) was thrown *out*, the **Old Serpent** (*ophis*), the one being called **devil** and **Satan**, the one deceiving the whole world. He was

> thrown into the earth, and his angels were thrown with him. And I heard a loud voice speaking in the heaven, 'Now came to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Anointed, because was thrown down the accuser of our brothers, the one accusing them before our God day and night.' And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their witness, and they loved not their lives up to death. Because of this rejoice, the heavens and those dwelling in them. **Woe** to those inhabiting the earth and the sea, because **the devil** has descended to you having great wrath, knowing that he has a little season. And when the **dragon** (*drakōn*) saw that he was thrown into the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *child*. And were given to the woman two wings of the eagle, so that she might fly into the wilderness into her place, where she is being fed there a season and seasons and half a season from the face of the **serpent** (*ophis*). And the **serpent** (*ophis*) threw after the woman, out of his mouth, water like a river, so that he might make her river-flooded. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the **dragon** (*drakōn*) threw out of his mouth. And the **dragon** (*drakōn*) was angry at the woman, and he went away to make war with the rest of her seed, those keeping the commandments of God and having the witness of Jesus Christ." Rev.12:7-17

The final contest of the angels, with the Great Dragon, Satan being cast out into the earth shows with great clarity who the OT Leviathan depicts. Then follows his contest with "the woman" Israel. The water metaphors continue here with the "water like a river" that the Dragon will attempt to use to exterminate Israel. The Dragon's having seven heads shows that seven earthly kingdoms will do his bidding in the persecution of "the woman".

And another Satanic figure will arise at this time –

> **"** And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and I saw a **beast ascending out of the sea**, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a name of blasphemy. And the beast that I saw was a likeness of a leopard, and its feet as a bear's, and its mouth as a lion's mouth. And the **dragon** (*drakōn*) gave it his power and his throne and great authority. And I saw one of its heads as having been slain to death, and its Wound of Death was healed. And there was wonder in the whole earth after the beast. And they

> worshipped the **dragon** (*drakōn*) who gave authority to the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with it?'" Rev.13:1-4

The beast will be Satan's means of ruling those seven kingdoms, for he will have the same "seven heads". This beast is the same as "the Scarlet Beast" of Revelation chapter 17, where his hue has been acquired from the blood of the saints he has killed. There he is further described –

> "The beast which you saw was, and is not, and is about to ascend out of **the Abyss** (*abussos*) and to go into destruction." Rev.17:8

I have dealt with the nature and identity of the Beast in the chapters **"Mystery, Babylon the Great"** and **Conditions of the "Rapture"**. Note how this beast is either "ascending out of the sea" or "is about to ascend out of the Abyss", indicating he is the same as the beast of chapter 11 –

> "And whenever they may finish their witness, **the beast, the one ascending out of the Abyss** (Gk. *abussos*), will make war with them and will overcome them and will kill them." Rev.11:7

Many are accustomed to thinking of an abyss as a depth in the earth, but the Scriptural Abyss is watery. And so this beast is the one who had earlier been identified as Apollyon –

> "And the fifth angel trumpeted and I saw a star (i.e., 'angel') having fallen out of the heaven into the earth, and was given to him the key of **the Well** (*phrear*) **of the Abyss** (*abussos*). And he opened **the Well of the Abyss**, and smoke ascended out of **the Well**, as smoke of a great furnace. And the sun and the air was darkened by the Smoke of **the Well**. … And they have over them a king, **the Angel of the Abyss**. His name in Hebrew *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek he has *the* name Apollyon." Rev.9:1-2, 11

With the Dragon-Satan as "the god of this age" (2 Cor.4:4), the resurrected Beast/Apollyon will be the son of this god.

But there is more to this picture than the Dragon and the Beast – a third player with them forms an unholy trinity –

> "And I saw another beast ascending out of the earth, and it had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a **dragon** (*drakōn*). And it performs the whole authority of the first beast before it. And it makes the earth and those dwelling in it, that they worshipped the First Beast, whose Wound of its Death was healed."
>
> Rev.13:11-12

Thus the False-Prophet, as he is elsewhere called, will have the Dragon's authority like the Beast, and he will speak "like a dragon". The three will act together in calling armies to war –

> "And I saw from the mouth of the **dragon** (*drakōn*), and from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false-prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs *came*. For they are spirits of demons performing signs, to go out to the kings of the earth, and of the whole world to gather them for *the* battle of That Great Day of God Almighty." Rev.16:13-14

This "battle of That Great Day of God Almighty" will be settled at Armageddon (Hill of Megiddo). After the defeat of the earthly armies, the Beast and False-Prophet will be judged by the Lake of Fire (Rev.19:19-21). But Satan will only be imprisoned for the Millennium –

> "And I saw an angel descending out of the heaven, having the Key of **the Abyss** (*abussos*) and a great chain in his hand. And he seized the **dragon** (*drakōn*), the **Old Serpent**, who is *the* **devil** and **Satan**, and he bound him a thousand years. And he threw him into **the Abyss** (*abussos*) and closed him in and sealed *it* over him, so that he may not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years ended. And after these things he must be loosed for a short time. Rev.20:1-3

The judgment of the evil spirits released from the Abyss and those thrown out of heaven (Rev.12:9), although not specifically mentioned here, is likely to follow that of Apollyon (Beast) into the Lake of Fire – "the Aionian Fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mat.25:41).

> There is one last, short episode with the Dragon –
>
> "And whenever the thousand years should end, **Satan** will be loosed out of his **prison**. And he will go out to deceive the nations, those in the four corners of

> the earth, the Gog and Magog, to gather them for war, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea. And they ascended upon the breadth of the earth and encircled the camp of the saints, even the Beloved City. And fire descended from God out of the heaven and ate them down. And **the devil**, the one deceiving them, was thrown into the Lake of Fire and Sulphur, where the beast and false-prophet *were thrown*. And they will be tormented day and night for the ages of the ages." Rev.20:7-10

Some of the drama of war and judgment in Revelation are described with such succinctness as to give an impression of *swiftness* also. After this final deception, the Dragon will meet his judgment in "the Lake of Fire and Sulphur". Surely, Satan is well-acquainted with all that the word of God has spoken against him, from smashing the heads of Leviathan to the Dragon being cast into the burning Lake. One wonders if he thinks he can somehow wiggle out of it? But that is the great weakness of overweening pride. Such an arrogant one fails to see what the ordinary man may see.

Appendix J: Isaiah 13-14 – A More Detailed Analysis

This Appendix is provided as an adjunct to a preceding chapter, **"Mystery, Babylon the Great"**. Isaiah chapters 13 and 14 are a two-fold prophecy concerning Babel and its king. They were given to Isaiah when Assyria was the ascendant empire in Mesopotamia. A complete diagramming of this prophecy's parts follows this discussion. The interpretation of these chapters is differentiated thus –

1. Chapter 13 – an "oracle" of Babel
2. Chapter 14 – a "proverb" against the king of Babel

But what exactly is an "oracle", sometimes translated "burden" (*KJV*)? The original word is Heb. *massâ'*, which derives from the verb *nâssâ'*, meaning to lift or carry. The implication seems to be to lift up an object in order to inspect and describe it. Thus Isaiah said he "saw" (Heb. *châzâh*) this "burden" – i.e., it was a vision (*châzôwn*) given to him. On the other hand, chapter 14 was a "proverb" (Heb. *mâshâl*) that Israel would lift up (Heb. *nâssâ'*) when their redemption was accomplished. The implication here was that they were to raise their voice to speak this proverb. A proverb (Heb. noun *mâshâl*) was a comparison of one thing "being like" (Heb. verb *mâshal*) another thing. And while the oracle concerned the people of Babel, the proverb was against its king.

Further, the oracle concerned armies and nations in the "day of Yahweh" (twice), in the "day of the burning of His anger". It also concerned the overthrow of Babel, like Sodom and Gomorrah. So in a loose sense 'Babel **like** Sodom and Gomorrah' was a proverb within the oracle of chapter 13. On the other hand, the proverb in chapter 14 dealt with the king of Babel and other kings, and their eventual end in Sheol, the Grave. For all his vaunted pride, the king of Babel "was like" (*mâshal*) other men of lesser pride in their being made "weak" by death – this is the heart of the proverb's meaning. But there is another great contrast in this proverb because of the king of Babel's God-like pretensions, compared with his humble end in Sheol. Between the oracle and the proverb lies a short comforting word to Jacob "in a day of Yahweh giving rest". There is no "day" mentioned in the proverb section, whose focus centers on what had happened to the king of Babel as a result of "the day of Yahweh" in the oracle section. Further, this proverb was given to Israel to speak in their "day of Yahweh giving rest".

Appendix J: Isaiah 13-14 – A More Detailed Analysis

I was frustrated in my analysis of the details in not finding what we might call a "classic" didactic structure, using such forms as –

Alternation:

a.
  b.
a.
  b.

and Introversion:

a.
  b.
    c.
  b.
a.

However, on a summary level, we can discern this simple introversion –

a. oracle of Babel – its fall (13:1-22)
  b. comfort of Israel – their rise (14:1-3)
a. proverb against the king of Babel – his fall (14:4-23)

But this is a simplification. As I said above, the proverb portion can be interpreted as part of Israel's comfort after "the day of the Lord" is over.

Within **a.** oracle of Babel, I have divided the activities into six sections that seemed to sum up the multiple actions within them –

a. An oracle of Babel (*hapax*)**, which Isaiah son of Amoz saw.** (13:1)

A. Rally to muster an army – 4 actions (13:2)
B. Nine-fold description of Yahweh's army (13:3-5)
C. Nine terrors of the day of Yahweh (Howl!) (13:6-8)
D. Nine doublets of judgments (Behold!) (13:9-13)
E. Nine judgments of devastated Babel (13:14-16)
F. Nine more doublets of judgments (Behold!) (13:17-22)

Nine is the number of judgment (*Number*, p.235), and divine judgment is very definitely conveyed by this "oracle".

A. Rally to muster an army (13:2)
Upon a bare mountain (*hapax*)

1. lift a standard.
2. Lift a voice to them.
3. Wave a hand,
4. that they may enter *the* gates of nobles (*hapax*, or 'willing', 'inclined').

The A. Rally to muster an army takes place upon a "bare (or 'level') mountain" (*hapax*). The *hapax* nature of so many expressions in Isaiah 13-14 makes them difficult to match against other Scriptures. The identity of this mountain is a secret, but the Medes will participate in this muster for certain (Isa.13:17). And it is possible to interpret this "mountain" as a kingdom, as is so often the case in prophecy. The number four rather marks this muster as "world-wide" (*Number*, p.123). Equally mysterious with the "bare mountain" is this army's entering the "gates of nobles" (*hapax*), but this might also be translated the "gates of the willing" (or 'inclined'). This latter expression would color it as a muster of willing recruits for a patriotic war. The latter sense fits well with our modern, democratic times, when mustering to war relies on propaganda, and appeals to patriotism or religious devotion. In ancient times an autocratic *fiat* was typically sufficient to muster armies.

The calling of this army includes –

B. Nine-fold description of Yahweh's army (13:3-5)

1. I have commanded to My consecrated ones –
2. yea, I have called My mighty ones for My wrath –
3. jubilant ones *in* My majesty.
4. *The* sound of the crowd in *the* mountains.
5. A likeness of many people (*hapax*).
6. A sound of roaring of kingdoms of nations (*hapax*) assembled together.
7. Yahweh of armies *is* mustering an army *for* battle.
8. They *are* coming from a distant land, from *the* end of the heavens
9. Yahweh and weapons of His indignation to destroy the whole land. (also Jer.50:25)

Items 6. and 8. rather confirm the "world-wide" nature of this muster. One of the nine descriptions of this army includes – 8. they *are* coming from a distant land, from *the* end of the heavens. This "distant land" seems to rule out any near neighbors to Babel. Despite this distance clarification, I found an interpretation of "the end of heaven" from an internet site that makes this out to be just "beyond the borders" of the country under discussion. Let us see if this interpretation stands up under scrutiny.

Following are the OT texts, besides Isa.13:5, using the expression "end of the heavens" –

"For ask now concerning former days, which came to pass before you, since the day that Elohim created man upon the earth, from *the* end of the heavens, even to *the* end of the heavens, has it happened like this great thing, or has been heard *anything* like it? Did a people hear the voice of Elohim speaking from the midst of the fire, as what you heard, and lived?" Deu.4:32-33

This is a 'for all time' (for mankind) and 'in all places' (for peoples) statement. Israel were wandering in a wilderness at the time this was spoken, and they did not even have borders yet. Note how it is God's voice "from the midst of the fire", which neither Adam, nor any of the fathers had heard. This first occurrence rather sets the definition of "end of heaven" as being world-wide, and the remaining occurrences only reinforce this meaning –

> "Yahweh your Elohim will bring you back from your captivity, and He will have compassion on you, and He will even again gather you from all the nations where Yahweh your Elohim has scattered you there. If you come to be driven out to *the* end of the heavens, Yahweh your Elohim will gather you from there, and He will bring you from there." Deu.30:3-4

Where historically were the captivities of Israel taken? They were taken to Assyria and Babylonia/Persia – well beyond the borders God had fixed for Israel (Deu.32:8).

> "But if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though you come to be cast out to *the* end of the heavens, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place which I chose for dwelling My name." Neh.1:9

Nehemiah was praying from his captivity in Persia, for the mercy that God had spoken in Deu.30:3-4. Persia was well beyond the borders of Israel.

> "Day to day pours out speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech nor words *where* their voice *is* not heard. In all the earth their line has gone out, and to the end of the world their words. He has set for the sun a tent in them, and he (the sun) like a bridegroom *is* coming out of his chamber. He rejoices like a strong-man to run his race from *the* end of the heavens – his rising and his circuit to *the* end of them, and nothing is hidden from his heat." Psa.19:2-6

Psalm 19 demonstrates the equivalence of "in all the earth", "to the end of the world" and "from the end of the heavens … to the end of them". The prospect was as global as the sunlight.

> "And I will bring toward Elam four winds from *the* ends of the heavens, and I will scatter them to all these winds. And will not come to pass nations where outcasts of Elam will not go there." Jer.49:36

The testimony of these five examples speaks to a widespread dispersion, and the example of Psalm 19 is most certainly global. Therefore, any interpretation attempting to restrict the expression "end(s) of the heavens" to just outside the borders

of a given nation is simply turning on its head the idea behind "the end of heaven". There are not a few man-made arguments used to explain prophecy, but we are much safer in letting Scripture explain Scripture.

The element B. Nine-fold description of Yahweh's army included "a sound of a crowd in the mountains" and "a sound of roaring of kingdoms of nations", so this will be a multi-national enemy coming against Babel. There will be at least ten kings involved in the overthrow of Babel per Rev.17:16. The "in the mountains" description, if literal, might include Media, as well as many mountainous, northern lands distant from Babel. We have already examined in the chapter **"Mystery Babylon the Great"** the threat to Babel from "the North" in Jer.50:3, 9, 41; 51:48, and also from Media in Jer.51:11, 28. The latter threat is confirmed by Isa.13:17, where Yahweh will be "rousing against them *the* Medes". But again, if the meaning of "mountains" is metaphoric, then it would be interpreted as "a sound of a crowd among the kingdoms".

The ninth descriptive element concerning this army calls them "weapons of His indignation", a term also found in the large Babel prophecy of Jeremiah 50-51 –

> "Yahweh has opened His armory and He has brought out weapons of His indignation, because this work *is* for Adonai Yahweh of armies in *the* land of Chaldeans. Come to her from *the* end." Jer.50:25-26

Whatever their personal standing before God, the armies attacking Babel will be doing God's will toward Babel. This is similar to how Yahweh called the idolater, "Nebuchadrezzar My servant", who also did His bidding. Here the army coming against Babel is further called "My consecrated ones" and "My mighty ones".

The qualification of the Medes as valuing neither silver nor gold shows that the lure of plunder will not be their *casus belli*. Although latter-day Babylon will be full of riches (Rev.18:12-13), these will largely be a motivation for "the merchants of the earth" (Rev.18:11). The "ten horn" kingdoms will attack her out of hatred (Rev.17:16), but the cause of this hatred is not explained. Revelation is further aligned with Isa.13:5 in this fulfillment of divine will –

> "For God gave into their hearts to do His mind and to make one mind, even to give their kingdom to the Beast until the words of God may be completed." Rev.17:17 (spoken of the 10 horns)

I suppose it will seem to them to be "the right thing to do" to destroy Babel, rather than to plunder her riches – a point of national honor, perhaps.

The next group of activities are the C. Nine terrors of the day of Yahweh (Howl!) –

C. Nine terrors of day of Yahweh 13:6-8

Howl, for

1. **near *is* a day of Yahweh**! (also Joe.1:15: 4:14; Oba.1:15; Zep.1:7, 14)
2. As a ruin from Shaddai it comes. (also Joe.1:15)
3. Therefore, all hands go limp,
4. and every heart of man melts.
5. Then they will be terrified.
6. Pains and anguish will take hold;
7. like bringing forth *to birth* they will writhe.
8. Each to his fellow will be astounded.
9. Their faces *will be* faces of flushing (*hapax*).

These Nine terrors of the day of Yahweh begin with the command to Howl! (or 'wail'). Then "near *is* a day of Yahweh" begins the nine-fold list. That same nearness of "a day of Yahweh" is expressed in Joe.1:15; 2:1 (roughly the same words); 3:14; Oba.1:15; Zep.1:7, 14, bringing the total of occurrences of the phrase to seven. And the next phrase in Isa.13:6, "as a ruin from Shaddai it comes", also continues the "day of Yahweh" statement in Joe.1:15. So the link between the day of Yahweh for Babel in Isa.13:6 and the day of Yahweh for Israel and the house of God in Joel is particularly strong. This does not necessarily mean that these judgments will coincide, but there will likely be a connection between the two. While Joel 1 focuses its effects upon Israel, there "drunkards" (1:5), "vinedressers" (1:11), and "ministers of the altar" (1:13) are instructed to "Howl!" The focus in Oba.1:15 is "all the nations" who have come against Israel. Then Zep.1:7, 14 is against Judah, while those of the second *gate* and the merchants of Jerusalem (1:10-12) are both told to "Howl!" But the "Howl!" of Isa.13:6 appears to be directed toward the whole of Babel.

The full description of the Nine terrors depicts a thoroughly demoralized people. I have interpreted the literal "faces of flames" as "faces of flushing", but there are no other examples in Scripture. The anguish of "bringing forth" was also used of Israel in the time of "Jacob's trouble" (*KJV*) –

> "For thus said Yahweh, 'We have heard a voice of trembling, of terror and not of peace. Ask, now, and see if a male *is* bringing forth. Why have I seen every young man, his hands upon his loins, like her bringing forth, and all faces are turned to pallor? **Woe**, for great *is* that day! Above any like it. Even a time of that distress to Jacob, but he will be saved from it." Jer.30:5-7

Although Babel's faces will be flushed and Israel's pale, each seems to be an effect of a child-bearing anguish that comes upon them both. The anguish for Babel will end in overthrow, but the anguish for Israel in salvation. Perhaps that is why the different coloration of their anguished faces.

The next section, D. Nine doublets of judgments, opens with another divine interjection, **Behold**!

D. Nine doublets of judgments in day of Yahweh 13:9-13

Behold,

1. a **day of Yahweh** *is* **coming** (*hapax*), cruel both of wrath **and** fierce anger,
2. to appoint the land for a waste, **and** its sinners He will exterminate from it.
3. For *the* stars of the heavens **and** their constellations will not shine forth their light.
4. The sun grew dark in its coming out **and** *the* moon does not cause to shine its light.
5. But I will appoint evil upon the world **and** upon the wicked *for* their iniquity.
6. And I will put an end to pride of insolence (*hapax*) **and** I will bring low *the* majesty of *the* terrible (*hapax*).
7. I will make a man more rare than pure gold **and** mankind more than gold of Ophir.
8. Therefore I will cause heavens to quake **and** the earth will shake from its place (also in 14:16)
9. in *the* fury of Yahweh of armies **and in a day of *the* burning of His anger**. (also Lam.1:12)

Here we find nine more statements of judgment, but expressed as doublets to make the wrath of Yahweh doubly fearsome. Note how the celestial signs of 3. and 4., and the quaking and shaking of 8., coincide again with Joel's vision of the day of

Yahweh at Joe.2:10, 31; 3:15. Also the "pride of insolence" in 6. is a more emphatic statement of the charge against Babel than Jer.50:29, 31-32.

Then follows section E., and nine more judgments –

E. Nine judgments (including four doublets) of devastated Babel 13:14-16

1. And it (m.) will become like a hunted gazelle (*hapax*)
2. **and** like a sheep that is not gathered.
3. Each of them will turn to his *own* people
4. **and** each of them will flee to his *own* land.
5. Everyone who is found will be pierced,
6. **and** everyone who is captured will fall by a sword.
7. And their children they will dash to pieces before their eyes.
8. Their houses will be plundered
9. **and** their wives will be violated.

From 3. and 4. it is clear that there will be expatriates in Babel before her destruction. These will flee, but they are not *commanded* to flee, as Israel will be commanded when safety is still possible – Jer.50:4-8; 51:5-6, 45, 50. The action here seems swift, and not like a lengthened siege.

And another divine **Behold** introduces a second set of nine doublets in section F. –

F. Nine more doublets of judgments 13:17-22

Behold,

1. I *am* rousing against them *the* **Medes**, who value not silver – **and** gold, they delight not in it.
2. And *their* bows will dash to pieces *the* young men, **and** fruit of a womb they will not pity.
3. Upon sons their eye will not look with compassion,

and will come to pass **Babel**, [before **and** after – a doublet within a doublet]
beauty ('gazelle') of kingdoms (*hapax*),

adornment of excellence (*hapax*) of **Chaldeans**,
as Elohim's overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah.
4. It will not dwell for a duration **and** it will not abide for a generation.
5. And an Arab will not pitch his tent there, **nor** will they cause to lie down there *for* pasturing.
6. But wild animals will lie down there **and** their houses will be full of jackals.
7. And daughters of an ostrich will dwell there **and** he-goats will skip about there.
8. And jackals will answer in their palaces **and** serpents in *the* exquisite temples.
9. And **near to come *is* her time, and her days will not be drawn out**.

Finally the "oracle" gets specific about the principal adversary – the Medes. The overthrow of Babel like Sodom and Gomorrah indicates a complete annihilation. This will be a "take no prisoners" battle, what typifies a war of revenge. Babel's overthrow is described in like manner in Jer.50:40. The prophecy against Edom also foretells annihilation like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jer.49:18), as does that of Moab and Ammon (Zep.2:9). Judgment 9. "near to come is her time" rather reinforces the earlier statement that "near is a day of Yahweh" (13:6).

The text now switches its focus from Babel to Israel –

b. Seven rewards (six are doublets) **for Jacob after their "hard service"** Isa.14:1-3

1. For Yahweh will have compassion on Jacob, **and** He will choose again Israel.
2. Then He will give them rest upon their own ground.
3. And the sojourners will be joined to them **and** they will attach themselves to *the* house of Jacob.
4. Then peoples will take them **and** bring them into their own place,
5. and *the* house of Israel will possess them upon *the* ground of Yahweh (*hapax*) for servants **and** maid-servants.
6. And it will come to pass *their* taking captive those who took them captive, **and** they will rule over their oppressors.
7. And it will come to pass in a **day of Yahweh giving rest** (*hapax*) to you from your pain and from your turmoil **and** from the hard service (*hapax*) which he served.

This depicts Israel's captors bringing them back from captivity. All the roles of Israel's "hard service" are reversed here. The "day of Yahweh giving rest" will be the ultimate fulfillment of His promise at –

"And He said, 'My presence will go *with you*, and I will give you rest.'" Exo.33:14

In placing this promise of blessing for Israel between the "oracle" and the "proverb" of Babel and its king, the implication is that Babel will be one of Israel's oppressors.

Next comes the last part of the three major divisions, the "proverb" against the king of Babel.

***a.* Then you will lift up this proverb** (*mâshâl*) **against *the* king of Babel**, 14:4

i. Exclamation of the king's cessation 14:5-11

i. Exclamation of the king's fall from heaven 14:12-21

ii. Babel destroyed – six-fold pronouncement 14:22-23

ii. Asshur broken – five-fold oath (doubled) 14:24-27

The first part is given in more detail by –

i. *Exclamation of the king's cessation*

'**How** ('*êyk*) ceased *the* oppressor,
ceased *the* boisterousness!'

How oppressor stopped

Yahweh has broken
the staff of wicked ones, *two-fold breaking*
the scepter of rulers,
who struck peoples in wrath a continual stroke (*hapax*), *two-fold tyranny*
who ruled nations in anger, an unrestrained ('not holding back' (*hapax*)) persecution.

Peace on earth begins

The whole earth *was* at rest *and* quiet. *quiet & restful*
They broke forth a ringing cry. *then shouting*
Indeed, *the* cypress trees rejoiced over you, cedars of Lebanon, *saying*, *response of two trees*
'From that time you have lain down, the *wood*cutter comes not up against us.' *peaceful, unbusy*

A meeting at the Grave

Sheol from beneath quakes (*râgaz*) for you, to meet your entering *it*. *the two meet*
It stirs up for you *the* Rephaim, all leaders ('rams') of the earth (*hapax*). *two-fold raising*
It has raised up from their thrones all kings of nations. (and v.18, only 2 occs.)
They all answer and say to you, *response of leaders & kings*
'Yea, you were made weak just like (k_e*môw*) us. You were made like (*mâshal*) us. *two-fold comparing*
Has been brought down to Sheol your arrogance, *the* sound of your instruments (*hapax*). *two-fold lowering*
Under you is spread *the* maggot, and your cover *is the* worm. *two-fold decomposition*

The introductory "**How**" is exclamatory, rather than interrogative, and a similar "**How**" introduces the affiliated section that follows. We are meant to compare these, as they address an earthly fall and a heavenly fall –

i. '**How** (*'êyk*) ceased *the* oppressor, ceased *the* boisterousness!'

i. '**How** (*'êyk*) you have fallen from *the* heavens, morning-star (Heb. *hêylêl*; LXX *heōsphoros*, *hapax*), son of dawn (*hapax*); you have been cut down to the earth, prostrater over nations!' But this is a fall from the pretext of being a nation of heavenly origin.

This is not all. The large Babel prophecy in Jeremiah 50-51 uses similar exclamations –

How (*'êyk*) has been cut off and broken *the* hammer of the whole earth (*hapax*)!
How (*'êyk*) has become for a horror Babel among *the* nations!" Jer.50:23

How (*'êyk*) Sheshak has been taken and seized, *the* praise of the whole earth (*hapax*)!

How (‘*êyk*) has become for a horror Babel among *the* nations!” Jer.51:41

“*The* hammer of the whole earth” and “*the* praise of the whole earth” speak to Babel’s dominance in the earth – whether by force or by persuasive intoxication. And Isaiah 14 adds to this the oppression of Babel’s king, and his divine pretenses. Likely his oppressive, boisterous, self-vaunting character will be part of his formula for success. The Jeremiah texts above seem to lend themselves to comparison with the lament of the kings of the earth here –

“**Woe, woe**, the great city Babylon, the strong city, because in one hour came your judgment!” Rev.18:10

After establishing that Yahweh has broken this oppressor, as He has other “rulers”, some amazing voices are heard. First, two trees declare how they have come to a time of rest. Inclusion of the cypress and cedar, with a specific mention of Lebanon, may indicate one of the nations victimized by latter-day Babylon. Then comes a raising of “all kings of nations” (this phrase unique to Isaiah 14 – 2 occs.), who speak the parable that this grand king of Babel is just as weak and lowly as the rest of kings. Part of the force of the parable appears to be this fabulous nature of talking trees and talking dead men. I would draw your attention to the parable **The Rich Man and Lazarus** (see chapter **Parable as Prophecy)**, which uses a similar dramatic device.

The quaking of Sheol at meeting the king of Babel contrasts with his making the earth quake, and shaking kingdoms (14:16). But this Sheol-quake is likely spoken in mockery of “the hammer of the whole earth”.

The second **How** section completes the humiliation of this king of Babel –

i. ‘**How** (‘*êyk*) you have fallen from *the* heavens, morning-star (Heb. *hêylêl*; *LXX heōsphoros*, *hapax*), son of dawn (*hapax*); you have been cut down to the earth, prostrater over nations.’!’

This fall “from the heavens”, like the designation “morning-star”, indicate the crest-fall of one with divine pretenses, even delusions of heavenly grandeur. I already pointed out in the chapter **“This Generation” in Prophecy** how the *KJV* translation of “Lucifer” for “morning-star” has prejudiced identifying the “king of Babel” as a figure for Satan. There is such a human-like figure for Satan that is valid, in “the lamentation over the king of Tyre” (Eze.28:12). This one was also called the “anointed cherub” (Eze.28:13 – i.e., an angelic being), and he was a direct creation of God (Eze.28:15). He was

also " in Eden, garden of God" (Eze.28:12). His heart was lifted up because of his beauty (Eze.28:17), and his destruction is said to bring him to ashes (Eze.28:18). Nowhere does this "king of Tyre" display God-like pretenses, so aligning his prophecy with that of the king of Babel is a mis-alignment.

However, the "proverb against the king of Babel" in Isaiah 14 does resemble the following saying "to the prince of Tyre" –

> "And came *the* word of Yahweh to me saying, 'Son of man, say to *the* prince of Tyre, "Thus said Adonai Yahweh, 'Because your heart raised up and you said, "**God *am* I**. **I sit *in the* seat of gods** in *the* midst of *the* seas." But **you *are* a man and not a god**. And **you set your heart as a heart of gods**. Behold, you *are* wiser than Daniel. Every secret *is* not hidden from you. By your wisdom and by your understanding you have gained for yourself riches, and you gathered gold and silver into your treasuries. By your great wisdom by trade you have increased your riches, and your heart has been lifted up because of your riches.' Therefore, thus said Adonai Yahweh, 'Because of **your setting your heart as a heart of gods**, therefore, **behold**, I will bring against you terrifying foreign nations. And they will draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom, and they will defile your splendor. They will throw you down into a pit (Heb. *shâchath*), and you will die a death of *those* slain in *the* midst of *the* seas. Will you certainly say, "**God *am* I**" before the one slaying you? But you *will be* **a man and not a god** in *the* hand of one slaying you. You will die an uncircumcised death by *the* hand of strangers, because I have spoken – an utterance of Adonai Yahweh.'"'" Eze.28:1-10

The cherubic "king of Tyre" was corrupted by his own great beauty, but aspiring to be a god was not attributed to him. It seems that this blasphemy is the preserve of men, because both the "prince of Tyre" and "the king of Babel" will put on this divine masquerade. And it is entirely credible that they will become so swept away by it, as to believe the lie themselves. It is not difficult to perceive the strong relation between the Satanic "king of Tyre" and his man, "the prince of Tyre". This relationship bears a resemblance to how the Dragon and the Beast of Revelation are related. But the prince of Tyre must also have a relationship to the city of Tyre "in *the* midst of *the* seas", while the earthly origin of the Beast in Revelation is not stated. It is possible for Satan to have many such disciples among the princes of the earth.

The remainder of morning-star's fall is here –

His pretense 14:13-14

And you said in your heart,
The heavens I will ascend.
From above stars of God (*hapax*) I will raise my throne, *two-fold self-raising*
and I sat down on *the* mountain of meeting ('appointment') (*hapax*) *two-fold lowering*
in *the* sides of *the* North. (cp. Eze.38:6, 15; 39:2)
I will ascend above *the* heights of thick cloud (*hapax*) . *two-fold self-raising*
I will make myself like (*dâmâh*) to the Most High (Elyon).

His humiliation 14:15-19

Surely, to Sheol you will be brought down, into *the* sides of a pit (*hapax*). cp. Eze. chs 32-33 re: the Assyrian
Those seeing you will stare at you. *response of witnesses*
To you they will discern,
If this *is* the man quaking (*râgaz*) the earth,
shaking kingdoms, (also 13:13)
setting *the* world as the desert?
And its cities he threw down;
his prisoners he did not open *the prison*-house *to*.'
All kings of nations, all of them have lain down in glory, each in his own house. *other kings - glorious*
But you have been thrown from your grave (*qeber*) *king of Babel - inglorious*
as an abominated sprout (*hapax*),
a garment of *the* slain (*hapax*),
pierced *with* a sword,
going down to stones of a pit (*hapax*),
as a trampled corpse (*hapax*).

Five prohibitions

You will **not** be united with them in burial, 14:20-21

for you ruined your land, you killed your people.
A seed of evil-doers will **not** be proclaimed for an age. (also 1:4)
Prepare slaughter for his sons, upon the guilt of their fathers.
They will **not** rise **nor** inherit *the* land, **nor** fill *the* face of *the* world *with* cities.

Going back to "the prince of Tyre" in Ezekiel 28, both he and "the king of Babel" here in Isaiah will die by the hand of man and be consigned to the "pit" (Heb. *shâchath*). Note how this differs from the "king of Tyre", who will be destroyed by fire into "ashes". In his destruction, the "king of Tyre" will become an object for gazing (Eze.28:17) and astonishment (Eze.28:19) to kings and peoples. On the other hand, the king of Babel will be "brought down to Sheol" (the Grave – Isa. 14:15) into "the sides of a pit" (Heb. *shâchath*), "to the stones of a pit" (Isa.14:17), where "maggot" and "worm" will destroy his body (Isa.14:14). Note the contrast between his end ("the sides of a pit") and his ambition to sit, that is 'rule' ("in the sides of the North"). I have dwelt in some detail on these "sides of the North" in the chapter, **Where Does Gog of the Land of Magog Fit?**, where I have concluded that "the mountain of meeting" is a confederacy or alliance of northern kingdoms that will become Babel's rivals.

At some point the king of Babel appears to be thrown from his grave (Isa.14:19) to become a "trampled corpse". He too will become a gazing-stock for "all leaders of the earth" and "all kings of nations" (second occ. - Isa.14:9), but this is rather a fabulous gaze by other dwellers of Sheol. The reason the king of Babel will be defiled "as a trampled corpse" is because he will ruin his land and kill his people. This is not what kings normally do to their country and people.

The earlier observation of "all kings of nations" was "you were made weak just **like** us" (Isa.14:10). This is the one who will pretend to make himself "**like** the Most High" (Isa.14:14). This will take the king of Babel from pretense to parable.

Then the conclusion of chapter 14 appears to extend the "parable" –

Babel destroyed – four-fold pronouncement
And I will rise up against them 14:22-23
– an utterance of Yahweh of armies –
and I will cut off for **Babel**, name and remnant, and offspring and posterity *4 cuttings off*

– an utterance of Yahweh.
And I will appoint her (Babel) for a possession of *the* porcupine (*hapax*), and marshes of waters.
And I will sweep her with a broom of annihilation (*hapax*)
– an utterance of Yahweh of armies.

Asshur broken – five-fold oath (doubled)
Yahweh of armies has sworn, to say, 14:24-27
Surely, like as I have intended, thus it has come to pass. *doublet of purpose*
And like as I have counseled, *so* it will stand,
to break **Asshur** in My land, (see Isa.23:13; Mic.5:5) *doublet of destroying Asshur*
and upon My mountains I will trample him.
And his yoke will turn aside from upon them, *doublet of freeing Jacob*
and his burden from upon their shoulder will turn aside.
This *is* the counsel that is counseled against the whole earth, *doublet of God's omnipotence*
and this the hand that is stretching out over all the nations.'
For Yahweh of armies has counseled, and who will annul *it*? *doublet of His omnipotence vs. impotence*
And His hand *is* stretching out, and who will turn it back?

I have earlier remarked how the identities of Babel and Asshur seem to be intermingled here. Assyria is depicted in another Isaiah prophecy by this text –

"**Behold**, land of Chaldeans. This people became not. Asshur founded her for desert-dwellers. They set up its towers; they raised up her fortresses; they brought her to ruin." Isa.23:13

Assyria is here accredited as both founder and destroyer of "land of Chaldeans", which would include Babel-city as well as other cities. But the statement is so succinct, and even more confounding is its unexplained insertion into an extended prophecy against Tyre. It is as if it were addressing Canaan as the "land of Chaldeans" (*Kasdîym*). Secular histories trace the origin of the *Kasdîym* to regions west of Mesopotamia around the ninth century BC. If the Levant is indicated by this

"west", then Tyre and Sidon are possible sources of the emigration. But the Hebrew of Isa.23:13 is ambiguous, and it might also be translated –

> "Look at the land of the Chaldeans! This is the people; it was not Assyria. They destined it for wild animals. They erected their siege towers; they tore down her palaces; they made her a ruin." (*NSRVUE*)

Was this meant as warning that Babylonia, not Assyria, was the real threat in "the burden of Tyre"?

In Isaiah 13-14 Babel's destruction will be in its own land, but the breaking of Asshur will be "in My land" and "upon My mountains". This rather differentiates Babel from Asshur in this prophecy.

Note how the breaking of Asshur is sealed by a divine oath. And every statement in this oath is doubled for emphasis. But additional subjects of this oath were His counsel "against the whole earth" and His hand stretching out (in judgment – like in Isa.5:25) "over all the nations". The more or less universal reach of the Isaiah 13-14 prophecy is confirmed by these expressions:

- many people (13:4)
- kingdoms of nations (13:4)
- a distant land from the end of the heavens (13:5)
- the whole land (13:5)
- the land (13:9; 14:21)
- the world (13:11; 14:17)
- the earth (13:13; 14:9, 12, 16)
- his own people, his own land (13:14)
- kingdoms (13:19; 14:16)
- their own ground (14:1)
- peoples (14:6)
- nations (14:6, 12)

- the whole earth (14:7, 26)
- all kings of nations (14:9, 18)
- in *the* sides of *the* North (14:13)
- its cities (14:17)
- your land (14:20)
- your people (14:20)
- face of the world (14:21)
- cities (14:21)
- in My land and on My mountains (14:25)
- all the nations (14:26)

This inventory reminds me of similar terms used in the Revelation –

- every tribe and tongue and people and nation (and several variations of this word-order)
- the kings of the earth
- the whole world

Babel will one day become the center of a worldwide intoxication (Rev.17:2), and also an oppressor of the saints of God (Rev.17:6). **Appendix K: Jeremiah 50-51 A More Detailed Analysis** will add more to this picture of latter-day Babylon.

Even as Babel will become like Sodom and Gomorrah, Assyria's role will be different. First Yahweh will use Assyria as the "rod of My anger" against Jerusalem (a "hypocritical nation"); then He will punish Assyria's haughtiness (Isa.10:5-12). And finally Assyria will become blessed, as a "third" with Israel and Egypt (Isa.19:23-24). Apparently, there is no future blessing reserved for Babel.

Structure of Isaiah 13-14 in its Entirety

a. An oracle of Babel (*hapax*)**, which Isaiah son of Amoz saw.** {Babel-4, Chaldeans-1, Asshur-1, Medes-1} 13:1-5

Rally to muster an army

Upon a bare mountain (*hapax*)

1. lift a standard.
2. Lift a voice to them. (cp.37:23)
3. Wave a hand,
4. that they may enter *the* gates of nobles (*hapax*, or 'willing', 'inclined').

Nine-fold description of Yahweh's army

1. I have commanded to My consecrated ones –
2. yea, I have called My mighty ones for My wrath –
3. jubilant ones *in* My majesty.
4. *The* sound of the crowd in *the* mountains.
5. A likeness of many people (*hapax*).
6. A sound of roaring of kingdoms of nations (*hapax*) assembled together.
7. Yahweh of armies *is* mustering an army *for* battle.
8. They *are* coming from a distant land, from *the* end of the heavens
9. Yahweh and weapons of His indignation to destroy the whole land. (also Jer.50:25)

Howl, for *Nine terrors of day of Yahweh* 13:6-8

1. **near *is* a day of Yahweh**! (also Joe.1:15: 4:14; Oba.1:15; Zep.1:7, 14)
2. As a ruin from Shaddai it comes. (also Joe.1:15)
3. Therefore, all hands go limp,
4. and every heart of man melts.

5. Then they will be terrified.
6. Pains and anguish will take hold;
7. like bringing forth *to birth* they will writhe.
8. Each to his fellow will be astounded.
9. Their faces *will be* faces of flushing (*hapax*).

Behold, *Nine doublets of judgments in day of Yahweh* 13:9-13

1. **a day of Yahweh** *is* **coming** (*hapax*), cruel both of wrath **and** fierce anger,
2. to appoint the land for a waste, **and** its sinners He will exterminate from it.
3. For *the* stars of the heavens **and** their constellations will not shine forth their light.
4. The sun grew dark in its coming out **and** *the* moon does not cause to shine its light.
5. But I will appoint evil upon the world **and** upon the wicked *for* their iniquity.
6. And I will put an end to pride of insolence (*hapax*) **and** I will bring low *the* majesty of *the* terrible (*hapax*).
7. I will make a man more rare than pure gold **and** mankind more than gold of Ophir.
8. Therefore I will cause heavens to quake **and** the earth will shake from its place (also in 14:16)
9. in *the* fury of Yahweh of armies **and in a day of *the* burning of His anger**. (also Lam.1:12)

Nine judgments (including four doublets) of devastated Babel 13:14-16

1. And it (m.) will come to pass like a hunted gazelle (*hapax*)
2. **and** like a sheep that is not gathered.
3. Each of them will turn to his *own* people
4. **and** each of them will flee to his *own* land.
5. Everyone who is found will be pierced,
6. **and** everyone who is captured will fall by a sword.
7. And their children they will dash to pieces before their eyes.
8. Their houses will be plundered
9. **and** their wives will be violated.

Behold, *Nine more doublets of judgments* 13:17-22

1. I *am* rousing against them *the* **Medes**, who value not silver – **and** gold, they delight not in it.
2. And *their* bows will dash to pieces *the* young men, **and** fruit of a womb they will not pity.
3. Upon sons their eye will not look with compassion,

and will come to pass **Babel**, [before **and** after – a doublet within a doublet]
beauty (gazelle) of kingdoms (*hapax*),
adornment of excellence (*hapax*) of **Chaldeans**,
as Elohim's overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah.

4. It will not dwell for a duration **and** it will not abide for a generation.
5. And an Arab will not pitch his tent there, **nor** will they cause to lie down there *for* pasturing.
6. But wild animals will lie down there **and** their houses will be full of jackals.
7. And daughters of an ostrich will dwell there **and** he-goats will skip about there.
8. And jackals will answer in their palaces **and** serpents in *the* exquisite temples.
9. And **near to come *is* her time, and her days will not be drawn out**.

b. *Seven rewards (six are doublets) for Jacob after their "hard service"* Isa.14:1-3

1. For Yahweh will have compassion on Jacob, **and** He will choose again Israel.
2. Then He will give them rest upon their own ground.
3. And the sojourners will be joined to them **and** they will attach themselves to *the* house of Jacob.
4. Then peoples will take them **and** bring them into their own place,
5. and *the* house of Israel will possess them upon *the* ground of Yahweh (*hapax*) for servants **and** maid-servants.
6. And it will come to pass *their* taking captive those who took them captive, **and** they will rule over their oppressors.
7. And it will come to pass in a **day of Yahweh giving rest** (*hapax*) to you from your pain and from your turmoil **and** from the hard service (*hapax*) which he served.

_a._ Then you will lift up this proverb (_mâshâl_) against _the_ king of Babel, 14:4

Exclamation of the king's cessation

'**How** ('_êyk_) ceased *the* oppressor, 14:5-11
ceased *the* boisterousness!' cp. '_êyk_ in Jer.50:23 ('_êyk_ x2, the hammer of the whole earth); 51:41 ('_êyk_ x2, the praise of the whole earth)

How oppressor stopped

Yahweh has broken
the staff of wicked ones, *two-fold breaking*
the scepter of rulers,
who struck peoples in wrath a continual stroke (*hapax*), *two-fold tyranny*
who ruled nations in anger an unrestrained (not holding back (*hapax*)) persecution.

Peace on earth begins

The whole earth *was* at rest *and* quiet. *quiet & restful*
They broke forth a ringing cry. *then shouting*
Indeed, *the* cypress trees rejoiced over you, cedars of Lebanon, *saying*, *response of two trees*
'From that time you have lain down, the *wood*cutter comes not up against us.' *peaceful, unbusy*

A meeting at the Grave

Sheol from beneath quakes (*râgaz*) for you, to meet your entering *it*. *the two meet*
It stirs up for you *the* Rephaim, all leaders ('rams') of *the* earth (*hapax*). *two-fold raising*
It has raised up from their thrones all kings of nations. (and v.18, only)
They all answer and say to you, *response of leaders & kings*
'Yea, you were made weak just like (k_e*môw*) us. You were made like (*mâshal*) us.
Has been brought down to Sheol your arrogance, *the* sound of your instruments (*hapax*). *two-fold lowering*
Under you is spread *the* maggot, and your cover *is the* worm. *two-fold decay*

Exclamation of the king's fall from heaven

'**How** (*'êyk*) you have fallen from *the* heavens, morning-star (Heb. *hêylêl*; Gk. *heōsphoros*, *hapax*), son of dawn (*hapax*);
you have been cut down to the earth, prostrater over nations.' 14:12-14

His pretense

And you said in your heart,
The heavens I will ascend. *two-fold self-raising*
From above stars of God (*hapax*) I will raise my throne,
and I sat down on *the* mount of meeting ('appointment') (*hapax*) *two-fold lowering*
in *the* sides of *the* North. (cp. Eze.38:6, 15; 39:2)
I will ascend above *the* heights of thick cloud (*hapax*) . *two-fold self-raising*
I will make myself like (*dâmâh*) to the Most High (Elyon).

His humiliation 14:15-19

Surely, to Sheol you will be brought down, into *the* sides of a pit (*hapax*). cp. Eze. chs 32-33 the Assyrian
Those seeing you will stare at you. *response of witnesses*
To you they will discern,
If this *is* the man quaking (*râgaz*) the earth,
shaking kingdoms, (also 13:13)
setting *the* world as the desert?
And its cities he threw down;
his prisoners he did not open *the prison*-house *to*.'
All kings of nations, all of them have lain down in glory, each in his own house. *other kings - glorious*
But you have been thrown from your grave (*qeber*) *king of Babel - inglorious*
as an abominated sprout (*hapax*),
a garment of *the* slain (*hapax*),

pierced *with* a sword,
going down to stones of a pit (*hapax*),
as a trampled corpse (*hapax*).

Five prohibitions

You will **not** be united with them in burial, 14:20-21
for you ruined your land, you killed your people.
A seed of evil-doers will **not** be proclaimed for an age. (also 1:4)
Prepare slaughter for his sons, upon the guilt of their fathers.
They will **not** rise **nor** inherit *the* land, **nor** fill *the* face of *the* world *with* cities.

Babel destroyed – four-fold pronouncement

And I will rise up against them 14:22-23
– an utterance of Yahweh of armies –
and I will cut off for **Babel**, name and remnant, and offspring and posterity *4 cuttings off*
– an utterance of Yahweh.
And I will appoint her (Babel) for a possession of *the* porcupine (*hapax*), and marshes of waters.
And I will sweep her with a broom of annihilation (*hapax*)
– an utterance of Yahweh of armies.

Asshur broken – five-fold oath (doubled)

Yahweh of armies has sworn, to say, 14:24-27
Surely, like as I have intended, thus it has come to pass. *doublet of purpose*
And like as I have counseled, *so* it will stand,
to break **Asshur** in My land, (see Isa.23:13; Mic.5:5) *doublet of destroying Asshur*
and upon My mountains I will trample him.
And his yoke will turn aside from upon them, *doublet of freeing Jacob*
and his burden from upon their shoulder will turn aside.

This *is* the counsel that is counseled against the whole earth, *doublet of God's omnipotence*
and this the hand that is stretching out over all the nations.'
For Yahweh of armies has counseled, and who will annul *it*? *doublet of His omnipotence vs. impotence*
And His hand *is* stretching out, and who will turn it back?

Appendix K: Jeremiah 50-51 – A More Detailed Analysis

Isaiah chapters 13-14 (see **Appendix J**) is another long prophecy related to this long Jeremiah declaration against Babel. However, these two texts differ greatly in their treatments of the subject. Isaiah 13-14 resolves structurally into three major parts -

a. oracle of Babel – its fall (13:1-22)
b. comfort of Israel – their rise (14:1-3)
a. proverb against the king of Babel – his fall (14:4-23)

Within **a.** oracle of Babel, I have divided the activities into six sections that seemed to sum up the multiple actions within them –

a. An oracle of Babel (*hapax*)**, which Isaiah son of Amoz saw.** (13:1)

A. Rally to muster an army – 4 actions (13:2)
B. Nine-fold description of Yahweh's army (13:3-5)
C. Nine terrors of the day of Yahweh (Howl!) (13:6-8)
D. Nine doublets of judgments (Behold!) (13:9-13)
E. Nine judgments of devastated Babel (13:14-16)
F. Nine more doublets of judgments (Behold!) (13:17-22)

The oracle is marked by its several nine-fold groups, strongly reinforcing the message of judgment (see *Number*, p.235).

Then Israel becomes the center of attention with this short word of comfort –

b. Seven rewards for Jacob after their "hard service" Isa.14:1-3

And finally the portion ***a.*** proverb against the king of Babel resolves into four subsections –

a. **Then you will lift up this proverb against *the* king of Babel** 14:4

i. Exclamation of the king's cessation 14:5-11
i. Exclamation of the king's fall from heaven 14:12-21
ii. Babel destroyed – six-fold pronouncement 14:22-23
ii. Asshur broken – five-fold oath (doubled) 14:24-27

On the other hand, Jeremiah 50-51 has this more complex overview structure, an extended alternation –

A. *Proclamation for the nations against Babel*
- **a.** 1st declaration against Babel
  - **b.** *1st word of comfort to Israel*
- **a.** 2nd declaration against Babel
  - **b.** *2nd word of comfort to Israel*
- **a.** 3rd declaration against Babel
  - **b.** *3rd word of comfort for Israel*
- **a.** 4th declaration against Babel
  - **b.** *4th word of comfort for Israel*
- **a.** 5th declaration against Babel
  - **b.** *5th word of comfort for Israel*
- **a.** 6th declaration against Babel
  - **b.** *6th word of comfort for Israel*
- **a.** 7th declaration against Babel
  - **b.** *7th word of comfort for Israel*
- **a.** 8th declaration against Babel
  - **b.** *8th word of comfort to Israel*
- **a.** 9th declaration against Babel
  - **b.** *9th word of comfort for Israel*
- **a.** 10th declaration against Babel
  - **b.** *10th word of comfort for Israel*
- **a.** 11th declaration against Babel

This is certainly a long concatenation of many things spoken – both against Babel and for Israel. In fact, such stringing together is often a keynote of emphatic prophecies. They are not spoken in simple terms, but in many parts. This manifold nature of prophecy can give it the appearance of random statements strung together, but at the next level there is an even more elaborate set of manifold statements -

A. *Proclamation for the nations against Babel* (50:1)
6-fold command to Jeremiah & the nations

a. 1st declaration against Babel (50:2-3)
9 *judgments of Babel*

b. *1st word of comfort to Israel* (50:4-8)
(7-fold return of Israel to Zion & Yahweh
*{**9**-fold condition of Israel – misled & abused}*
3-fold command to Israel to leave Babel) 7 + 3 = 10

a. 2nd declaration against Babel
(7-fold disaster of Babel
3-fold expression of Babel's shame) 7 + 3 = 10 (50:9-12)
10-fold emptying of Babel (50:12-16)

b. *2nd word of comfort to Israel*
dispersion of nations/Israel & punishment (6-parts) (50:16-17)
2-fold punishment of Israel's enemies (50:18)
3-fold return of Israel (50:19)
3-fold pardon of Israel (50:20)
3-fold command to attack Babel (50:21)

a. 3rd declaration against Babel
(7-fold declaration of crushing +
*2-fold exclamation) 7 + 2 = **9*** (50:22-25)
3-fold work of Yahweh
(7-fold command to destroy +
*2-fold exclamation) 7 + 2 = **9*** (50:26-27)

b. *3rd word of comfort for Israel* (50:28)
2-fold blessing

a. 4th declaration against Babel
*(**9**-fold commands & declarations against Babel +* (50:29-31)
*3-fold statement of Yahweh's punishment) **9** + 3 = 12* (50:31-32)

b. *4th word of comfort for Israel* (50:33-34)
7-fold dispute of Israel

a. 5th declaration against Babel
*(**9** objects of the sword, 1 object of the drought) **9** + 1 = 10* (50:35-40)
3 results (stated in 2-parts each) 3 x 2 = 6
7-fold attack on Babel (50:41-43)

4-fold challenge & Yahweh's chosen man (50:44)
4-fold purpose of Yahweh against Babel (50:45-46)
***9**-fold judgment of Babel* (51:1-4)

b. *5th word of comfort for Israel* (51:5-6)
7-steps from guilt to recompense

a. 6th declaration against Babel (51:7-9)
***9**-fold use & dis-use of Babel*

b. *6th word of comfort for Israel* (51:9-10)
4-fold judgment of Babel & exoneration of Israel

a. 7th declaration against Babel
*Yahweh's **9**-fold plan against Babel* (51:11-12)
4-fold profit & loss (51:13)
2-fold oath of Yahweh (51:14)
7-fold works of the true God (51:15-16)
6-fold vanity of idols (51:17-18)

b. *7th word of comfort for Israel*
4-fold benefit to Israel (51:19)
*Israel a 10-fold club – 18 objects (2 x **9**, or the nations doubly **judged**)*
(51:20-23)

a. 8th declaration against Babel
2-fold recompense of Yahweh (51: 24)
4-fold exclamation against Babel (51:25)
2-fold recompense of Yahweh (51:26)
(7-fold command to attack +
3-fold components of chief attacker) 7 + 3 = 10 (51:27-28)
3-fold plan of Yahweh (51:29)
***9**-fold fall of Babel* (51:30-32)
2-fold verdict of Yahweh (51:33)

b. *8th word of comfort to Israel*
(6 works of Nebuchadrezzar + (51:34)
*3 works of Yahweh's justice vs. Babel) 6 + 3 = **9*** (51:35-36)

a. 9th declaration against Babel
9-fold judgment of Babel (51:36-40)
2-fold exclamation against Babel (51:41)
7-fold destruction of Babel (51:42-44)

b. *9th word of comfort for Israel*
7-fold flight (51:44-46)

a. 10th declaration against Babel
7-fold days of punishment (51:47-49)

b. *10th word of comfort for Israel*
7-fold flight (51:50-51)

a. 11th declaration against Babel
9-fold days of punishment (51:52-56)
3-fold justice of God (51:56-57)
4-fold exclamation against Babel (51:58)

In overview, there are 11 declarations against Babel. Bullinger identified 11 as a number of disorganization (*Number*, p.251), and the destruction of Babel "like Sodom and Gomorrah" speaks to its ultimate disorganization. Like the greater part of Isaiah 13-14, some portions of this long Jeremiah prophecy are also marked by the number of judgment (9). But other portions are reckoned by many other multiples (2 to 12). The full, detailed text is laid out along these lines at the end of this Appendix. Now let us examine some of that detail.

Take the introductory command to Jeremiah (50:1-2) as an example of emphasis by multiplication. There are six verbs spoken to Jeremiah by Yahweh –

1. the imperative: Announce among the nations
2. the imperative: make them hear
3. the imperative: raise a standard
4. the imperative: make them hear
5. the imperfect: you will not conceal
6. the imperative: say

Because the Heb. imperative form is never used with a negative verb, number 5 should be taken as an implied imperative. Although ostensibly a command to

Jeremiah, these six verbs use masc. pl. forms – in effect, the command went out from Jeremiah as a command to the nations themselves. So the declaration of Babel's capture was meant for the whole world to declare.

Again, we find a multifarious emphasis in this ten-fold list of objects of Yahweh's warfare with a "sword" (50:35-40) –

A **sword** *is*
1. against (Heb. *`al*) Chaldeans – an utterance of Yahweh –
2. and **toward** (Heb. *'el*) those inhabiting Babel,
3. and **toward** her princes,
4. and **toward** her wise ones.

A **sword** *is*
5. **toward** the diviners, and they will act foolishly.

A **sword** *is*
5. **toward** her mighty ones and they will be shattered.

A **sword** *is*
4. **toward** their horses
3. and **toward** their chariots
2. and **toward** all the mixed people who *are* in her midst, and they will become as women.

A **sword** *is*
1. **toward** her storehouses, and they will be plundered.

A **drought** *is*
6. **toward** her waters and they will dry up, for she is a land of idols, and they run madly upon horrors.

"Sword" is mentioned five times, and "drought" make six mentions of the implements of Yahweh's warfare. They are "toward" the Chaldean enemy – with "toward" used ten times. This remarkable statement has a noticeably martial drumbeat to it. Note that "toward" (*'el*) has the sense of "against", but I wanted to differentiate this preposition from *`al* in the first line. In total, there are eleven of these "against" statements. Thus far, Yahweh of armies is waging this war (50:34). So this small section is marked by the "disorganization" number 11, even as the whole of Jeremiah 50-51 is divided into 11 declarations against Babel. See below for more discussion on the number 11.

Another such martial drumbeat concerns Israel –

*Israel a 10-fold club – 18 objects (2 x **9**, or the nations doubly **judged**)* (51:20-23)
You *are* a club to Me, implements of war,

1. and **by you** I will smash (Heb. *nâphats*) nations,
2. and **by you** I will destroy (Heb. *shâchath*) kingdoms,
3. and **by you** I will smash a horse and his rider,
4. and **by you** I will smash a chariot and its rider,
5. and **by you** I will smash man and woman,
6. and **by you** I will smash old and young,
7. and **by you** I will smash young man and virgin,
8. and **by you** I will smash a shepherd and his flock,
9. and **by you** I will smash a serf and his team,
10. and **by you** I will smash governors and officials.

Note that "by you" occurs ten times, the same number of times in the larger text that a word of comfort is declared to Israel. The word "smash" occurs nine times and the synonym "destroy" once, with a total of eighteen objects of destruction. Certainly *completeness of destruction* must be a sense of this passage. This statement concerning Israel as Yahweh's club, or battle-ax, continues into v.24 –

> "And I will repay to Babel and to all dwellers, Chaldeans, *for* all their evil which they have done in Zion – an utterance of Yahweh."

This context gives the impression that Israel as Yahweh's battle-ax will contribute to Babel's fall. I would not go so far as to name Israel as one of the "ten horns", who are allies of the Beast in Rev.17:12. But it does open a leaf that seems to have little other OT textual backing. However, see my discussion of Revelation's 144,000 in the section, **Then Who Are the 144,000?** I have suggested there that the 144,000 are an elite army, chosen to hold back the 200,000,000 man army, while Israel escapes in their second Exodus. But if Jeremiah 50-51 is fulfilled entirely in the future, that means some time before the dispatch of the 200,000,000, Israel will have thrown off the yoke of Babel. Some part of the 144,000 may get their combat experience from having previously battled Babylonians.

And another text that might apply to Israel as a victor is this enigmatic statement –

> "Behold one will go up like a lion from *the* plain of the Jordan toward an enduring pasture, for suddenly I will drive them (fugitives?) away from over her (Babel?). And who is *the* young man (or 'chosen one') I appoint toward her (likely the daughter of Babel in v.42)? For who *is* like Me, and who will summon Me, and who is this shepherd who will stand up before Me?" 50:44 {same verbiage as the doom of Edom at 49:19}

Some commentaries interpret "one" going up like a lion, and "chosen one" as Cyrus, who is named as Babel's subduer in Isa.44:28. But Cyrus did not accomplish the destruction described in Jeremiah 50-51. So, I must ask, 'will this "shepherd" (or 'chosen one') be a ruler of Israel?' Rather, it seems more likely to be a future king of Media. The "war-club" is very definitely addressed to Israel, and it can hardly be considered as a fulfilled prophecy – so it must be future to us. It is like the prophecy of Israel's attack upon Assyria at Mic.5:5-6. A statement that stands rather by itself, and an obviously unfulfilled prophecy.

If Israel were Yahweh's club to smash Babel, what of the nations? As I noted above, the announcement section was given to Jeremiah to tell the nations. On the whole, this anti-Babel prophecy seems to be directed to the nations, even as Jeremiah chapter 25 was a prophecy of doom to a host of nations (including Israel and Babel).Therefore, the various commands to destroy Babel – those not addressed to Israel in the context – must be commands to the nations. Here is a survey of those commands and a few others (verbs in pl. imper. are double-underlined; those in sing. imper. are single-underlined). Note how even the commands in the "announce" section at the beginning are addressed to a plural "you" –

- announce among the nations (50:2)
- make them hear (50:2)
- raise a standard (50:2)
- make them hear (50:2)
- you (pl.) will not conceal it (50:2)
- say, "Has been captured Babel…" (50:2)
- Wander from the midst of Babel, (50:8)
- and from the land of Chaldeans go forth. (50:8)
- And become as rams before a flock. (50:8)

- Set in order against Babel all around. (50:14)
- All bending a bow shoot at her. You will not spare concerning *the* arrow (50:14)
- Shout a war-cry against her all around. (50:15)
- Avenge yourself upon her. (50:15)
- As what she has done, do to her. (50:15)
- Cut off *the* sower from Babel, and one holding a sickle in time of harvest. (50:16)
- Go up against the land of Merathaim, against it, and toward those inhabiting Pekod. (50:21)
- Ruin and devote to destruction after them (50:21)
- And do according to all that I have commanded you (sing.). (50:21)
- Go to her from the farthest *boundary*. (50:26)
- Open her granaries. (50:26)
- Cast her up as heaps, (50:26)
- and devote her to destruction. (50:26)
- Will not come to her a remnant. (50:26)
- Kill all her bulls. (50:27)
- Summon to Babel archers, all those bending a bow. (50:29)
- Encamp against her all around. (50:29)
- Allow not an escape. (50:29)
- Repay her according to her work. (50:29)
- According to all that she has done, do to her
- Devote to destruction her whole army. (51:3)
- Flee from the midst of Babel, (51:6)
- and each one save his life. (51:6)
- Howl over her. (51:8)
- Take balm for her pain. (51:8)
- Abandon her and let us go, each to his own land (51:9)
- Come and let us declare in Zion a work of Yahweh our Elohim (51:10)
- Polish the arrows. (51:11)
- Fill the shields. (51:11)
- Toward *the* walls of Babel lift up a standard. (51:12)

- Make strong the watch. (51:12)
- Stand up *the* watchers. (51:12)
- Prepare *the* ambushes (51:12)
- Lift up a standard in *the* land. (51:27)
- Blow a ram's-horn among *the* nations. (51:27)
- Dedicate nations against her. (51:27)
- Summon against her kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz. (51:27)
- Commission a commander against her. (51:27)
- Bring up *the* horse like *the* bristling locust. (51:27)
- Dedicate against her nations, with kings of Media (51:28)
- Go out from *the* midst of her My people (51:45)
- Each one deliver his life from *the* wrath of *the* anger of Yahweh (51:45)
- Go, fugitives from the sword (51:50)
- You will not stand still (51:50)
- Remember Yahweh from afar (51:50)

Here are 51 commands, primarily to unnamed nations concerning Babel – 34 commands to attack, but also 5 commands to speak, 9 commands to flee or return, 2 commands to empathize (for the nations made drunk by her) and 1 command to remember (for Israel). Additionally, there are at least 5 negative verbs in the imperfect tense that likely have an imperative sense (squiggly underlined).

All of these imperatives are in plural form, except the four in 50:21. Although I have structured these as the end of 2nd word of comfort to Israel, it is possible they are the beginning of the 3rd declaration against Babel. Israel the nation is often spoken of in Scripture in the singular, and this may be the indication here. If true, then Israel is commanded to both flee Babel, and attack her. Another keynote of 50:21 are the emblematic names given to Babel, "land of Merathaim ('dual rebellion')" and "those inhabiting Pekod ('visitation')". Various interpretations have been applied to "dual rebellion", such as a plural of majesty, or the Companion Bible note, p.1090 – "so called here because the empire was founded in a double rebellion". But these explanations rather miss what must be obvious in our latter day, that an idolatrous Babel existed in ancient history, and it will be rebuilt in the future as another sinkhole of rebellion against the living God.

Appendix K: Jeremiah 50-51 – A More Detailed Analysis

There are more specifics as to Yahweh's human agents of destruction in these texts, but most of these are rather generic –

- a nation out of **the North itself** (50:3)
- an assembly of great nations out of **the North-land** (50:9)
- all plundering her (50:10)
- a people *is* coming from *the* **north**, even a great nation and many kings will be raised from the far reaches of the earth (50:41)
- and I will let loose foreigners on Babel (51:2)
- Yahweh has stirred up *the* spirit of *the* kings of Media (51:11)
- surely I have filled you with man like the locust (51:14)
- dedicate nations against her (51:27)
- summon against her kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz (51:27)
- dedicate against her nations, with kings of Media, with her governors and with all her officials, and with *the* whole land of his dominion (51:28)
- from **the North** will come to her the plunderers (51:48)
- from beside Me plunderers will come to her (51:53)

Note how expansive the description at 51:28 is. This seems to signify all-out warfare from the nation of Media, perhaps implying that confederate nations have sent only portions of their military. And "the North" is emphasized, being mentioned 4 times. Further, 4 nations are *named*, with Media mentioned twice for emphasis. Adding the 4 mentions of "North" and the 5 namings of nations yields 9, the number of judgment. Whatever their national origins, it is clear that all these plunderers are being sent by Yahweh to fulfill His judgment against Babel (51:53).

Part of the reason for these judgments, besides the idolatry within Babel, is a certain vengeance on Yahweh's part –

- because you rejoiced, plunderers of My heritage (50:11)
- to declare in Zion a vengeance of Yahweh our Elohim, a vengeance of His temple (50:28)
- Sons of Israel *were* oppressed, even together with sons of Judah. And all taking them captive held them fast. They refused to release *them*. The One Redeeming them *is* strong – Yahweh of armies *is* His name. (50:33-34)

- His plan against Babel *is* to destroy her, for it *is* a vengeance of Yahweh, a vengeance for His temple (51:11)
- And I will repay to Babel and to all dwellers, Chaldeans, *for* all their evil which they have done in Zion (51:24)
- Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babel, has consumed us, has crushed us. He has presented us as a vessel of emptiness. He has swallowed us like a sea-serpent. He has filled his belly with my ornaments. (51:34)
- 'My violence and my flesh *be* upon Babel', a dweller of Zion will say. 'And my blood *be* upon dwellers of Chaldeans', Jerusalem will say. Therefore, thus said Yahweh, '**Behold**. I *am* disputing your case and I will avenge your vengeance.' (51:35-36)
- And I will visit against Bel in Babel, and I will bring out what is swallowed from his mouth. (51:44)
- Even as Babel *caused* to fall *the* pierced of Israel, so for Babel have fallen *the* pierced of the whole earth. (51:49)
- foreigners have come upon *the* sanctuaries of *the* house of Yahweh (51:51)

One could infer from these texts that they dealt with Jeremiah's contemporary situation and what was soon to occur by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar, who is named at 51:34. But I have made the case in the study above how there appear to be two Nebuchadrezzars, one historic and one apocalyptic-prophetic (see chapter **"Mystery, Babylon the Great"**, section **Nebuchadrezzar, a King of Kings**). Seeing that the destruction of Babel as described in Jeremiah 50-51 did not occur historically, it warrants deferring the whole prophecy to a future time. What does that mean? A future Babel will violently subjugate nations, including Israel. At least some part of Israel will be in captivity at Babel. Yahweh's vengeance against Babel will be for the violence that she does against Israel, and for desecration of a future temple. The phrases "vengeance of/for His temple" and "in Zion" each occur twice in the Yahweh's vengeance texts of this prophecy.

Recall the words of Jesus, "Therefore, whenever you may see the Abomination of Desolation, the one having been mentioned by Daniel the prophet, having stood in *the* holy place – the one reading let him understand" (Mat.24:15). There will be "*the* holy place", the sanctuary, some day in the future – and God will honor it as "holy". That is the temple that a future Babel will desecrate and loot, even as

historic Nebuchadrezzar did with a previous temple. Jeremiah's prophecies did not deal with the Abomination of Desolation, or the Beast. But the Beast's destruction of the future Babylon (Rev.17:16) may make of him a savior in the eyes of many in Israel. Thus he will enter a seven year covenant with them (Dan.9:27), before breaking it mid-term and instituting the worship of himself in the temple (2 Th.2:3-4). This savior will seem at first like a latter-day Cyrus. But unlike historic Cyrus, he will not be Yahweh's "shepherd" (Isa.44:28). Seeing that a leader in the liberation of captives from Babel will be a "king of Media" (Jer.51:11, 28), an acclaim as being like the ancient Cyrus seems possible. However, both Jer.51:11 and 28 mention the plural "kings of Media". Is only one of these kings a potential future "Cyrus"? Or will the future Media be a region full of city-states, like the cities of the Philistines or of Lebanon, each with its own king?

Two parallel passages in Jeremiah 50 speak to a future condition of Israel, using identical time markers –

In those days and at that time, – an utterance of Yahweh – (50:4-5)
Israel's 7-fold return to Zion & Yahweh

1. 'sons of Israel will go,
2. they and sons of Judah together.
3. They will surely go weeping,
4. and Yahweh their Elohim they will seek.
5. Zion they will ask *the* way to, there their faces *turned*.
6. " Come and let us be joined to Yahweh *by* a covenant of an age.
7. It will not be forgotten."

In those days and at that time – an utterance of Yahweh – (50:20)
Israel's 3-fold pardon

1. one will seek for *the* guilt of Israel, but it *is* not,
2. and the sins of Judah, but they will not be found,
3. for I will pardon toward those whom I am keeping *as a remnant*.

These two statements go hand-in-hand. The national weeping in the first section is reminiscent of the mourning in Zechariah 12. But the mourning of Zec.12:10, by the pouring out of "the spirit of grace and of supplications" (*KJV*), is confined to Jerusalem. Then will the mourning of returning Babel-captives be separate from Zechariah's Jerusalem-mourning for Yahweh Whom they pierced? Zechariah

prefaces his prophecy with, "And it will happen in that day, I will seek to destroy all the nations, those coming against Jerusalem" (Zec.12:9). But recall that one sense of "day" is a time period governed by a notable event. I sense no great lapse of time between the captives' release from Babel and Jerusalem being surrounded by attacking nations, based on these similar mournings. And the "covenant of an age" of Jer.50:5 must be the new covenant, because "guilt of Israel" and "sins of Judah" (both nations) will not be found. Compare this with another new covenant statement "their sin I will remember no longer" (Jer.31:34).

Joel 2:30-3:2 made a declaration about the day of Yahweh with the same time-note as Jeremiah 50 –

> "And I will give wonders in *the* heavens, and in *the* earth blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before *the* coming of *the* day of Yahweh, the great and the fearful. And it will come to pass everyone who calls upon *the* name of Yahweh will escape, for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem will come an escape, as what Yahweh has said, and among survivors whom Yahweh *is* calling. For, **behold**, **in those days and at that time**, when I turn back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, then I will gather all the nations and I will bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter judgment with them there, concerning My people and concerning My inheritance Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations. And they have divided My land."

Note that Joel records both a return from captivity and attacking nations. All these prophecies bind together events of "the day of the Lord" that will happen rapidly, suddenly. Like Zechariah, Joel addressed only the situation in Jerusalem, but both were prophets to Judah, the southern kingdom.

But there are more parallels, because Jeremiah seems fond of this timing expression, "**in those days and at that time**" –

> "And it will happen when you are multiplied and increased in *the* land **in those days** – an utterance of Yahweh – they will say no longer 'ark of *the* covenant of Yahweh', nor will it come up upon *the* heart, nor will they remember it, nor will they visit it, nor will it be made any longer. **At that time** they will call Jerusalem, 'throne of Yahweh'. And all the nations will be gathered to her for

> *the* name of Yahweh, to Jerusalem. **In those days** *the* house of Judah will walk with *the* house of Israel. And they will come together from *the* land of *the* North to the land that I caused your fathers to inherit." Jer.3:16-18

If these time links are a correct interpretation, then the Nation's return from Babel ("*the* land of *the* North") will be both pre-millennial and New Covenantal. Further, this would seem to be a "day" that will encompass both the nations being gathered to the Valley of Jehoshaphat for judgment, and also being gathered to Jerusalem ("throne of Yahweh") for worship (but not simultaneously). The latter would follow the former.

And the last Jeremiah time-check –

> "**In those days and at that time** I will cause to sprout to David a Sprout of righteousness, and He will perform judgment and righteousness in *the* earth ('*the* Land'). **In those days** Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely, and this is what will be called to her, 'Yahweh our righteousness'. Jer.33:15-16

If these texts seem incongruous, mixing both danger and safety, it is because "the day of the Lord" will unfold so swiftly. And Israel's new birth will come before the nations constitute such an extreme danger to her survival. A further danger, not mentioned here, is the great apostasy that will affect some of covenant-Israel in the final hour (2 Th.2:3). OT prophecies tended to lump together various events without ordering them much, while Jesus, Paul and the NT prophets gave these events more detail, including a sense of sequence.

Jeremiah 50-51 also yields these parallel passages between the third declaration against Babel, and the ninth –

> **How** has the hammer of the whole earth been cut off and broken!
> **How** Babel has become for a horror among *the* nations! (50:23)

> **How** has Sheshak been captured, and the praise of the whole earth been seized!
> **How** has Babel become for a horror among *the* nations! (51:41)

These pairs of statements are meant to show the stark contrast between Babel's extremes, from having been the universal "hammer" and "praise" "of the whole

earth", to a universal "horror among *the* nations". She who was feared and admired throughout the world will become utterly revolting to that same world. "How" is the Heb. interjection *'êyk*, and recall that a pair of these "How!" statements were used in Isaiah 14 in the proverb against the king of Babel –

> "**How** ceased *the* oppressor, ceased *the* boisterousness!"
>
> "**How** you have fallen from *the* heavens, morning-star, son of dawn; you have been cut down to the earth, prostrater over nations!"

In this pair the second statement builds upon the first, and does not contrast with it. He will be both a noisy oppressor, and a pretender to divinity, or at least divine appointment.

Finally, analysis of the Jeremiah 50-51 text yields some interesting word counts. For example –

Yahweh's words & thoughts:

- the word which Yahweh spoke (1)
- an utterance of Yahweh (14)
- utterance of Adonai Yahweh of armies (2)
- utterance of the King, Yahweh of armies (1)
- thus said Yahweh (2)
- thus said Yahweh of armies (4)
- plans of Yahweh (1)
- His plan(s) (2)
- purpose of Yahweh (1)

Total 27 = 3 x 9, triple the number of judgment

Names of Babel:

- Babel (50)
- Sheshak (1)
- Leb-Qamai (1)
- as Sodom and Gomorrah (2)

Total 54 = 6 x 9, number of fallen man times the number of judgment

But adding the names of the people of Babel-land:

- Chaldeans (10)
- Merathaim (1)

- Pekod (1)

Total = 12; **12 + 54 = 66**, or 6 x **11** (again, that number of disorganization)

Names associated with Israel:

- Israel (**11**)
- Judah (4)
- Jacob (1)
- Zion (5)
- Jerusalem (2)
- Carmel (1)
- Mt. Ephraim (1)
- Gilead (1)
- Bashan (1)
- Jordan (1)

Total 27 = 3 x 9, matching "Yahweh's words & thoughts" above

But adding indirect references:

- fathers (1)
- My people (2)
- My heritage (1)
- a club to Me (1)
- a vessel of emptiness (1)

Total = 6; **6 + 27 = 33**, or 3 x **11**

My conclusion is that whatever shortcomings Yahweh has found in His people Israel, He has found double in Babel. Bullinger identified the number 11 as signifying "disorder, disorganization, imperfection, and disintegration" (*Number*, p.251). While I agree with his definitions concerning some numerations of 11 in Scripture, I believe there may also be a more positive side to number 11 – "the glass half-full", as it were. Eleven is the number of the Twelve Apostles with Judas removed. It may have left the full government of the Twelve deficient, but temporarily it also left them purged of a traitor. Perhaps "awaiting completion, or fulfillment" is another way of looking at Biblical things marked by the number 11, i.e., a positive side. Eleven is also a factor in the number of years Jesus ministered on earth (33), before sitting at the Father's right. He certainly completed something in those 33 years, but His work is not yet *altogether* completed.

Then there are these references to God in Jeremiah 50-51 –

Appendix K: Jeremiah 50-51 – A More Detailed Analysis

Mentions of God:

- Yahweh (58)
- Adonai, Yahweh of armies (3)
- Elohim (5)
- Elohim of Israel (2)
- El (1)
- the King, Yahweh of armies (1)
- Yahweh, Holy One of Israel (2)
- their Redeemer (1)
- Portion of Jacob (1)
- Staff of their inheritance (1)
- Abode of justice (1)
- Hope of their fathers (1)

Total 77, or 7 x **11**

Here God is marked by the number 11 in the declaration concerning Babel and Israel. Would that indicate that God is somehow "disorganized"? I believe a better view would be that God's work concerning both Babel and Israel are "incomplete" so far. "But now, not yet do we see all these things subordinated to Him." (Heb.2:8) is an aspect of Christ's work. In fact, the Gematria total for the time factor, "but now, not yet" is 1859, or **11** x **13** x **13**. God's program is not yet complete. For the number 13 see the discussion further down.

But also in Jeremiah 50-51 we find these –

Concerning gods:

- Bel (2)
- Marduk ("Merodach" – 1)
- idol (*`âtsâb* – 1)
- image (*gillûwl* – 1)
- carved image (p_e*sîyl* – 3)
- terror (*'emâh* – 1)
- vanity – (1)
- work of mockery – (1)

Total 11

In the case of "gods", their number 11 is indicative of the "disarray" which has characterized the world since mankind at ancient Babel were dispersed by God. There is an inference here that mankind coming together at ancient Babel to "let us make for ourselves a name" (Gen.11:4) contained the roots of this idolatry. This evil legacy helps explain the wholesale destruction prophesied for Babel, "like Sodom and Gomorrah". Even Sodom will have a restorative future (Eze.16:55), but no such blessing awaits Babel.

Assyria is mentioned twice, but both are historical references (50:17-18). This differs from the earlier prophecy of breaking the Assyrian (Isa.14:25), which is contained in the larger "burden of Babel" in "the day of the Lord". Since the day of the Lord did not arrive in Jeremiah's day, the past punishment of Assyria he recorded cannot satisfy the Isaiah 14 prophecy concerning his future breaking. This breaking remains unfulfilled at the present.

At the end of this Appendix appears the entire text of Jeremiah 50-51 mapped out against the diagram near the beginning of the Appendix. I hope it will demonstrate to you that the groupings indicated in the diagram (i.e., 7 + 2, 7 + 3 and 9 + 3) seem to fall naturally within their contexts. This may be accidental, but I seem to find 13 occasions of groups of 9 items in this analysis. I have noted throughout this book that 9 is the number of judgment (see *Number*, p.235). Although 13 is most often given the label "number of rebellion", it also happens to be a factor in the Gematria of Yahweh (26, or **13** x 2) and Adonai (65, or **13** x 5), as well as these NT examples:

- angel of the Lord – Mat.28:2 (1118, or **13** x 2 x 43)
- the angels the holy – Mar.8:38 (4056, or **13** x **13** x 3 x 8)
- the angels of God (acc.) – Joh.1:51 (2548, or **13** x 7 x 7 x 4)
- as a face of an angel – Acts 6:15 (2977, or **13** x 229)
- into an angel of light – 2 Cor.11:14 (1859, or **13** x **13** x **11**)
- angel from heaven – Gal.1:8 (1274, or **13** x 7 x 7 x 2)
- our wrestling is not against blood and flesh, but against the principalities, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spirituals of the evil in the heavenlies – Eph.6:12 (13351, or **13** x **13** x 79)
- in the coming one (i.e., 'age') – Eph.1:21 (1690, or **13** x **13** x 2 x 5)

- the secret (dat.) of the Christ – Eph.3:4 (5408, or **13** x **13** x 32)
- this secret is great – Eph.5:32 (3302, or **13** x 2 x 127)
- by Him were created all these things in the heavens and upon the earth – Col.:16 (4446, or **13** x 2 x 9 x 19)
- the riches of the glory of this secret among the nations – Col.1:27 (6396, or **13** x 3 x 4 x 41)
- for acknowledgement of the secret of God, Christ – Col.2:2 (6461, or **13** x 7 x 71)
- all the fullness – Col.2:9 (1560, or **13** x 3 x 5 x 8)
- for in Him down-dwells all the fullness of the Deity bodily, and you are filled by Him Who is the Head of every principality and authority – Col.2:9-10 (13572, or **13** x 4 x 9 x 29)
- the secret of the Faith – 1 Tim.3:9 (3263, or **13** x 251)
- the secret of the Piety – 1 Tim.3:16 (2496, or **13** x 3 x 64)
- before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels – 1 Tim.5:21 (8021, or **13** x 617)
- his name has not been written in the book of the life of the Lamb Who was slain – Rev.13:8 (9334, or **13** x 2 x 359)

So in addition to rebellion, the number 13 in Scripture is stamped on expressions and texts dealing with secret or hidden things – the world of angels, heavenly beings, as well as God's secret plans. And perhaps because rebellions are usually planned in secret, as in a conspiracy, the number 13 has been applied to rebellion. The "heart" of the number 13 appears to be secret, hidden, unseen matters.

Jeremiah 50-51 Text

Preamble

Proclamation for the nations against Babel (50:1)
The word which Yahweh spoke against Babel, (same opening in Jer.46:13, an unfulfilled prophecy re: Nebuchadrezzar)
against *the* land of Chaldeans (6 occs.),
6-fold command to Jeremiah & nations (50:1)
by *the* hand of Jeremiah the prophet.

Announce among the nations and make them hear (46:14). (50:2)
Even raise a standard. (51:12, 27)
Make them hear. You will not conceal *it*.
Say,

A.1st declaration

a. against Babel

9 judgments of Babel (50:2-3)

1. 'Has been captured Babel. (cp. 50:24)
2. Has been shamed Bel.
3. Has been shattered Merodak.
4. Have been shamed her idols.
5. Have been shattered her images.
6. For has gone up against her a nation **out of *the* North itself**.
7. It will appoint her land for a waste.
8. And no dweller will come to pass in her from man and up to beast (51:62).
9. They wandered – they went away.

b. for Israel (50:4-8)

In those days and at that time, – an utterance of Yahweh – (and see 50:20)

Israel's 7-fold return to Zion & Yahweh

1. 'sons of Israel will go,
2. they and sons of Judah together (cp. 50:33).
3. They will surely go weeping,
4. and Yahweh their Elohim they will seek.
5. Zion they will ask *the* way to, there their faces *turned*.
6." Come and let us be joined to Yahweh *by* a covenant of an age.
7. It will not be forgotten."

Israel's 9-fold condition – misled & abused

1.'My people have become straying sheep.
2.Those pasturing them have caused them to stray.
3.They have led them astray.
4.They have backslid them *on the* mountains.
5. From mountain to hill they have gone.

6.They have forgotten their resting-place.
7.All those finding them have consumed them,
8.and their enemies said, ”We are not guilty,
9.a.instead they have sinned
b. toward Yahweh, *the* Abode of justice,
b. and Hope of their fathers, Yahweh.”

3-fold command to leave Babel

a. Wander from *the* midst of Babel (51:6),
b. and from *the* land of Chaldeans go forth.
c. And become as rams before a flock.

B.2nd declaration

a. against Babel

Babel's 7-fold disaster

For, **behold**, (50:9-12)

1. I *am* rousing and bringing up against Babel an assembly of great nations **from *the* north-land** (cp. 50:41).
2. And they will set in order (cp.50:42) toward her.
3. From there she will be captured.
4. His arrows *will be* as a mighty one, making childless.
5. None will return vainly.
6. And Chaldeans will become plunder.
7. All plundering her will be satisfied – an utterance of Yahweh.

3-fold expression of Babel's shame

a. Because you rejoice, because you exult, plunderers of My heritage,
b. because you grow fat as a threshing heifer, and you cried as the stallions,
c. your mother has been ashamed. *The* one bearing you has been deeply ashamed.

Behold, *10-fold emptying of Babel* (50:12-16)

1. *the* last of nations will be a wilderness, dry country, and desert.
2. Because of *the* anger of Yahweh, she will not abide, but she will become wholly a devastation.
3. Everyone passing by (against) Babel (10 occs. chs. 50-51) will be horrified, and will hiss over all her wounds (cp. 49:17).

4. Set in order against Babel all around.
5. All bending a bow shoot at her. You will not spare concerning *the* arrow, because she has sinned toward Yahweh.
6. Shout a war-cry against her all around (5 occs. chs. 50-51).
7. She has given her hand. Her foundations have collapsed. Her walls have been thrown down, because it *is* a vengeance of Yahweh.
8. Avenge yourself upon her.
9. As what she has done, do to her.
10. Cut off *the* sower from Babel, and one holding a sickle **in time of harvest**.

b. for Israel (50:16-17)

dispersion of nations/Israel & punishment (6-parts)

From before the oppressing sword,

1. each will turn toward his own people,
1. and each will flee to his own land.

2. A scattered lamb *is* Israel.
3. Lions dispersed *him*.
4.a. First *the* king of Assyria consumed him,
b. then this latter Nebuchadrezzar king of Babel gnawed on him.

Therefore, thus said Yahweh of armies, Elohim of Israel,

2-fold punishment of Israel's enemies (50:18)

4.b. '**Behold**, I am punishing *the* king of Babel, and his land,
a. as whom I have punished *the* king of Assyria.'

Israel's 3-fold return (50:19)

1.But I will bring back Israel to his pasturage,
2.and he will graze the Carmel *hills* and Bashan.
3.And on Mount Ephraim and Gilead his soul will be satisfied.

In those days and at that time – an utterance of Yahweh – (50:20)

Israel's 3-fold pardon

1. one will seek for *the* guilt of Israel, but it *is* not,
2. and the sins of Judah, but they will not be found,
3. for I will pardon toward those whom I am keeping *as a remnant*.

3-fold command to attack Babel (50:21) (single verbs suggest this command goes out to a singular nation, Israel)

1. Go up against the land of Merathaim, against it, and toward those inhabiting Pekod.
2. Ruin and devote to destruction after them – an utterance of Yahweh.
3. And do according to all that I have commanded you.

C. 3rd declaration

a. against Babel

7-fold declaration of crushing (50:22-25)

1. A sound of combat *is* in *the* land, and a great crushing.

(parenthetical 2-fold exclamation)

How has the hammer of the whole earth been cut off and broken!
How Babel has become for a horror among *the* nations!

2. I have laid a snare for you,
3. and indeed, you have even been caught, Babel, (50:2)
4. and you did not observe *it*.
5. You have been found,
6. even captured,
7. because you opposed yourself against Yahweh.

a. Yahweh has opened His storehouse *3-fold work of Yahweh*
b. and He has brought out implements of His anger,
c. for it *is* a work for Adonai Yahweh of armies in *the* land of Chaldeans.

7-fold command to destroy (50:26)

1. Go to her from the farthest *boundary*.
2. Open her granaries.
3. Cast her up as heaps,
4. and devote her to destruction.
5. Will not come for her a remnant.
6. Kill all her bulls.
7. They will go down to *the* slaughter.

2-fold exclamation

Woe against them, (50:27)
for has come **their day, *the* time of their punishment**.

b. for Israel (50:28)

1.a. *The* voice of those fleeing and fugitives from *the* land of Babel
b.to declare in Zion a vengeance of Yahweh our Elohim, a vengeance of His temple.

D. 4th declaration

a. against Babel

9-fold judgment against Babel (50:29-31)

1. Summon to Babel archers, all those bending a bow.
2. Encamp against her all around.
3. Allow none an escape.
4. Repay her according to her work.
5. According to all that she has done, do to her,
6. for she **has acted proudly** toward Yahweh, toward the Holy One of Israel.
7. Therefore, her young men will fall in her streets,
8. and all her men of war will be cut off **in that day** – an utterance of Yahweh.
9. **Behold**, I *am* against you **insolent one** – an utterance of Adonai Yahweh of armies –

3-fold statement of Yahweh's punishment (50:31-32)

a. for **your day** has come, ***the* time *that* I have punished you**.
b. And **the insolent** will stagger and fall, and none *is* raising him up.
c. And I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it will consume all around him.

b. for Israel (50:33-34)

Thus said Yahweh of armies, *7-fold dispute of Israel*

1. 'Sons of Israel *were* oppressed, even together with sons of Judah. (50:4)
2. And all taking them captive held them fast.
3. They refused to release *them*.
4. The One Redeeming them *is* strong. Yahweh of armies *is* His name.

5. He will surely dispute their case,
6. so as to give rest to the land,
7. and to shake up those inhabiting Babel.'

E. 5th declaration

a. against Babel

9 objects of the sword, 1 object of the drought (50:35-40)

A **sword** *is* against (`*al*) Chaldeans – an utterance of Yahweh –
1. and **toward** (‘*el*) those inhabiting Babel,
2. and **toward** her princes,
3. and **toward** her wise ones.

A **sword** *is*
4. **toward** the diviners, and they will act foolishly.

A **sword** *is*
5. **toward** her mighty ones and they will be shattered.

A **sword** *is*
6. **toward** their horses
7. and **toward** their chariots
8. and **toward** all the mixed people who *are* in her midst, and they will become as women.

A **sword** *is*
9. **toward** her storehouses, and they will be plundered.

A **drought** *is*
10. **toward** her waters and they will dry up, for she is a land of idols, and they run madly upon horrors.

3 results (stated in 2-parts)

a. Therefore <u>wild animals with jackals</u> will dwell *there*, and <u>daughters of an ostrich</u> will dwell in her.

b. And <u>she will not abide</u> continuously, for a duration, and <u>she will not be inhabited</u> for generations.

c. As Elohim’s overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and her neighbors – an utterance of Yahweh – <u>no man</u> will dwell there, <u>nor son of man</u> sojourn in her.

<u>Behold</u>, *7-fold attack on Babel* (50:41-43)

1. a people *is* coming **from *the* North**, even a great nation and many kings will be raised from the far-reaches of the earth.
2. They will take hold of bow and spear.
3. These *are* cruel and will not show mercy.
4. Their voice will roar like *the* sea, and they will ride upon horses.
5. Having been set in order as a man for the combat, *he is* against you, daughter of Babel.
6. *The* king of Babel has heard *the* report of them, and his hands slacken.
7. Distress has seized him, anguish as the one giving birth.

Behold, *4-fold challenge & Yahweh's chosen man* (50:44)

1. one will go up like a lion from *the* height of the Jordan toward an enduring pasture, {repeated fm. doom of Edom – 49:19}
2. for suddenly I will drive them away from over her (daughter of Babel?).
3. And who is *the* young man (or 'chosen one') I appoint against her (daughter of Babel?)?
4. For who *is* like Me, and who will summon Me, and who is this shepherd who will stand up before Me?

4-fold purpose of Yahweh against Babel (50:45-46)

Therefore, hear *the* purpose of Yahweh, which He has purposed toward Babel, and His plans which He has planned toward *the* land of Chaldeans. 1. Surely He will drag off the least of the flock.
2. Surely He will make desolate *their* pasturage against them.
3. From *the* sound *that* Babel has been seized, the earth has been shaken.
4. And an outcry has been heard among *the* nations.

Thus said Yahweh, '**Behold**, *9-fold judgment of Babel* (51:1-4)

1. I am stirring up against Babel, even toward those dwelling at Leb-Qamai a destroying wind.
2. And I will let loose on Babel foreigners,
3. and they will scatter her and empty out her land,
4. for they will come against her from all around in **a day of evil**.
5. Toward *her* the archer bends the bow, and toward *her* he lifts himself in his armor.
6. They will not take compassion toward young men.

7. Devote to destruction her whole army.
8. Then will fall *the* slain in *the* land of Chaldeans,
9. and *the* pierced in her streets.

b. for Israel

7-fold guilt & recompense (51:5-6)

1. For Israel *is* not widowed, nor Judah, from his Elohim, from Yahweh of armies,
2. for their land was full of guilt from *the* Holy One of Israel.
3. Flee from *the* midst of Babel, (50:8)
4. and each one deliver his life.
5. You will not be silenced by her offense,
6. for it *is* a **time of vengeance** for Yahweh.
7. A recompense He *is* paying to her.

F. 6th declaration

a. against Babel

9-fold use & dis-use of Babel (51:7-9)

1. A cup of gold *is* Babel in *the* hand of Yahweh;
2. she *is* making drunk the whole earth.
3. From her wine drank nations.
4. Therefore nations act madly.
5. Suddenly fell Babel, and has been broken.
6. Howl over her.
7. Take balm for her pain.
8. Perhaps she will be healed.
9. We would have healed Babel, but she has not been healed.

b. for Israel

4-fold judgment of Babel & exoneration of Israel (51:9-10)

a. Abandon her and let us go, each to his own land,
b. for her judgment has reached to the heavens, and it is raised up to *the* clouds.
b. Yahweh has brought out our righteousness.
a. Come and let us declare in Zion, a work of Yahweh our Elohim."

G. 7th declaration

a. against Babel

Yahweh's 9-fold plan against Babel (51:11-12)

1. Polish the arrows.
2. Fill the shields.
3. Yahweh has stirred up *the* spirit of *the* kings of Media,
4. for His plan against Babel *is* to destroy her, for it *is* a vengeance of Yahweh, a vengeance for His temple.
5. Toward *the* walls of Babel lift up a standard.
6. Make strong the watch.
7. Stand up *the* watchers.
8. Prepare *the* ambushes,
9. for Yahweh both planned and performed what He spoke toward those inhabiting Babel.

4-fold profit & loss (51:13)

a. She dwelling upon many waters,
b. great in treasures,
a. your end has come,
b. a cubit of your profit.

2-fold oath of Yahweh (51:14)

Yahweh of armies has sworn to Himself by His own soul,
A. 'That surely I have filled you with man like the locust,
A. and they will answer a war-cry over you.'

7-fold works of the true God (51:15-16)

a. The One making *the* earth by His power,
b. establishing *the* world by His wisdom,
c. and by His understanding He stretched out *the* heavens.
d. In giving His voice *there is* a roar of waters in the heavens,
e. and He raises up mists from *the* ends of *the* earth.
f. He made lightnings for the rain,
g. and He brought out *the* wind from His storehouses.

6-fold vanity of idols (51:17-18)

a. Every man is stupid, apart from knowledge.

b. Everyone smelting an idol is withered,
c. for his drink-offering *is* a lie,
d. and *there is* no breath in them.
e. They *are* vanity, a work of mockery.
f. **In a time of their punishment**, they will perish.

b. for Israel

4-fold benefit to Israel (51:19)

A. a. *The* Portion of Jacob *is* not like these,
b. for *He is* One making all these.
a. And He is *the* Staff of his inheritance,
b. Yahweh of armies *is* His name.

Israel a 10-fold club – 18 objects (2 x 9, or doubly judged) (51:20-23)

You *are* a club to Me, implements of war,
1. and **by you** I will smash nations,
2.and **by you** I will destroy kingdoms,
3.and **by you** I will smash a horse and his rider,
4.and **by you** I will smash a chariot and its rider,
5.and **by you** I will smash man and woman,
6.and **by you** I will smash old and young,
7.and **by you** I will smash young man and virgin,
8.and **by you** I will smash a shepherd and his flock,
9.and **by you** I will smash a serf and his team,
10.and **by you** I will smash governors and officials.

H. 8th declaration

a. against Babel

2-fold recompense of Yahweh (51: 24)

A. And I will repay to Babel and to all dwellers, Chaldeans,
A. *for* all their evil which they have done in Zion – an utterance of Yahweh.

"**Behold**, *4-fold exclamation against Babel* (51:25)

a. I *am* against you, **mountain of the destroyer** – an utterance of Yahweh – the one destroying the whole earth,
b. and I will stretch out My hand against you,
b. and I will roll you down from the rocks,
a. and I will appoint you for a **mountain of burning**.

2-fold recompense of Yahweh (51:26)
A. And they will not take from you a stone for a corner nor a stone for a foundation,
A. for you will become desolations of an age – an utterance of Yahweh.

7-fold command to attack (51:27-28)
1. Lift up a standard in *the* land.
2. Blow a ram's-horn among *the* nations.
3. Dedicate nations against her.
4. Summon against her kingdoms of **Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz**.
5. Commission a commander against her.
6. Bring up *the* horse like *the* bristling locust.
7. Dedicate against her nations,
a. with **kings of Media**, *3-fold components of chief attacker*
b. with her governors and with all her officials,
c. and with *the* whole land of his dominion.

And the land has quaked and writhed, *3-fold plan of Yahweh* (51:29)
a. for have stood up against Babel plans of Yahweh,
b. to appoint *the* land of Babel for a horror,
c. apart from no one dwelling *there*.

9-fold fall of Babel (51:30-32)
1. Mighty men of Babel have stopped fighting.
2. They have remained in *the* strongholds.
3. Their strength has dried up.
4. They have become like women.
5. They have set on fire her dwellings.
6. Her gate-bars have been broken.

7. Runner runs to meet runner, and messenger to meet messenger, to declare to *the* king of Babel that his city has been captured from *every* border.
8. And the fords have been seized, and the marshes they have burned with the fire.
9. And the men of war have been terrified.

2-fold verdict of Yahweh (51:33)
For thus said Yahweh of armies, Elohim of Israel,
A. '*The* daughter of Babel *is* like a threshing-floor, *at the* **time He has tread her**.
A. Yet a little *while* and will come **her time of the harvest**.'

b. for Israel

B. *6 works of Nebuchadrezzar* (51:34)
1. Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babel, has consumed us,
2. has crushed us.
3. He has presented us a vessel of emptiness.
4. He has swallowed us like a sea-serpent.
5. He has filled his belly with my ornaments.
6. He has washed me off.

3 works of Yahweh's justice (51:35-36)
a. 'My violence and my flesh *be* upon Babel,' a dweller of Zion will say.
b. 'And my blood *be* upon dwellers of Chaldeans,' Jerusalem will say.
c. Therefore, thus said Yahweh, '**Behold**, I *am* disputing your case and I will avenge your vengeance.

I. 9th declaration

a. against Babel

9-fold judgment of Babel (51:36-40)
1. And I will make desolate her sea, and make dry her spring.
2. And Babel will become for heaps,
3. a. a dwelling of jackals,
b. a horror and a hissing,
a. apart from anyone dwelling *there*.
4. They will roar together like the lions.
5. They have growled like cubs of lions.

6. In their heating up I will appoint their feasts,
7. and I will make them drunk so that they rejoice.
8. And they will sleep a sleep of an age and not awaken.' – an utterance of Yahweh.
9. I will bring them down as lambs to slaughter, like rams with he-goats.

2-fold exclamation against Babel (51:41)

How (*'êyk*) has Sheshak been captured, and the praise of the whole earth been seized!
How (*'êyk*) has Babel become for a horror among *the* nations!

7-fold destruction of Babel (51:42-44)

1.The sea has gone up over Babel.
2.She has been covered by the turmoil of its waves.
3.Her cities have become for a horror, a waterless land and a desert,
4.a land each and every one dwells not in them.
5.And passes not through them a son of man.
6.And I will visit against Bel in Babel,
7.and I will bring out what is swallowed from his mouth.

b. for Israel

7-fold flight (51:44-46)

1. And nations will not flow toward him any longer.
2. Yea, *the* wall of Babel has fallen.
3. Go out from *the* midst of her My people,
4. and deliver, each one, his life from *the* wrath of *the* anger of Yahweh.
5. And lest your heart be timid, and you fear according to the report which *is* being heard in the land,
6. and will come in a year the report,
7. then afterwards in a year the report, even violence in *the* land, and ruler against ruler.

J. 10th declaration

a. against Babel

7-fold days of punishment (51:47-49)

1. Therefore, behold, days *are* coming,
2. that I will visit upon *the* idols of Babel.
3. Her whole land will be ashamed,
4. and all her pierced will fall in her midst.
5. Then heavens and earth, and all that *is* in them, will shout against Babel,
6. for **from *the* North** will come to her the plunderers – an utterance of Yahweh.
7. Even as Babel *caused* to fall *the* pierced of Israel, so for Babel have fallen *the* pierced of the whole earth.

b. for Israel

7-fold, Israel's shame & flight (51:50-51)

1. Go, fugitives from *the* sword.
2. You will not stand still.
3. Remember Yahweh from afar,
4. and Jerusalem will go up upon your heart.
5. We have been ashamed, because we heard scorn.
6. Disgrace has covered our faces,
7. for foreigners have come upon *the* sanctuaries of *the* house of Yahweh.

K. 11th declaration

a. against Babel

9-fold days of punishment (51:52-56)

Therefore, behold, days are coming – an utterance of Yahweh –
1. that I will visit upon her idols,
2. and in all her land *the* pierced will groan.
3. Though Babel ascend the heavens, and though she fortify *the* height of her strength, from beside Me plunderers will come to her – an utterance of Yahweh.
4. A voice of an outcry from Babel, and a great crushing out of *the* land of Chaldeans.
5. Because Yahweh *is* plundering Babel,
6. and He will make vanish from her *the* loud voice, and the roar of her waves like many waters.

7. *The* uproar of their voice has been given, for a plunderer *is* coming against her, against Babel.
8. And her mighty ones are captured.
9. Their bows have been broken,

3-fold justice of God (51:56-57)

a. for God (El) of reprisals *is* Yahweh. He will surely repay.
b. And I will make drunk her princes and her wise ones, her governors and her rulers and her mighty ones.
c. And they will sleep a sleep of an age and not awaken – an utterance of the King, Yahweh of armies *is* His name.

Thus said Yahweh of armies,

4-fold exclamation against Babel (51:58)

a. 'The wide walls of Babel will be utterly laid bare,
b. and her high gates will be burned by fire.
a. And peoples will toil in abundance *for* emptiness.
b. And for peoples in abundance will even grow tired *by the* fire.'

Appendix L: List of Structures

Diagram of Matthew chapter 13
Parable as Prophecy

Structure of Revelation 12
Conditions of the “Rapture”

Structure of Jeremiah 31:27-40
Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?

Structure of 1 Cor.15:23-26
Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?

Structure of 2 Th.1:4-10
Restoration of the Kingdom – What? Where? When?

Structure of Daniel 9:22-27
Appendix H

“Holy Ones”, “People” in Daniel 7-12
Appendix I

Isaiah 13-14 – A More Detailed Analysis
Appendix J

Jeremiah 50-51 – A More Detailed Analysis
Appendix K