

Bible Prophecy

Interpreting Scripture According
to the Scriptures

~~Newspapers~~

~~News Broadcasts~~

~~Radio News~~

~~TV News~~

~~Internet News~~

Which things also we speak, not in the words
which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy
Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with
spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:13, KJV)

Dr. Ken Matto

Preface

This is a hard-hitting book and I make no apologies for that. True Biblical Prophecy has been hijacked by the sensationalist preachers and teachers who look at Scripture and then look at magazines, newspapers, news broadcasts, and other prophecy books and then create these fanciful Hollywood style scripted prophecy books. The reason they sell is because they create in the reader's mind a scenario like you would see in a Chuck Norris action movie. The problem is that since I have become saved in mid-1980, I have been familiar with prophecy books and their teachings and have yet to see any of these prognostications come to pass. The reason for that is because their interpretations of Scripture are not interpretations but rather they are invented narratives.

They will have their Bibles open to Revelation and then put on a news broadcast. As soon as something is mentioned about Israel, then right away the pages start flapping and more false teachings appear. When these false prophecy teachers predict future events and they do not come to pass, instead of issuing an apology or even a refund, they will just write another book which will become a best seller simply because the majority of Christians are very gullible, especially if the author is a famous media Christian.

For example, in 1974 the following prophecy book was written:

Armageddon: Oil and the Middle East Crisis; What the Bible Says About the Future of the Middle East and the End of Western Civilization

John F. Walvoord and John E. Walvoord. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974.

John Walvoord was president of Dallas Theological Seminary which is the main center of Dispensationalism. Notice the title of the book. This is now 2018 and the book was written in 1974 which was 44 years ago. Surely something should have happened but there was no Armageddon and Western Civilization is still here. If you go to Amazon, you will see that this book is being sold in

tandem with his commentary on Revelation. This is how they do it. They force fit world events onto the Scriptures and attempt to make them fit and because they hold a position in a seminary or are on radio or TV, they are never questioned or challenged. False teaching is heresy no matter who does it.

Here is another example. In 1988 Edgar Whisenant wrote a book entitled "88 Reasons why the Rapture will be in 1988: the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hash-Ana) September, 11-12-13." 4.5 million copies were sold. Remember the word I used, "gullible." Guess what it didn't happen but instead of dropping it or admitting his error, he penned another false prophecy book the following year entitled, "The final shout: Rapture report 1989." Predicted that the Rapture would occur in 1989. Whisenant was quoted as saying "Only if the Bible is in error am I wrong; and I say that to every preacher in town" and "if there were a king in this country and I could gamble with my life, I would stake my life on [Rosh Hashanah](#) 88." How arrogant can you get? In other words he could only be in error if the Bible was in error. It was not the fact that he could be in error but the Bible. This is how arrogant many of these prophecy pundits are, they believe they can never be in error.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:13, KJV)

1 Corinthians 2:13 gives us an insight on how we are to understand the Scriptures. We are to compare Scripture with Scripture. Why? It is because the Bible is one cohesive whole and as you go through this book, you will see that I have not used any outside sources to understand the individual subject at hand. You will also see how uncomplicated biblical prophecy truly is. These false prophecy books with their newspaper comparisons will always be in error simply because we compare "spiritual with spiritual" and newspapers and magazines are not spiritual but are worldly.

You will also see how different true biblical prophecy is from the Hollywood scripts which flow out of the majority of pulpits in the world. The greatest errors in prophecy comes from the

dispensational camp, which is synonymous with pre-tribulationism. Dispensationalism is basically a heretical system that many have clung to because of its invented scenarios that play out like an action movie.

God gave us prophecy in the Bible for the purpose of showing the believer that there will be an end to the tribulation and affliction that the true Christian suffers in this present world. It is also given as an encouragement to the believer that the Lord Jesus Christ will return to this world at an appointed day. Prophecy is not something we dwell upon with obsession.

“In many cases sheer fanaticism has been the result of exclusively dwelling on prophecy, and probably more men have gone mad on that subject than on any other religious questions.” – Charles Haddon Spurgeon

We are to be busy sending forth the gospel into the world, not sitting home reading prophecy books and comparing them to the latest news report. Please make sure you read my chapter entitled “Prophecy Books are Dangerous.” As you go through this book, I do hope you will begin to realize that we have been sold a bill of goods from these self-appointed prophecy experts who predict but we never see their predictions come to pass. If you study prophecy from the Bible by the Bible, then you will come to truth. Millions believe in a pre-tribulation rapture but wait till you see what the Bible says concerning the timing of the rapture. It will be two totally different time frames, so do we listen to men or do we listen to God’s word? That is the crux of the matter, God’s Word or man’s word?

What has happened is that the study of the Bible in the area of prophecy has now taken place outside the Bible. This sorry situation will never bring a person to truth but will instill more confusion. Just because a person has a PhD or ThD does not mean they understand the Bible. In fact, the higher the degree, the more they rely on that instead of the Scriptures. William Tyndale stated “If God spared him life, ere many years he would cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scripture than he did.” Of course, he was referring to the Pope but the principle still

stands. Someone without a Bible College or Seminary degree will have greater understanding of Scripture because education gets in the way of biblical truth.

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. (Matthew 11:25, KJV)

Jesus himself has stated the truth has been withheld from those who are the wise and prudent but has been revealed unto babes. This means that those who attempt to interpret the Bible by worldly events will never come to truth because they have discarded the words of 1 Corinthians 2:13 that we are supposed to compare spiritual with spiritual. When you look at the Scriptures and interpret them according to Scripture you will come to truth. Now this does not mean there will not be any parallels between what is taught in Scripture and some worldly events. For example:

Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. (Revelation 9:21, KJV)

The Greek word behind “sorceries” in Revelation 9:21 is the word “pharmakeia.” We get the words “pharmacy” and “pharmaceuticals” from that word. If you watch TV you will notice that almost 1 out of 4 commercials is advertising some drug. We are an over-medicated society. The time frame of the book of Revelation is from the first coming of Christ to the second coming where we are right now and drugs, both legal and illegal are rampant in this world. So there will be parallels but the key to keeping it proper is not to interpret the Bible by these events but allow the Scriptures to interpret them as we saw in Revelation 9:21 where we did not make any Hollywood style script out of it, we just looked at the word and saw it fulfilled in the context without over-interpreting it.

You will also notice in this book I have written has many repetitions. This is intentional because not only is repetition a great teacher but also much of prophecy overlaps each other in different aspects of the overall subject. Dr. Ken Matto

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Prophecy and Paranoia

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: {20} Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. {21} For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Pet 1:19-21, KJV)

The word for "prophecy" in the New Testament is the Greek word "propheteia" which carries with it the meaning of "a speaking forth, exhortations, warnings, (which refer to the past, present, or future). These prophecies in Scripture were uttered forth by Prophets under the revelation or influence of God.

As we look at the Scriptures and the prophecies uttered in them, we see the majority of them have to do with judgment or impending doom, such as:

The word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah. {2} I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD. {3} I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD. (Zep 1:1-3, KJV)

In the above Scriptural warning we see that God is prophesying through Zephaniah that He is going to consume or judge Judah, and their judgment will be a removal from their present location to Babylon. Their time in Babylon would be 70 years as prophesied in other areas of Scripture. We are seeing that prophecy fits into a certain course in Scripture and mainly deals with "something impending," whether it be judgment or good. One of the most beautiful prophecies of Scripture for the believer is found in 2 Corinthians 5:8:

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. (2 Cor 5:8, KJV)

This verse is a great comfort at a funeral for a TRUE believer. No one wants to die, but for the true Christian, once we do, we will be glad we did. (He who has ears to hear)

However, the subject of this chapter is not the real biblical prophecy which is contained in Scripture, it is what has been done to the end time biblical prophecies by the self-appointed prophecy pundits. These prophecy moguls have butchered the meanings of Scriptures and have caused many Christians to walk around in a state of paranoia.

When I was a young Christian in 1980-81 I began my Christian walk listening to Jack Van Impe and his prophecy ministry. I sent for materials and I heard all about:

- The 10 Nation Common Market
- The physical Antichrist
- The Mark of the Beast
- 666
- The invasion of Israel by Russia
- The physical persecution of the Christians
- The restoration of the Jews
- 2/3 of all Jews being killed
- Armageddon in the Plains of Megiddo
- The 1,000 year Reign of Christ
- 7 year Tribulation Period
- The judgment of the Believers
- Pre-Trib Rapture
- Dispensationalism
- The Rebuilding of the Temple
- Animal Sacrifices reinstated

The prophecy moguls are just sensationalists and this is why they get to preach 250 times a year and are in demand because the prophetic illiterate love to hear their "doomsday prophecies" for the express reason that these same "experts" claim that good ole' American Christians are going to escape it because of the "secret rapture" which will zoom them to Heaven while everybody else will be suffering on earth.

Convenient isn't it? If you think about it, if their prophecies are true (which they aren't) then millions of deceived Christians are actually rejoicing in the pain and suffering and death of others while they bask on the shore lines of Heaven. Here are some other embellishments which have been added to biblical prophecy by the prophecy pundits to make sure their books sell. These things have absolutely nothing to do with true biblical prophecy.

- Black Helicopters over America
- Noise barriers on major highways so UN troops can shoot at the motorists
- (From Prophecy, Eschatology, and Discoveries Web Site) The United Nations security council unanimously endorsed an agreement with Iraq that would allow U.N. weapons inspectors access to presidential palaces early on the morning of March 3, 1998, (Mideast time). This date is 29304 days into the New Age. 29304 is 44 times 666. These prophetic intervals are particularly interesting since the 1991 Gulf War was fought during Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's 666th (Hebrew/Jewish) month of life. However, before rushing to the conclusion that this means Hussein is the "beast" of Revelation, remember that 666 has also been found in association with Mikhail Gorbachev and with efforts to secure a homeland for the Palestinians within the borders of Israel. It does, however, strengthen the argument that this date and this event hold significance in prophetic fulfillment.
- Jack Van Impe Web site - THE MARK OF THE BEAST
TECHNOLOGY DATA WAREHOUSING AND DATA MINING
BRINGS VISIONS OF BIG BROTHER The Washington Post reported recently on the growing information service market where companies legally gather and sort electronic data 24 hours a day about 196 million Americans. These data warehousing or datamining businesses assemble an array of facts from scattered sources from credit card transactions and magazine subscriptions to telephone numbers and real estate records to car registrations and fishing licenses to consumer surveys and demographic details. In a moment of time, such services can provide electronic dossiers that give marketers information into an American's needs, lifestyle,

and spending habits. Meanwhile, individuals have almost no control over facts that are assembled and disseminated about them. The report went on to say that "traditional American notions of personal privacy have become obsolete, outstripped by technology's ability to peer into personal lives." Jim Settle, formerly with the FBI said, "The whole thing is scary. It's not the government you need to worry about. It's private industry." (Rev. 13:16-18)

- (From Texe Marrs Web Site) PROJECT L.U.C.I.D. BOOK OFFER - It's frightening, and it's real. In this stunning book, noted author Texe Marrs unravels the secrets of Project L.U.C.I.D., the covert government operation destined to devour the whole world. Soon, every person on Earth -- even newborn babies -- will be issued the universal biometrics I.D. card. Resisters will have a mind control biochip surgically implanted in their brains. The ISO 9000 program requires that all manufactured goods be controlled with the number of the beast, 666. Project L.U.C.I.D. empowers America's hidden SS establishment to use its massively powerful, computer databases to control your bank accounts and purchases, and to monitor intimate details of your life. Spy satellites; hidden, miniature video cameras; and interactive TV sets will be watching your every move. Your telephone calls will be wiretapped and recorded by remote computers. All data on you is linked, networked, and processed by a Central Gestapo, where faceless bureaucrats give orders to police, military, and intelligence agencies. This is the new, global police state, made up of the FBI, KGB, CIA, DEA, DIA, NSA, IRS, EPA, NCIC, USDA, FDA, NRO, BATF, FINCEN, INS, DOJ, WTO, Europol, Interpol, Mossad, and the MAB.

If you notice I took 3 articles off the Internet from various Prophecy Ministries which all focus in on the number 666. They all claim the number of the beast or Antichrist is 666. Let us look at what the Bible teaches to see if they are correct. In Revelation 13:18 we read:

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. (Rev 13:18, KJV)

All the prophecy pundits have built their 666 theology and sensations around these 2 words "a man." First of all, in the koine Greek Language of the New Testament there is no such thing as an "indefinite article" as there is in English, either the word has the article or it does not. There is only a "definite article" which is identified by "O" with a hard breathing sound over it making it sound like "ho." In Revelation 13:18, "a man" is the Greek word "anthropou" which is a singular genitive case.

The term "anthropos" may be used to describe the entire human race as we read in Matthew 4:4:

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4, KJV)

So the idea that Revelation 13:18 is speaking of a single physical man is erroneous and to be rejected. However, the King James translators were very astute when they used the term "a man" in Revelation 13:18. If this was speaking of the entire human race then it should read "of men." This is not speaking of the entire human race but is speaking about one person and that is found in Isaiah 14:16:

They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; (Isaiah 14:16, KJV)

In Isaiah 14:16, we are reading that Satan is called "the man" which harmonizes perfectly with Revelation 13:18 which means that Satan is the Antichrist and not a physical man. The subject of the Antichrist will be discussed further in the chapter "Who is the Antichrist?"

With this 666 belief, they teach that people will be marked with a 666 on their forehead or right hand. Let's look at it from a different perspective and see if everyone is going to get an identifying mark. When you became a Christian, did you receive a physical mark on your forehead? The following verses say that God has set a seal in the foreheads of His children.

Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. (Rev 7:3, KJV)

And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. (Rev 9:4, KJV)

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. (Rev 14:1, KJV)

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. (Rev 22:4, KJV)

And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. {5} And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: {6} Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. (Ezek 9:4-6, KJV)

Here is a very interesting passage In Ezekiel 9 which speaks about a mark given to those who have cried and wept over the sins of Jerusalem. Who cries and weeps over sins, the unregenerate or the regenerate? Of course, the only ones concerned with sin are those who are saved, the world continues on in sinful perpetuity until the last day. Isn't it interesting that God used the very same language approximately 600 BC when giving the command to Ezekiel to set a mark on the heads of the saved? Did Ezekiel walk around with a quill and put a mark on all the repentant? Here is a picture of the last day. Those who have the mark of God in their foreheads will not be touched by the final judgment but those who have the mark of the beast a.k.a. the unsaved, shall be judged and

cast into eternal hell, which here is symbolized by the physical slaughter of the disobedient in Jerusalem in Ezekiel 9.

It is also interesting to note that a separation is in view which harmonizes with Revelation 9:4 above and Matthew 25:31-34 and John 5:25-29. God is separating the believers from the unbelievers as He will do on Judgment day after the resurrection of all mankind. If you also notice one thing in the Ezekiel passage, God begins judgment at His Sanctuary which harmonizes with 1 Peter 4:17 where God states that judgment begins at the house of God. God will purge every unholy element from His true church as we see being done today. The rise of the Charismatic movement in almost every church shows the unholy and rebellious attitudes toward God. The Emergent church with all its esoteric teachings and rituals is also in rebellion against God. Only the true Christian with open spiritual eyes will see these movements for what they truly are.

Let's wrap this chapter up with a quick look at some of the other elements which are taught by these prophecy moguls and some of the Scriptures which refute their Fantasy Island theology:

Rebuilding of the Temple - Ezekiel 40-48 is used to justify this but a physical temple is not what is in view:

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? {17} If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. (1 Cor 3:16-17, KJV)

The Believers are the Temple!

Animal Sacrifices Reinstated - OT Sacrifices used to justify this

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; (Heb 10:12, KJV)

I think it is reprehensible that Christians think that reinstatement of animal sacrifices is wonderful. That is an affront to the cross of Christ and a denial that He came and finished the sacrifice once

and for all. Too many Christians have been so indoctrinated into Christian Zionism by their clergy that they begin to think in terms of Judaism which is a Christ rejecting false religion. Judaism is not Old Testament rather it is a maintained rejection of Christ. If it was Old Testament based, they would recognize Christ immediately.

10 Nation Common Market - Daniel 7:7, 20, 24 used to justify this

I remember when the European Common Market went to 11, then 12, then 13 and some prophecy expert made a statement (I forgot who but not what) that God was just setting everything up for the final number of 10. Well, of course God had to redo everything, He made a mistake because it didn't fit into paranoia prophecy.

Armageddon in the Plains of Megiddo - Revelation 16:16 used to justify this

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. {14} For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. {15} Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. {16} And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Rev 16:13-16, KJV)

Notice the sequence of events concerning Armageddon:

1. Unclean Spirits go out over the whole world
2. They gather them to battle (Armageddon not mentioned yet)
3. The Return of Christ
4. Gathers them to Armageddon

What is the event that happens right after Christ's return? It is judgment day. Armageddon is a synonym for judgment day. Satan's kingdom has always been at war with God's kingdom, and they will be at war until the last battle, where Satan and his host of demons will be cast eternally into hell.

Pre-Tribulational Rapture - 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18 & Revelation 4:1 used.

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (John 6:39, KJV)

This is one of six verses which show the rapture is on the last day.

Thousand year reign of Christ - Revelation 20:1-8 used to justify

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Rev 20:4, KJV)

Notice the wording here, it talks about seeing the "SOULS" not the physical bodies on physical thrones in Jerusalem. The thousand year reign is supposed to be a physical reign, right?

The Physical Invasion of Israel by Russia - Ezekiel 38:2 is used to justify

Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, (Ezek 38:2, KJV)

This is an absolute butchering of Scripture. The words "chief prince" in this verse is the Hebrew word "Rosh" and guess how the prophecy moguls interpret it? You got it, Russia! The word "rosh" means "head or chief, whether in place, rank or time, or an individual head." What, tell me what does that have to do with Russia and how do you get Russia out of a word that simply means "Chief?" The word is used 97 times in the Old Testament. All translated with a meaning of "chief or head." So why does Ezekiel 38:2 mean Russia and the other 96 something different?

Well I think you are getting my point that prophecy has gone out of control and the underlying factors for it is greed and fame. Let me give you my assessment of false prophecy teachers:

1. Liars - They consistently misinterpret the Bible to make their case. If someone disseminates false information on a consistent basis, I deem this an act of lying.
2. Cheaters - When you buy one of their books, you could have used that money for something necessary or worthwhile.
3. Sensationalists - Always inventing new ways to captivate their disciples.
4. Sinful approach to Scripture - The Bible says we are to compare Scripture with Scripture not newspapers or other worldly publications.
5. Prideful - When their prophecies do not come to pass, they never retract their statements instead they write another million best seller.
6. Deceivers - They cause people to look outside the Scriptures for understanding of Scriptures. This is deceptive hermeneutics and causes people to misinterpret the Word of God and are left with the wrong understanding which eventually they will defend.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Prophecy preachers are one of the most dangerous elements in Christianity because they are consistently wrong yet are the most admired and sought after. These specialists go from church to church peddling their political assumptions and call it biblical prophecy. I am not saying that groups like the Trilateral Commission or Council on Foreign Relations do not exist nor do I deny the existence of Black Helicopters over the USA. I have seen them fly over my area but as for the sake of the gospel, they have nothing whatsoever to do with it. If we are to understand prophecy, it must be understood by means of interpreting Scripture with Scripture. That is God's method! When I rid myself of all my prophecy books, my understanding of Scripture began to elevate

and the Holy Spirit now had a clear mind to teach. That is what you need to do.

Probably the worst thing that it does is it turns Christians into paranoid androids in that everything that happens in life is now linked to some prophecy book. How do I know this? In 1981 I received a credit card statement from a bank and the statement number had 666 on it. I showed it to everybody and even sent a copy to the Southwest Radio Church. The next month's credit card statement didn't have it on there so I guess they got off the Antichrist system. That was nothing more than paranoia on my part. As Christians we need to be people of the Book not people of the prophecy books.

Prophecy Books Are Dangerous!

For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 29:9, KJV)

Spurgeon - "In many cases sheer fanaticism has been the result of exclusively dwelling on prophecy, and probably more men have gone mad on that subject than on any other religious questions."

When we look at Jeremiah 29:9, the Lord is warning the people of Judah that there are false prophets who will come in the name of the Lord and will prophesy unto them but the problem is that they are false prophets because they were not commissioned by the Lord. Some went among the people claiming that the captivity would only last two years instead of seventy years which the Lord Himself declared. Now do we have a similar scenario today about false prophecies among the Church? We sure do and they are in the form of the written word, not the Word of God, but the word of man who likes to make money off of false interpretations of the Bible.

I am speaking about prophecy books which fill the shelves of every Christian book store and ministry. There are ministries out there that are dedicated solely to the study and dissemination of prophecy. One such ministry is the Southwest Radio Ministries from Bethany, Oklahoma. I will not donate anything to their ministry ever since I saw them offer material which called for the annihilation of all the Palestinians and then in that same material they claim it was the Holy Spirit who was prompting Israel to annihilate them. Blasphemy to the highest! It is called "Israel's Prophesied Triumph Over the Palestinians" by David Bay. Here is the link to the book and below is the write up and you will see how this man completely twists Scripture and endorses wholesale murder in the name of God. <https://www.swrc.com/israel-s-prophesied-triumph-over-the-palestinians.html>

"How many of you believe the Bible to be inerrant? How many of you believe all prophecy will be fulfilled to the letter? How many of you believe all End Times prophecy will be exactly fulfilled, even if it seems harsh or politically incorrect? Obadiah 15-18 foretells the

annihilation by fire of an entire nation, the House of Esau, which today are the Palestinians. Israel possesses the "Weapon of Fire" (Fuel Air Bomb) that could fulfill this prophecy precisely! Understanding how Israel is planning to carry out this annihilation soon is critical to comprehending events in Israel today between the Palestinians and Israel. Consider the somber prophecy of Obadiah 18: 'The house of Jacob shall be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame, but the house of Esau shall be stubble; they shall kindle them and burn them and consume them, and there shall be no more survivor of the house of Esau, for the Lord has spoken it.' [Verse 18] *This prophecy states that the nation of Israel [the combined houses of Jacob and Joseph] shall have some kind of a fire build up within them that will suddenly explode outward to consume the House of Esau in 100% annihilation. Since a weapon of fire does not travel outward from its source too far, we can assume that this House of Esau must be living in close proximity to Israel at the moment of this conflagration. Thus, the major question is, 'who is the House of Esau today'? It is the Palestinians, led currently by Mahmoud Abbas. **You will be shocked to learn that God's Holy Spirit has been working since 1990 to convince the Israeli leadership of the need to annihilate the Palestinians.** You will be further surprised to learn that the huge security fence Israel has erected around the Palestinian towns and cities will prove to be an indispensable tool in their strategy to carry out this complete destruction, as God has foretold 2,500 years ago."*

Just looking at this one book and its description is enough to cause me to reject these prophecy pundits because they twist the Scriptures, give false meanings to make their case. If you notice in the write-up that he starts out by asking if you believe the Bible is inerrant? This statement sets you up because you can only answer in the affirmative. Now that he has set the stage for you to respond to his message in the affirmative, he now goes and completely twists the meaning of Obadiah 15-18 and inserts his warped interpretation of Obadiah 15-18. What he has not asked you is if you believe his interpretation of those verses are inerrant? Of course, the King James Bible is inerrant but he does not ask concerning himself and his interpretation. This way inerrancy, in the readers mind, is now linked to both the Scriptures and the interpretation of certain verses. This is nothing more than mind

manipulation to sell books and to set up a bias toward a group of people. Unfortunately, the reader comes away with a warped understanding of those verses based upon a very bad explanation. Now they will carry that same mindset to other portions of Scripture and will impose error on other Scriptures. This is one example of why prophecy books are dangerous and should be avoided!

And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? (Luke 9:54, KJV)

When the disciples wanted to annihilate the Samaritans, what was the Lord's response to them?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. 56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village. (Luke 9:55-56, KJV)

The Lord corrected their thinking and told them He did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them. Someone should tell David Bay and the Southwest Radio Church that they should not be desiring the annihilation of the Palestinians since they should realize what manner of Spirit they are of or should be of!

I want to list nineteen reasons why prophecy books are dangerous and should be avoided, especially by new Christians. As a new Christian, I was drawn into the world of prophecy books and had my mind saturated with them. When I was a young Christian in 1980 I began my Christian walk listening to Jack Van Impe and his prophecy ministry. I will list again the subjects from the last chapter. I sent for the materials and I heard all about:

- The 10 Nation Common Market
- The physical Antichrist
- The Mark of the Beast
- 666
- The invasion of Israel by Russia
- The physical persecution of the Christians
- The restoration of the Jews

- 2/3 of all Jews being killed
- Armageddon in the Plains of Megiddo
- The 1,000 year Reign of Christ
- 7 year Tribulation Period
- The judgment of the Believers
- Pre-Trib Rapture
- Dispensationalism
- The Rebuilding of the Temple
- Animal Sacrifices reinstated

Out of these 16 subjects, only one has truth attached to it and that is the persecution of the Christians which we are seeing happen in many parts of the world and right before our eyes. Let us now attend to reasons that these prophecy books are dangerous.

Refocuses from Bible to News and Newspapers

One of the first things that the prophecy crazed Christian will do is to redirect themselves from the Bible to news outlets. They will scour the newspapers and turn on the news to see what is happening in the Middle East and then when some type of situation happens, they immediately go back to the Bible and try to fit the event into some verse of Scripture. I remember when the first gulf war started back in 1990, the prophecy pundits went crazy teaching that World War III was now on the horizon. The problem with this is that newspapers and news outlets are placed on the same level as Scripture since the prophecy crazed Christian thinks that Scripture is being fulfilled. This type of situation violates Scripture and its understanding. *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:13, KJV)*

1 Corinthians 2:13 teaches that we are to compare spiritual with spiritual which means the answer to one Scripture is found in another part of the Scriptures. Are newspapers spiritual? Are news outlets spiritual? The answer to both of these is no so by comparing them to Scripture, you will arrive at a false understanding and then the desire will be to share that interpretation with others thus leading them astray. I remember attending a church where a prophecy preacher was preaching and

he held up a copy of the Jerusalem Post as if it was divinely inspired.

They Keep Naming New Candidates for Antichrist

I remember when I first became a Christian and Ronald Reagan was the President, the prophecy pundits had thought that he was the Antichrist. They believed this because his name was Ronald Wilson Reagan, 6 letters in each name corresponding to 666. Then by 1984 President Reagan was out as a candidate. Then they thought David Rockefeller was the Antichrist, but then he was discounted because in 1984 Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union was now the new candidate because of his “glasnost” policies (openness) and because of the port wine stain or firemark on his head which they took for the mark of the beast. Then in 1994 another candidate came on the scene and that was Vladimir Zhirinovsky who was the head of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia. He said a few things against the Jews publicly so right away he became a candidate for Antichrist. The candidate for Antichrist seems to change with the news.

The reality is that there is only one person in history who fits the definition of Antichrist and that is Satan himself.

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

They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; (Isaiah 14:16, KJV)

2 Thessalonians has long been used as the chapter which identifies the man of sin as the Antichrist. If you look carefully there is a parallel found in Isaiah 14:16 and 2 Thessalonians 2:7. It is the fact that in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 and Isaiah 14:16, Satan is referred to as a man and we know that Satan is not flesh and blood but a fallen angel and yet is referred to as a man. The meaning is symbolic because it is pointing to Satan who is spirit. I cover this more fully in the chapter “Who is the Antichrist?”

Makes World Events Focus of Christian Walk

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15, KJV) The Lord Jesus Christ gave this command before He went back to Heaven. It is the Christian's responsibility to send forth the gospel and proclaim the message of salvation to as many as we possibly can. However, when Christians begin to get bogged down with prophecy, instead of focusing on getting the gospel out, they are always looking for events which they think will usher in the final days and the rapture. This is a great waste of time and takes well-needed Christians out of circulation which could otherwise be getting the gospel out to the world. I remember when 1984 rolled around we all thought it was going to be a very prophetic year and nothing happened out of the ordinary. In 2003 when the U.S. invaded Iraq, the prophecy pundits were claiming the end was near because modern Iraq was ancient Babylon and they thought Revelation 18 was about to be fulfilled. Guess what? It didn't happen!

Another great quote by Spurgeon on this very matter. "I deeply regret when I see persons so taken up with prophecy that they forget evangelism. Trumpets and vials must not displace the gospel and its invitations."

Hollywood Style Narratives

The prophecy moguls are just sensationalists and this is why they get to preach hundreds of times per year and are in demand because the prophetic illiterate love to hear their "doomsday prophecies." This is why movies and books such as the "Left Behind" series were so successful because now the prophecy books could be made into a movie which leaves an indelible impression on people. Visuals have great effect on people and can be longer lasting than just reading about something. Prophecy books create an exciting mindset because of their subject matter and compared to all that excitement the normal Christian life seems bland. This is why so many Christians delve into prophecy instead of getting busy getting the gospel out. After all would you rather read a book about evangelism or one entitled "Armageddon, Oil, and Terror: What The Bible Says About The Future" by John Walvoord and Mark Hitchcock? If you think about it, if their prophecies are true (which they aren't) then millions of deceived

Christians are actually rejoicing in the pain and suffering and death of others.

They Instill Fear Into The Believer

In the King James Bible the phrase “fear not” appears 144 times. God is telling us not to fear because He has everything under control and when we relinquish ourselves of fear, our Christian walk becomes much more stable. However, when we look at the general milieu of prophecy books, they are all focused on doomsday scenarios. They keep the eyes of the believer focused on the events of this earth in violation of what the Scriptures teach. *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. (Colossians 3:2, KJV)* Prophecy books keep our minds set on things of the earth. Look at the following three titles:

Apocalypse Rising: Chaos in the Middle East, the fall of the West, and other signs of the end times by Dr. Timothy Dailey

World War III: History’s Greatest Lynchpin Ever by David Bay

The Next Great War in the Middle East by S. Douglas Woodward

Just looking at the titles can actually depress a Christian into thinking that there is no way out and all they have to look forward to is a mushroom cloud over their homes. Prophecy books do not in any way encourage and strengthen the believer but instead they instill fear where faith should be.

Causes Laziness in Christians as they look for an Imminent Rapture

These prophecy books are always pushing to the forefront of their teachings the belief that there will be an imminent rapture. Many Christians feel that since the rapture is imminent, there is no need to get involved in ministry or to even start a personal ministry. What these prophecy books do is create an entire army of “rapture ready couch potatoes.” The Lord commanded that the believer goes into the world to send forth the gospel to every nation but these rapture imminent prophecy books seem to negate that command. In the first place, how do they know that we are the terminal generation? There could be one or two more after our

generation and in that case we would fail to train the next generation. Here are the names of three prophecy books which focus on the imminent rapture of the church:

The Popular Handbook of the Rapture by Thomas Ice, Ed Hindson, and Tim LaHaye

Will the Church Go Through the Tribulation? by Noah Hutchings, Bob Glaze, Larry Spargimino, Kenneth Hill, David Schnittger, and Douglas Stauffer

Rapture Ready...or Not? By Terry James

The second one speaks about the church going through the tribulation and, of course, they claim the church will not go through it. Let me ask a question. Isn't the eternal church of Christ in tribulation right now? The tribulation period that the eternal church faces goes from the first coming to the second coming of Christ. Now speaking of the second coming of Christ, the Bible is very clear that there is going to be one general resurrection on the last day of earth's history.

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, {29} And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:28-29, KJV)

John 5:28-29 are very clear that both the saved and the unsaved will be raised simultaneously on the last day. Notice the following verse about Lazarus:

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. (John 11:24, KJV)

Martha tells the Lord that she knows that Lazarus will rise in the resurrection at the last day. Now wait a minute! These prophecy books claim that the believers are going to be raised from the dead at the rapture and the unbelievers will be raised at the end of time. If that is true then why is Lazarus, a believer, not being raised at the rapture but on the last day with all the unbelievers? A clear case of

total confusion because of biblical illiteracy. This is why Christians cannot handle any types of crises which may come into their lives because they are just waiting for the rapture.

They Teach The Holy Spirit Will Be Removed from the Earth at the Rapture

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. (2 Thessalonians 2:7, KJV) 2 Thessalonians 2:7 is used to undergird the teaching that the Holy Spirit will be removed at the rapture when the church is taken out. However, we have another problem with this teaching because it does not match up with Scripture. They teach that the Holy Spirit is removed from the earth at the rapture yet they speak of tribulation saints, those who are saved in the seven year tribulation period. How can you be a saint without the indwelling Holy Spirit? *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Romans 8:9, KJV)* If the Holy Spirit is gone from the earth at the rapture, then how can there be tribulation saints in those seven years without the Holy Spirit indwelling them, since He is now in Heaven? This shows that they believe in their prophecy books without even checking what the Bible teaches. Just because the book is written by some prominent theologian or media preacher, it is accepted without reservation.

They Proclaim a False "Tribulation Period"

Then one of the other big selling points of these prophecy books is the teaching that there is going to be a seven year tribulation period. They take symbolic numbers and turn them into literal numbers when they need to make their case.

But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. (Revelation 11:2, KJV)

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. (Revelation 13:5, KJV)

When we look at Revelation 11:2 & 13:5, we read that both of these verses speak about a period of 42 months or 3 ½ years. That is if we choose to take those numbers literally. If we do that, then when is the starting date? According to the prophecy books, the 7 year tribulation period begins at the moment of the rapture of the Saints into Heaven. Now we have a problem, because if these numbers are literal, then we now have information as to when the Lord will be returning, which would be in 7 years, and the Bible states plainly that no one will ever know the date of the Lord's return. *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.* (Matthew 24:36, KJV) The term "no man" is in the cardinal form in the Greek making it a specific number. It is the word "oudeis." That fact illuminates the reality that not one man on earth will ever know the day or hour. Cardinal form means a specific number like one or two in contrast to the ordinal form which would be translated first or second. The word is only used in the cardinal form in seven inflections and over 100 times in the New Testament. Its meanings are "none, no one, not one, in no way, nothing, worthless, no." Some uses of the word which illustrate this are found in the following verses:

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (Mat 6:24, KJV)

But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. (Mark 13:32, KJV)

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. (Luke 5:37, KJV)

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6, KJV)

So therefore if those numbers were literal, then the Bible has contradicted itself, which can never happen. Where they get the idea for this 7 year tribulation period is by combining Revelation's 42 months with Daniel 9:27:

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

They apply the seventieth week and they take the term “midst of the week” and turn that into 3 ½ years. 3 ½ days equals 3 ½ years. There is no correlation at all between these two numbers yet they just make the connection and leave it at that. This is how prophecy books work. Here is another created allegory. They claim we are presently in the church age, specifically in the Laodicean era. Right after this era is ended, then the rapture will take place. Here is the verse which is used to prove their rapture theory:

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. (Revelation 4:1, KJV)

I cannot for the life of me see how this relates to the rapture. The Scripture states that the Lord Jesus was the one speaking (Revelation 1:10) and said to John “I will shew thee...” The word “thee” in the Greek text is a personal pronoun and second person singular. The Lord was addressing John alone. If this was the rapture then shouldn’t the words at least be in the third person which include crowds? It is not and therefore this is another forced interpretation which is error.

If there is one characteristic about prophecy books, it is that they push everything into the future and leave nothing for the present. We started this chapter on the subject of the 7 year tribulation period. The tribulation period for the eternal church of Christ began on Pentecost and will end at the return of Christ. Do we have biblical justification for this? We sure do and it is found in Revelation 1:9:

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is

called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 1:9, KJV)

Notice that John is writing that he is the brother of the Christians and their companion in tribulation. The tribulation had already begun as John was writing the book of Revelation in 95 A.D. under Domitian (81-96 A.D.) who was one of the worst Roman emperors concerning the persecution of the Christians. Then do we have biblical justification for the ending of the tribulation period? We sure do and it is found in Matthew 24:29-31:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: {30} And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. {31} And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:29-31, KJV)

Notice in verse 29 it speaks of immediately after the tribulation of those days that the universe is now collapsing and simultaneously in verse 30 we read that the Lord Jesus Christ is returning, also in verse 30 we see all the tribes of the earth mourn. These are the unbelievers who now realize that Christianity was correct and in verse 31 we see the gathering of the believers into Heaven. So the tribulation period is not a 7 year period but it is a stretch of time between the first and second coming of Christ. All one has to do is look around and who can deny the church is not in tribulation. It is not only physical persecution of the Christians but the theological attacks also. In the visible church we see sodomites being ordained, false teachings, signs and wonders, mysticism, gibberish called tongues, ecumenism, unbelievers being ordained, counterfeit Bible versions being endorsed, unqualified pastors, no reverence in the sanctuary instead a football game setting, bingo, Las Vegas Nights, etc. All these and more are a form of persecution because it causes true believers to leave those churches and search and hopefully find another church reasonably faithful to God's word.

Makes Projections and Prophecies

There is nothing more abundant in prophecy books than prophecies and projections about Israel and the Middle East. These prophecy moguls all have the future figured out and they write these prophecy books to try and convince Christians that they have a handle upon all the coming events. The problem is that they are consistently wrong. Here are some titles:

Armageddon, Oil and the Mid East Crisis by John Walvoord. Written in 1974 and here it is 2018. No armageddon and the oil crisis was averted simply by raising the price of gas and that made all the oil available. 1990 was the year of the first Gulf War and nothing came out of it beyond a local battle.

The Next Great War in the Middle East by S. Douglas Woodward. This author argues the specter of nuclear war as Gog gathers its armies against Israel. I have heard that Russia is going to invade Israel since 1981, 37 years ago. This is a reoccurring theme in every prophecy book.

Armageddon, Oil, and Terror: What the Bible Says about the Future by John Walvoord and Mark Hitchcock. It is not what the Bible says about the future, it is what their interpretation and bias says about the future. More doomsday prophecies.

The problem with all these fantasy prophecy books is that when these authors are completely proven wrong, they never issue an apology, they just write another prophecy book and put it on the market. This is why prophecy books make up the largest section in a book store.

It makes the Bible an End Time Geography Book

Instead of seeing the Bible as a book of the redemption of man through the Lord Jesus Christ, prophecy hunters use it as a geography book. They are constantly looking at the names of the countries found in Scripture and then finding out what their modern names are. Now that wouldn't be bad if it stopped there but they go on to apply prophetic events to those nations. Here is an example of a created scenario:

Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, (Ezekiel 38:2, KJV)

In Ezekiel 38:2, we read the words “the chief.” The Hebrew word behind these English words is “roshe” and it simply means “captain, head, or ruler.” It has no other meaning but the prophecy preachers have taken that word and have applied the name Russia to it. In other words, they take a word which is not alluding to any nation and create a bridge to the nation of Russia because in their prophecy beliefs, they teach that Russia is going to attack Israel at some time in the future at the battle of Armageddon. One of the reasons they believe this is because some of the modern versions have added to the word of God to endorse that belief.

Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, (Ezekiel 38:2, KJV)

Son of man, set thy face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, (Ezekiel 38:2, ASV)

Son of man, set your face against Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshek and Tubal, and prophesy against him, (Ezekiel 38:2, MEV)

“Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him (Ezekiel 38:2, NASV)

“Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, (Ezekiel 38:2, NKJV)

‘Son of man, set thy face unto Gog, of the land of Magog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy concerning him, (Ezekiel 38:2, YLT)

Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, (Ezekiel 38:2, DBY)

Here we have 6 counterfeit Bible versions which add the name “rosh” making it out to be some country and as soon as the prophecy preachers saw this they connected that name to Russia. JN Darby (DBY) was one of the earliest dispensationalists having received this view from Edward Irving who received it from Margaret MacDonald who trance channeled the modern rapture movement at the Glasgow, Scotland prophecy conferences in 1830. As you can see how they mutilated this verse by taking the word “chief” and turning it into a country. Now the prophecy preachers have their biblical proof that Russia is going to attack Israel during Armageddon. This is nothing but a terrible twisting of the word of God to endorse a false system of belief. This is why prophecy books sell because they create scenarios that do not exist but since they are sensational and exciting, the people will accept them at face value especially if a famous prophecy preacher teaches it. I remember when I was a young Christian back in the early 80’s and heard Jack Van Impe teaching that Rosh was Russia. Always be careful when reading these projections about warfare among the nations because the prophecy books will be wrong but they will get you to believe and defend false teaching.

The Bible is interpreted thru Prophecy Books

One of the other more serious problems is that the Bible is interpreted through the prophecy books. When you look at chapters like Ezekiel 38-39, 2 Thessalonians 2, Matthew 24, Luke 21, Mark 13 and other prophetic chapters through the eyes of a prophecy book, it will have one main focus and because prophecy is sensationalism you will tend to stay with the most fanciful interpretation. It is the prophecy books which must be interpreted in the light of Scripture. As we previously looked at Revelation 4:1 and how every prophecy book will teach that it is the verse which speaks about the rapture.

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with

me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. (Revelation 4:1, KJV)

John was already given information on the things which were and the things which are and now in chapters 2 & 3 but he is going to be given the information on what is going to happen in the last days. The “last days” is the period from the cross to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (Hebrews 1:2 KJV)* Notice the writer to the Hebrews had stated that he was already in the last days. In Revelation chapters two and three, letters were sent to the existing churches on Earth but now the scene shifts to Heaven. This verse has been so misunderstood by the pre-tribulation crowd. They have taught for so long that it represents the rapture and they attempt to tie it in with 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Revelation 4:1 has nothing whatsoever to do with the idea of a pre-tribulation rapture. This verse is teaching us that the scene now shifts from earth to Heaven. Just as Ezekiel had heavenly visions, John is now having them. *Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. (Ezek 1:1, KJV)*

John now states that after the letters to the seven churches he looked and then he saw a door opened in heaven and the first voice was that of one which was a trumpet. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, (Rev 1:10, KJV)* John is repeating what he had previously saw. Remember the trumpet sounded a true sound and it was a call to battle. In the rest of the book of Revelation, we see how the church is at constant war with the powers of evil. John is told to come up hither, that is, he is commanded to enter into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ who is now going to show him the final chapter of the war between God and the powers of evil. This war continues until the last day when the Lord will destroy Satan and all his host of demons. Notice John is told that these things “must take place.” That means, there is going to be persecution, both physical and spiritual, of the believer. Since these things must take place, the believer better stop looking for an easy escape such as the pre-

tribulation rapture. It simply does not exist in Scripture. The true Christians are going to be on earth until the last day and we will suffer persecution until the last day. These are things which “must be hereafter.”

Revelation is not a Chronological Book

One of the most egregious mistakes the prophecy pundits make is that they treat the book of Revelation as a chronological book. The book of Revelation is not a chronological book because if it was then why is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ detailed four times in the book:

Rev. 6:12-17

Rev. 11:15-19

Rev. 14:14-18

Rev. 19:11-21

One of the main characteristics of the book of Revelation is that it is a book built upon parallel visions with each subsequent one more intense and progressively revealing more information.

They are as follows:

John's first vision was Chapters 4-7 - We read that the judgments affect one fourth of the earth.

The second parallel vision is Chapters 8-11 - There we read about one third of the earth being affected. This means that the second vision is parallel to the first but it showing an intensifying of the judgments.

The third parallel vision is chapters 12-14 - ends in the reaping of the earth

The fourth vision is chapters 15-16 which contains the vial judgments which affect the whole earth (1/4>1/3>to whole earth) and ends with Armageddon which is the final battle between Christ and Satan.

The fifth vision is chapters 17-18 which is the destruction of the kingdom of Satan.

The sixth vision is chapters 19-20 which details the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the final judgment of the unsaved.

The seventh vision is chapters 21-22 which is the New Heaven and the New Earth.

Each vision is complete in itself as we progress in the book of Revelation we see that the judgments become more surgical and intense until we come to the last day. The book of Revelation, teaches in apocalyptic imagery, the time between the first and second coming of Christ. It details the intensification of the judgments on the unsaved while the Gospel continues to go forth as it is being darkened by false gospels (Rev. 8:8-13). We must be very careful when dealing with apocalyptic imagery because it requires much more than a cursory reading, as each verse in Revelation is part of a vision and isolating verses from those visions to attempt to prove some type of pet doctrine does damage to the understanding of the book of Revelation. Martin Luther explains Revelation in this manner:

"The Book of Revelation is intended as a revelation of things that are to happen in the future, and especially of tribulations and disasters for the church..."

Works of Martin Luther, VI, P.481

They are built on False Theology

Prophecy books are built upon one major false eschatological system and that is dispensationalism. You cannot find any of these fanciful interpretations by any good Bible writer before 1830. 1830 was when Satan used a woman named Margaret MacDonald to trance channel a two-stage appearance of Christ. That is, He is coming for His church at the beginning of their seven year tribulation period and He will return once again at the end. We have previously seen in the Bible that there is going to be only one general resurrection of all people, both believers and unbelievers on the last day and yet the verses in John are ignored and they would rather believe a trance channeled system. In Daniel 7:25, we read:

And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (Daniel 7:25, KJV)

We read that Satan is going to change times and laws and he has done a good job getting Christians to believe him. The Bible teaches one general resurrection on the last day but dispensationalism teaches two resurrections and that is widely accepted especially by those who read prophecy books. One of the other time changes that Satan made was that Judgment Day has been pushed out 1,000 years after their so-called Millennium. Judgment Day is going to be held on the last day after all the unsaved are resurrected along with the saved who go right into the presence of the Lord. See the chapters on “Resurrections or Resurrection” and “the Millennium.”

Always Making Suggestions on Dates Christ will Return

Along with their erroneous interpretations of Scripture, many of these prophecy pundits will attempt to state when the Lord is going to return in violation of what the Scriptures teach. Many of them try to use 1948, which was the year of the founding of the modern nation of Israel as a basis for their date setting.

Edward Whisenant wrote a book “88 reasons why the rapture will be in 1988.” What he did was he based his timeline on 1948 and he added 40 years which can be a biblical generation and he came out with 1988. When it didn’t happen, instead of issuing an apology, he wrote another one called “The Final Shout: Rapture Report” when he claimed the rapture would be in 1989. Then there were two other that he wrote:

(1993). 23 reasons why a pre-tribulation rapture looks like it will occur on Rosh-Hashanah 1993. Predicted that the Rapture would occur in 1993.

(1994). And now the earth's destruction by fire, nuclear bomb fire. Prediction for 1994.

Then there was Harold Camping who predicted the Lord's return in both 1994 and 2011. Even though Camping was not a dispensationalist, his books still are considered prophecy books.

Jack Van Impe believes that the Lord is going to return in 2018. He used 70 years as a number for a biblical generation.

I heard this one with my own ears in 1983 in Oklahoma City at the Southwest Radio Church Prophecy Conference. J.R. Church (Hidden Prophecies in the Psalms) claimed the Lord would return in 1988. He claimed that Psalms 88-95 represented the 7 year tribulation period.

Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel in his book "Future Survival" predicted 1988. He also believed that the rapture would take place in 1981.

Hal Lindsay predicted both 1988 and 2007 would usher in the rapture.

John Denton (Bible Research and Investigation Company) claims 2034.

These prophecy writers get to the point that they feel they can accurately predict when the Lord is going to return which is in total violation of what the Scriptures teach. This is why if you choose to receive your biblical understanding from these prophecy preachers, you are building on sand because their views change rapidly with every newspaper article.

They use Many Pictures and Illustrations to Implant Images

During the Middle Ages when there was mass illiteracy, the Roman Catholic Church used a method which is still used today to continue to capture their adherents. It was the usage of pictures, relics, and illustrations to augment their teachings. There were pictures of the Virgin Mary and many statues of the Saints. There were personal relics and they even claimed they had the bones of the Saints. All of these were used to cause reverence in the heart of their followers. Even though people could not read, they were presented with these pictures and relics and the priests told them what they

were, even if it was untrue or unverifiable. The word of the priest was final because they had pictures and statues and images. In today's prophecy books, you have many pictures and illustrations of places where events are supposed to happen. How many have seen pictures of the Valley of Jezreel at Mount Megiddo? We are told all the armies of the world would converge on Israel in that place? If you have seen it, even only once, you are now convinced that is where the battle of Armageddon will take place. Pictures and illustrations can be as convincing as words. This is why the Jehovah's Witnesses make copious use of them in their magazines depicting a paradise on earth. The Hare Krishna and the Hindus use the same methods to keep their adherents trapped.

They Create Fanciful and Erroneous Timelines

Right up there with all the photographs and illustrations found in prophecy books are the fancy timelines which accompany them. We have all seen them. They illustrate the length of time for each dispensation such as the church age, the age of law, the age of innocence, etc. Probably there is no greater illustrator of dispensationalism than Clarence Larkin who made all these timelines and they look so in depth that you deem them as really truthful timelines. He was born in 1850 and many of his timelines are drawn about the turn of the 20th century. Here is the link to his book of Revelation:

http://clarencelarkincharts.com/charts/Clarence_Larkin_Charts_LargeView.html

These charts are nothing more than to get you to imbed these timelines into your thinking and eventually into your theology. Keep in mind where dispensationalism came from. It came from trance-channeling which is satanic. Also keep in mind that Satan is going to change times and laws as we have read in Daniel 7:25.

Refocuses from the Eternal Church to Modern Israel

Probably there is no greater idol in the dispensational churches today than the modern nation of Israel. Christians are told to look to Israel as the center of all the prophetic action in these last days. However, we saw that the book of Revelation does not speak about the modern nation of Israel simply because the Bible knows nothing

about it except that it is just one nation among the many on earth. Revelation speaks about the church and the attacks that it is under and the reason that it is happening at such a large scale is because Christians have been diverted from the church to Israel. This is why false teachers and false gospels are pouring into the churches because the Christians are not concerned as long as Israel is being preached. The so-called “pro-Israel” Christian is also a biblically illiterate Christian. Does this mean we are to be against them? No, but we are to treat them as a mission field and not some type of special nation on earth.

That modern nation of Israel is not a nation formed by God but it is a political nation formed by the Rothschilds. There is absolutely nothing in the New Testament about a regathering of the people to Israel. If God was going to form a new nation of Israel, don't you think He would have at least mentioned it one time? Look how much Scripture is dedicated to the ancient nation of Israel in the Old Testament. Israel is to the Old Testament what the eternal church is to the New Testament. Both of these are supplanted by the fact that the Bible is about the Lord Jesus Christ. Ancient Israel along with all the feasts and sacrifices were just foreshadows of the Lord Jesus Christ. The eternal church is the fulfillment of the many promises found in the Old Testament through such personages as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Joseph, et al. No longer is God dealing with one nation as He did with ancient Israel. He is now dealing with all the nations of the world getting the gospel out through the church. Here are some titles of some books which can lead the theology of Christians astray:

The Case for Zionism: Why Christians Should Support Israel by Thomas Ice

Whose land is it? By Zola Levitt

Target Israel: Caught in the Crosshairs of the End Times by Ed Hindson and Tim LaHaye

These type of books are built on something called Christian Zionism. Christian Zionism is the belief that the return of the Jews to the homeland and the founding of the nation of Israel in 1948

was an act of God in accordance with Bible prophecy. As a result, this belief system has taken hold of many churches and it is now embedded so deeply in pre-trib theology that any Christian who challenges it is normally ejected from the church for being an anti-Semite. The belief system has also created another attached belief system to it and that is the belief that anything Israel wants, that is what God wants. The result is that the serial wars which are fought for Israel by America are heartily endorsed by Christians in the west. America's youth is dying on foreign battlefields of countries that have never invaded us but because Israel wants all their enemies annihilated in the Middle East, the American Christians agree whole heartedly with any war that protects Israel. This is because the American Christian is so biblically illiterate that they cannot see they are endorsing the unprovoked murders of millions of people, and many of them are Christians, in the Middle East thinking that they are on God's side. This is the ignorance that is created by prophecy books and preachers who push the Zionist agenda. There is nothing in the Scriptures which endorse wholesale slaughter of other nations to the glory of modern Israel. Never take your biblical understanding from a prophecy book because you will only be led astray as countless millions of Christians have been already.

They are Scripts to make Money for the Author

Prophecy books are written in such a way that they are scripts just waiting to be made into movies. Movies embed images and thoughts into the viewers which the majority take as biblical fact. These prophecy books along with the movies made from them are nothing more than entertainment and are not biblical fact. These movies are made for money not for the edification of the viewer. A good example of this is the Left Behind series:

"Left Behind" (2000) and its sequels based on Left behind by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins

"Left Behind II: Tribulation Force" (2002) based on Tribulation Force by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins

"Left Behind: World at War" (2005) based on Nicolae: The Rise of Antichrist by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins

The entire Left behind series has 20 volumes. When authors Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins first imagined Left Behind, their goal was to create "...the first fictional portrayal of events that are true to the literal interpretation of Bible prophecy."

Here is a book overview on the first book "Left behind." "but the Left Behind series is the absolute champion in the race to make the Book of Revelation into racy thriller reading." --Tim Appelo Did you catch that? They are making the book of Revelation into racy thriller reading. These books are novels and fiction based upon the book of Revelation and yet so many will get their theology from them. The Bible is not to be made into fiction for entertainment purposes. The book of Revelation is a serious book about the struggles of the church on earth between the first and second coming of Christ. Many Christians have died from persecution and Revelation predicted it. Should we turn the book of Revelation into an entertainment novel for TV?

Salvation by Race not Grace

The majority of Christians who adhere to Christian Zionism do not believe the doctrines of predestination and election, yet they claim that all Israel is going to be saved. It is nothing more than predestination if the nation of Israel is to be totally saved. It is based upon an erroneous understanding of Romans 11:25-26:

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. {26} And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: (Romans 11:25-26, KJV)

Notice it says that blindness in part has happened to Israel. This means that some will become saved and others will be divinely blinded to the truth. Then it talks about the Gentiles coming in and after they are in, then all Israel will be saved. The true Israel of God contains both Jews and Gentiles and the only entity that fits that description is the eternal church of Christ which is the body of Christ. If one believes that only the nation of Israel will be saved,

then does that mean God will have to save those whom He killed in the exodus from Egypt and before that such as Korah, Dathan, Abiram, Onan, Er, Hophni, Phinheas? You see the Israel that God has in view in the New Testament is the Israel of God which is the eternal church containing both Jews and Gentiles.

Summary

I have given 19 reasons why prophecy books are very dangerous. Each one explains itself. I can only counsel a Christian, especially a new Christian, do not make the same mistake I did by inundating yourself with prophecy books and prophetic ministries. They will lead you astray in your biblical understanding and you will have a hard time reconciling verses and comparing spiritual with spiritual. Every news broadcast or news article you read or hear will cause you to apply it to your biblical understanding and that will cause you to go on overload because eventually these articles will start contradicting each other and then you will have a hard time which will lead to frustration in trying to place them in the prophetic timetables. Back in the 1980's one of the big prophecy subjects was the 10 nation Common Market in Europe. When it hit ten nations the prophecy pundits went wild because the physical Antichrist was supposed to come out of it but then when it went to 12 and then to 13 nations, their concept of a ten market fell by the wayside and so much for that prophecy. If that was truly a biblical prophecy, it would not have faded but remain fulfilled. It was not a true prophecy but one that was nothing but conjecture.

The Rapture of the Church

The prophetic event which we are now going to study is known as the "Rapture." The standard belief is that the church will be raptured when Christ secretly returns, and all Christians who are living on earth, including those who have previously died, will be removed from the earth. Immediately following this event, the world will be plunged into a seven year span known as the "Great Tribulation Period," which will culminate in the return of Christ. It will be at this time that Christ will set up His one thousand year reign and will reign from Jerusalem.

The question is not whether there is a rapture because it is a biblical event (1 Thess. 4:13-18), but the question is, when will it occur, a.k.a., the timing. If we allow the Bible to be the expositor of this event, we will see that the Scriptures teach the exact timing of the rapture (not the date), and does not shade it in mysterious language. All Christians are interested in the timing of the rapture, and it is imperative that we allow the Bible to be our guidebook.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. {14} For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. {15} For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. {16} For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: {17} Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. {18} Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Th 4:13-18, KJV)

This is probably the most well-known passage on the rapture in Scripture. The word "rapture" is not found in scripture. It is derived from the Latin word "rapius" which carries the meaning of "carrying away." In verse 17, we read the words "caught up" which are derived from the Greek word "harpadzo" which means "to seize,

steal, pluck, carry off, or snatch away." The same word is used in various parts of the New Testament, for example, in John 6:15, the words "take...by force" is harpadzo. Just to further illustrate this word, we read in John 10:28-29 where it is translated "pluck," and in Jude 23, the word is translated "pulling." So we may safely conclude that the rapture is going to be a sudden, abrupt removal of Christians from the earth. As we have seen in these passages, we have only a description of the rapture but we are still lacking the timing of the rapture. It is then necessary for us to search the Scriptures very diligently, to gain a clue as to when God has ordained the rapture of believers. Once we ascertain the proper timing of the rapture, we will begin to clear up many misconceptions about prophecy.

Matthew 13:24-30, 39-40

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: {25} But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. {26} But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. {27} So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? {28} He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? {29} But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. {30} Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. (Mat 13:24-30, KJV)

The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. {40} As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. (Mat 13:39-40, KJV)

In verses 24-30, we read the parable of the Wheat and Tares. This symbolizes both the unbelievers and believers existing together in the congregation of the church. In verse 30, the Lord Jesus says they are to grow together "until the harvest." Now that is a clue as to when the rapture will occur. We have all seen what a farm looks

like after the harvest, the fields are cleaned out. So now, armed with the key word "harvest," let us further investigate this chapter.

In verse 39, we see the key word "harvest" again, and in this verse we also see the harvest is at the end of the world or the last day. The reapers are the angels as verified by Matthew 24:31, which we will develop later. So here we see the Bible telling us that the rapture will be on the last day, with no generations to follow. Let us continue on to see if we are on the right path, allowing the Bible to be its own interpreter.

Matthew 13:47-49

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: {48} Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. {49} So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, (Mat 13:47-49, KJV)

In this parable we see an analogy of the separation of the good and bad fish after the net is pulled onto shore. In Verse 47 the Lord parallels the Great Commission to a fisherman's net. The symbolism here is that the net was cast into the sea which represents the church sending forth the gospel in the world. At the end of the day when the fishermen brought back the catch, the separation of the good and bad fish took place. It was necessary that the separation be done quickly, so the bad fish would not affect the good fish. In the end of verse 47 we read, "and gathered of every kind."

This parallels Matthew 22:10: "So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests."

This parable tells us that the servants went out into the world and brought back many into the church, both good and bad (saved and unsaved). There are many in the congregations who believe they are saved but are not.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is

in heaven. {22} Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? {23} And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Mat 7:21-23, KJV)

Matthew 7:21-23 reveals to us that there will be many at the judgment seat of Christ who will be arguing to get into heaven because they sincerely thought they were saved. They were doing what they thought were good works. So we see that we are on the right track as both saved and unsaved will dwell together in the church until the last day, or the separation of the good and the bad. Continuing in Matthew 13:47, we may also render the last part of that verse, "and of every kind having gathered together." So here we see that all will be gathered together at the last day for separation, and this may clearly be seen in verse 49, where Christ makes the distinct comparison as plain as day.

At the end of the world, Christ will send forth His angels to do exactly what the fishermen in verse 48 are doing, and that is separating the believers from the unbelievers. The word "sever" in verse 49 means "to separate." It is derived from the Greek verb "aphoridzo" which means, "to separate from, set apart, excommunicate, exclude." God is using very explicit language here as He declares that there will be a separation of people at the last day or the end of the world. As the fishermen separate the good fish from the bad fish, God will likewise separate the Christian from the non-Christian. Are you also beginning to see the evidence surface that there will be one general resurrection and not two? Let's continue on and see if we are still on the right track.

John 5:28-29

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, {29} And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:28-29, KJV)

These two verses openly declare to us that there will be only one resurrection. In verse 28 we are told that "all who are in the graves shall hear his voice," and then continuing in verse 29 we see that

as a result of hearing the voice of Christ, everyone on earth who is in the grave at that time will be resurrected, and then a separation will take place.

The Christian will be taken into eternal life and the unbeliever will go to judgment and eternal damnation. Those who hold to the two stage appearance of Christ theory believe that verse 29 is just a general statement describing both resurrections without regard to a specific timetable. A case could possibly be made for that if we isolated verse 29 from the rest of the Bible, but we cannot do that.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Dan 12:2, KJV)

In Daniel 12:2, we read a verse which is an exact parallel to John 5:29. However, in Daniel 12:2, we read the word "many" in contrast to "all" in John 5:29. It seems we are at an impasse. There is a contradiction in the Bible, right? Perish the thought!! There are no contradictions in the Bible. To gain a better understanding of that word "many" we must now turn to the Hebrew word which is used. It is the word "rab" which may also be translated "abundant." Are we on the right path? The answer is Yes! Why? OK, let me answer your question. The same Hebrew word "rab" used for "many" in Daniel 12:2, is translated "multitude" in Exodus 34:6 and "great" in Numbers 11:23.

So we now have a better understanding of the word "many," as it refers to a great abundance of people. God is not telling us that a limited number will be resurrected, rather He is telling us there will be one resurrection of both the just and unjust in one action, and no one will be left in their grave. Daniel was written about 600 B.C. and God was simply telling us that the last day there will be a great multitude of people who will be resurrected. There are about 7 1/2 billion people on earth at present, so God foreknew that a great multitude of people would be resurrected. Out of that 7 1/2 billion, we do not know how many of them will be in their graves when the Lord returns and add to that all those that have died since creation definitely making it a great multitude.

John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48

Here we have six verses which are very plain. They claim that the resurrection of both the just and the unjust will be at the last day. Out of this group, John 12:48 deals with the resurrection of the unjust. The common thread that runs through these verses is that all the action will take place on the last day. Let's take a brief look at each verse.

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (John 6:39, KJV)

In this verse we read that the Lord Jesus will not allow any of the elect to perish (2 Peter 3:9) but those believers who have died throughout the ages will be raised at the last day. In the six verses that we will study, it is interesting to note that in the Greek, the words "last" and "day" are both in singular form, denoting one event on one day. These two words do not allow for two resurrections. God emphasizes this six times in the book of John alone.

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:40, KJV)

In this verse we see a reaffirmation of 6:39, but here we are told that the will of God for those who believe on Christ will be everlasting life and will be raptured on the last day.

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:44, KJV)

Here we see a refutation of the idea that man can be saved anytime he wants to. For a person to respond to the gospel, they must be drawn by the Father first. In other words, salvation begins with God and ends with Him. So, here also, we see that those Christians in the biblical sense of the word will be raised at the last day.

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:54, KJV)

In this verse, Christ is using a figure of eating His flesh and drinking His blood as a synonym for salvation. This verse in no way supports or defends the cannibalistic belief of transubstantiation or the other false teaching of consubstantiation. This is the fourth time we read in this chapter that the Christian will be raised or raptured at the last day of recorded history.

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. (John 11:24, KJV)

This is probably the plainest verse in Scripture showing that the resurrection will be at the last day. There is no possible way that a person may hold to a two resurrection theory with this verse in the Bible. Many say that all believers will be raptured before the tribulation period, so if this is true, why isn't Lazarus being raptured until the last day? Lazarus was saved, so why is he being excluded from the resurrection of the just before the tribulation period starts? Do you see how imperative it is to twist Scripture just to hold to the pre-tribulational view? In fact, you do not only have to twist Scripture but you must outright ignore those plain Scriptures which do not make your case.

When was the last time you heard these six verses included in a sermon on the rapture? I have never heard one! All I hear is 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 being linked to Revelation 4:1, the supposed time of the rapture. These are two totally different events being forced together to prove a doctrine which does not exist in Scripture. Revelation 4:1 has absolutely nothing to do with the rapture, it is God giving John the beginning of his vision which extends to the entire book of Revelation.

Revelation 4:1 is in no way a proof text for a pre-tribulational rapture, because the context will not allow it, yet millions of Christians allow themselves to be duped into believing it is the rapture because they will not follow God's method of biblical interpretation, which is comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Unfortunately, many Christians allow prophecy books to do their biblical thinking for them. They interpret the Bible according to

these books, instead of allowing the Bible to interpret them. Let us take a look at the final verse in John.

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (John 12:48, KJV)

Here is the sixth verse in this series which openly proclaims that the last day will be resurrection day. In this verse, Christ reverses the subject. He states the unbeliever will be raised and judged at the last day (Rev. 20:13-15). So if we combine all the biblical evidence in this chapter alone, we may safely conclude that both the believer and unbeliever will be raised at the last day. This biblical evidence also agrees with the other passages we saw from Matthew, so we must be on the right track.

Let us continue our search for more biblical truth to complete our study in total harmony. Isn't it something, how we did not even slightly stretch the meaning of any verse. When a verse must be over-justified to have it fit into the doctrine, then no doubt, it does not belong there in the first place.

Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, {52} In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. {53} For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Cor 15:51-53, KJV)

These verses are also famous passages describing the rapture of the church. In verse 52, we see a hint of when the rapture will occur. It plainly states, "at the last trump." The word "last" is the same word found in the six verses of John. The word "last" comes from the Greek word "eschatos", from where we derive the word "eschatology" which is the study of last things. The word "eschatos" may also be understood as "final, extreme, or farthest." Do you see by this definition that when God uses the word "last," He is telling us that the rapture will be on the most extremely, farthest, or final day? The definition of this word alone discounts any possibility of a golden reign after the rapture of the church.

We have openly seen and safely concluded that the rapture will take place on the last day, which is also judgment day for the unbeliever. We took many passages and saw we were on the correct path to truth. Nowhere in this study did we find that the rapture is going to be pre-tribulational but in fact all the biblical evidence points to the rapture of the church being a simultaneous event with judgment day which is the last day. Now you can raise an argument against my commentary, but how can you argue with Scripture when it is so clear that the Bible teaches the rapture is the last day.

Rapture Watching: A Dangerous Diversion

Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:11, KJV)

The Great Escape was a hit movie produced in 1963. It was based on a real escape in World War 2 from a German prisoner of war camp, Stalag Luft 3 which was located in the German Province of Lower Silesia and was located near the Polish border town of Sagan. The location was chosen because it was believed that it would have been very hard to tunnel and therefore escape.

The subject of this chapter is the Great Escape which is sought by many Christians. It is also known as the dispensational rapture which could occur at any moment, so they say. Then while the Christians are in Heaven for their 7 year tribulation period getting their rewards, the world will be under an evil man called the Antichrist. Then the Lord will return and the Antichrist will be cast into hell and then the Lord will set up His one thousand year reign, of course, from Jerusalem, where I once heard a prophecy preacher claim that David was going to be the mayor of Jerusalem. What I just described is basic prophecy book fiction.

Millions sit in dispensational churches every week and keep hearing their pastor state something like "I am not looking for the undertaker, but for the upper taker." So all these Christians continue to hear this chatter and then they are told to look to Israel, which has become the Golden Calf of the majority of dispensational churches. Both of these are nothing but diversions from true biblical Christianity. Many will not become involved in becoming the salt of society which the Lord Jesus told us about because they are waiting for the any-moment rapture while our country has been taken over by unbelievers of all kinds. The church has become a weak entity because of these kind of teachings. It is a good thing

that the colonial preachers, who sparked the war for independence from their pulpits did not get up there and say, “well, just serve King George III and don’t worry the rapture is getting close and soon we will be out of here.”

This dispensational rapture theory is a dangerous teaching because it places a spirit of laziness in the Christian thinking that the rapture is going to be today, so why start a project or get involved? I want to give some dangers of this theory and why it should be rejected by all Christians.

Pre-Trib Rapture watching has been around since 1830

Ever since Margaret MacDonald trance channeled the two stage appearance of Christ theory in the Glasgow prophecy conferences beginning in 1830, the idea that a separate rapture of all believers would be imminent. This means that since 1830 many Christians left off being responsible citizens because of this idea the Lord was going to return at any time so there would be no need to get involved in this world and I do not mean in a sinful way, but in a way which helps serve your country and serve others.

Is the Rapture Imminent?

Here is the reality. The fact is that there is a rapture of all believers coming but that rapture is simultaneous with the raising of all the unbelievers. *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, {29} And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.* (John 5:28-29, KJV) John 5:28 & 29 make it perfectly clear that there is going to be one general resurrection and that resurrection is going to be on the last day: Let’s look again at the 6 verses we saw last chapter in John.

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (John 6:39, KJV)

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:40, KJV)

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:44, KJV)

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:54, KJV)

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. (John 11:24, KJV)

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (John 12:48, KJV)

We can plainly see that four times in John 6 that the Lord Himself speaks of the fact that the believers are going to be raised on the last day. Now let us look at John 11:24 & 12:48 above.

In John 11:24, Martha is confirming her understanding that the resurrection of believers is going to be the last day. Lazarus was a believer and here we are being told that he will be raised on the last day. Remember the standard dispensational teaching is that all believers are going to be raised 7 years before the return of Christ to set up His kingdom and yet the Bible completely contradicts that teaching by stating that the believers are going to be raised on the last day. Let us look at John 12:48. Here Jesus is stating that those unbelievers who reject Him and His word will be judged at the last day. So here we have a complete harmony with John 5:28 & 29, that both groups, believers and unbelievers, will be raised on the last day. Plus we can see in verse 48, that the unbelievers will be judged on the last day which is a confirmation of the Great White Throne Judgment found in Revelation 20. *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (Revelation 20:12, KJV).* How much more plainer can the Bible be concerning the events of the last day which will comprise both the rapture of the Saints and the judgment of the unsaved?

The dispensationalists are always touting the following saying, "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense." They violate their own little pet saying by simply accepting willy-nilly, whatever is told to them. They continue to teach that the rapture is going to be seven years prior to some mythical millennium, and yet the Bible clearly teaches, totally refuting their teaching, that the believer and the unbeliever will be raised on the last day. Here we have the plain sense of Scripture teaching us opposite of what the pre-millennialists have been teaching since 1830. Isn't it better to read and accept what the Bible plainly teaches rather than what the devil trance-channeled through Margaret MacDonald?

Rapture Watchers Dodge The Great Commission

The Lord Jesus commanded us to send the gospel into all the world. *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15, KJV)* Rapture watchers tend to shirk their duties by not only withholding funds but from also going to the world and bringing the Gospel. They figure that if the rapture is imminent, then why bother getting involved since they are looking for the "upper taker." They find time for every worldly activity but not for missions.

Rapture Watchers disobey the Lord's Command to Occupy

And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. (Luke 19:13, KJV) The Lord gave us a command to occupy till He comes back. Well He has not returned yet and many Christians have stopped occupying because they are waiting for the "upper taker." We are to continue sending forth the Gospel from the time we are saved until the time the Lord returns or takes us home. Those that have stopped serving have become useless to the Kingdom of God. Christians go to their churches on Sunday and constantly complain that false gospels are taking over our country, well duh, if they were out there being as aggressive as the false gospels, then we would have our country back and have a Christian majority but they reason within themselves that the rapture is imminent, so they reject the idea of getting out to the streets.

Rapture Watchers Rob Their Own Country

Rapture watchers continually complain that our nation is becoming more secular and that we are under God's judgment for evils like abortion. The reason for this is simple. Christians have just given up getting involved. They decry abortion for the murder that it is, yet, why will Christians not run for office? Do they honestly think by voting in another unbeliever that abortion will end or that our government will take responsibility for its carelessness in all areas? Much of the reasoning for Christians not partaking in political office goes back to the 1527 Schleithem confession of the Anabaptists. In article 6, they claim a Christian cannot serve the Lord and hold a political office because the office is a sinful undertaking. They believe that a Christian is not permitted to take the life of someone who has been convicted of a capital crime. They believed that a political office is nothing but a partaker of the flesh and lusts of this world. It is based on the belief that a Christian cannot serve the government and Christ at the same time. The Bible does not condone that belief.

What about men such as Joseph who God Himself promoted to Governor of Egypt. Joseph did not forsake God but served Him in that capacity. Daniel was made the third ruler in the Kingdom, and he did not stop serving God at all but was a faithful servant throughout his entire life and to several pagan kingdoms where he dwelt. David was beloved of the Lord and was king for forty years by the hand of God Himself. These three men served God in whatever capacity God raised them to. Why is it so proper for a Christian to work a job like fork lift driving or waitress when these jobs also pull Christians away from their studies and church for many hours each week? Then I ask why is it proper to serve the Lord in these type of jobs but not as a Congressman or a Senator? Both major political parties in the USA are total failures. If we continue to send unbelievers there, they will continue to fail. Once we start seeding them with Christians, they become the conscience of the nation and their secular philosophies will begin to wane. Parents talk about school curriculum. Tell me, how many Christians in your community are serving on the school boards? The whole concept of Christians not serving in office in government is a foreign concept to the Bible. How would you dismiss Cornelius of Acts 10 who was a Roman Centurion and became a believer? You can't, because all he knew was soldiering and remained a

Centurion after salvation. The idea that you are serving two Gods by serving in Government is ridiculous. You are serving one God in two capacities, in your elected office according to your Christian convictions and your Christian responsibilities outside that office.

Rapture Watching Cheats The Next Generation

Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. (2 Corinthians 12:14, KJV) Rapture watchers always think their generation is the last one and so does ours. I believe we are the last generation based upon some major principles but I will not discuss them here. Okay just one. Never before has the Gospel been preached in every country around the world and this has been made possible by means of the Internet. *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:14, KJV)* I want to look at the principle found in the verse above, 2 Corinthians 12:14 of the parents laying up for the children. Each generation is to lay the groundwork for the next generation. In other words, we, as the parents, are to train the next generation, which are the children. It is our responsibility to pass along all which we have learned to others and that is only part of the training. If you are able, then take young Christians to the street or introduce them to some type of ministry which they will be able to continue long after you are home with the Lord. If one thinks that they are living in the terminal generation, they may just ignore the reality of having to train the next generation. We need to look at examples such as Paul with Timothy, or Barnabas with John Mark. We need to take younger Christians under our wings, whether we are the last generation or not. Do you think the cults and other false gospels are not preparing their young for their work?

Summary

I think by now you get the message and that is we are to remain busy in some type of ministry on this earth and we are to work in some capacity where we could also make a difference. This means that running for office is not wrong or is it sinful. The lifestyle of rapture watching is also not Scriptural because it is the enablement of living a lazy lifestyle under the umbrella of waiting for the Lord.

We need to be involved in every aspect of this life while we are on earth and no opportunity for service should be rejected or ignored. We have seen that the rapture of the Saints is going to be on the last day and the teaching that it is imminent, except for the end of the world, is total error. The last day is the last day, period, so get busy with the little time you have left.

For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: (Acts 13:36, KJV) Acts 13:36 is a very important verse because it speaks about David serving his own generation. Keep in mind, David served as King and as a representative of God to his people. David served in both a political and spiritual capacity, and guess what? His salvation was secure! And so will your salvation be secure!

Watching

Is it Faithful Service or is it Date Setting?

Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. (Luke 12:37, KJV)

With many people involved in date setting, a subject within this movement has arisen. That subject is the understanding of what the Bible teaches concerning watching. The question is concerning the meaning of watching. Is it setting a date for the Lord's return or is it continued faithful service until the Lord returns? We are going to look at the words watch, watching, and occupy in relation to the Lord's return and we will look at these verses in context and not pulled out of context.

Let me use an analogy of watching versus the dormant date setter.

In the work place, you have 2 kinds of employees, one is the type who continues to do their job while the boss is not looking, they are the faithful ones who do what they are getting paid to do so the company prospers. The second kind of employee is the lazy one who does as little as possible and keeps watching out for the boss so he does not get caught. One watches by faithfulness and one watches by sight.

So are those who are date setters, they do nothing to send forth the true gospel because all they are doing is watching for the Lord's return in the form of dates. The one who is truly watching is the one who continues to be faithful so when the Lord returns they will be able to present Him with fruit, maybe 30, 60, or 100 fold. Being faithful in anticipation of the Lord's return is the biblical norm for the Christian life. Date setters are like people who are stuck in quicksand, they never get beyond looking for a date and Satan has them stuck in the quicksand because their own pride will never allow them to admit they are going against the biblical lifestyle for the Christian. So they go in circles trying to find a day, hour, minute,

and second of Christ's return and in the meanwhile, their Christian lives are empty shells because there is no growth nor outreach and all they do is create division in the body of Christ by trying to divert other Christians into that useless venture. Diversion is a great tool of Satan and he does not have to change tactics because it works so well. Look how many have been diverted from sending forth the true Gospel to date setting, which has a track record of being 100% wrong whereas the true biblical teachings have a track record of being 100% right. Should Christians invest their lives in 100% loss and error or should they invest them in 100% truth and gain? That's something to think about!

Occupy

And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. (Luke 19:13, KJV)

Luke 19:13 is part of a parable concerning the Lord Jesus Christ who will be going back to Heaven and will return someday. He speaks about a nobleman going to a far country and while he was gone he doled out 10 pounds, 1 pound to each servant. On his return he demanded an account of his money. One servant had gained 10 pounds with the one pound and was given rule over ten cities. Another servant gained 5 pounds from the 1 pound and as given rule over 5 cities. Another servant came forward and gave the nobleman his pound back which he had wrapped up in a blanket. This servant did not occupy and do business so he yielded no fruit. His punishment was to be executed with the wicked servants. The word "occupy" in the Greek is "pragmateuomai" and it carries with it the meaning of "trade, do business, or occupy." It is also a cognate of the Greek verb "prassô" which means "to do, accomplish, or act." If you notice the one who did not occupy or do business was the one who was called a wicked servant, which meant that he was unsaved. The wicked servant is like many Christians who own a Bible and do nothing with it except take it to church.

They are, in essence, burying the pound. The word "pragmateuomai" is in the Imperative Mood which means Jesus is giving a command to the believers to carry out the Great Commission until He returns on the last day. Those believers who carry out the Great Commission as best as they can and bear fruit,

are commended by the Lord Jesus Christ for obeying His command. Those believers who have stopped obeying the Great Commission and have turned to date setting, which bears no fruit, are in direct disobedience to the Lord's command detailed in this parable. Can anyone in direct disobedience to the Lord's command expect to be given preferential Heavenly secrets such as the exact date of Christ's return? The answer is no because all they can expect, being in disobedience, is delusion and diversion from truth. This is why every date setter in history has been wrong and why everyone who attempts it will be wrong.

Watching

Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. (Luke 12:37, KJV)

Luke 12:37 is the only place in the New Testament which uses the word "watching" in reference to the second coming of Christ. The Greek word behind "watching" is "grêgoreô" which carries with it the meaning of "be alert, be vigilant, be or stay awake." The Lord is stating that the servants will be blessed when the Lord returns finding them watching. The key to understanding "watching" is found in Luke 19:13, where the master of the house told his servants to occupy till he returns. Those who continued to do business, were rewarded and those who did no business but became slothful were condemned.

In Luke 12:37, we read that these servants were to be rewarded by sitting at the Master's table. When a master has servants, they are expected to work and to produce for whatever they have been assigned to. These servants are not sitting around trying to figure out the day the Lord will come back but they are being rewarded because when the Lord returned to his estate, he found them watching, that is, they were being vigilant in their work because they were commanded to occupy or do business until the Lord returned. If you notice when the Lord returns in Luke 12:37, the servants will be blessed because they will be found faithful in their duties.

And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. (Luke 12:38, KJV)

Let us look at the next verse and see the situation of the servants. The master could come in any watch of the day which is what is in view in Luke 12:38. How then is the servant to be ready for the return of the master? He is to be faithfully engaged in the occupation he has been gifted to do and in this way, his production or fruit will show that he is prepared for the master's return. The key here is that the servant is prepared for his master's return by means of being faithfully employed to his tasks. If he is faithfully employed, he is anticipating his master's return and thereby he will be ready for his arrival.

Watch

Now we are going to look at verses which use the word watch. Unless specified, the Greek word behind "watch" will be the same as the one behind "watching," "grêgoreô." We will look at those verses which deal with the return of Christ and see if we find any commands to set dates. Luke 12:37 was found to be in the context of servants faithfully executing their duties in anticipation of their Lord's return. Let us see if we find anything different in the following verses.

Matthew 24:40-46

Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. {41} Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. {42} Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. (Mat 24:40-42, KJV)

Now we see in the context of verses 40-42 that when the Lord returns he will find his servants in the field and in the mill and they will be working. If you notice, in both of these scenarios, the ones that were taken were working right up to the time the Lord took them. There was no work hiatus nor were they sitting around trying to figure out when the Lord would return. They were taken while they were at work. Here we see again these people were busy right until the moment the Lord came.

But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. {44} Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. {45} Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? {46} Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. (Mat 24:43-46, KJV)

In verse 43 we see a scenario concerning a thief. The goodman of the house would be the owner or the master of the family. If he had prior knowledge that a thief was going to break in at a certain time, he would have been able to prevent it. How does one prevent a thief from breaking in? You prevent a break in by means of preparation. You make sure the doors are locked, the windows are sealed, and that everything is secure. Even if you know what watch the thief comes in, you will not know the exact time within that three hour time frame and that is why precautionary measures must be taken to prevent the break in. Then in verse 44, we are given confirmation concerning the way we prevent a break in. Just as the goodman of the house is to be ready, so are we to be ready for we do not know when the Son of man will return, so then how does one prepare for the return of Christ? The primary way is that one must be saved and the moment they are saved, they are ready for Heaven.

Let us look at verses 45 & 46. We now look back at the ruler who has gone on a far journey. If you will notice that the Lord of the household made a servant ruler over the house. Why was he made ruler? In verse 45 we read that he was a faithful and wise servant as he would dole out the portions of food and provisions to the family. In verse 46, we read that the servant who is faithfully executing their duties, will be blessed when the Lord returns. Here again we looked at some verses on watching and they had nothing whatsoever to do with date setting but only with faithful stewardship. *Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. (1 Cor 4:2, KJV)*

Matthew 25:13-15

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. {14} For *the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. {15} And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. (Mat 25:13-15, KJV)*

In Matthew 25:13, we are told to watch because we do not know the day nor the hour that the Lord will return. Now let us look at these verses and see if watching is connected with date setting or faithful service? In verse 14, we see the statement begins with the word “for” and in the Greek it is the word “gar” and is a common conjunction which is used to signify a reason or cause for the previous statement, which would be verse 13. Now Jesus goes into His narrative about a man travelling on the far journey, of course, the man is Jesus who went back to Heaven. He then speaks of the man doling out funds to the servants according to their abilities and talents. Now here we see the scenario of the servants, they are to occupy or do business until he returns. Here again we see that watching is connected with faithful stewardship because when the man returned he reckoned with the servants concerning what they did with what they were given. *After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. (Mat 25:19, KJV)* So here we see that watching is definitely connected with faithfulness in the Lord’s business and not date setting.

Mark 13:33-37

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. {34} For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. {35} Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: {36} Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. {37} And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. (Mark 13:33-37, KJV)

In verse 33, Jesus is speaking to the Apostles and is commanding them to watch and pray. The word in the Greek for watch in verse

33 is, “agrupneô ” which is a synonym of “gregôreô” and means “be on the alert, to be vigilant, or keep oneself awake.” In connection with watching, Jesus is telling them they are to pray. The word “watch” is in the Imperative Mood which makes it a command. The believer is commanded to be alert and to pray. Why? Jesus goes on to say that they do not know when the time is and this is why believers are to remain vigilant. Now in verse 34, Jesus begins with a conjunction because He is continuing the reason that believers are to watch and pray. He is likening Himself to a man who goes on a far journey and we have previously seen that the far journey is the time between His ascension and His return. First of all, Christ gives authority to His servants the believers and they have the authority to speak in His name and to bring the true Gospel which has authority over people because it is the Word of God. Secondly, He doles out work to every man and that is done by means of the distribution of the spiritual gifts when a person becomes saved. The spiritual gifts qualify a Christian to work in a certain area of ministry. So up to this point we are still in harmony with all the meanings of watching and how they are all connected to faithful stewardship and not date setting.

Then the doorkeeper or the porter is commanded to watch. What is he watching for? In verse 35 he is watching for the return of the Master. In the interim he is also watching out for the enemies which may come and try to plunder the house and steal all the goods and the servants. He is the first line of warning against any type of trouble. In the book of First Chronicles in chapter 9, there were 212 porters in the temple duty and they were Levites who had charge of the various entrances. Their main job was to guard the temple so no unclean person would be able to come in and defile it. So back to Mark 13:34, we see that the porter, who was specifically commanded to watch, was doing so as a faithful servant engaged in his duties which was given to him by his Master.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. {2} But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. {3} To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. (John 10:1-3, KJV)

The porter in John 10 only opens the door of the sheepfold when he hears and recognizes the true shepherd of the sheep. Now the porter can be considered every true believer because only they will recognize the true voice of the Shepherd and will not allow any false teachings to take root in themselves and this will prevent any infection of the other sheep with false gospels. So the porter represents every true believer who disallows false teachings and allows only the entrance of true teachings of Scripture. False teachings will not be allowed in and will be stopped right at the door so the estate of the master, the body of believers, will not suffer the ravages of false teachings.

Now back to Mark 13:35. Jesus gave the example of the porter watching for the master and now He admonishes the Christians that they are to watch or remain vigilant. Why? Because we are not going to know the time of the Lord's return because he gives us three watches of the day, and does not specify any particular time. The only way a Christian can be ready for the Lord's return is to be faithfully employed in fruitful ministry anticipating the Lord's return.

On to verse 36 where the Lord is warning the Christians, not the unbelievers, that He may come suddenly or unexpectedly and find the Christians sleeping. We are living in an age of sleeping Christians. *But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. (Mat 13:25, KJV)* In Matthew 13:25, we are reading that while men slept, the enemies sowed tares among the wheat. In the Scriptures, the wheat is the true believers. The tares are the unbelievers plus it also points to the fact of false teachings which are found among the Christians. Do we live in a time of false teachings? Purpose driven church, date setting, Nation of Israel almost worshipped by churches and some media ministries, annihilation, no final judgment, no visible return of Christ, 1,000 year reign on earth, days of creation accepted as long periods of time, free will, counterfeit Bible versions, unbelievers in pulpits, tongues, signs and wonders, faith healers, etc. Christians have been fast asleep for many years and have allowed the tares to come in and sow the false teachings among the wheat.

In verse 37, Jesus is making the statement that not only are the disciples to watch but He states that all are to watch. The “all” are the ones who will come after the disciples up until the last day. Based upon what we have already looked at in the Scriptures, the warning Jesus gives is not a command for Christians to set dates for His return. It is for His people to remain vigilant in their Christian walk while they are engaged in doing the work of the Lord. Christians are never to forsake the commands which Christ gives us to be vigilant in our stewardship of doing the Lord’s work. Date setting is tantamount to idleness because it stops and diverts a Christian from true Gospel studies. In all applications of watching so far, it is only connected with faithful ministry.

Luke 12:35-43

In this section of Scripture we will be seeing the subject of the waiting servant being faithful in their duties until the return of the Lord from the wedding feast.

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; (Luke 12:35, KJV)

In ancient times, men wore long flowing robes and if they were doing some kind of work, they would literally have to tuck the robes into the belt which went around their waist and then they would be ready for both work and the speed of that work. Then in the second part of this verse the disciples are told to keep their lights burning. A light is to guide one in the dark and if they are to keep them burning, then that means they will be ready when they have to travel for some reason or for those who work at night. This verse is also teaching the Christian to always be prepared.

And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. (Luke 12:36, KJV)

In the previous set of verses we read about the porter, who is the doorkeeper, and had as his responsibility, to watch for the master returning from the long journey. He would also prevent unauthorized people from entering into the estate. In Luke 12:36, we are looking at a similar situation but instead the Lord is coming

from a wedding. In ancient Israel, weddings were not like they are today for just a part of a day. The festivities could last 7-14 days, so the doorkeeper would be ready to open the door but would not know exactly when the Lord would return and that was why he was to remain vigilant, so he could open the door immediately.

Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. (Luke 12:37, KJV)

Here is a tremendous verse speaking about the faithfulness of the servants. Those who were ready and vigilant at the return of the Lord from the wedding feast, would now be tended to by the Lord. These are the ones who were saved and would now be taken to Heaven where they will be taken care of eternally by God the Father and God the Son. He is not speaking about someone sitting down and date setting when it comes to girding up their loins and keeping their lights burning. As Christians we go into this world with the light of the Gospel which burns brightly in a spiritually darkened world. So here the watching is in the faithful service of the Christians who are engaged in obedience to the Great Commission in sending out the Gospel to the world.

And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. (Luke 12:38, KJV)

Here the Lord is restating the fact that the Christian must be ready and prepared for His return. They will not know what watch He will return in but He states that those who are vigilant in their service will be ready in all watches and because of their faithfulness and obedience in continued service, He will find them faithful and they will be blessed.

And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. (Luke 12:39, KJV)

Here once again we read about the master of the house and if he knew when the thief was going to break in, he would have watched out for him so there would be no break in of the house. Now since a person does not know when a thief will strike, the only way to prevent a robbery would be to prepare beforehand so the thief would come but would not be able to break in. Prevention, in this case, would be preparation. In modern days we have burglar alarms, dogs, electric fences, walls, etc., to prevent robberies. All of these are proper preparations. A person does not wait until they are robbed before they prepare, they prepare as soon as possible and before anything happens.

Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. (Luke 12:40, KJV)

One of the greatest diversions Christian fall prey to is date setting. They try to figure out when the Lord Jesus Christ is returning to this world. There has never been a correct date given by anyone and there never will be. One date which these date setters never include is the fact that Christ comes for many believers every day in death. Many Christians die every day and that means the Son of Man has come for them. If God did not see fit to reveal to us our day of death, why would He reveal to someone the date of the deaths of billions of people? Date setters never take this into consideration. Just like Satan has taken judgment day and placed it 1,007 years in the future, date setters always place the return of Christ in some future date not realizing that many, maybe including the date setter, will never see that date. This is why the Lord Jesus commanded His children to be faithful in occupying the time instead of trying to figure out the date of His return. Just as the servants who were in the field and the mill worked right up until the day the Lord returned, we must follow the same pattern and work and be as faithful in ministry as long as we possibly can.

Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?
(Luke 12:41, KJV)

Peter was not sure who the Lord had in mind when He made these statements but we know for sure that the Lord was speaking to all because the time of the second coming was in view.

And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? {43} Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. (Luke 12:42-43, KJV)

Once again the Lord makes it plain who will be blessed. It will not be the date setter who does nothing but figure out false dates but it will be the wise and faithful steward. This is the second time in this parable where the Lord comments on the fact that the wise and faithful servant will be the one who is blessed. The Lord gave the Great Commission at the time He went back to Heaven and that has never been rescinded because we are to continue on until He returns. This is why the Lord states that the servant will be blessed who is faithfully engaged in ministry when He returns.

1 Thessalonians 5:6

Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. (1 Thess 5:6, KJV)

Sleep - Figurative for being unaware, oblivious, ignorant, or unconscious to the subject
or situation at hand

Watch - Be alert or be vigilant

Sober - Self-controlled or well-balanced

Here Paul is stating that since the Christians are people of the day, we must never sleep during the day. We are to remain vigilant, alert, and watching. Not only those things but while we are being vigilant, we do not be vigilant in a mode of rest, instead the Christian continues to work until the Lord returns or He takes us home through physical death. *And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.* (Luke 19:13, KJV) This means we are to be involved with the work of the Lord and not to put on white robes and sit on a mountain top and wait for the Lord to return. Our responsibility is to get the

Gospel out to the entire world as we are commanded in the Great Commission. Many Christians are sleeping today by thinking that going to church or just listening to the radio is all that is required. That is false, we are to be involved seven days a week in sending forth the Gospel. There are some today who have believed they figured out the day of the Lord's return and they have stopped evangelizing and have focused on that date. They are, in essence, sleeping because they are not sending out the Gospel and the one who just goes to church or listen to the radio is sleeping. If you have no involvement in sending forth the true, and not diverted Gospel, then you are sleeping and this applies to date setters since it is a different gospel than the one which saves.

Revelation 3:3

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. (Revelation 3:3, KJV)

Watch - Remain vigilant, stay awake, or be alert.

Christ is now commanding them to remember not the fact that they heard but how they received and heard. They received the truth in much hardship and persecution. They also received the Gospel through faith. The Lord is telling them to hold fast to the things they had when they first became a church. Christ is commanding them to repent and abide in those things which make for a solid spiritual church. Worldly things in the church do not grow Christians in the faith. If this church refuses to remain vigilant in those things which still remain, then the Lord is going to come upon them as a thief and when a thief comes, you do not know what hour he comes. There are two scenarios in view in the second half of this verse. The first one is that if they do not repent, the Lord will come swiftly and uncompromisingly upon this church and remove them from being a living church among the congregations of the Lord. The second scenario is that the return of the Lord at His second coming will be as a thief in the night. It will come upon all churches and those that are not found faithful, will suffer the consequences of the unsaved world. This also applies to radio and TV ministries

because anyone who takes up the Word of God and teaches it, is responsible for what they teach.

Prior Generations

Now the date setters of today do not take something else into consideration. What about all those Christians who lived between the Lord's ascension and let us say the 19th century for example? Would there have been a great expansion of Christianity during this time if every Christian, who read their Bibles, and took the word "watch" to mean only "date setting?" If date setting is so "biblical" for today, why was it not since the time of Christ's ascension? Instead, they took the word "watch" and saw that it spoke of vigilance and they were watchers in their own generations over the souls of others and it cost many their physical lives.

For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: (Acts 13:36 KJV) This is what David did. He served his own generation and that is what the multitude of Christians did in prior years. They preached and they spread the gospel and people became saved, so in case the Son of Man came in a time they thought not, they were ready to go to Heaven.

Summation

We have been through quite a number of verses which focus on watching in reference to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we progressed in the study, we found harmony that "watching" is always associated with being faithfully engaged in the ministry as wise and prudent stewards. "Watching" is never associated, in any manner, with date setting. This is just another aberrant application of Scripture by those who choose to exalt themselves as if they found the date of Christ's return. We also saw in these Scriptures where Christ specifically states that we do not know when He will return as He used specific language, such as, "second or third watch," and "ye know not," and "when ye think not." So for those who misuse the word "watch" and try to force the meaning as "date setting" are proving beyond the shadow of a doubt that they are false teachers and are not to be trusted.

We are to continue to be faithfully engaged in the ministry of sending forth the true Gospel to the world and the Lord will shut it down because He has declared there will be a day when He will return but until then as stewards, we are to be found faithful. With every tract that is given or every true gospel broadcast, there is always an anticipation and knowledge that the Lord will be returning. In fact, those who are involved in true ministry are more cognizant of the return of Christ than the date setters because the faithful are involved with the souls of others and want to see as many get into Heaven as possible, while the date setters are involved with their own pride, they do nothing but glorify themselves. Every person who lives has a day of death assigned to them and that is one thing that faithful stewards are very aware of and that is what motivates them to continue to send forth the Gospel. Those who deal in large chunks of time, remove the reality and personality of the true ministry.

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. (Acts 17:31, KJV)

But until that time.....

And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. (Luke 19:13, KJV)

Resurrection or Resurrections?

How many are there?

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

Here is another clear doctrine which has been tampered with by those who follow the erroneous teachings of dispensationalism. There are those who teach that Christ will come back secretly for His church before the start of the Great Tribulation Period but in the same breath they teach that Christ will raise those who are in the tombs first. Don't you think that millions of opened graves around the world would compromise the secrecy of such a return? We will look at what is so widely taught by many today. We will not concentrate on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ but rather the resurrection of the believers.

The term "resurrection" is used 41 times in the New Testament and it is the Greek word "anastasis" which is the root word for the medical term "anesthesia." If you have ever underwent surgery you were placed under anesthesia by an Anesthesiologist. This doctor places you into a forced sleep and when the surgeon is done, he brings you out of it. As he brings you out of the sleep, you begin to regain consciousness and eventually full alertness. (If that doesn't bring you to full alertness, wait till you get his bill.) This is what happens when a person is resurrected. They are dead and then brought back to a conscious life, like Lazarus was in John 11.

Some preachers teach there is going to be multiple resurrections. One Bible teacher told me personally that there was going to be three. I cannot remember exactly how he arrived at his conclusion but he had his rationale in favor of his position. As with any and all teachings, it is required that we test all conclusions against the mirror of Scripture to make sure we are on solid ground.

The Common Teaching

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. {14} For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. {15} For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. {16} For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: {17} Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Th 4:13-17, KJV)

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. (Rev 4:1, KJV)

Those that follow the dispensationalist teaching believe that the seven churches of Revelation 2 & 3 represent a specific time period in church history and as a result will link the above two passages of Scripture together. This is based on the erroneous belief that the book of Revelation is a chronological book. The reason that Revelation cannot be taken as a chronological book is because the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned four times in addition to many allusions to Judgment day which is the last day:

Rev. 6:12-17

Rev. 11:15-19

Rev. 14:14-18

Rev. 19:11-21

At the end of the Church of Laodicea time period, the church on earth will be secretly raptured, then the world will be plunged into the Great Tribulation period with the rise of an Antichrist and then after the seven year tribulation period, the rest of the world will be raptured and all the saved dead that died in the tribulation period will be resurrected along with all the dead from the beginning of

time. This then is the standard belief that there will be two resurrection events. The first will be the secret rapture and resurrection of the saints. The second will be the simultaneous resurrection of the unsaved and the tribulation saints who died under Antichrist. Now let us see if the Bible supports such a teaching.

The Biblical Resurrection

Now as we begin to investigate the resurrection of both the saved and unsaved, we will see plainly that the Bible gives us a totally different picture than do the prophecy books. So to make this study easy, I will post the passages of Scripture which deal with the resurrection of the believers and unbelievers and examine them on an individual basis and we will see if we attain biblical harmony.

John

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (John 6:39, KJV)

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:40, KJV)

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:44, KJV)

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:54, KJV)

Here are four verses which plainly teach that the resurrection of the believers will be on the last day. I have heard people say that the Lord is referring to the last day of the church age. Do we find that written here? The answer is no because they interpolate instead of interpret. God simply states that they will be raised on the last day. The phrase "last day" in the Greek is "eschatos hermas" which means the "farthest or most final day, the end." Eschatos does not make room for any more time afterward.

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. (John 11:24, KJV)

Here is an interesting verse concerning the death of Lazarus. Lazarus was a believer and if we follow dispensational resurrection theology, then Lazarus should be raised with the other believers at the secret rapture of the church. However, the verse is using the term "eschatos hermas" which we saw means the utter end. Lazarus is going to be resurrected on the last day and not with the secret Christians before any world event. How much plainer could this passage be as to when the believers are going to be raptured.

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (John 12:48, KJV)

Here is another passage which gives us insight as to when the unbelievers are going to be raised and that is on the last day, simultaneous with the believers and this is borne out in other passages of Scripture which we will look at.

Matthew 25:31-46

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: {32} And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: {33} And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. {34} Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: {35} For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: {36} Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. {37} Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? {38} When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? {39} Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? {40} And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto

me. {41} Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: {42} For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: {43} I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. {44} Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? {45} Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. {46} And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. (Mat 25:31-46, KJV)

Now those who teach multiple resurrections claim dedicated resurrections. They say that in the first resurrection at the secret return of Christ that only believers will be raised from the dead and taken to heaven. Now if this is true, then why do we see in our passage of Scripture a separation of two distinct categories of people: the saved and unsaved? Here we see Christ separating the sheep (saved) from the goats (unsaved) at His Judgment seat. If the multiple resurrection theory was correct, then each resurrection would have a dedicated group of people and no separation would be needed, but as we see this is not the case as the Lord is making a separation of the single group of people. Now is this borne out anywhere else in the Bible?

John 5:28-29

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, {29} And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:28-29, KJV)

Here are two verses which teach a single resurrection. Verse 28 tells us that ALL who are in the graves, not a portion, not only the believers, but ALL will be resurrected. Verse 29 goes on to tell us that there will be a separation of the unbeliever from the believer. The only one who does good in God's sight are His children. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (Gal 6:10, KJV)* The only ones that can do evil in God's sight are the unbelievers. *Can*

the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. (Jer 13:23, KJV) So here we see biblical foundation for the separation of the believer and unbeliever on judgment day.

Even in the parables the Lord tells us to let the wheat and tares grow together. Why? Because on Judgment Day He will winnow the wheat from the chaff. *Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. (Mat 13:30 KJV)* Then the Lord goes on in Matthew Chapter 13 and gives a definite answer to the parable. *The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; {39} The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. (Mat 13:38-39 KJV)* So we have seen biblical proof that there will only be one resurrection on the last day when the Lord returns and then final separation of the unbeliever and believer will take place. I remember being at a prophecy conference at America's Keswick with the Friends of Israel ministry and a question was posed to one of the speakers in an open forum concerning John 5:28-29 teaching a single resurrection. The speaker did not and could not answer the person who posed the question. Now then the question remains is where does the idea of multiple resurrections come from?

Where does it come from?

The idea of two resurrections come from two sources: Satan and wrong interpretation.

Satan

In 1830 in Port Glasgow, Scotland a woman named Margaret MacDonald at a prophecy conference went into a trance and channeled the entire scenario of a two stage appearance of Christ with His secret rapture. Trance channeling has long been associated with the occult as this is what mediums do. Channeling is akin to ouija boards and is also a great part of the New Age Movement where someone believes they are receiving wisdom from ascended masters and avatars. Before Christians accept any teachings they must check it out in Scripture.

Wrong Interpretation

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. {6} Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Rev 20:5-6, KJV)

With most church theology leaning toward the two resurrection theory, when this verse is happened upon in a discourse on eschatology, it is always taken as a physical resurrection of the believer rather than the spiritual resurrection of the believer.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. {25} Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. (John 5:24-25, KJV)

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: (Eph 2:1, KJV)

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (Eph 2:5, KJV)

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (Col 2:13, KJV)

These four verses give us insight as to the nature of the first resurrection which is not a physical one but a spiritual one. The believer was once dead in their sins but because God had quickened (made alive), the Christian is not subject unto the second death or eternal damnation. So the first resurrection is not physical, it is the moment when we receive our resurrected souls and now we are alive unto God whereas before we were dead to the things of God. When Revelation 20:5-6 is interpreted correctly as a spiritual resurrection, then it harmonizes with the rest of

Scripture and we don't have to twist any Scripture or fabricate a doctrine to make it fit.

Final Thoughts

We have seen that the Bible clearly teaches there will be one general resurrection on the last day. We can see this from the clear witness of Scripture. If I am to believe a two resurrection theory, then I must avoid all the Scriptures we looked at or twist them to fit my belief system. As you saw, we did not twist or force any meaning into any of the plain Scriptures concerning the teaching of a single general resurrection, it is the two resurrection believer who has to do that. Next time you read a prophecy book, see if they mention any of the six verses in John concerning "the last day." If they do, I could almost guarantee that they will add meaning to them which will make their case. The Bible does not say "last day of the church age" but the "last day" period.

The 1000 Year Reign of Christ

Is it Literal or Figurative?

Right up there with the rapture of the church is the teaching on the Millennium. In this chapter we are going to discuss the subject of the 1000 year reign of Christ or the golden age. The millennium is said to commence at the end of the great tribulation period, when Christ will return to earth to establish His earthly kingdom.

At the same time Satan will be bound for the duration of the millennium till the end when he will be loosed to once again wage war against Christ and the Saints of God. In this study we will allow the Bible to be its own spokesman on this subject. The millennium teaching stems from Revelation 20:1-7, but we are not going to start there. I am going to give many Scripture passages which make it absolutely impossible for there to be a literal 1,000 year reign of Christ on the earth. We will start with a passage from the gospels which is pertinent to the study of millennium theology.

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: {21} Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! or, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. (Luke 17:20-21, KJV)

In verse 20 we read the words of Christ who emphatically states that the kingdom of God will not come with "observation." The word "observation" carries with it the meaning of "outward show, or in a visible manner." Right at the outset of this study God gives us a hint regarding the nature of the Kingdom of God, that it is not visible. Now logic takes over, if it is not visible, then it must be invisible. Now we have to verify if our conclusion is correct, so we will check it out in verse 21. Christ states that the Kingdom of God will be neither here nor there, which is a synonym for saying that it will not be a political kingdom. His kingdom will not be established similar to that of a nation with a political rule.

Christ continues to say the Kingdom of God is "within you." The Greek word behind "within" in this verse is "entos" and may also be found in only one other place in the New Testament and that is in Matthew 23:26:

Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. (Mat 23:26, KJV)

Christ is making a specific distinction between inside and outside. Thus giving us a clue that the Kingdom of God dwells inside the believer and has no outside political nature. These verses cannot be ignored, they must be included to see if we are on the right pathway to truth.

Romans 9:28

For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. (Rom 9:28, KJV)

This verse has been a stumper but if we go back to the original language, we will see how it opens up. This verse lies in the middle of a quotation from Isaiah 10:22-23; 37:32.

22 For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. 23 For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land. (Isaiah 10:22-23, KJV)

In Isaiah 10:22 we read that though there are many in national Israel, only a remnant of that nation will become saved. This same verse teaches there will be a destruction of national Israel. The word "consumption" in this verse means "a pining or destruction," but then God declares that out of this destruction will come righteousness. The righteousness is the gospel that will come forth from the remnant. It was out of national Israel that Christ came but only a remnant would believe on Him. The majority of national Israel disbelieved and rejected Christ, and therefore, Christ rejected

the nation of Israel, and this rejection, except for a remnant, will stand until the last day.

In Isaiah 10:23 God declares that the destruction will be total in that national Israel will cease to exist as the nation which was entrusted to send forth the gospel. Only a remnant will be chosen out of national Israel, the nation will lose its favored status with God. In Isaiah 37:32, God again speaks of the remnant of believers which will be saved in national Israel. Now we may feel confident that the context of Romans 9:28 is dealing with the remnant of believers from Israel. Let us now approach Romans 9:28 with this thought in view.

The word "finish" means "to complete entirely." It is also translated "ended" in Matthew 7:28 and "fulfilled" in Mark 13:4. So this word carries the meaning of an ending. This verb is in its active voice. The phrase "cut it short" also is an active voice verb which may be translated "cutting short." It may also be translated "speedily." The words "short work" could be translated "having been cut short," which means the work of salvation will not continue on for thousands of years. God is stating the work has already been completed and it will not be drawn out. In other words, there will be no long length of time, such as a span from Noah to Moses, or from Moses to the cross, or the cross to today. God is going to completely wrap it all up on a day which He has already predetermined, as we read in Acts 17:31. When God saves the last person He intends to, that will usher in the last day, and no golden age will follow. In this verse, these phrases declare finality.

The Word "Thousand," Figurative or Literal

The word "thousand" is used both figuratively and literally in the Bible. We must learn to discern between the uses. First, let us look at the way the word is literally used. We will look at two because of the wide usage of the word in the Bible.

And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter. (1 Sam 6:19, KJV)

This verse gives us an accounting of the number of men who were smote looking into the Ark of God. God gives a specific number of 50,070.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41, KJV)

Here God tells us that Peter preached a sermon and about three thousand were saved. God gives us an approximate but literal number.

Now let us look at the figurative use of the word "thousand." Here also we will use only two verses.

(The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you!) (Deu 1:11, KJV)

Here Moses tells the people of Israel that his desire is that they multiply to a thousand times what they are now.

Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations; {16} Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac; {17} And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, (1 Chr 16:15-17, KJV)

These three verses are probably the most open about the figurative use of the word "thousand." In Vs 15, we read that God is stating that His covenant is commanded to a thousand generations. In Vs 16, He tells us that the covenant which is in view is the one God made with Abraham. Then in Vs 17 God continues to tell us that He confirmed the covenant to Israel as an "everlasting covenant." Here in the same sentence, the covenant is described as both "everlasting" and "thousand generations." Do you see how figurative this language is as God equates "everlasting" and "thousand generations" as the same thing.

Now out of these 4 verses, let us see if we may glean some principles on discerning between literal and figurative. 1 Samuel 6:19 & Acts 2:41 show us:

- A. A specific, literal event happening.
- B. A specific number is mentioned in direct relation to the event happening.
- C. A literal result happened because of the action.

For a verse to be taken literally, these three principles must be present. Let us test our conclusion to see if we have hypothesized correctly. Let us dissect Exodus 32:28.

And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. (Exo 32:28, KJV)

- A. Specific Event - Levites were to slay all idolaters in the camp.
- B. Specific number - About three thousand.
- C. Specific Result - They were slain by the Levites.

Let us test another verse: Job 42:12

So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. (Job 42:12, KJV)

- A. Specific Event - God's blessing and replenishment of Job's goods.
- B. Specific Number - A thousand oxen and a thousand she asses.
- C. Specific Result - Job had double in the end of his life.

Deuteronomy 1:11 & 1 Chronicles 16:15-17:

- A. No specific event happening.
- B. The number covers an unspecified time period or unspecified amount of years.
- C. Anticipated or unspecified result

Let us test the conclusion on Genesis 24:60:

And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them. (Genesis 24:60, KJV)

A. No specific event happening - The number must be a specific part of the event.

B. An unspecified amount - Thousands of millions which if taken literally would mean

billions of Israelites. This is a figure of speech because there were never billions but millions.

C. An unspecified amount as a result of the use of a general number.

Now I am not claiming this to be a fool-proof system but a guideline to help in discerning the figurative from the literal. Bible study will be more truth revealing if we know what to look for.

Revelation 20:1-7

Let us turn to the passage of Scripture which is the theoretical basis for the theory of the physical one thousand year reign of Christ.

VERSE 1

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. (Rev 20:1, KJV)

In this verse we will focus on the word "key." It is the Greek word "kleis" and is used only six times in the New Testament. All six times it is figurative.

Matthew 16:19-Keys of the kingdom of Heaven

Luke 11:52-Keys of knowledge

Revelation 1:18-Keys of Hell and Death

Revelation 3:7-Key of David (open and shut)

Revelation 9:1-Key of the bottomless pit

Revelation 20:1-Key of bottomless pit

In these six uses, there is a reference to opening and shutting in a figurative sense. Since these are not a literal set of keys, we must

be careful to interpret the passage in the light of its symbolic usage. Now if the key is symbolic, we may safely conclude the chain is also symbolic. The word for "chain" is used eleven times in the New Testament and always with a sense of binding action. For example, in Acts 12:6, Peter was literally bound with chains between two soldiers. The chain we read about in Revelation 20:1 is symbolic for the gospel itself.

VERSE 2

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, (Rev 20:2, KJV)

Satan has not been bound in a literal sense but that he can no longer prevent someone from becoming saved. Satan was bound at the cross and is helpless to prevent God's chosen elect from becoming saved. Before the cross very few were saved but since the cross Satan could no longer blind the minds of God's elect, therefore, thousands were saved. We see this principle in Matthew 12:29 where we see Satan represented as a strong man.

Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. (Mat 12:29, KJV)

Whenever a person becomes saved, they are in essence plundering the house of Satan. That person goes from becoming a child of Satan to a child of God.

It is also important to note that the word "bound" is in the Aorist Active Indicative which means it is a past one time action and not a future event. Many espouse the belief that Satan will be bound with a big chain at a future date, but the Bible has revealed that the binding is a past action which continues on until he is loosed at the end of the New Testament period. According to the Bible, if the binding was a past action, then one of the two following scenarios must apply: First, if it is a literal thousand years, then Satan must have been loosed already since it is about two thousand years since Christ; secondly, if the Aorist tense of the word "bound" is true, and it is if it is in the Bible, then the act of binding was a past

event. This can only mean that the thousand years represents the whole New Testament period, not a literal time period.

VERSE 3

And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. (Rev 20:3, KJV)

Here we have the word "cast" in the Aorist Active Indicative (aai) form. The next word is "shut" which is a cognate of the word "key" in verse one. (Cognates are words that stem from a common root word.) This word is also in the (aai) form, which means the shutting up or binding was a past action. Remember, we previously saw that Satan cannot hinder those who will become saved because he is restrained by God. The figure of casting, shutting, and sealing are symbolic of this action. The word "seal" is also in the Aorist tense and carries with it the meaning of "seal up, stop, keep secret." All of this confirms what we previously stated, that Satan was bound at the cross.

This verse continues to say that this binding will remain till the thousand years are fulfilled. The word "deceive" is in the Aorist subjunctive active form, which indicates a past action which is conditional upon a situation. God is restraining the activity of Satan during the entire New Testament period. Satan will be freed up once again as we approach the end of time. My personal belief is that we are at this stage in history at present as we witness a dramatic increase of satanic activity both inside and outside of the church.

VERSE 4

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Rev 20:4, KJV)

Now the vision of John switches from the devil to the Christian. The first part of this verse deals with the fact that Christians will be partaking in some type of judgment. (1 Cor. 6:2-3) The verse states that the believer "sat" upon thrones. "Sat" is also in the (aai). Throughout the ages as people became saved, they began to reign with Christ at the very moment. Is that biblical? According to Ephesians 2:6 it is:

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Eph 2:6, KJV)

They immediately began to reign in their soul essence, as verse 4 states, John saw the souls of these believers, not their bodies, and these souls were upon thrones. Maybe John saw the believers in their glorified state. This verse has two sets of believers in view. The first are those who lost their lives in the service of Christ; secondly, those Christians who were not martyred for Christ in a physical sense. But do you notice both groups reign on an equal basis and for a thousand years. Now a serious question must be posed. If everything we have studied so far in these four verses points to a past action which is still in effect, then at what point does the thousand year reign begin if it is literal, since believers have been dying every day since the time of the cross?

The Bible will not allow a future millennium because all of its language points to a time past. Now if the believer is raised at the time of salvation, then this would mean that the thousand year reign for each believer begins at the time of their salvation and not a future golden reign. We may also safely conclude that the spiritual reign of the totality of believers will end on the last day, in reference to the thousand year reign not eternity, because the believer will continue to reign with Christ throughout eternity. If a Christian is saved the day before Christ returns, that believer is reigning with Christ in the thousand years as the believer who became saved in 113 A.D.

VERSE 5

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. (Rev 20:5, KJV)

In this verse we read when the resurrection of all people will occur. The Bible is very clear that the resurrection of both the believers and unbelievers will be on the last day. So we see that the thousand year reign and the entire New Testament period are the same, since the resurrection is stated as being at the end of both. This verse also points out the unbelievers, "the rest of the dead," will not be raised till the thousand years are completed. So till that time, where do they go? Psalm 115:17 tells us:

The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence. (Psa 115:17, KJV)

This verse shows us that the unsaved dead go to a place of silence until the resurrection. I do not know where this place is but God declares it is a place of silence. The word "silence" in the Hebrew means "to be dumb." It is figuratively used as "death." So the unbeliever is in a place of silence which is comparable to the silence of death until the last day. The balance of this verse continues to speak of the first resurrection but I will include this study in verse 6.

VERSE 6

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Rev 20:6, KJV)

In this verse we will discover what the first resurrection is. The Bible clearly teaches a single, general resurrection and we must seek to understand if the first resurrection is something different from a resurrection of believers. Let us explore some unique characteristics of the first resurrection. The key to understanding the first resurrection is in the part of this verse which states, "on such the second death has no power."

Who is unaffected by the second death, which is a synonym for judgment and hell? Only the born again Christian is unaffected by judgment because Christ has already paid for our sins. Therefore, our abode will be heaven not hell. Every born again Christian on earth has experienced the first resurrection. I saw a famous Pre-trib

theologian on a talk show mockingly put down this biblical view by saying something has to be dead before it can be resurrected. He offered no alternative teaching but just a pseudo-intellectual put down.

I am glad he said it because it is based on truth, whether he knows or not. Let us look at Ephesians 2:1-3:

1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (Ephesians 2:1-3, KJV)

We read in verse 1 that we were dead in our sins. It seems that something was dead, and it was us. Now were we physically dead or spiritually dead? The answer is simple, we were spiritually dead. Paul tells us that we walked in the deadness of our sins, until something happened. We read in Ephesians 2:5:

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (Eph 2:5, KJV)

God made us alive or resurrected our dead souls. The phrase "quickened us together" may also be translated "to make alive together." That theologian who mockingly discounted this truth should have done his homework and would have discovered that something was dead, and was made alive. When you received Christ, did your physical body change? Of course not, but you did receive your resurrected soul, and before you did, you were dead to the things of God, whereas now you are alive to the things of God. Let us look again at Ephesians 2:6:

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Eph 2:6, KJV)

As a result of being made alive, we are raised up to sit together with Christ in heaven, as if we are already up there reigning with Him. The rest of Rev. 20:6 tells us that we are on the right track since when a person becomes saved, they become: priests of God and Christ (1 Peter 2:5); blessed (Eph. 1:3); and holy (Eph. 1:4). So as we see the believer is already reigning with Christ as a result of their position, and since this reigning is in effect at present, it also tells us that the thousand year reign is also in effect at present. The two cannot be separated.

VERSE 7

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, (Rev 20:7, KJV)

In the final verse of our study of millennium theology, it reveals that right at the end of time Satan will be allowed to continue his deceptions. He may blind the minds of the people of the world on a grander scale. Maybe this is how God will wind down His salvation program by saving less and less toward the last day.

When God saves the last one, then this will usher in the last day, and then the prophetic events will quickly unfold as it will be the end of recorded history. We are very close to the end as we see the increase in false gospels and New Age philosophies creeping into the church and are being embraced by both clergy and congregations. The church at present is becoming one of the greatest enemies of biblical truth. I need not expound on that.

Inviolate Biblical Evidence Which Refutes the Literal Thousand Year Reign Theory!

One of the most crucial hermeneutical principles is the interpretation of the obvious. Many times theologians glance at something and believe they understand something by simply glancing at it. This is totally illogical. We saw, in this study, that the binding of Satan was a past action, yet, theologians insist it will be a future event. This is what I mean by the glance method of interpretation. It sounds future but it is past.

This reminds me of a cartoon called the Far Side which I have in my possession. The scene opens up with a murder in a bowling pin

factory and the detective is leaning over the body stating that his preliminary investigation shows that this person was murdered with a large, blunt object. Meanwhile the cartoon shows the detective in the middle of the warehouse with open boxes and a conveyor filled with bowling pins. The detective was overlooking the obvious in his investigation and sometimes we do that.

Sometimes Christians purchase new versions with the belief they will have instant understanding of a passage. What they will have is instant confusion. As we continue in our study of the millennium, I wish to introduce some biblical passages which totally refute a literal thousand year reign of Christ on earth. I wish to introduce a biblical phrase which has been totally neglected by proponents of a literal thousand year reign. That phrase is "last days." We must first establish what the last days are according to the Bible and the time period this represents. This will open our understanding of this important subject.

HEBREWS 1:1-2

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, {2} Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (Heb 1:1-2, KJV)

This verse is the plainest account in the New Testament showing us that we are presently in the last days. Let us dissect some of the words and this will give us a foundation for our study:

"These"- A demonstrative pronoun - This shows something which is comparatively near

at hand in contrast to something which would be in the distance. For example,

these rather than those. It is a specific pointing out of something or someone.

"Last"- "Eschatos" which means farthest, uttermost, or last.

"Days"- "Hemera" which is a day.

The writer of Hebrews is making a stern assertion that we are living in the last days. Now, let us use logic. If this verse is telling us that

we are in the last days, then, how can there be another period of time to follow. The last days stretch from the time of the cross till judgment day on the last day. There is no more time after the last day. If the Bible says we are in the last days, who do we believe, the Bible or misguided theologians. Let's continue to see if we are on the right path.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:11

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. (1 Cor 10:11, KJV)

This verse deals with the sins of Israel and her judgment by God to give us an example of what happens when we are disobedient. The part of this verse I want to focus on is "ends of the world." Here the Bible gives us another indication of what time period we live in, namely, the last days. Again, we are living in the last days with no more time left after Christ's return.

HEBREWS 9:26

For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Heb 9:26, KJV)

This verse is also very obvious in that Christ came to earth the first time to put away sin through His atonement. Notice how God describes the time period when Christ was here as the end of the world. Interesting isn't it? Looking at verse 28 of the same chapter we read:

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (Heb 9:28, KJV)

Look at this verse and see what it is saying. The first time Christ appeared it was for the purpose of saving His people from their sins. The second time He appears it will not be in reference to salvation but to judgment. If there is a thousand year reign, then two things must happen:

1. There will be universal salvation because who in their right mind will not receive

Christ when they see Him sitting there in all His royal glory. Atheism will be defunct.

2. There must be a second resurrection at the start of the millennium, which would add up to three resurrections:

A. First, the initial rapture (believers).

B. Secondly, the saved dead who die during the great tribulation will have to be raised to reign with Christ.

C. Thirdly, the unsaved dead on the last day.

If people were becoming saved during the millennium, then Scripture is wrong and the prophecy books are right because the Bible teaches that the second time Christ comes it will have nothing to do with a further salvation plan. He will come to claim His elect as Mark 13:27 plainly states. The Bible proclaims only one resurrection, and that is on the last day. In Matthew 25, we read about Christ separating the sheep from the goats. If there were separate resurrections, each one dedicated to a certain group of people, namely, one resurrection for the unsaved and one for the saved, then why is Christ separating the sheep from the goats. The sheep would go to heaven and the goats to hell. Let me illustrate: If the principal of a school called a general assembly of students, then all students would attend and you would have both boys and girls in that assembly. You would then proceed to separate the boys from the girls, which typifies what Christ will be doing on the last day. If that same principal calls an assembly of only girls or boys, then no separation is needed, each group is a dedicated one.

As I continue to ponder, allow me to add another event which must happen if there is a literal thousand year reign of Christ on this earth. When He returns next time to earth, it will be in His glory and another dilemma will occur. In addition to universal salvation, there will be universal death of all unbelievers living during the thousand year reign. How do I arrive at that conclusion? Do you recall when

Moses wanted to see God's glory? This episode is written in Exodus 33:19-21:

And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. {20} And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. {21} And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: (Exo 33:19-21, KJV)

Read verse 20 carefully and realize if unbelievers will die upon sight of God's glory, then there can be no universal salvation because there will universal death instead. God has qualified only the believers to see Him in His glory as stated in 1 John 3:2:

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2, KJV)

Now back to the subject of universal death. The Bible teaches plainly that when Christ returns a second time every eye shall see Him as recorded in Revelation 1:7 and every eye will not see Him by means of television as some deep prophecy teachers tell us.

Are we on the right path that people will die if we see God in His glory? We sure are! Let's look at some verses which detail this line of biblical thought.

GENESIS 32:30

And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. (Gen 32:30, KJV)

Here Jacob is making the statement that he is actually alive after he saw God face to face. Why would he make this type of statement if any person can look at God and live?

EXODUS 19:21

And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. (Exo 19:21, KJV)

God makes no parable here, any unqualified person who sees Him will die.

EXODUS 24:17

And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. (Exo 24:17, KJV)

This verse tells us that the cloud is what the Israelites saw. If only the cloud is like devouring fire, then can you picture what the full glory of God would do to anyone that looks on it? We must always keep in mind that Christ is the "I AM" of Sinai.

DEUTERONOMY 5:24-26

And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath showed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. {25} Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. {26} For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? (Deu 5:24-26, KJV)

These three verses detail for us the experience of the Israelites in seeing the great fire on Horeb and believing that fire would consume them. In the same breath they feared the voice of God in that they believed by hearing His voice they would die. Here the Bible is stating again, that anyone who would behold God in all His glory would perish. One more verse and we will return to our original study on the biblical impossibility of a literal thousand year reign of Christ.

REVELATION 1:17

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: (Rev 1:17, KJV)

John in his apocalyptic vision fell as dead in front of Christ because he saw Him in his glory.

Let me summarize this section by saying this. If Christ was to reign in all His regal splendor, do we honestly think because we live in modern times there would be a different effect on people. God is God, Christ is God and no way would we have a different response to God's glory. We are as human as the Israelites were and as sinful, therefore, God's glory would consume us in an instance.

It is also interesting to note, that if Christ reigned in Jerusalem for 1,000 years, who would He reign over since every eye that saw Him in all His glory would be consumed to the point of death. So we have universal death before universal salvation, without 2 of the resurrections needed to maintain this teaching. Absurd isn't it!

Let's return to our study of the phrase "Last days" and see its usage in many verses. We have already extracted the fact from Hebrews 1:2 that we are living in the last days by means of the demonstrative pronoun "these" which points out something specific that is near at hand. The date of the writing of Hebrews is unknown but we do know that it was definitely written after the cross and before the second coming which would place it in the last days, therefore, specifically pointing to the fact we are in the last days. Let us continue.

JOEL 2:28-29 & ACTS 2:17-18

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: {29} And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. (Joel 2:28-29, KJV)

Acts 2:17-18 (KJV) And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see

visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: {18} And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

There are only two major differences between the Joel and Acts passage. In Acts God includes the words "last days" giving further comment on the Joel passage and in Acts 2:18, God calls His servants and handmaiden "my." This gives us further understanding of the Joel passage. God is stating in the last days (cross to second coming) His people will prophesy (declare God's Word), in other words, they will send forth the gospel until the harvest time. (Matt. 3:24-30)

2 TIMOTHY 3:1

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. (2 Tim 3:1, KJV)

Timothy details in this chapter what surroundings the Christian can expect to encounter. Since there is so much in this chapter, we must continue but keep the phrase in mind, "...in the last days..."

JAMES 5:3

Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. (James 5:3, KJV)

This passage speaks of someone heaping treasure for the last days. I do not believe this passage speaks only of money. "Gold and Silver" both speak of facets of God's salvation plan. But you notice, God says, "Your," it seems He is pointing to the fact there are those in the last days who will concoct their own salvation plan. Whenever man develops a salvation plan of their own, it is like cankered gold and silver (cankered literally means "eaten away") and rust which is evidence of corrosion. There are about 5,000 cults in the United States alone. Each of these have a cankered and rusted salvation plan. Not only the cults, but there are many self-made salvation plans in the church throughout the world. One such plan is just say a few words and accept Christ and you are in. The biblical truth is that Christ accepts us, we do not accept Him.

1 PETER 1:5

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Pet 1:5, KJV)

The word "time" in this passage is the Greek word "kairo" which means a distinct point in time. Placing "eschatos" and "kairo" in the same statement tells us that Peter is looking for the last distinct point in time. This would be judgment day because after judgment day will come eternity, which is not measured in time.

1 PETER 1:20

Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, (1 Pet 1:20, KJV)

The word "times" in this passage is the Greek word "chronon" which denotes a precise time of an event. This passage is telling us there is a last precise time for a certain event. In this case it would be the precise time for the first coming of Christ who ushered in the last days by means of His sacrifice and resurrection. This is another proof that we are in the last days and there is no more time after these days.

2 PETER 3:3

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, (2 Pet 3:3, KJV)

Here we see the phrase "last days" which again affirms the fact that last is last.

1 JOHN 2:18

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

The words "last time" may also be translated "last hour" as the Greek word behind time is "hora" which is translated "hour." This passage tells that we, from God's vantage point, that the times from the cross to the second coming of Christ is literally the last hour. If it is the last hour, how can there be another one after it? This word "hora" can also be used to designate a period of time as we plainly

see that God speaks of the whole New Testament period as the last hour.

JUDE 18

How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. (Jude 1:18, KJV)

The words "last time" may be translated "the last precise time of an event. It is the Greek word "chronos" which we have already studied. Here again God is telling us that we are in the last time.

Up to this point we have openly seen that God plainly states that we are in the last days. Now many may say, "Yes, they are the last days before the golden reign of Christ." The problem with that is we have looked at many verses and the Bible nowhere adds anything to these verses alluding to a literal 1,000 year reign. If someone chooses to force that doctrine on these verses, they must use a method called "eisegesis" which is placing interpretations into the Bible, especially referring to doctrine or words. The problem is that many theologians and pastors use interpolation instead of interpretation. In the area of prophecy, there is much false doctrine being spewed, and when these prophecy moguls are proven wrong, they do not retract their statements, they just write another book and sell a million copies. The longer I am saved, the more convinced I am that Christians want to be deceived because deceit is always more comfortable to live in than truth.

Look at what all the prophetic authorities prophesied concerning the Antichrist. In the early part of this century it was Kaiser Wilhelm, in the 1940's it was either Mao, Hitler, or Stalin. Then it was David Rockefeller, Lord Maitreya, Gorbachev and Reagan. Then in 1994 it was Zhiranovsky from Russia.

What happened to Russia the great bear which was supposed to attack Israel? The Soviet Union was broken up. They claimed Gog and Magog was the Soviet Union. When we look at Revelation 20:8, we see the Bible speaks of Gog and Magog being the entire earth. Does the Soviet Union stretch over the entire earth? I think not.

If pastors and theologians would cease interpreting the Bible according to magazines and newspapers, and burn all their prophecy fiction, and return to the Bible we would once again have a unified theology in the church. The pre-tribulation view was trance-channeled in 1830 by a woman named Margaret MacDonald in Port Glasgow, Scotland. This view was handed down to us through such men as J.N. Darby, Edward Irving, and C.I. Scofield.

Allow me to end this chapter by just stating that if we do not return to true biblical hermeneutics which is laid out for us in 1 Corinthians 2:13, we will continue to abide in the following biblical exhortation which is:

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (2 Tim 3:7, KJV)

I hope this study will propel you further into a study and search of God's word. This is its design, not to attack those who hold to the pre-tribulational view but to show these believers there is no need to accept everything which you are taught, whether by pulpit, blackboard, radio, TV, or internet without checking it first in the Bible. It is time Christians start questioning their pastors to provoke them into a deeper study of God's word.

Who Is The Antichrist?

I remember when I was a new Christian and the Bible was something new and exciting. I followed the advice of Bible teachers that I should purchase some books which would help me gain a better understanding of Scripture. Being a new Christian I latched onto the prophecy craze which is still going strong today. I purchased books by many different authors.

One thing they all had in common was their desire to identify the Antichrist. I remember being in Oklahoma City in 1983 for a prophecy meeting and a preacher gave a multi-media presentation on how he believed the Antichrist would appear.

These pre-tribulational theologians look everywhere for the revealing of the Antichrist, except in the Bible. When God first accepted me by His sovereign will, I too fell into the trap of trying to identify the Antichrist. In 1981, we were looking at the possibility of David Rockefeller being the Antichrist. Then we thought it was Ronald Wilson Reagan (3 names of six letters each 666), then Gorbachev came on the scene and we thought it might be him (some even thought his patch of discolored skin on his head might be the mark of the beast.) In July of 1994 a new candidate for Antichrist came on the scene from Russia, his name was Zhirinovsky.

Every time some world leader makes some anti-Christian statement, instantly they become a candidate for the Antichrist. When these theologians continue to be proven wrong, they never make an apology or retraction, they just continue to publish new books and sell them to the naive Christian public who have forgotten and ignored the biblical principle for true and proper hermeneutic which is found in 1 Corinthians 2:13:

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (1 Cor 2:13, KJV)

Let us look closely at what this verse is teaching us.

Phrase 1, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth,...."

This phrase teaches us that we need to speak the words of the Bible which are totally inspired by God and is void of human additions. Man's wisdom is found in philosophy and other sciences. Christians cannot expect the wisdom of the world to add anything to them. We are children of the book, PERIOD. All the wisdom and systems of this world are diametrically opposed to the purity of Scripture.

Phrase 2, "but which the Holy Ghost teacheth..."

This phrase cannot be contradicted because it teaches us that we are to bask in the teachings of the Holy Spirit. Where are the teaching of the Holy Spirit found? In the Bible, not in newspapers, not in theology books, not in prophecy magazines or books, not in politics, not in messianic Publications or the Jerusalem Post, but only in the Bible. The only inspired material contained in these publications are quoted Bible passages and that is it!

Phrase 3, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

This phrase tells us that we are to compare spiritual things with spiritual. In other words, it is the comparison of Scripture with Scripture as the only way to extract truth from Scripture. As we already stated, man's publications are not spiritual and cannot be used to interpret or compare with Scripture. Whenever we go outside the Bible to try to gain understanding of the Bible we will always hit a dead end. This is precisely why theologians have an "Antichrist of the Month club." The Bible tells us who the Antichrist is and to look further is to violate Revelation 22:18-19 by taking away from Scripture. To hold to an incorrect doctrine we have held for many years after learning the truth is simply a case of "suppressing the truth in unrighteousness" as Romans 1:18 warns us.

To hold on to an incorrect doctrine just to maintain a good job in a church or seminary constitutes a teacher of false doctrine and should be removed from that office. The role of the Bible teacher is to search out truth in the Bible (not newspapers or other periodicals) and deliver that truth to those whom God has placed in

his charge. Let us now attend to the subject at hand and we use only the King James Bible to gain the identity of the Antichrist.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 & 7-9

(2 Th 2:3-4, KJV) Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; {4} Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (2 Th 2:3-4, KJV)

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. {8} And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: {9} Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, (2 Th 2:7-9, KJV)

Within the context of these verses, we will have a clear understanding of who the Antichrist is. Verse 3 is closely linked with another passage of Scripture which opens up the identity of Antichrist. Incidentally, this passage is used as a proof text that there will be a physical Antichrist on this earth. Yet, this passage nowhere uses the description for the man of sin as Antichrist. Since God uses this moniker in other areas of the New Testament, it would seem appropriate that God would use the title of Antichrist here also.

Do we have a problem? No, we do not! The passage that 2 Thess. 2:3 is linked to is Isaiah 14:12-17. We will focus on only 3 verses but you read the entire passage to gain the understanding of this group of verses.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! {16} They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; {17} That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? (Isa 14:12, 16-17, KJV)

Did you notice the vital link in these verses to 2 Thess. 2:3? In verse 16, Lucifer, a.k.a., Satan is called "the man." Now we know that Satan is an angel not a physical human being. (The NIV omits "Lucifer" in verse 12 and calls him the morningstar which is the name for Christ in Revelation 2:28 and 22:16. Isn't it heresy to equate Christ with Satan?

Here God refers to Satan as the man which caused havoc on the earth. It is interesting to note that in Luke 4:18, the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of preaching deliverance to the captives. Isaiah 14:17 speaks of Satan not opening his house of the prisoners. The whole complicated doctrine need not be complicated.

Let us transfer the title "The Man" to 2 Thess. 2:3 and see if we are on the right track. There we read about the "Man of Sin" which is Satan himself. We saw the passage in Isaiah speaking directly about and to Satan and we see this passage speaking directly about Satan, as the man of sin. The man of sin is not a human being, for what human being can wage the war Satan has been waging against Christ from the time of creation, right in the Garden of Eden.

The Antichrist is therefore Satan and by this understanding of who he is, it fulfills the requirement for the end time prophecy in verse 3, "and that man of sin be revealed,..." The man of sin has been revealed and it is Satan.

In verse 4, we see Satan sitting in the temple of God. The temple in view here is not the physical temple but the temple which is the body of believers. (1 Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21; Rev. 3:12, 11:19) God is warning us that Satan is sitting in the churches and bringing false gospels. The people will think they are worshipping God when in essence they will be worshipping the false gospels of Satan.

This deception is most prevalent in the charismatic churches where they still believe God is bringing new revelation through tongues, signs, and wonders.

In verse 7 we are told of the mystery of iniquity which is already in the world and the Holy Spirit is hindering him until the Holy Spirit removes His restraints. As the Holy Spirit begins to remove restraints evil will begin to multiply and intensify. Who can argue that we are not at that point in history now? Never has there been so much blatant evil in any contemporary generation as in ours.

Verses 8 & 9 yields some precious truths about the destruction of Satan at the second coming of Christ. Verse 8 tells us that when the Holy Spirit restrains His activity, then the wicked one will be revealed. As we have plainly seen, Satan is that wicked one.

Verse 9 gives us insight into the final destruction of Satan. The word "after" could have also been translated "against."

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: {9} *Even him*, whose coming is after [against] the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, (2 Th 2:8-9, KJV)

Now do you see how the verse focuses directly upon Satan. We see that the Lord Jesus will come in brightness and his coming is against the workings of Satan, which will spell destruction for Him.

This is in perfect harmony with Rev. 19:19-20 and 20:7-11. Let us look at some Scripture verses which help us in our search for the identity of Antichrist.

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. (1 John 2:22, KJV)

There is no way that a single human being can be Antichrist since this verse tells us that anyone who denies the Father and the Son is Antichrist. This is a definite identification. There have always been those who deny the faith since the time of Christ. There is no human being that can live for 2000 years in this present earth. There have been many Antichrists throughout history but there is only one behind those who can motivate a person to deny the Father and The Son, and that is Satan. He is the ultimate Antichrist.

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (1 John 4:3, KJV)

Here John builds on the former verse in that Antichrist was already in the world at the time of the writing of the epistles which was 2000 years ago. Since only spirit can survive without reference to time, it is only possible that Satan is the Antichrist, since he was in the world at that time in addition to today. He is showing us that Antichrist is definitely a spirit essence and not corporeal.

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. (2 John 1:7, KJV)

Here John gives another example of who an Antichrist is. It is one who denies the incarnation of Jesus Christ. It seems that John gives us good understanding of the Antichrist. The Bible's definitions seem to center on the fact that antichrists deny essential doctrine and biblical truth. Let us look at the last two words of this verse, "an antichrist." The word "an" is the Greek article "o" which in this case is pronounced "ho." This article is placed before the word which means the word can be either definite or representing a general class. In this case, the position indicates a definite relation and may also be translated "the," which could allow these two words to be translated "the antichrist." This latter definition would place a new understanding on this verse, stating that anyone who denies the incarnation of Christ is the Antichrist. A definite moniker attached to those who oppose Christ.

At this point I was going to give the epilogue when the Holy Spirit brought to mind one more verse which is Daniel 7:25:

And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (Dan 7:25, KJV)

This verse is most revealing about the identity of the Antichrist. This verse speaks of wearing out the saints. Are there any Christians you know of who are battling some sin on the front lines and it seems we are losing on all fronts. Most Christians I know are almost always tired. Here are some battles we face today: abortion, education, pornography, false modern translations of the Bible, false gospels going into the churches, and there are many others. Satan, who is behind this escalation of sin, is literally wearing out the saints. This sin will continue to multiply since he was loosed as Rev. 20:7 tells us:

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, (Rev 20:7, KJV)

Daniel 7:25 continues in speaking of the changing of times and laws. Down through church history, the standard belief is that Christ would return on the last day and that would be the end. In the last chapter on "The Literal 1000 Year Reign of Christ" you will read where I quote many passages of Scripture which contain the words "last days" or "last time or times." If these are the last days, how can there be others after these?

Throughout church history, there have always been a group existing called "Chiliasts" which believed there was going to be a literal 1000 year reign of Christ. They were in extreme minority.

It wasn't until 1830, when Margaret MacDonald trance channeled the two stage appearance of Christ in the Glasgow, Scotland prophecy conferences. If one is familiar with the New Age Movement, one will instantly identify channeling as a satanic instrument. How does this affect the changing of laws and times? In this manner, whereas the church held to the biblical teaching of a last day when Christ would return which would be the culmination of earth's history and then we would enter the new heaven and the new earth.

The trance channeling of Margaret Mac Donald was passed down to us by J.N. Darby, then Edward Irving, then C.I. Scofield. (Incidentally, if you look at the Scofield reference Bible, you will see

a D.D. after his name. There is not one seminary which can claim they gave it to him. If they did, wouldn't it be a bragging rite?

With MacDonald being a trance channeler, she now enforced the heretical belief of the Chiliasts which now give people an extra 1007 years to turn to Christ for salvation. So Satan changed the time of the end of the world and judgment day to 1007 years in the future giving the false notion of having plenty of time to turn to Christ. This teaching has spread like wildfire since 1830, and now the true teaching of the Scriptures on the subject of eschatology is deemed as heretical and impossible because Satan has changed times and laws.

It must be thoroughly understood that just because Satan has falsified the times through these channelers and the theologians who accept anything so readily, does not mean God has changed them. God's timetable for the end is written in Scripture and no amount of satanic intervention can ever alter the Bible. He may cause false doctrines to look good and be widely believed, but that has no effect on the truth which is written in God's Word. It is a shame with all the degrees our modern learned men have from universities and seminaries, they have forgotten one major element. They forgot to study their Bible.

THE ISRAEL OF GOD

The subject we are going to study is the Israel of God. In 1948 when Israel became a nation it became the literal Mecca of Christianity. Every pre-tribulational theologian has told us and will tell us, that national Israel is the place where all the prophetic events will take place at a future time. Is this true? Does the formation of national Israel set the stage for cataclysmic events which will usher in the end? Or could it be that since the time of the cross, God has changed or expanded the meaning and nature of Israel?

If He has, why are modern theologians telling us that national Israel is the prophetic hotbed and also God's timetable for the end times? Could it be that the same situation exists in this subject as it does in the studies of the Millennium and Rapture? That situation being the isolation of verses without checking with the rest of the Bible to see if there is proper harmony.

The subject is quite complex, so to find out who God calls Israel, it is necessary for us to break this chapter down into topical sections to gain a clearer understanding. In the Bible there are four Israels, which means this name is not limited in its scope. We see:

Jacob is called Israel - Genesis 32:28

There was national Israel - 1 Kings 8:1

The ten northern tribes are Israel - 1 Kings 12:20

The Church is Israel - Galatians 6:16

The name "Israel" means "prince with God." We will attempt to find if national Israel is to be the recipient of the eternal covenants which God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We will also find out if national Israel holds special favor with God above all other nations. We will discover if God shifted His favor from national Israel to the church or if He has two sets of chosen people.

And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. (Ezek 34:23, KJV)

The Everlasting Covenants

The Abrahamic Covenant

In Genesis 12:1-3 we have a portion of Scripture known as the Abrahamic Covenant:

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

This covenant points out how God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees and commanded him to go to a land which God would show him. Within this covenant we see promises which must be examined very closely to determine their meaning. In vs. 2 God gives Abraham a promise that he will become a great nation. The word "nation" is the Hebrew word "goy," which may be translated "Gentile, foreign nation, or heathen." Right at the outset we see that the nation God has in view will not be limited to a single country. We establish this because within this nation there are going to exist Gentiles. We may conclude this nation will be worldwide in scope.

It must be worldwide if foreign Gentile nations are to be included. God also promised to make Abraham's name great, and this has been fulfilled. The nation of Israel proclaims him, the Arab world proclaims him, and the Christian world proclaims him. God says he would be a blessing, but a blessing to whom? I believe the answer to that lies in the end portion of verse 3, "and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Now we must look at what God chooses to bless as these blessings are not man made but divine. Let us pose three questions:

Has God blessed Judaism?

Has God blessed Islam?

Has God blessed Christianity?

The answer to the first two questions is no because both of these systems deny Christ in His deity. The answer to the third is yes, because Christianity is not a world religion with a cultic overtone. True Christianity exalts the person of Christ, and God promised to bless those who are in Christ.

Now we must realize that the only way all families on the earth can be blessed is if the gospel is preached to them. There is not a country on earth which is void of Christians, Christianity, or the knowledge of Christ. Now when Russia relaxed its strict control on the people in 1990, the cry was to send Bibles, not other religious books but unfortunately now the door is closing for evangelism.

Since the great nation is not limited to just a single nation or many as in the case of the Arabic countries, the great nation therefore encompasses all born again Christians in the world. God goes on to say, "and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee." The word "bless" carries with it the meaning of "benefits toward man" from God. The word "curse" means "to execrate, consider an abomination, or hate." Now we must find out who God hates in order to understand who is cursed.

In Psalm 5:5 we read: "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity."

The word "hatest" means to "hate personally, enemy, or foe." From one verse we may conclude that God considers all workers of iniquity as His enemy. God bears this out in 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; 1 Peter 3:12; Deuteronomy 7:10. Here we see a clear message that God is going to take retribution on those who hate Christians and true Christianity. This promise is not limited to national Israel as the language will not allow it. All enemies of God's universal church will be destroyed, and the curse in view is eternal damnation. Now am I taking liberty with this passage of Scripture? Am I taking something away from national Israel? The answer is no as we will see in Genesis 17:1-8. In this passage of Scripture God introduces some new language which sheds more light on the nature of the covenant.

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. {2} And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. {3} And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, {4} As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. {5} Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. {6} And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. {7} And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. {8} And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Gen 17:1-8, KJV)

Vs 2 - "...will multiply thee exceedingly." The word "exceedingly" may also be translated "greatly."

Vs 4 - "A father of many nations." - The word "many" may also be translated as "an abundance or multitude." Therefore this covenant cannot be limited to national Israel but refers to the world. This idea is repeated in vs. 5 which means God is putting an emphasis on it.

Vs 6 - God introduces a new word, "kings." Now if we are to be biblical in our approach, it is important that we know what type of kings. Since the covenant is worldwide in scope, it must be referring to kings on a worldwide scale.

Revelation 1:6 & 5:10 gives an answer to the query of the kings.

And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Rev 1:6, KJV)

And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:10, KJV)

The kings are the born again believers. Out of the lineage of Abraham came the Lord Jesus Christ, and through Him, all those who believe are made kings before God.

Vs 7 - "an everlasting covenant" - Here God describes the nature of the covenant. It will be a covenant without end. The only people in Scripture who are chosen for eternal life are born again Christians. The fulfillment of this covenant as with all other covenants of this nature are fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. Eternal life is not through the law but through faith in Christ. All those who are in Christ have experienced the fulfillment of this covenant.

Vs 8 - "All the land of Canaan" - Canaan in Scripture is a figure of heaven. This cannot be a physical Canaan because the world as we know it will end, and a new heaven and new earth will be ushered in. Therefore, since the present world is not everlasting but the new heaven and new earth are, it is then logical the "everlasting possession" of Canaan is heaven and not real estate on this earth. When one studies the book of Judges, we would see that Israel never settled every portion of the physical Canaan. There were many pagan nations still active which gave them trouble and where they committed spiritual fornication by means of idolatry. This is why the book of Judges is very important.

The Abrahamic covenant is applicable only to those who are in Christ and is not applicable to the physical Jews unless they become saved. They must be saved the same way everyone else is, and before the last day. This covenant shows us that God has not elected to salvation a certain race but His election extends to all parts of the earth. As we discuss covenants, we must never discount the fact that God did have a special relationship with national Israel for about 1800 years. National Israel was never chosen for salvation as a corporate body but the Bible does clearly state that a remnant would be chosen out of her. National Israel in its corporate sense was chosen as a type of the corporate body of Christians which make up local congregations.

In every congregation there are some who are not saved. Not everyone in national Israel was saved nor will be saved and the same is for the churches. God fulfilled the Abrahamic covenant to

Israel and granted them the land, which was a figure of God fulfilling the promise of heaven to the Christian as their final destination. But the type ends here as Israel went into rebellion against God and lost their land but the Christian will never lose their inheritance because God's covenant is everlasting being fulfilled in Christ. This does not mean there will not be apostate churches today but God's covenants are to the Christian and not to the corporate congregations of local churches.

The Davidic Covenant

2 Samuel presents what is known as the "Davidic Covenant."

And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. {17} According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David. (2 Sam 7:16-17, KJV)

Here God promises a successor who will reign over the house of David forever. Now to see who this successor is who will rule the house of David, we must go to Revelation 3:7:

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; (Rev 3:7, KJV)

This verse tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one who holds the key of David. In Revelation 20:1, the word "key" means an opening or shutting in a figurative sense. This verse is also taken as a figure for Christ being the only one who has the authority to grant salvation. We also see that "the House of David" is a synonym for salvation. Those who are saved are considered to be of the household of David. This is borne out in Scripture as Christ is referred to as the "Son of David." He was not a literal son of David but He was in the lineage of David and the term is used as an acknowledgment of the fact that He is the Messiah and only a small portion of the people recognized Him in that capacity. (Matt. 9:27; 15:22) Whenever we read a covenant in Scripture that has the word everlasting or forever attached to it, look for the spiritual meaning of

it, not the literal alone. It will be pointing toward salvation and Christ.

The Promise of the Land

One of the major teachings of the prophecy preachers is that God did not fulfill His promise to the Jews of giving them the land which He promised Abraham. So they tell us for God to fulfill His promise it must be done during the millennium. In other words, they preach God owes Israel. To say God owes any mere human is outright blasphemy. I do not understand how they can arrive at this because the Scriptures I am going to share refutes this to the utmost. The following six verses teach us that God had indeed fulfilled His promise to national Israel concerning the Promised Land. To arrive at the theory that God still owes a homeland to national Israel requires a flagrant denial of Scripture which refutes this heinous lie.

And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. {44} And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. {45} There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass. (Josh 21:43-45, KJV)

There is no way that these verses can be interpreted any other way than the fulfilling of the promise to Abraham. Twice in these passages God tells us that the land which Israel was dwelling in was the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham. In verse 45, God is plainly telling us that He didn't fail to keep His promise because He brought all to pass. How can any commentator look at these verses and say God still owes Israel a land? The only reason I can think of is that when verses do not make a case for a certain view, biblical or not, they are intentionally avoided or explained away in generalizations.

To say God did not fulfill His promises, when He did, is total heresy and blasphemy. It is a shame that so many Christians place prophecy books above Scripture, and accept their heresy as if it were gospel. Scofield, the high priest of prophecy, offers no comment on these verses, plus many claim it was part of a promise

and not the fulfillment. I have no idea how they arrived at that erroneous conclusion but it was definite evasion of truth on part of the commentator. Remember the Bible said, "all came to pass" not part! In other words, you the reader, will accept unbiblical Pre-tribulationalism whether it is of God or not.

Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; {8} And foundest his heart before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous: {23} Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it. (Neh 9:7-8, 23, KJV)

In these verses we have a reaffirmation that God fulfilled His promise to Abraham and gave Israel the land. Here also, God is telling us plainly that His promise to Abraham was fulfilled concerning the physical land of Canaan. Again, to neglect these verses is evasion of truth. As the reader, stop and ask yourself the question, should I believe what the Bible says or should I believe the prophecy books? Should I build my theology on the hard truth of Scripture or do I build it on the unbiblical theories of prophecy books?

Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. (1 Kings 8:56, KJV)

1 Kings 8:56 now gives another affirmation that everything which God promised to Israel through Moses had come to pass and not one word of any of the promises had failed.

Who is a Biblical Jew?

Now we face a crucial question, who is a biblical Jew? The name "Jew" is derived from the name "Judah" who was the son of Jacob through whose lineage the Lord Jesus Christ came. It was also the

name of the southern kingdom during the divided kingdom age. By the time of Christ, the name became synonymous with everyone living in Israel. In Scripture there are two types of Jews:

First, the physical descendants of Abraham and secondly, the spiritual descendants of Abraham. For 1800 years God had a special relationship with national Israel but something happened at the cross which changed the meanings of many things. This is a subject which is seldom, if ever, broached. Since 95% of all churches are pre-trib, they see no reason to go any further than that view. They comfortably believe that Israel in the New and Old Testament is the same Israel which exists in the Middle East at present. This is a tragedy because we will see from many Scriptures, that because of Calvary, the emphasis is no longer upon national Israel but upon Spiritual Israel, or, "The Israel of God." God no longer has a single nation as His people but instead His nation is universal in scope. (Matt. 8:10-12; Luke 13:28-30; John 10:16)

Before the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ had set Israel aside because He knew what was about to happen would be worldwide. Since Israel had become totally apostate, they were rejected as God's special people, yet God promised a remnant would come forth from them unto salvation. They would no longer be the vehicle by which God would send forth the gospel. They had failed miserably as God's representatives and as a result were now rejected. (The modern church is following the same pattern.) To understand the changes that took place at Calvary we must go to the Bible and ascertain some definitions. The definitions which we will look at will be of a single subject, but it will be according to two time frames, before the cross and after the cross.

Abraham's Seed

Before Calvary, God called the physical nation of Israel the seed of Abraham (Joshua 24:3). He also called it the seed of Isaac and Jacob (Deut. 34:4). In this context God was dealing with Israel on a special favored status because from them would come the Messiah, so it was necessary for God to protect them and deal specially with them. They served three functions:

First, they were chosen to bring forth the Messiah; secondly, they were a figure or a type of the worldwide church which was to come; and thirdly, their obedience and disobedience was to serve as an example to the church today.

Now when we switch to the New Testament, we plainly see that God no longer dwells on the subject of the physical seed but upon the spiritual seed. The physical seed was important up to the point of the cross. Since Christ died, the physical seed was no longer needed as a type owing to the fact the church would soon be born on a universal scale.

In John 8:38-40, we see the Lord in a hot debate with the Pharisees concerning their status of being Abraham's seed.

I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. {39} They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. (John 8:38-40, KJV)

If you notice, the Pharisees are claiming they are Abraham's seed while Christ is saying they are not. The reason for this is that the Pharisees were viewing their status from a physical point of view, while Christ was viewing them from a spiritual point of view. Keep in mind what the works of Abraham were, they were faith. Is this taught in Scripture? Let us dissect a very clear passage of Scripture at this point. Galatians 3:6-9:

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. {7} Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. {8} And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. {9} So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. (Gal 3:6-9, KJV)

Vs 6 - This tells us what the work of Abraham was. It is belief in God and as a result, God imputed righteousness to him. In other words, Abraham was saved as he received the grace of God.

Vs 7 - This verse tells us plainly that the seed of Abraham in the New Testament side of the cross are all the born again Christians in the world. This is the seed of Abraham that God is now concentrating on because of its eternal nature. There is no way that Abraham's seed is limited to a single race of people. The Bible will not allow this. The reason why the Pharisees did not qualify at being the children of Abraham because they were not of faith but still under the curse of the law. (Gal. 3:10-11)

Vs 8 - Do you recall when we discussed the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12:1-3 and we uncovered the fact that this promise was to the Christian in its ultimate sense. God protected Israel since it was out of her the Messiah came but once Christ came, all the covenants that God made with Israel were transferred to the church. Do you remember the words of the covenants and how they dwelled on eternity? The only way these covenants can find their ultimate fulfillment in blessings to the nations, is not through Judaism. According to Galatians 3:10, Judaism is a cursed religion because it attempts to find its fulfillment in the law and not faith. Judaism is also the religion of a single race of people, so the universal blessing could not come through it, but only through Christ.

Therefore we may safely conclude that the Old Testament is as Christian as the New Testament, because it looked forward to the fulfillment of the eternal covenants. I will be bold to say that the term used frequently today, "Judeo-Christian," is a misnomer since the entire Old Testament was looking forward to Christ. The festivals and covenants have no meaning if you remove the person of Christ from them.

Christianity must never be mixed with any Christ rejecting world religion or else we will lose the entire meaning of what the Old Testament stands for. The festivals and sacrifices of the Old Testament were in no way to stand on their own because they were only temporal foreshadows of an eternal event.

Vs 9 - Every born again Christian is a partaker of the same relationship which Abraham had with God. This is laid out in detail in Ephesians one. The same spiritual blessings that Abraham received are enjoyed by every Christian.

In Galatians 3:29 we read:

And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:29, KJV)

In this verse God puts to rest the question of who is Abraham's seed. Only those who belong to Christ will partake of the eternal covenants and promises that God made throughout the Old Testament. Judaism will find its end on the last day while Christianity will continue into eternity. This is what the Bible clearly teaches, there is no other teaching in Scripture.

Circumcision of the Heart

In Genesis 17:11, God commanded Abraham that he was to undergo circumcision as a sign of the covenant God made with him. Circumcision in Israel did not guarantee anyone's salvation, instead it was an indication that the person was identified with the nation of Israel. Physical circumcision was only a sign of the covenant and guaranteed no one's salvation. Physical circumcision was an earthly act while spiritual circumcision was a heavenly act. Let us examine some Scripture to see if we are correct.

In Deuteronomy 10:16 Moses elevates circumcision to a symbolic deed. The word "circumcise" may also be translated "cut short," and in a figurative sense means "destroy." Moses is telling the Israelites to destroy their hard hearts toward God. Only those who are unsaved can have a hard heart. Pharaoh proved that point well. Let us go to the New Testament and see if we are on track. Ephesians 2:11-13 speaks of the Gentiles who were considered outcasts from the kingdom of Israel and who were not partakers of the covenants in times past. But in verse 13, because of being under the blood of Christ, they were considered partakers of the covenants and members of the commonwealth of Israel. Now did that mean the Gentiles were to convert to Judaism, and were to

keep the law so they could be included in the keeping of the covenants? The answer is no, because the fulfillment of all the covenants are found in Christ and the Israel in view here is not national Israel but rather Spiritual Israel, which is the church. (Gal. 6:15-16)

In Philippians 3:2-3 Paul gives a distinction between the true and false circumcision. Paul tells us what the true circumcision is:

Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. {3} For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil 3:2-3, KJV)

They are the ones who worship God in spirit, and are in Christ, and who put no trust in the flesh. The circumcision that was given to national Israel was a foreshadow of the circumcision that was to come, namely salvation. Physical circumcision showed that you belonged to national Israel, while spiritual circumcision shows you belong to Christ. So God again makes it very clear that national Israel is no longer carrying on a special relationship with Him. To be in God's grace, you must be born again but the opportunity for salvation will cease on the last day. A true biblical Jew is one who is born again.

A Spiritual Jew

This section deals with what the Bible considers a true Jew. These passages also tell us who makes up the Israel of God that Paul speaks of in Galatians 6:16. We have discovered that the Bible speaks of born again Christians as the true circumcision, the seed of Abraham, and the recipients of the eternal covenants. Now we will look at some passages which are very open on the subject of who a true Jew is.

Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, (Rom 2:17, KJV)

In this verse Paul is admonishing the physical Jews concerning their religious life and how one who tries to keep the law will never

be able to do it. So Paul concludes this chapter with two revealing verses.

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: {29} But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (Rom 2:28-29, KJV)

In verse 28 Paul is openly stating that a person is not a Jew who is one that tries to keep the law. He also states that physical circumcision does not make a true biblical Jew. Circumcision has no spiritual value at all. Paul goes on to say in verse 29 what a true Jew is. Verse 29 details four ways to identify a true biblical Jew.

A. "One Inwardly" - A true Jew is one inwardly. The word "inwardly" may also be translated "secret, hid, and hidden." A true Jew has his identification with God in the secret places of the heart, not on the outward physical body. Is it biblical that our relation to Christ is hidden? Let's look at Colossians 3:3:

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Col 3:3, KJV)

B. "Circumcisions of the Heart" - A true Jew is one whose heart is circumcised toward God. As physical circumcision showed one belonged to the corporate nation of Israel, so circumcision of the heart shows that one has a special relationship to God, and this comes through Christ.

C. "Not in the Letter" - A true Jew does not keep the law for salvation as in the days before the cross because when a person is in Christ, they are considered keeping the law through Him, as He is the fulfillment of the law. Those who are in Christ have satisfied God's requirement of keeping the law in its entirety. No human being on their own can ever fulfill the law because we are all tainted with sin but through Christ's perfection it is attainable.

D. "Praise of God" - This can only be borne out as one reads the Scriptures and notices in both the Old Testament and New

Testament how God views the born again Christian. We also are given a new song as Psalm 96 and Mark 16:17 proclaim as we will speak with new tongues. Here are some examples of how God views the body of believers:

1. Assembly of the Upright - Psalm 111:1
2. A Pleasant Portion - Jeremiah 12:10
3. City of Truth - Zechariah 8:3
4. Pearl of Great Price - Matthew 13:45-46
5. His Workmanship - Ephesians 2:10
6. Heavenly Jerusalem - Revelation 3:12

In these verses we plainly see that a true Biblical Jew is one who is a born again Christian because only in Christ is the law kept and fulfilled.

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: {7} Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. {8} That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. (Rom 9:6-8, KJV)

In this set of verses, God is making a clear distinction between physical and spiritual Israel. He is giving us clear indication that the blessed Israel is the spiritual Israel as we will read.

Vs 6 - Here God is stating that not all Israel are of Israel. A strange statement indeed but we have insight as to what God means because of our previous studies. He is simply stating that not every physical Jew is a saved spiritual Jew. God has in mind that just because one is a physical Jew, this does not give him a special standing with God. The ones who have the special standing are the spiritual Jews or the born again Christians. Are we on the right path? God makes an identical comparison in the next verse.

Vs 7 - God tells us that just because the nation of Israel descended from Abraham, does not make them the children of promise. What is the promise? The seed of Abraham came through the lineage of Isaac. The seed in view here is the Lord Jesus Christ. God is not

making a statement to the effect that the chosen people will not come through Ishmael. The Arab nation being another descendant of Abraham is not the issue of this section, rather God is making a definite distinction between the physical and spiritual aspects of Israel. God continues in verse 8 and clarifies the matter.

Vs 8 - Those of the nation of Israel who are not born again are not the children of promise but the children of promise are those who are born again. The promise being the coming of the Messiah and those who are in Him are the recipients of the promise of eternal life which was so beautifully displayed in the covenants.

So God tells us that one single nation is not specially favored by God, namely national Israel, because God's favor or grace is given to all those who have become saved throughout the entire world. In the seven letters to the churches in Revelation 2-3, which could also be considered seven warnings, God places two verses in there which would seem strange if we isolated them. Since we have a good understanding of this subject, we will not find interpretation difficult.

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. (Rev 2:9, KJV)

God warns the church of Smyrna to beware of those who say they are Jews but are the synagogue of "Satan." The early church was made up of mostly Jews, and we already saw that God's definition of a true Jew is one that is saved. So here God is warning this church to beware of those who claim to be Christians but are unsaved. Only the unsaved in the Bible belong to Satan. These people who are unsaved in the churches are the destabilizing element in every church. Instead of the church leaders rejecting their unchristian attitudes and actions, they will embrace them, especially if they are the power brokers in the church or we don't want to offend them. (Remember in Acts 5, God took the lives of two liars to keep the church pure.) This is probably why God is warning this church of coming tribulation owing to the unsaved elements in the church. This is explained easily by the parable of the Wheat and Tares. (Matt. 13:24-30)

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. (Rev 3:9, KJV)

This verse is an identical warning as in 2:9. Those who are not saved are really lying that they are saved. These destabilizing people were in the church of Philadelphia, which dispensational theologians deem as a missions minded time of the church. They normally apply the timetable of 1517-1700 A.D. to it but time spans are not in view and should not be heeded because they are a figment of the imagination. They remove the real meaning of these letters.

All Israel Will be Saved

One of the most unbiblical and destructive doctrines being taught today is the belief that all the physical Jews will become saved when Christ returns. In essence Pre-tribulationism teaches two separate salvation plans, one for the physical Jews and one for the rest of the world. It seems they believe Gentiles are saved through the blood of Christ and the physical Jews are saved at the return of Christ in total. This is a cruel doctrine because the Jewish people have been lied to by a false doctrine. Jewish evangelism is not a priority because many believe that since they will be saved anyway, they should concentrate on other people groups who won't be saved. Nowhere in the Bible is this even intimated. It is here because of personal beliefs of some theologians of years past who believed and built on a vision rather than Scripture. This doctrine is built on an isolated verse without biblical substantiation.

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. {26} And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: (Rom 11:25-26, KJV)

This verse seems to be telling us that the entire nation of Israel will be saved. Some believe it is a restoration to the glory she once had

during the reigns of David and Solomon. The answer to this puzzling verse lies in verse 25 where we read, "...until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." The word "Gentile" may also be translated "ethnic or nation." This means that before Israel can be saved a multitude of other races must be included in God's salvation plan. Once God has saved the last person He plans to save, then Israel will be completed. Do you remember in our study who the Israel of God is? It is the entire body of believers. In verse 26 God has in view the completion of His salvation program. The Israel of God is complete with all those in the body of Christ. No single nation is chosen for mass salvation because we read in Acts 10:34 that God is not a respecter of persons. Only those who are saved in Christ before the last day are included in this "all Israel."

Remember in the chapter on the millennium, we saw in Romans 9:28 that God was going to make a short work on the earth. National Israel will not have a restoration in its entirety because the Bible contradicts that in many places. We read the word "remnant" frequently. Let me give you some verses and you do your homework: 2 Kings 19:30-31; Isaiah 10:20-22; 37:31-32, Joel 2:32; Micah 4:7; Zephaniah 3:13; Zechariah 8:1-8, 12; Romans 9:27; 11:5

Each of these verses speak of the nation of Israel but they speak in reference to only a remnant being saved. We have seen that twenty-one verses of Scripture declare that only a remnant of national Israel will be saved. Since God specifically states that a remnant will become saved, how can theologians continue to teach that all Israel will be saved, when the rest of the Bible contradicts that teaching? So we go right back to the root question again, do we believe the Bible or prophecy books?

As we continued in our prophetic investigation, we have discovered that the Bible continually refutes the pre-tribulational view. The modern nation of Israel is not the focal point of prophetic events, rather, it is spiritual Israel or the church. When Israel was formed in 1948, that was not a sign of the end times nor was it to become our focal point or the Mecca of Christianity. God is no longer dealing with only one nation but is dealing with them all.

Salvation is being proclaimed throughout all the earth and Christianity is the vehicle.

We have approached the subject of Israel from seven different ways and all the biblical evidence points to the fact that God is dealing with Christianity as His vehicle for salvation.

Let us recap our Biblical conclusions:

1. Abraham's seed is the Christian.
2. The true circumcision is the Christian.
3. The promise of the land was fulfilled in Joshua's time.
4. A biblical Jew is a Christian
5. The everlasting covenants find their fulfillment in Christ, not a future golden reign.
6. The Israel of God is the Church.
7. The "all Israel" that God has in view for salvation is not national Israel but it is the
completion of the body of Christ at the last day.

The Bible must be our only authority on all subjects and especially prophecy, not what we want to believe according to prophecy books.

The Seven Year Tribulation Period

Another of the great inventions of the prophecy crowd is the belief that there is going to be a special 7 year tribulation period which is also called “The Time of Jacob’s Trouble” which occurs between the rapture of the church and the Millennium. Now in previous chapters we saw plainly that the rapture of the true believers will be on the last day and we also saw plainly that the millennium is a representation of the entire New Testament period. With the Bible openly teaching that the rapture is the last day, then that would exclude any time periods to exist beyond the last day. With the Bible also teaching that the millennium represents the entire New Testament, then that teaches plainly that there could not possibly be a specific 7 year tribulation period within the confines of that time period. If so what years would you assign that time period too?

The seven year tribulation period is based upon the belief that the believers will be raptured and then a physical Antichrist will come on the scene. Meanwhile the believers will be judged in Heaven to receive their rewards for faithful service or lack of rewards for unfaithful service. Then when that judgment is finished, we get to cast all our earned crowns at the feet of Jesus and then proceed to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb where all the believers will join the Lord Jesus for a seven year feast.

Meanwhile back on earth the first 3½ years is going to be a peaceful existence under the Antichrist but right in the middle of that 7 years he breaks the peace covenant he made with Israel and then tribulation and affliction begins for the nation of Israel and also the for the tribulation saints. This 3½ years culminates with the battle of Armageddon on the plains of Megiddo which precedes the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and then when he returns, he sets up his thousand year reign in Jerusalem. This Hollywood style teaching has already been used to make several movies about the tribulation period. We are going to look at some of the teachings regarding the tribulation period to see if prophecy books are correct or incorrect.

One of the grave mistakes that prophecy preachers and writers make is that they take all the verses dealing with events and place them into the future. What should be attributed to the time of the first coming of Christ is normally projected way in the future to some unknown period of time. We will see very plainly that the whole premise for the idea of a great tribulation period is basically built on the misapplication of two verses and that is Matthew 24:21 and Matthew 24:29, which we will look at further in the chapter.

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

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: (Matthew 24:29, KJV)

We will not look at the rapture, millennium, or the Antichrist since we already studied those subjects previously instead we will look at some of the tenets of this teaching individually to see if there is such a period of time as the great tribulation or is this just an invention like the other dispensational teachings we debunked according to the Scriptures.

Wrath of God

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

1 Thessalonians 5:9 has been used by prophecy moguls to claim that there is going to be a pre-trib rapture and the church as we know it will be raptured out before this so-called 7 year tribulation period. It is basically known as “escapist theology.” Their claim is that the wrath spoken of in this verse is their 7 year tribulation period. Once again these prophecy moguls have isolated a verse and built an entire doctrine around their twisted interpretations. If we are going to look at the real understanding of this verse, we must follow the biblical pattern and compare Scripture with Scripture. The meaning of 1 Thessalonians 5:9 is found plainly in 1 Thessalonians 1:10.

And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. (1 Thessalonians 1:10, KJV)

When we compare both verses they harmonize beautifully and the meanings become very clear without the twisting and sensationalism that comes with Dispensationalism. Notice in both verses, they are speaking of salvation. 5:9 states that we are not appointed to wrath and in the next phrase of that verse we are told that we are to obtain salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ. There is not even the slightest intimation that some type of escape from a tribulation period is in view. God has not appointed His Elect to wrath. 1:10 confirms the meaning of the term “wrath” because it mentions the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead and that resurrection assured that all the Elect have been delivered from the wrath to come. That wrath is eternal damnation, not some limited time period here on earth. The believer has been saved from eternal damnation through Christ. When the Lord Jesus Christ returns, then comes Judgment Day.

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, {8} In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: {9} Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, KJV)

Seven Years

The seven year time period of this tribulation period is also arrived at by making assumptions and poor comparison of verses.

Daniel 9:26

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

Now following the 62 weeks of Daniel 9:25, we are told that the Messiah will be cut off. The words “cut off” are used quite

copiously in the Old Testament and carries with it the meaning of "death." *Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.* (Numbers 15:31, KJV) In Daniel 9:26 we are told that the Messiah will be cut off which means He will be put to death. "Not for himself" because He was absolutely sinless but He would be cut off for the sins of His people making substitutionary atonement for their sins. *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* Matthew 1:21 (KJV) These would be known in the New Testament as the "Elect" of God. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.* (Romans 8:33, KJV)

Then we are told that the people of the prince shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. This is a prophecy looking forward to the time when General Titus and the Roman Army will destroy Jerusalem, the Temple, and Judah from 66 A.D. to about 74 A.D. The other ten tribes when taken to Assyria in 721 B.C. never returned to the land because there was no need since Messiah came through the lineage of the tribe of Judah. When it speaks about a flood, it describes the immensity of the final destruction of Judah by the Romans. Within the time frame of the final siege of Judah by the Romans there would be mass executions. They hung so many Jews on crosses that they actually ran out of wood plus there was no food or water so over one million Jews died. *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.* (Matthew 23:38, KJV) The Lord prophesied these desolations in Matthew 23 and 24.

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) {16} Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: {17} Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: {18} Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. (Matthew 24:15-18, KJV)

Matthew 24:15-18 prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem which is also called the holy place. *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of*

the most High. (Psalm 46:4, KJV) The Roman army marched into Jerusalem or the holy place and made it desolate. The Christians had fled Jerusalem because they heeded the Lord's warning found in Matthew 24:15-18 and as a result, no Christians were killed in the siege of Jerusalem. This was also a historically accurate event as historians of the first century noted that no Christians were killed but over one million Jews were killed by the Romans because they did not believe who Christ was and therefore did not heed His warning. Countless numbers of Jews were taken to Rome and sold as slaves.

Daniel 9:27

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

Now the seventieth week stands alone. Now we have to ask which covenant is in view? Is it the covenant of law or the covenant of grace? When we look at the term "many" it is associated with the covenant of grace. *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Hebrews 9:28 (KJV)* The reason that this week stands out is because it covers the time of creation to the last day. Seven is the number of completeness or fullness in the Bible.

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8, KJV)

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Revelation 17:8, KJV)

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (Ephesians 1:4, KJV)

In Revelation 13:8 and 17:8 we are shown that the names of the Elect were written in the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:4 confirms this by stating that the Elect were chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world.

Next we are told "and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," When Christ went to the cross it not only was the end for animal and temple sacrifices and offerings, but became the dividing line. Christ fulfilled the law and all the sacrifices which were contained in the law were looking forward to Christ and His sacrifice.

Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. (Hebrews 10:9, KJV)

In Hebrews 10:9, we are told that Christ came to take away the first covenant and establish the second covenant. No longer would animal sacrifices ever make a covering for sin. Christ was the final sacrifice for sins and those who are born again in Him never have to worry about making sacrifices or celebrating feasts again. The covenant of grace is without works. Christ going to the cross brought in the period of the New Testament while removing the period of the Old Testament. The midst of the final week represented that dividing line of covenants.

"and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." Even after the crucifixion of Christ, the Jews remained in rank apostasy and were persecuting the followers of Christ. 70 A.D. brought in the determined end of God's patience and He finally destroyed them fully until the nation of Judah was nothing but a desert place. This just didn't happen but was planned by God because now that the covenant of grace is fully engaged in the world, He is no longer dealing with only one country but all the countries of the world.

Now let us look at Matthew 24: 21 & 29.

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

In Matthew 24, there are two verses which seem to teaching the same event but when we look closer we will see they are two totally different events at different times. In Matthew 24, there are two different events spoken about. In verse 21, the Lord is warning all the Christians that they are to leave Jerusalem when the invading armies start approaching the city. They heeded his warning and left the city which resulted in no Christian deaths during the siege by Rome.

Once the armies of Rome begins to surround the city, then the razing of Jerusalem will begin. Jesus is now telling them that this is going to be a time of great tribulation. In fact, what will transpire in this part of the world was never seen before nor will it be seen after. *For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. (Mark 13:19, KJV)* One of the reasons that this tribulation is going to be bad is because it is divinely ordered. *But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. (Mat 22:7, KJV)* God Himself is going to send the army of Rome to completely destroy this city. In fact the destruction of Israel was over an eight year period from 66-74 A.D. What made this differ from other divine judgments was the fact that prior judgments were made against pagan nations especially as we read in the book of Judges. This time it was total destruction of the nation of Israel which was supposed to be God's people through covenant.

Israel was the place where God chose to place His name and where the temple and tabernacle were. Israel was delivered from bondage in Egypt and many times after that God had protected Israel from her enemies. The punishment now was going to fit the crime of their rebellion against God. God gave them the Scriptures, He sent prophets to them, and even His own Son came as the prophesied Messiah but their ways were so evil and corrupt that

they killed the prophets and even killed their own Messiah. *Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: (1 Th 2:15, KJV)* Even before the time of the actual destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, there was famine, cannibalism, and internal fighting in Jerusalem according to Josephus. The Romans had cut down every tree within a mile of the perimeter of Jerusalem so there would not be any cover for people to escape or to bring in supplies. *For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, {44} And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. (Luke 19:43-44, KJV)* This is why Jesus told the people that they would have to leave Jerusalem very quickly because the siege was like nothing which ever happened before. There were over a million Jews killed and there were so many of them being crucified that the Romans ran out of wood. So verse 21 is dealing with the siege of Jerusalem in 66-73 A.D.

Now let us attend to Matthew 24:29 and see why it differs from verse 21. I will also include verses 30 and 31 since they complete the statement.

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:29-31, KJV)

As much as theologians have tried to make this tribulation in verse 29 some type of seven year tribulation, it is pure speculation and cannot be confirmed by Scripture. *But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two*

months. (Rev 11:2 KJV) The forty and two months here are representative of the entire New Testament period which we will look at further in this study. *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (Luke 21:24, KJV)* When Jesus was speaking about the destruction of Jerusalem, He stated that it would be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. The Gospel is still going forth all over this world and non-Jews are being saved and until the last one is saved, the times of the Gentiles will not be fulfilled. If one studies the history of Jerusalem, one will find that it has been destroyed several times and invaded such as in the time of the Crusades.

“The tribulation of those days” is referring to the whole New Testament period. Once the last Gentile is saved somewhere in the world, then the time of tribulation will be over for the believer. This world is the only tribulation a true believer will ever know. It is interesting to note here that it says “immediately after” which means no more time. Yet, theologians try to jam a thousand year millennium into that time frame when the Scripture states “immediately after.”

Then we see the direct signs in the heavens signaling the soon return of Jesus. First the sun will be darkened just as it was when the Lord was being crucified. Then because the sun will be darkened, the moon will not be able to reflect any light because there won't be any. The third major sign is that the stars will fall from Heaven. Then the powers of Heaven will be shaken. Not only will the physical universe be collapsing but also the kingdom of Satan will be collapsing too. He right now is in the heavens and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will spell the end of his kingdom and he will be shaken as he is sent to eternal damnation. *Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. (Heb 12:26, KJV)* The word “heavens” is plural meaning that all the heavens as we know of shall be shaken. The first which surrounds earth, the second which is the universe, and the third which is the abode of God because the judgment against sin will be that mighty.

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; (Luke 21:25, KJV) Then Luke gives us a little more insight into those days. Not only will the universe be shaken but the nations will be in perplexity which means they see no way out of their dilemma and the sea and the waves roaring. Interesting that “sea” is mentioned as singular because it is not speaking of a singular sea but is speaking about the people of the world. Every person except the believer will be wondering what is happening. *Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! {13} The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. (Isa 17:12-13, KJV)*

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. When you see these things begin then look up for it is close. (Luke 21:28, KJV)

In verse 29, we know that we are on the right track because it speaks about the Lord’s return and the gathering of the elect and we have already studied that the gathering of the Saints will be on the last day of earth’s history. In Matthew 24, from verse 1 to 28 it speaks about the impending doom of the earthly Jerusalem, then the rest of the chapter deals with the Lord’s second coming.

And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. (Matthew 24:2, KJV)

Just to make sure we are correctly understanding the time frame, we look at Matthew 24:2 where Jesus tells his disciples that the temple will be destroyed and to confirm he was speaking about the temple, he uses the term “here.” “There shall not be left here..” So it is definitely speaking about the siege of Jerusalem which took place in 70 A.D.

Three and a Half Years

To understand where they get the 3½ years from, we must go back to Daniel.

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

In dispensational theology, they take the last week of Daniel 9:27 and claim that it is talking about 7 years because seven days equals 7 years according to the interpretation. They arrive at this by claiming that the Antichrist will break the peace covenant he made with Israel right in the middle of the seven year period. Daniel 9:27 states “in the midst of the week.” So they claim this will be directly in the middle of the last week of Daniel 9.

When the Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross, he became the final sacrifice for sin. Once he went to the cross and completed his sacrifice, at that time the requirements of the Mosaic Law were fulfilled and no longer would the sacrifices and offerings in the law ever be used to cover sins since Christ was now the sin bearer of his people. This means that the Mosaic sacrifices and offerings like oblations now ceased because they no longer held any spiritual authority as they did leading up to the time of Christ.

So Daniel 9:27 is not talking about some Antichrist but is talking about Christ who caused the offerings to cease since he was now the final offering for sin. Notice it was considered in the midst of the week. This means the first 3½ days was pointing to the Old Testament when the sacrifices were valid but the last 3½ days were now pointing to the entire New Testament. Here are two verses from Revelation to help us understand if we are on the right path. The key to understanding this is the number 3½.

But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. (Revelation 11:2, KJV)

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. (Revelation 13:5, KJV)

If you notice in both Revelation 11:2 & 13:5, the length of 42 months are prominent. 42 months equals 3½ years if we were to take it literally. 3½ is a symbolic number for the whole New Testament period. Look at 11:2 and we see that the Gentiles are treading the Holy City for 42 months.

What is the holy city? *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Revelation 21:2, KJV)* The holy city is the New Jerusalem that people are a part of when they become saved. In other words, the Holy City is the New Jerusalem which continues to receive Gentiles from all nations around the world.

Then in Revelation 13:5, we read about Satan who speaks great things and blasphemies for 42 months. This means until he is removed into the lake of fire on the last day, he will continue his blasphemies through his people on earth. So here we have Satan blaspheming during the entire New Testament period until his judgment day.

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 1:9, KJV)

Here is an interesting passage. When John penned the Book of Revelation under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he did so in 95 A.D. under the Emperor Domitian who had one of the most vicious campaigns against Christians. In fact he was so evil, he was actually removed from power by the Romans themselves. He already stated way back then, that he was the companion of the believers who were also in tribulation. The tribulation period of the Saints is from the first coming of Christ to the second and that is what the book of Revelation is all about, it is not about Israel or a physical Antichrist or some Hollywood type script. If pastors would

approach this book properly, it would prepare their people to face affliction and tribulation strongly.

Armageddon

If you have seen the movie “Battle of the Bulge” with Henry Fonda and Charles Bronson, then you have already seen how prophecy preachers describe Armageddon. They see Armageddon as a great military battle between the forces of God and the forces of Satan with Satan losing the battle. The problem with this scenario is that it may sell books and it makes a good Hollywood script but it is total error and should not be considered as a true biblical interpretation.

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Revelation 16:16, KJV)

The word “Armageddon” is a Greek translation of the words “Ir Megiddo,” “the city of Megiddo.” There is a problem though. The city of Megiddo was destroyed in 350 B.C and has never been rebuilt. It had no end time significance.

Now we see plainly that based on history, the city of Megiddo no longer exists. So where do the prophecy preachers get the idea of a military battle on the plains of Megiddo? Once again the modern versions cause Christians to stray in their belief. In the Greek text behind the King James Bible the word is “Armageddwn” which is translated letter for letter “Armageddon.” The breathing mark over “A” in the Greek is pointing to the left. If it was pointing to the right, then it would mean “a hard breathing sound.” That hard breathing sound would be “h.”

In the following manuscripts which underlie the modern versions, the breathing mark is pointing to the right making the word “Harmageddon.” The word “har” in the Hebrew would be translated hill and is used 485 times in the Hebrew Scriptures with various meanings such as mount or mountain.

The term “Harmageddon” is found in the following manuscripts plus about 95 Minuscules.

Aleph 01 - Sinaiticus - Nineteenth Century Counterfeit
A 02 - Alexandrinus - Fifth century

Both of these manuscripts are corrupted copies of the true manuscripts from Antioch. Sinaiticus has now been proven to be a nineteenth century counterfeit written by a man named Constantine Simonides and the Alexandrinus manuscript hailed from Alexandria, Egypt which was the Gnostic capital of Egypt and the surrounding region.

Notice the difference in translation:

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Revelation 16:16, KJV)

And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-magedon. (Revelation 16:16, ASV)

And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon. (Revelation 16:16, NASV)

As you can see the 1901 ASV and the 1995 NASV both follow the corrupted and false manuscripts and use the term "Har-mageddon" which means now a physical place is named which is "the hill of Megiddo." Now the hill of Megiddo is a false hill otherwise known as a "tell" which overlooks the valley of Jezreel in the northern part of Israel. It was a place where many battles were fought in ancient times. The Mediterranean Sea is not far from this place.

The prophecy pundits see Armageddon as final battle between the forces of Antichrist and the forces of Jesus. They also see naval involvement in this final battle since the sea is so close. So what we see is that the modern versions are the culprits behind this Hollywood scenario creating a false understanding of this verse. If we are going to understand Armageddon, we must look at Revelation 16:14 & 15.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I

come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Revelation 16:14-16, KJV)

The first part of verse 14 explains exactly what the unclean spirits are. These are the spirits of devils and by means of miracles, they go out and deceive not only the populations of the world, but also incites the leaders of the nations around the entire world. It is through the political governments that Christianity has either been curtailed or endorsed. In this verse we are seeing that because of the nature of these miracles as being unclean, this will be a worldwide crusade against true Christianity. There will be no nation that will not attempt some type of persecution for the purpose of silencing the Gospel. God will be using this time of persecution as the precursor for the great battle of God Almighty which will be Armageddon, the final battle between God and Satan. While the war will be waged in the spiritual realm, it will also be waged here on earth by the followers of the beast. The kings of the earth here are linked also to the kings of the east in verse 12. *And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. {21} Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. {22} For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.* (Luke 21:20-22 KJV) Luke 21:20-22 calls these the days of vengeance when Satan will try to enact vengeance upon the body of Christ but instead God will bring vengeance upon the kingdom of Satan for its persecution of the true believers.

Right on the heels of the gathering of the armies in verse 14, we read this interjection which the Lord Jesus Christ makes. Here He is warning the world and assuring the believers that He will return to earth and those who are truly saved will be watching for Him but to the rest of the world, He will come as a thief in the night which means His return to them will be unexpected. In the Bible, walking naked (Vs 15) means that a person has no savior to cover their sins.

The interjection of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is keeping in harmony with the other two judgment visions of John. (Chapters 4-7 & 8-11) In each case the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned. Here there is no difference because the battle of Armageddon is not a physical battle but the final spiritual battle between God and Satan where the forces of Satan are destroyed along with the earth which is to be made a new.

Notice the language of Revelation 16:17:

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. (Revelation 16:17, KJV)

The Lord Jesus Christ from the throne is saying it is done which means the end of mankind has come and it is time for Judgment day. The following verses in Revelation 16 are verses denoting judgment, which is also the final judgment since there is no place that anyone can hide from the Lord Jesus Christ.

And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. (Revelation 16:20, KJV)

All the islands and mountains were no longer found which means the verse is speaking of total judgment. If the mountains are no longer found, then how could there be a battle on the hill of Megiddo? Armageddon is the final battle between God and Satan which we know otherwise as Judgment Day. It is not a physical battle but a spiritual battle which ends in the doom of Satan. *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* (Revelation 20:10, KJV) At that point Satan is no longer a threat to the believer, the days of temptation and evil are done.

Just as an addition, there is one verse in Revelation which is used to try and justify a special period of tribulation and it is Revelation 7:14:

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:14, KJV)

In the Greek text, right before the word "tribulation" appears there is a "the." What the pundits do is take that "the" and place it in the text making it appear as if their seven year tribulation period is legitimate.

And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:14, ASV)

And I said to him, My lord, *thou* knowest. And he said to me, These are they who come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:14, Darby)

I told him, "My lord, you know." He said to me, "These are those who came out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes, and made them white in the Lamb's blood. (Revelation 7:14, WEB)

and I have said to him, 'Sir, thou hast known;' and he said to me, 'These are those who are coming out of the great tribulation, and they did wash their robes, and they made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb; (Revelation 7:14, YLT)

John is told that these have come out of great tribulation. Tribulation has always been part of the believer's life, from the time of Abel who was murdered by Cain up to the last day. From the time of the cross to the last day, there is going to be tribulation which will be both spiritual and physical. The 20th century had more Christian martyrs than any other century in history. As we progress toward the last day, the spiritual attacks on the true Gospel will intensify. These attacks will tend to either neutralize or degrade the true Gospel until it will be impossible to find any true Bible teaching. Alongside will come physical persecution of the Christians and that is escalating every day, especially in Islamic and Communist

countries where Christians are killed without conscience. We read in Revelation 6:11 that there were yet many more who are going to die for the sake of the Gospel. We are not told in this verse if John is speaking of the entire multitude which he saw before the throne or if he is seeing a select group who were martyred for the Kingdom in the final days. It would seem that John in this verse was speaking of a specific group of martyrs which would go to glory in the final days right before the return of Christ as we read that a certain number had to be killed and that these should rest until that happens and then the end will come. The word "the" before "great tribulation" does not change the fact that tribulation and affliction has been present in the church and the lives of individual believers. The tribulation period for the church will be from the first coming of Christ to the last day and then the church will go to its eternal rest from any and all attacks by the kingdom of Satan owing to the fact that he and his followers are now separated eternally from the believers, never to rise again.

The Time of Jacob's Trouble

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

For many years the idea that a nation called Israel would once again rise from obscurity and become a nation among the nations of the world has been taught and is continually being taught in dispensational circles. This teaching came to a political fruition in 1948 when Israel became a nation. There is nothing in Scripture that teaches that a nation will rise with the direct descendants of true ancient Israel. The only reason that the present nation of Israel is so popular among the dispensational crowd is because of the faulty hermeneutic which is found in prophecy books. For example, Ezekiel 37 is being erroneously taught that this is a prophecy of the formation of the nation of Israel but when you get to the latter portions of that chapter, you will see that this nation that God is speaking of will have the Lord Jesus Christ ruling over them. We will deal more fully with Ezekiel 37 in the next chapter.

And David my servant *shall be* king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. {25} And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, *even* they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David *shall be* their prince for ever. (Ezek 37:24-25, KJV)

Christ is represented by David. David had been in glory for about 300 years, so how could he rule over the physical nation of Israel? Some dispensational theologians believe that David is going to be raised to rule over Israel. Need I say there is nothing in Scripture that teaches a future rule of any man. The eternal ruler of His people will be the Lord Jesus Christ as we see in the above verse, Ezekiel 37:25. In that same verse which speaks of eternity, we see that the land was given to "Jacob my servant." The name "David" means "beloved" which is also attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ. The term "my beloved" is found 22 times in the Song of Solomon.

Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: (Isa 5:1, KJV)

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Mat 3:17, KJV)

Why would God contradict Himself in Scripture concerning the fulfillment of a prophecy that He has already fulfilled. The problem is that the dispensational theologians skip the following verses because it doesn't make their case.

And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. {44} And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. {45} There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass. (Josh 21:43-45, KJV)

Thou *art* the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; {8} And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give *it*, *I say*, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou *art* righteous: (Neh 9:7-8, KJV)

Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess *it*. (Neh 9:23, KJV)

Blessed *be* the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. (1 Ki 8:56, KJV)

And it shall come to pass, *that* as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. (Deu 28:63, KJV)

When we look at all these verses, except Deut. 28:63, we read that God had kept His promise to Abraham concerning the land of promise. When Israel went into the land, there was a requirement of them for the purpose of remaining in the land. That requirement was obedience to the law of God. Now when we read Deuteronomy 28:63, we see that God had already told them that they would be plucked from off the land.

God already knew that Israel could not keep the law nor the Sinaitic covenant. The covenant that God made with Israel was conditional. It was based on their obedience but we see that when they came into the land with Joshua as the head, there was order. When Joshua died, that ushered in the period of the Judges whereby Israel was beginning to be disobedient by playing the harlot with surrounding nations. Once they did this, they abrogated the covenant of obedience they made with God, and that violation of the Covenant meant that God was now going to judge them and part of the judgment was to be removed from the land forever.

In 721 BC, the northern kingdom of Israel went into captivity with Assyria and they were never heard from again. They assimilated into the population of the world. In 587 BC, Judah went into captivity with Babylon. Judah received only a temporary sentence of 70 years. She needed to be revived because it was through Judah that the Lord Jesus Christ would come. Once the Lord Jesus Christ came and became the final sacrifice of sin for His Elect, that ushered in the culmination of the Temple system. In 70 AD, the final destruction came for Judah, and Judah, like the northern kingdom was never to rise again because the Lord Jesus Christ had come and went back to Heaven. God was now dealing with the entire world and no longer with just one nation. This is how it will be until the Lord returns on the last day.

The true nation of Israel as God began forming it about 2000 BC was really a family tree, in reality it was the blood line of the Lord

Jesus Christ. Israel did not become a nation until they came out of the land of Egypt in 1447 BC which was about 600 years after Abraham. The blood line of the Lord Jesus Christ started out with God promising Abraham a land and an eternal covenant. It must be clarified that the temporary covenant of Sinai was made with the nation of Israel while the eternal covenant, Grace, was made to the spiritual descendants of Abraham. *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. (Gal 3:16, KJV)*

That covenant was then passed on through Isaac, and then to Jacob. Jacob's name was then changed to Israel which means "prince with God." Jacob went down into Egypt and stayed there 430 years when God brought them out in the great exodus. After they left Egypt and settled in Canaan, they were then a bona fide nation among the nations. There was constant disobedience on their part in both the times of the united monarchy and the divided kingdom, which finally ended up with their separate captivities.

Since God has fulfilled His commitment of the land to Israel and the Bible clearly states this without any guesswork, since they lost it by disobedience, it is outright blasphemy to say that God owes this disobedient people anything. God owes no man anything. Dispensational theologians forget that Israel and Judah were two of the most evil nations on earth. All one has to do is read the books of Judges, Samuel, Chronicles, and Kings. They were already to the point of doing child sacrifices to the false gods of the surrounding nations and someone is going to tell me that God owes this type of people anything? It is a miracle He just didn't wipe them off the face of the earth. They had the truth of God and chose to go against it at every opportunity they had. There were brief periods of obedience, but they went right back to evil works as soon as they could.

The present nation of Israel that was formed in 1948 is not a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. It is a political formation by the United Nations. While God allowed it to happen, it is not of divine origin. As we saw in previous verses, God had fulfilled His word in giving them a land but they lost it by their disobedience. The people who live in Israel have come from many different countries and are

bound by one thing, the religion of Judaism. It cannot even be said that they are a single race since they have come from many different races. The first Israel was a race of people and were Semitic in origin, being Hebrews. The present inhabitants of Israel are not Hebrews but the majority are Gentile converts to Judaism by their descendants which was a result of the many diasporas. I speak English, but if I was to learn the Swedish language as good as a native of Sweden speaks, and then I moved there, does that make me a Swede and a descendant of Sweden? The answer is no. If I go to church does that make me a Christian? In the same manner, because one speaks Hebrew does not make them a Hebrew. Languages and customs when taught from childhood become second nature and can be mistaken and taught for lineage. When Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD, all the temple records were destroyed with it, which means that no one living today can trace their lineage back to the true Israel. The focus of prophecy is not on the modern day nation of Israel, rather it is on the body of Christ, which is called Jacob.

I want to go back to Ezekiel 37:25:

And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, *even* they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David *shall be* their prince for ever. (Ezek 37:25, KJV)

God injects the eternal element in this verse. First, He states that David will be their prince forever. Whenever God introduces the word “forever” we can instantly look for His eternal salvation program and can discount any notion of a physical land location. Notice, that God speaks of generations of children are going to dwell in the new land. Is He speaking of physical children? I think we need to investigate it a little bit and the Bible gives us our definition of children. Keep in mind these children are in the realm of everlasting and not temporal.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. {13} I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men,

because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. (1 John 2:12-13, KJV)

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

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:18, KJV)

These four verses reveal that God is speaking of His children as little children. These are the believers in Christ not little children on a playground. God uses this as an endearing term toward His redeemed.

But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. {27} For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. {28} Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. {29} But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. {30} Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. {31} So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. (Gal 4:26-31, KJV)

We see in these passages that we are children of the free woman who is Sarah in conjunction with the New Jerusalem who is the mother of us all. What is meant here is that the body of believers being the New Jerusalem continues to bring children into the spiritual land of Canaan. Whenever we witness to someone and that person becomes saved, in essence, we as the New Jerusalem, have mothered another child for the Kingdom of God. God calls us children of promise. So the children that God has in view in Ezekiel 37:25 are the believers in the future that will continue to bring new believers into the Kingdom through the sending forth of the gospel. It is a spiritual reproduction not a physical reproduction in view. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God only spirit can.

The Time of Jacob's Trouble

It took us a while to get here but we had to define who the true Jacob was. We had to define which descendants were in view, the physical descendants of Jacob, of which no one can truly tell who they are, again, language and custom does not define lineage. Yet, we can easily tell who the spiritual descendants of Jacob are, these are the believers, the body of Christ.

Alas! for that day *is* great, so that none *is* like it: it *is* even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. 8} For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, *that* I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: {9} But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. {10} Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make *him* afraid. (Jer 30:7-10, KJV)

When we look at these four verses, we are not looking at a physical realm, instead we are looking at the verses of salvation. Notice in verse 7, we read that Jacob is going to suffer some great trouble yet, Jacob will be saved out of it. In verse 8, we read a great promise that the bonds, or the slavery of the true believer will be removed by God Himself. No longer will the world have any effect upon the true children of God. Then in verse 9, we see that Jacob is going to serve the Lord God and David their king. Now Jeremiah was written about 630 BC which means that David was dead for about 330 years, yet in this verse we are told that Jacob is going to serve the Lord God and David.

We have seen that David was a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. So here we have the people of Jacob, the true believers, serving God the Father and God the Son. Then in verse 10, we read that God says to Jacob, they should not fear because He is going to bring them out from all over the world and will return them unto their own land, where they will have rest, quiet, and no fear. This is the language of salvation.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. (Psa 23:2, KJV)

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (Psa 23:4, KJV) The land that the true believer is going to return to is not a physical land on earth in this present age, it is the land of Canaan which God promised to Abraham.

For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. (Gen 13:15, KJV)

And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Gen 17:8, KJV)

Whenever God adds the words “everlasting” or “forever” it means that what is in view is not a temporary land but it is the language of salvation or the covenant of Grace. The land that we go back to from every corner of the world, is Heaven. That is the dwelling place of the true believer. *And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven. (Mark 13:27 KJV)* Mark 13:27 gives us the answer that the people who have been scattered all over the earth are His people, the redeemed Elect of God, and on the last day they will be gathered and brought into their own land, which is Heaven.

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

For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. (Isa 14:1, KJV)

Isaiah 14:1 is one of the best salvation verses. Notice in this verse that God is going to have mercy on Jacob which is the language of salvation. *Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (1 Pet 2:10, KJV)* God then goes on to repeat that He is going to place them in their own land, and we already saw what the gathering of the believers were. Then God adds something different to this verse. He says that, "strangers shall be joined to them." *And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. (Isa 11:10, KJV)* The strangers were the Gentiles who did not know God. *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (Eph 2:19, KJV)* Isaiah 14:1 is telling us that the Gospel of Grace is going to be preached in the entire world, which means that the Gentile countries are included and that God's children are now going to be found in every country on earth.

Notice that it also says they will cleave to the house of Jacob. This is because the house of Jacob in view is the body of believers. *Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. (Deu 10:20, KJV)* The only ones who are going to cleave to the Lord is the ones He has redeemed. Isaiah 14:1 is a beautiful verse which teaches us about God's wonderful salvation plan. The Israel that he will choose is another term for the body of believers.

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. (Gal 6:16, KJV)

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: (Rom 11:26, KJV)

Here is another salvation verse. When God forgives and removes the sin of the believer, He Himself is turning away ungodliness from Jacob or the body of Christ. The Deliverer is Christ Himself who cleanses His people from their sins by means of salvation.

For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. {25} Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. {26} A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. {27} And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*. {28} And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. (Ezek 36:24-28, KJV)

Here are five verses that are dripping with the promise of salvation of the body of believers. First of all, God starts out in verse 24 again stating that he is going to bring all the believers out of the countries where they reside. Now when we look at verses 25-27, they are some of the most popular salvation verses in the Old Testament. God is saying that He will cleanse, after the cleansing comes a new heart and a new spirit. Then in verse 27 God defines what spirit He is going to give His children, it is going to be the Holy Spirit. Since the Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross and fulfilled the requirements of God's holy law, the Christian is going to be viewed by God as one who will be walking in His statutes and keeping His judgments and doing them. This is because those people who are in Christ, have satisfied the requirements of keeping God's holy law in Christ. Salvation is the fulfillment and keeping of the law of God which is imputed to the believer. Then after God speaks of granting salvation to His people, He once again states that they will dwell in the land that God gave to the fathers but He adds another dimension. He states these people will be His people and He will be their God, which is the language of salvation. We already saw that the land God is speaking of is not a physical land, but an eternal land, for that is the only suitable dwelling place for His children.

And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God. (Amos 9:15, KJV)

Here is another salvation verse in that God is going to permanently plant His children in their eternal home. They are secure in Christ

and can never be pulled out of Heaven. If this verse was speaking of national Israel, then we have a problem, first of all, they lost the land by disobedience and secondly, there was never to be another land of true Israelites to rise among the nations again. The present land of Israel is based upon the Talmud and not upon the true Scriptures. This is why it is a political nation and not borne out of biblical prophecy. God is now dealing with the entire world and not a single country again. It is absolutely reprehensible when Christian Zionists rejoice at the idea of another temple with animal sacrifices. These Christian Zionists are so flawed in their belief systems, they are actually an affront to God and are showing rebellion in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ who was the final sacrifice for sin for His Elect. God destroyed Judah in 70 AD for the reason that her mission was done and the temple/ceremonial system was now voided, never to have any purpose again. It became null and void the day Christ went to the cross. To try and say that God is the one who is going to bring about this temple is to make God a liar and that is exactly what Zionist Dispensationalism does. Why would God ordain another temple when the work of His Son was completed and accepted totally? This idea of another temple is just born out of political Zionism with the help of the ill-informed clergy, seminaries, and sheep. *And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. (Rev 21:22, KJV)*

The Period of Time for Jacob's Trouble

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

The words “the time” in the Hebrew do not refer to a single day but rather it speaking of a period of time. The word “trouble” in the Hebrew carries the meaning of “distress or affliction.” So we see here a period of time when the body of believers is going to be facing much distress or affliction. Now the last days began at Pentecost but when we read this verse we are seeing that within the confines of those last days, there is going to be a period when the body of believers is going to face an elevated level of affliction. Now it is not saying here what type of affliction but we know that the method which Satan will be using in the last days is going to be deceit. *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. {14} And no marvel; for*

Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. {15} Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. (2 Cor 11:13-15, KJV) There is no doubt that Jeremiah 30:7 is a prophetic passage speaking about the affliction of the body of believers in the last days, and that is what I want to look at in the rest of this study. I believe deeply that we are in that period when Satan has been loosed. *And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. (Rev 20:3, KJV)* *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, {8} And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. (Rev 20:7-8, KJV)*

The evidence for this is overwhelming as we look at the condition that Christianity is in, while all the other worldly religions are seemingly untouched by any affliction.

Never before in history has Christianity been assaulted the way it is being assaulted today. We are definitely in a period of trouble or affliction and I want to bring to light some of the ways that we are being attacked and I believe that you too will see that we are living in that period of time known as Jacob's trouble.

False Bible Versions

One of the most prevalent attacks on Christianity is the attack on the Bible itself. Never before in history has there been new versions of the Bible coming out about one per year. The final translation that God gave was the King James Bible in 1611 and never again was God going to give a new translation. It was in 1871 when Hort & Westcott, two Catholic occultists, took the ancient Egyptian manuscripts from Alexandria, and under the Vatican's authority created the Revised Version which became the predecessor for all the modern corrupt versions. These corrupt modern versions were never sanctioned by God since these modern versions have been corrupted and with each new one, the true Gospel is more heavily obscured than in the last version. God never gave His Word to

sodomites, Catholics, Cultists, Occultists, and unbelievers to correct and translate. But unto the wicked God saith, *What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? {17} Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. (Psa 50:16-17, KJV)*

If you go to any church you will find at least 10 different versions of the Bible in use in the congregation. When the pastor uses one version and the people use different versions, then you are going to have no understanding of the passages being taught, since it will say something different. These versions are causing massive confusion in the church and among Christians. It is the tower of Babel all over again, except at the tower of Babel, it was God who confused the languages. With the attacks on the Bible mounting, all the new versions are being created by unbelievers which means that Satan is behind the new move of false versions which has watered down Christianity and removed the power from the churches.

More Physical Martyrs

It has been said that there were more Christian martyrs in the 20th century than in all the centuries of the past. With Muslim countries adding more capital punishment laws to their books concerning Christianity, the amount of physical martyrs will only increase as we head toward the last day.

Homosexual Invasion

Never before in history have the homosexuals been attempting and gaining positions in the churches. God condemns homosexuality, as He does all sin, but He openly mentions this one as a sign that we are close to the end. Recently some denominations have elevated sodomites to a position of bishop. What can anyone in this sin teach people about the Bible? It is a condemned man teaching other condemned people that their sin is okay. Wait till they wake up on Judgment day, none of them will be gay. In Canada they are trying to get the Bible declared as hate literature so if a pastor preaches against it, the pastor can then be removed and indicted under hate crime laws. Almost every TV program is an endorsement of sodomy and it is not for fun, but to desensitize you

to accept their perversions. With the sodomites gaining ground in churches, pretty soon the real church is going to go underground.

Dead and Dying Churches

Another attack on true Christianity is the fact that churches are dying all around us because their failed leadership has accepted all the worldly philosophies of the day and have weakened the people in the pews. As a result of unqualified and overpaid leadership in most churches, the true sheep of God have been scattered, simply because they cannot sit under the teachings of a sold-out leader. A good leader will remove the worldly teachings at the point of their beginning. This means that false brethren will have to be removed from the churches. One of the biggest barriers to truth in the church is the leadership.

Amalgamated Gospels

Another attack on the body of Christ comes when the true Gospel is diluted with the false sciences of today. Many preachers have taken up the mantle of the political gospel which cannot save a soul and has yet to save a country. God does not bless the ministries of those who pollute the true Gospel. There is nothing wrong for a Christian to be involved in politics but the Gospel cannot be mixed with the worldly principles of politics. There are many, like the late Jerry Falwell, who had taken up the political gospel only to fail in ministry. His university went millions into debt and he even took money from Sun Myung Moon. Whenever we depart from the true Gospel, we will wind up spiritually famished and sometimes even asking Satan for money. Those who teach political or psychological gospels, after a while, begin to lose the distinction between the true Gospel and their gospel additions.

Christ replaced by Israel

One of the main diversions that Satan has thrown into the church is the icon of Israel. Israel has become the deified nation in the majority of churches. If people would only study the history of this nation and their terrorist activities toward the Palestinians, of whom many are Christians, they would not blindly support this nation. The reason that this imposter nation of Israel enjoys such high status is because the ill-informed clergy and seminary professors have blindly accepted dispensationalism as truly biblical, when not one

tenet of dispensationalism can be proven without hyperbole and allegory. If your church sponsored a prophecy conference about Israel and one about Prayer, guess which one would fill up? The teaching that the Jews are God's chosen people has been accepted blindly and has only been around since 1956, when the Bible clearly teaches that God has only one chosen people, and that is those who were chosen for salvation in Christ. The Bible teaches plainly that it was written about the Lord Jesus Christ and not to elevate the modern nation of Israel to god-status, as it is in the majority of churches. Those who live in Israel are not the direct descendants of the Hebrews, they are a people bound by a false religion called Judaism. When Christians ascribe all the promises of a land and the other promises to this nation of false religion, they are prostituting the truths of Scripture based on prophecy books written by well-paid Zionist sympathizers.

Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me, (Psa 40:7, KJV)

Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book *it is* written of me,) to do thy will, O God. (Heb 10:7, KJV)

These two verses teach us that the Bible was written about the Lord Jesus. Christians need to get their eyes back on Christ and off of Israel. Turn off those prophecy programs which are just a source of lies, deceit, and diversion.

Attacks on Christ

Another aspect of end time attacks are the ones coming against the Lord Jesus Christ. A special aired on TV called, "Jesus, Mary, and the Da Vinci Code" tried to get people to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was married. It was a resurrection of an old 2nd century lie. The deity of Christ is being attacked, not only by those outside the church, but by those inside the church. The modern versions aid this by removing much of the deity of Christ from their pages. The new age movement has taken the Lord Jesus and placed Him on the same level of false teachers like Confucius. They claim that the Lord Jesus is on the 7th plane with the other ascended masters of wisdom. The blasphemy is that these ascended masters are nothing more than demons who trance

channel their deceit through willing subjects. Even in many churches Christ is looked on as only a great teacher and prophet.

Signs and Wonders

Never before in history has every church been plagued by the infestation of signs and wonders. Almost every congregation has been menaced by tongues and many Christians who do not speak in tongues, endorse them. These tongues are supposed to be a message from God, just as modern day visions and dreams are but they are false. These charismatic congregations are all seeking prophetic words and supernatural healings. These things divert from the real reason the Christian is here and that is to send forth the Gospel. When people concern themselves with health, wealth, and prophecies, they have been derailed in their Christian walk. Every Christian has faced this problem and it is only a good study of Scripture on this subject which will help them to walk away from it unscathed. The modern tongues are not the tongues of Acts since they were legitimate, established languages, in fact, God even names those people groups who were represented on the first Pentecost. The tongues of today are just evil babblings with no meaning. Yet, we see Christians running after this because they feel that this is a great move of the Holy Spirit. This is untrue because the Holy Spirit is going to bring us into all truth and He couldn't do that if we can't understand instruction.

Christianity Soon to be Outlawed

A very serious situation which true Christians are facing now and will escalate is the outlawing of the very Faith which founded this nation. In the public schools (which were originally founded to teach children the Bible) you are allowed to discuss any world religion such as Islam or Hinduism. The names of Allah or Shiva are permitted in the schools but the name of Jesus Christ is not permitted. The cross is to be removed from every place it has been placed in, yet the Menorah is allowed to stand anywhere, even on Government property. This is because we have been placed under law 102-14 signed into law March 26, 1991 which was the birthday of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson who was head of the radical, anti-Christian Lubavitch Movement. They have imposed upon the people of the United States the Noahide laws which state that anyone who worships the Lord Jesus Christ is guilty of idolatry and

according to their Torah is punishable by death. They have seven Noahide Laws and the 7th is a requirement that courts be set up to enforce the first six laws, one of them being idolatry laws. This law 102-14 was signed into law by President George Bush Sr. Basically, it is saying that every true Christian who worships the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures, has a reigning death sentence on them which can be enacted at any time. These laws are nothing more than hate crime legislation against Christians and the church still exalts these anti-Christian people as God's Chosen People.

www.mechon-mamre.org/jewfaq/gentiles.htm This is the website which claims Christians are punishable by death for worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ. They also list the 7 Noahide Laws. According to them, these laws were supposedly given to Noah and are binding upon the entire human race. Idolatry is number 1! I wonder why? Whenever you see some facet of Christianity being attacked, just look for the ADL funded ACLU behind it. Those who are attacking and vilifying Christianity are the ones being glorified in the church. Go figure!

Governments all over the world have passed laws outlawing Christianity. Over half of the world has laws on the books which prohibit Christians from free exercise of their Faith. We think that because we live in the USA that this can't happen. Look around. The IRS imposes penalties on churches who speak out in any politically incorrect manner. The IRS holds the removal of tax exemption over the heads of every church. So a church would rather compromise with the world just so they can give out receipts at the end of the year. What a pitiful, cowardly tradeoff, when the churches are already protected by the First Amendment. Most clergy and media preachers are so neutered that they have become only useful idiots for the one world order crowd. If all the true churches would start preaching and teaching the truth around this country, the government would back off of its attacks and think twice.

Time Stealers

As we approach the end times never have we had as many time stealers as there is now. We have so many things which can divert

us from Bible Study such as TV, Radio, Internet, DVD's, Video games, etc. How many people do you know make time to stare at their phones? 100 Years ago radio didn't even exist yet, therefore, Christians had utilized much time in their day for studies. This is why there have been so many writings from past years. Today, there are many books out there, but if you look at the theology in them, you will see there is a shallowness and compromised atmosphere in them. Man's books are becoming increasingly man-centered instead of Christ-centered, which means they are of no spiritual value to the true Christian. Isn't it amazing that without the help of a computer Martin Luther could put out over 40 volumes of studies. When was the last time you seen a true Christian author put something together like Luther's commentaries or the Calvin's Institutes? Today, somebody writes a book of 100 pages and fills it with psychobabble, and then they receive invitations to speak at 100 churches as if they are some expert.

Summary

We have biblically concluded that Jacob is the body of believers because of the salvation language that surrounds it. It is not the modern nation of Israel since God does not detail any gathering of Talmudic Jews into a land because God fulfilled all the promises of a physical land in Joshua's time. Ancient Israel lost the land by reason of their disobedience and this is seen in many places in the Scriptures. Since the Lord Jesus Christ came and died for His Elect, the ceremonial system has been abolished and since there is not going to be any more animal sacrifices, then there would be no reason for God to make another nation similar to ancient Israel, since the Lord Jesus Christ came and fulfilled all the true meanings of the Feasts and ceremonies, plus God is now dealing with His Elect in every country around the world. To focus only on one country and animal sacrifices is to denigrate the final sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures that deal with re-gathering are speaking only of God re-gathering His Elect on the last day into Glory. The Israel that God has in view in these final days is the Israel of God which is the Redeemed body of Believers.

We are seeing constant attacks on the body of Christ and we are also seeing the prohibition of the Christians to practice their faith, while every false religion in America is granted the right-of-way to

practice theirs. Attacks against Christianity are on the rise, whether they are from the media or world religions. Governments all over the world, including the USA, fear the truth telling of Christians and is doing everything they can to suppress the truth. There will come a time in our world when the Christian witness may be silenced and that time is fast approaching but it will only be for a very short time, and then all the Anti-Christian religions and governments will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and give an account for their hatred.

And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. (Rev 20:9, KJV)

As we see in this verse that the Christians will be silenced but right on the heels of that event will be the second coming of the Lord Jesus and the judgment of the nations. All those in false religions and their puppet governments will be brought before the Lord Jesus Christ and will stand for their crimes against Christ and His Body.

The second woe is past; *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. {15} And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Rev 11:14-15, KJV)

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, {8} In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: {9} Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; (2 Th 1:7-9, KJV)

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: {32} And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: (Mat 25:31-32, KJV)

May this study provoke you into a deeper study of Scripture.

Ezekiel 37: Of whom doth the prophet Speak? The church or national Israel?

For many years as I studied prophecy I would always come across a study of Ezekiel 37 and every prophecy book I read told me that Ezekiel 37 was a prophecy of the reestablishment of national Israel in 1948. As a good pre-tribber I accepted this theory for many years, since each prophecy mogul kept quoting their prophecy mentors. You know the passage: *Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* (2 Tim 3:7, KJV) This passage does not only apply to the evolutionist or other unbeliever but it opulently applies to those who write prophecy books. Those pre-trib prophecy books are so far from truth you would think they came right out of the newspaper. What do ya' know? They do! It seems every time some world leader sneezes, the Antichrist is ready to be revealed. But I don't want to get into every phase of prophecy just what pertains to Ezekiel 37 and as always we will let the Bible be its own interpreter. So put down your Jerusalem Post and pick up your King James Bible.

Ezek 37:1

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,

Keep in mind that Ezekiel, as John who penned Revelation, is in the Spirit. (Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3) God is giving Ezekiel a vision. No specific valley is being mentioned therefore it is a spiritual not political nor historical truth being taught. If this was national Israel, then the valley in view would have to be big enough to envelop the entire nation of Israel. Notice the passage "midst of the valley." Notice it is "the valley" not "a valley." There are quite a number of specific valleys mentioned in Scripture such as: Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2); Eshcol (Deut. 1:24); Hinnom (Josh. 18:16). But in Ezekiel 37:1 there is no specific geographical valley in view.

Ezek 37:2

And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; (Psa 63:1, KJV)

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. (Isa 53:2, KJV)

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. (Mat 12:43, KJV)

The dry represents all those whom God plans to save. Where does God save His elect out of? The dry places where there is no water of the gospel. *Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.* (Isa 35:6, KJV) When a person becomes saved they become as a stream in the desert. What is the condition of the desert and wilderness? It is a very dry place where water is very scarce. As we see in Ezekiel 37:2, this valley is replete with dry bones. Is the world a dry place when it comes to the gospel? Absolutely! This is why the psalmist in Psalm 63 seeks the Lord from a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. It is the water of the gospel he seeks. He seeks to be bathed in the waters of Christ. *He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.* (Psa 105:41, KJV) When Christ went to the cross for the sins of His people the Rock of God was opened and then the waters of the gospel gushed forth in the dry places after He was resurrected the third day. Those dry places are the entire world to seek out His elect in all the nations. This Ezekiel passage also points out the fact that a person is a dead bone before salvation and only God can make them live. Salvation is through grace and not free will! Do these bones have the free will to make themselves live?

Ezek 37:3

And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (John 6:37, KJV)

And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:40, KJV)

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? (Rom 11:34, KJV)

Here God asks Ezekiel a question as to whether these bones can live or not. Ezekiel answers in the correct fashion that only God knows if they will or not. It is the same with Christianity as only God knows who will be saved and not us and this is why we take the gospel to the world, to seek out the elect. As we see in our 3 passages that God gives the believers to the Son and as a result of salvation, they have eternal life. Ezekiel knew he could not know the mind of God on such a great issue as the building up of the church but left the entire matter in God's hands. Ezekiel was just a willing participant in the scene which was about to unfold.

Ezek 37:4

Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom 10:17, KJV) The word in the Hebrew behind the word "hear" carries with it the meaning of hearing with understanding and the only ones who understand spiritual things are those whom God has saved. Here God is using Ezekiel in a figure to prophesy over these bones. What is the method which God uses today and throughout the ages to bring His elect out of the nations? It is the preaching and proclaiming of the Gospel. As the believers are typed here as dry bones and are commanded to hear the Word of the Lord. Only those who are named from the foundations of the world will respond to that command and the one in Acts 17:30. *And*

the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: (Acts 17:30, KJV)

Ezek 37:5-6

Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: {6} And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (Gen 2:7, KJV)

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. (Gen 3:21, KJV)

Here God is likening the forming of the church to the intimate construction of a human being. For a human being to live they must be clothed in skins. For a Christian to be a Christian they must also be clothed in skins. Genesis 3:21 foreshadows the clothing of the believer in the Robe of Christ's righteousness. *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. (Isa 61:10, KJV)*

Then God says that He is going to place breath in us. As Adam became a living soul with the physical breath of life, the believer becomes a spiritually living soul when we receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (Rom 8:14, KJV) Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Cor 3:16, KJV)* Here we plainly see that we are baptized in the Holy Spirit at salvation, we then become a great part of the temple which God is building. The temple is a spiritual one and not a physical temple based on a biased misinterpretation of Ezekiel 40-48.

Ezek 37:7

So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

(Eph 5:30, KJV) The body of Christ is so intimately related to Christ that we are considered to be members of His physical body. The Bible gives us a little insight into this mystery. Do you remember Saul's encounter on the road to Damascus? What did Jesus say to him? *And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. (Acts 26:15, KJV)* Well Saul wasn't persecuting Jesus personally yet Saul was accused of doing just that. These passages give us insight into the intimate relation between Christ and the Church. Notice Jesus says "whom thou persecutest" which means when a slander or other persecution comes to a true believer, the persecution is actually railed against Christ Himself.

Another interesting peculiarity about our verse in Ezekiel is that it says, "bone to his bone." Why not "bone to bone?" or why not "bone to her bone?" I believe we are gaining another insight into the intimacy between Christ and His church. When we become saved, our bones are members of His bones and where are bones in reference to the body human? They are inside! Where does the believer dwell? IN CHRIST!

And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. (Isaiah 25:6, KJV)

In Isaiah 25:6, we read that there will be "fat things full of marrow." Marrow is the life of a bone and this verse drips with salvation language. The mountain represents the Kingdom of God where the believer finds eternal refreshment. See the section on Verse 21 & 22.

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. (Rom 12:5, KJV) Here is another

example of the intimacy of the body of believers as we are members of one another.

To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Col 1:2, KJV)

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, (2 Tim 1:1, KJV)

Ezek 37:8

And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

Here we see the sinews which are the tendons and the muscular system being placed upon the bones as they began to come together. Sinews is a term also used to describe strength. Whenever we see a strong person, they are normally one of a muscular physique. In the spiritual realm one of the names of God is "The Strength of Israel." *And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent. (1 Sam 15:29, KJV)*

Ezek 37:9

Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

Even though these bones now had sinews and a muscular system to allow them to walk, yet there was no breath in them. God is commanding Ezekiel to prophesy over them that their breath should come from the four winds of the earth. Four is the number of universality which means the wind (in this verse is a type of the Holy Spirit) will come from all areas of the world. *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. (John 3:8 KJV)* The Holy Spirit will begin to save God's chosen elect from out of all the nations of the world and that

evangelization of the world will come about only through the preaching of the Word. This is why we see that no one knows where the wind begins and where it ends because we do not know who God's elect is and our responsibility is to keep preaching the Word so they will come. The four winds also play a part on the last day as Christ will send His angels to the four winds of the earth and bring in His elect.

Another interesting phrase in this passage is "upon these slain." Apparently there once was life in these bones and this was a valley of death. When was the human race slain? In the Garden of Eden! After the sin of Adam and Eve, the whole human race was plunged into spiritual death because sin was now the legacy of all humans to the next generation.

Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: {50} That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; {51} From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. (Luke 11:49-51, KJV)

Here is the reality of human history. All the sins that were done before our time will still be judged on the last day. Notice the length of time from Abel to Zacharias which would be a couple of thousand years. Jesus refers to the generation of evil as all of humanity from the first sin of Adam to the last sin on the last day.

Ezek 37:10

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it? (Joel 2:11, KJV)

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. {4} No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. (2 Tim 2:3-4, KJV)

God speaks of His church as an army. He calls individual Christians "soldiers." Notice in the Joel passage the Bible tells us that "His" camp is very great. *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; (Rev 7:9, KJV)* This passage is telling us that a great multitude is in Heaven praising the Lord. This great multitude is the church as you notice they have come out of every tribe, nation, and people of the whole world. Until the last day, God will continue to save out of the world.

Let us look at an interesting passage which we find in 1 Samuel 17. David comes to the site where Goliath is taunting the Israelites. David had great spiritual insight as the others viewed the army opposing the Philistines as the army of Israel. Note how David viewed the army.

And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? (1 Sam 17:26, KJV)

David viewed the army of Israel as the armies of the living God. As we become saved, we join the great army of God and we oppose the army of Satan, which is represented by the Philistines. In Revelation 19 the believers which return to earth with Christ are symbolized mounted upon horses and following the King of Kings. When speaking of the armies of Israel, the Israel in view becomes clearer in the next passage with supporting Scripture.

Ezek 37:11

Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

When discussing the understanding of the above term "whole house of Israel" it behooves us to see what the Bible says on that term. In other words, who is the Israel in view? I want to offer quite a number of Scripture which teaches us that the Israel in view is the church and not national Israel.

But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. (Isa 45:17, KJV)

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: {29} But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (Rom 2:28-29, KJV)

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: (Rom 9:6, KJV)

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. {26} And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: (Rom 11:25-26, KJV)

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. {8} And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. (Gal 3:7-8, KJV)

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. (Gal 3:16, KJV)

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. (Gal 6:16, KJV)

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (Eph 2:12, KJV)

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil 3:3, KJV)

As we have seen in these many verses that the whole house of Israel is not confined to one nation rather its borders reach into the entire world. The whole house of Israel contains both the saved Gentiles and Jews, otherwise known as the church universal. Abraham's descendants would reach throughout the entire world. *And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.* (Gen 17:6 KJV) Here is a little insight about who will be the descendants of Abraham and Sarah. Notice the Bible states that "kings" will come out of her. Who are these kings? For the answer we must go back to the Bible and find our answer.

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, {6} And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Rev 1:5-6, KJV)

Notice in these two revealing verses who the kings of the earth are? They are another name for the believers. How do I know this? What does a king do? He reigns! *And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.* (Rev 5:10, KJV)

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Rev 20:6 KJV)

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. {5} And there shall be no night there; and they need no

candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. (Rev 22:4-5, KJV)

So here we see that those kings, the believers, are going to reign with Christ for 1,000 years which is a representation of the whole New Testament period that will culminate on the last day. We will reign on the earth and that reign will be forever and ever. As to what we will reign over, God has kept that to Himself and will be revealed in His timing which will probably be after the last day of recorded time. What a marvelous future for the believer.

Ezek 37:12-13

Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. {13} And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,

Before we broach the subject of graves in these two verses, let us look at the term "land of Israel." We have already seen that Israel comprises all the saved of both physical Jews and Gentiles. To give us a basic understanding we must go back to Genesis 17:8 which gives us insight of the land of Israel.

And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Gen 17:8, KJV)

Let us go to a passage which details for us the term "stranger" that we find in Genesis 17:8.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. {9} By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: {10} For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. {13} These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of

them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (Heb 11:8-10, 13, KJV)

Here we see that Abraham and the other Patriarchs had the spiritual insight to realize that their real home was not on this earth. Here we Christians are all strangers and pilgrims. How do we know that we are strangers on earth? Because your philosophy of life is different. Be honest on the job and see if you get promoted. Decry any form of sin, even in the church, and see the reception you get. I think you know what I am getting at. To be obedient to God is to rebuke the world's ways. Another reason we know that the Patriarchs were seeing earth as a strange land is because of the following Scripture:

Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people. (Gen 25:8, KJV)

Here Abraham was gathered to his people after he died and not before. We see here plainly that "his people" and ours are those who are already in heaven which means our people are God's redeemed.

The second term I want to look at in Genesis 17:8 is "Land of Canaan." We gain some insight into the Land of Canaan from Romans 4:13 *"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."*

Notice the Bible states that the land of Canaan is an everlasting possession and when we look at Romans 4:13, we see that Abraham was to be heir of the entire world. Now we must ask the question, is Canaan limited to national Israel or is it limited to the entire world? The answer of course is the entire world as we have already seen that God is saving millions out of the entire world. Therefore, anyone who becomes saved has entered Canaan as they receive everlasting life. Those who are of faith are Abraham's seed and the world that he will be heir of are those who are being saved throughout the entire world. Then when God remakes the heavens and the earth, the ultimate fulfillment of the Canaan

prophecy will be complete as only believers will dwell in the new heavens and new earth, thus making Abraham the heir of the entire world.

Now let us return unto Ezekiel 37:12-13 and deal with the term "graves." Whenever we look at a term we try to harmonize it with the rest of the Bible. Let us look at some explanations of this term. Whenever we speak of graves we must ask the question, what does a grave hold? The answer of course is a dead body and how does God view the unbeliever and the pre-salvific believer? The answer is very simple, He views us as dead in our sins and we will look at a number of verses which teach this truth quite openly.

I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. {2} I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; {3} A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; {4} Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; {5} Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day. (Isa 65:1-5, KJV)

Now here God is telling us that these people are remaining among the graves. Is He telling us they literally remain among the graves or is He using this as a figure? He is using it as a figure as he points out the character of these people. The traits He points out are the ones associated with unsaved people: rebellious, idolatrous, eating unclean foods, holier than thou mentality, etc. God lists traits which are associated with those who are dead in their sins

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: {2} Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: {3} Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh,

fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. {4} But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, {5} Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) {6} And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Eph 2:1-6, KJV)

Here God plainly states that the believers were once dead in their sins as we followed the wickedness of Satan, which made us spiritual corpses. But God who named His elect before the foundation of the world quickened us or made us alive unto God and even raised us up and made us sit in heavenly places with the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, God has already seen the end of wickedness and His children reigning in the new heaven and new earth.

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; {14} Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; {15} And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (Col 2:13-15, KJV)

Here is another great verse of triumph for the believer. We were once spiritually dead but Christ took every penalty for every sin we committed, past, present, and future. Now because of Christ, there is nothing which can prevent the believer from going to heaven since every sin has been atoned for. This was the first judgment day, where Christ died for the sins of His people. The second judgment day will be the Great White Throne judgment where the unbeliever dies for his own sins

Ezek 37:14

And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.

I would like to offer a preliminary observation on this verse. If Ezekiel 37 was a prophecy of national Israel then something is

wrong. God says He was going to place His Spirit in them. Who is God's Spirit? He is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who bears witness with our spirit to the person and work of Christ. The nation of Israel is still in rebellion against God as they still reject and hate Christ. Since this condition persists today, it is obvious that God did not place His Spirit in the unsaved Jews or else they would be walking in Christ and not rejecting Him as they continuously do.

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. (1 John 2:23, KJV) So since they reject the Son, they are also rejecting the Father. *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Rom 8:9, KJV)*

Here God returns to the land again emphasizing that the land is not a physical land but it is the kingdom of God.

For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. {25} Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. {26} A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. {27} And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. {28} And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. (Ezek 36:24-28, KJV)

Here God says that He is going to bring them into their own land and then sprinkle "clean water" on them. What is the clean water he is going to sprinkle on them? *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (Heb 10:22, KJV)* The water which is sprinkled on us is the water of the true gospel. This is how we are given a new heart and a new spirit. Our old dead spirit is made alive through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, (Eph 5:26, KJV)* Here we see that the washing

of water comes by the word of God which brings the true gospel to its hearers.

Let us now return again to the term "your own land," as so many choose to attribute this to the nation of Israel. Let us go back to the beginning and see where the idea of a land for Israel came from and how it has been misinterpreted and misapplied.

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

And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. (Gen 12:7, KJV)

Based upon these 2 sets of verses we can safely conclude that national Israel will have a homeland and that came to pass when they left Egypt and the land of Israel was divided among the 12 tribes which as a whole became one nation. Now let us ask the question, is this what God had in view? Again we must let the Bible be our guide.

For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. (Gen 13:15, KJV)

Here is another insight as we see two words which must be factored into the equation and they are "for ever." God is now beginning to add an eternal dimension while simultaneously speaking in the physical dimension. The only people in Scripture that will be dwelling in an eternal land will be the redeemed of God, therefore God does not have national Israel in view when He speaks of eternal things. Now of course, there are those who God saved out of national Israel and he is still saving many physical Jews today and bringing them into the Spiritual Israel. Let us look at

one more verse which enforces this teaching and we have already looked at this verse already but it does bear repeating.

And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Gen 17:8, KJV)

Any time you see any of the covenants in Scripture which have words in them which speak of eternity, you will automatically know that God is not speaking of a physical covenant but is speaking of the gospel which is an eternal covenant. God has already fulfilled His promise to Abraham in connection with the physical land. Here are some Scriptures which reveal this.

And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. {44} And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. {45} There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass. (Josh 21:43-45, KJV)

And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age. {2} And Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and stricken in age: {3} And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God is he that hath fought for you. {4} Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward. {5} And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you. (Josh 23:1-5, KJV)

Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of

all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. (1 Ki 8:56, KJV)

Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; {8} And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous: {23} Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it. (Neh 9:7-8, 23, KJV)

We see that the Scriptures teach that God fulfilled His word to the Patriarchs concerning the Promised Land. The Israelites went in and possessed the land according to the promises of God. When prophecy preachers and teachers write books and say that God still owes Israel a land, they err greatly because they are calling God a liar by evading these passages. God promised them the land, they received it but what happened?

Wherefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood: and shall ye possess the land? {26} Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every one his neighbour's wife: and shall ye possess the land? {27} Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely they that are in the wastes shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that be in the forts and in the caves shall die of the pestilence. {28} For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through. {29} Then shall they know that I am the LORD, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed. (Ezek 33:25-29, KJV)

God simply removed them because they became wicked and ran after false gods. This is why their land was taken from them and their disobedience does not constitute a debt of land being owed to

them. They broke the covenant which resulted in the penalty of losing the land. Therefore, God owes them nothing and prophecy moguls who produce these false beliefs in their books are simply lying and are taking flight from the truths of the Scripture which we have seen.

Ezek 37:15-17

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, {16} Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: {17} And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.

Here we see that Ezekiel is commanded to take two sticks which represent the southern and northern kingdom of Israel. He is also commanded to take both sticks in his hand and as he does they shall become as one. Now for us to understand the spiritual meaning behind this we must look further in the Bible to give us understanding.

For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. (Isa 14:1, KJV)

Notice in this passage that "strangers" will be joined to Jacob. Jacob is a biblical reference to the redeemed of God. Now what strangers are going to be joined to Jacob? When we go to the New Testament, we find in many places that God is going to save the Gentiles also not only a remnant out of national Israel will be saved but many Gentiles will be saved also. We read in Romans 11 about how the Gentiles were grafted into the natural tree. The truth of the Gospel came to national Israel first and many believed and into that tree were the wild olive trees or the Gentiles grafted in to salvation. The melding of both Gentiles and physical Jews to form the Israel of God is set out at the end of Romans Chapter 11

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is

happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. {26} And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: (Rom 11:25-26, KJV)

This verse has probably been the most misunderstood and misapplied verse in the New Testament. The prophecy moguls continue to use this verse as their proof text that the entire nation of Israel will become saved at a future time. Even those who believe in free will apparently believe in predestination in that the whole nation of Israel is going to become saved. The key to understanding this verse is simple *"until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."* We saw in Ezekiel that God is going to make one nation of Israel out of the two sticks, the southern and northern kingdoms. The spiritual principle is simple. When God begins to save the Gentiles out of many countries and when the last one is saved that is to be saved, then "All Israel Will Be Saved." The all Israel is the Church of God and not the physical nation of Israel as we have already defined who Israel is.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Pet 3:9, KJV)

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (John 6:39 KJV)

Here are two verses which harmonize in meaning. In 2 Peter 3:9 we read that God is "not willing that any should perish." Who are these that God does not will to perish? They are His elect and He has committed Himself to save everyone which He named before the foundation of the world to salvation. In John 6:39 Jesus states that all of those the Father gives Him will come to Him and He will not lose one single soul. 2 Peter 3:9 in no way means that God does not want any to perish in hell and that He is waiting for them to accept Christ. This has nothing to do with that type of thought. If God wills something, do you think created man has the ability to abort God's will? I think not but there are many who propose free

will that believe they can command God when they want to be saved. How about this one "I gave God permission to be Lord of my Life." Arrogance, Blind Arrogance!!!!

Let us continue and look at a few more verses which give us a better understanding of the idea of combining two to make one.

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. {14} For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; {15} Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; {16} And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: {17} And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. {18} For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. {19} Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; {20} And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; {21} In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: {22} In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Eph 2:13-22 KJV)

Here we read that Christ is our peace who made one out of two, both Jews and Gentiles will be brought into the Church and as a result He makes one new man out of us. Notice the verses also state that He preached to those who were far off and near. This is another indication that the Gospel will go to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Also the Scriptures teach we both have access unto the Father by one Spirit. The teaching tells us that we all stand on the same footing and that no single race stands before God with a most favored status. We see that those who become saved are being built into a holy temple in the Lord. A while back I had mentioned the fact that Ezekiel 40-48 was not describing some "Millennium Temple" but it was describing the perfection of the church in building terms. Verses 21 and 22 reveal to us that the temple is a spiritual one and not a physical one.

Ezek 37:18-19

And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these? {19} Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

God continues to emphasize that He is going to make one nation out of two but here He states that the two nations will become one in His hand. Let us look at a passage of Scripture which give us an understanding as to what the one stick in the hand of God will be like.

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. {2} And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. {3} Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. {4} Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. {5} For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. (Isa 62:1-5 KJV)

This passage would take another full study to dissect but we will give it just a cursory look right now. We see that the gospel is going to go forth as something that lights the way which will never burn out. We can call salvation an eternal flame. We will also be called by a name which was unknown in Isaiah's time which may be the name "Christian." However, when one searches the Old Testament, we will find many names for the believer written there. One famous one is "Zion." This is where I got the name for my web site "Scion of Zion" which means a descendant or heir of Zion. The word "Saint" is used in the Old Testament 37 times. God will make us a crown of glory in His hand. His redeeming work is His crowning glory as all the Gentiles will see His redeeming work. It is opulently displayed

today in the believer. One was a drunk and now they are saved. One was a thief but now they are saved. One was a murderer but now they are saved. Amazing Grace how sweet the sound!

Then God says we will no longer be forsaken nor our land desolate. That word desolate in verse 4 means "deserted, lifeless or barren." What were our lives like before Christ came in? These 3 words describe it. Then He goes on to say that we will be married. Are not the believers the Bride of Christ? Also note in verse 4 He states that the "land" will be married. This is definitely a picture of the body of believers and the reason I can dogmatically say this is has anybody ever married land? Then in verse 5 we read how God will rejoice over us as His redeemed. This is how we are going to be in the hand of the Lord.

Ezek 37:20-21

And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. {21}

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

For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. {12} As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. {13} And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. (Ezek 34:11-13, KJV)

Here the Lord introduces the land again. God says that he is going to seek and search for His sheep wherever they have been scattered. He will then bring them into their own land. Notice He says they will be gathered out from the countries. Where are all the redeemed coming from today? Is it Israel? The answer is no, from all nations around the world including national Israel. And of course the nation that God is planting the believers in is the Israel of God

or the eternal Israel of Covenant. He will also feed them by the rivers. *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (Psa 1:3, KJV)* What is the great river which will feed the believers? The believers are fed by the Holy Spirit who gives understanding in the Scriptures. The mountains of Israel are a synonym for the Kingdom of God.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. (Psa 121:1, KJV)

The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. (Psa 72:3, KJV)

What mountain will bring peace to God's people? It is not a physical mountain but the Kingdom of God which is portrayed by the term "mountain" many times in Scripture. *His foundation is in the holy mountains. (Psa 87:1, KJV)*

Ezekiel 37:22

And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:

After 22 verses we are finally getting to the heart of the teaching of Ezekiel 37. We read that one king shall be over them and that King is the Lord Jesus Christ. Many times we hear the term that Christ is "The King of the Jews." For many years I believed that this statement meant that He was king over the nation of Israel alone. But as I began to study the Scriptures, I realized that statement was not speaking of the physical Jews but Christ is the King of the Spiritual Jews which is the Body of Christ or the Church.

Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. (Mat 2:2, KJV)

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Mat 1:21, KJV)

Who are the people of God? It is the body of Christ or His called out, redeemed, elected church. It was these He came to save and reign over. Now this is not to say that Christ does not reign over His creation as the Sovereign God but the eternal reign of Christ will be over His eternal church no matter what milieu they will be in concerning the new heaven and new earth.

Ezekiel 37:23

Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.

Here is a beautiful picture of salvation as this verse shows that God has cleansed His people.

For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; (1 Th 1:9, KJV)

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, {10} Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. {11} And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:9-11, KJV)

Here we see many more sins which God's people were involved in before salvation but notice the term which God uses to describe their present state. He says *"And such were some of you"* which means that God views their sin as past sins and does not hold any sin against His elect because they were all atoned for. Ezekiel says that these people will not defile themselves anymore which means that all the sins have been atoned for and forgotten and there is not one sin which God will hold against us. *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.* (Heb 10:17, KJV) So then why does the

believer and many clergy still view themselves and the body of Christ as sinners? Biblical ignorance that's why! Can anyone find me one verse in the Bible where God calls His children sinners? The only ones who will not concern themselves with world and false religions are the true believers since we have the truth of Christ abiding in us. The only reason that many "seeming" Christians go into false religions is because they were never saved to begin with. If a person is saved, they will not follow another voice (John 10) but God has committed Himself to keep His redeemed.

Ezekiel 37:24

And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

Now the book of Ezekiel was written about 600 BC which would be about 400 years after the death of King David. Does this verse mean that King David will be resurrected and reign over Israel or does it mean something else? The name David means "beloved or dear." *Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; (Rom 1:3, KJV)* David was made of the seed of Christ according to the Spirit. Christ was in the lineage of David. *Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? (John 7:42, KJV)*

After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: (Acts 15:16, KJV) The tabernacle of David is a synonym for the building up of the church. *For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, (Acts 2:34, KJV)* When speaking of the resurrection of Christ this passage makes a clear declaration that David did not ascend into heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ was the one who ascended into heaven. So when God uses David in Ezekiel 37:24 he is telling us that Christ will be the one who will be King over them.

God goes on to say that this king will also be the one shepherd which will be over them. David was a shepherd of sheep but the

Lord Jesus Christ is the Shepherd of His Church. *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. (John 10:11, KJV)* David did not give his life for the sheep but the Lord Jesus Christ did. In the balance of this verse God reiterates that those who follow the shepherd will be obedient to His statutes and laws. This type of obedience is only found in the redeemed

Ezekiel 37:25

And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

We have looked at the definition of "the land" and found biblically conclusive evidence that this land is the Spiritual Israel or Spiritual land of Canaan of which one enters only through Christ. God introduces the eternal element in this verse. First He states that David will be their prince forever. Whenever God introduces the word forever we can instantly look for His eternal salvation program and can discount any notion of a physical land location.

Notice though God speaks of generations of children are going to dwell in the new land. Is He speaking of physical children? I think we need to investigate it a little bit and the Bible gives us our definition of children. Keep in mind these children are in the realm of everlasting and not temporal.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. {13} I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. (1 John 2:12-13, KJV)

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

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:18, KJV)

Remember these four verses which reveal that God is speaking of His children as little children? These are the believers in Christ not little children. God uses this as a loveable description of His redeemed.

But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. {27} For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. {28} Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. {29} But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. {30} Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. {31} So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. (Gal 4:26-31, KJV)

We see in these passages that we are children of the free woman who is Sarah in conjunction with the New Jerusalem who is the mother of us all. What is meant here is that the body of believers being the New Jerusalem continues to bring children into the spiritual land of Canaan. Whenever we witness to someone and that person becomes saved, in essence, we as the New Jerusalem, have mothered another child for the Kingdom of God. God calls us children of promise. So the children that God has in view in Ezekiel 37:25 are the believers in the future that will continue to bring new believers into the Kingdom through the sending forth of the gospel. It is a spiritual reproduction not a physical reproduction in view. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God only spirit can.

Ezek 37:26

Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, {11} Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. {12} Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant

of peace: {13} And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel. (Num 25:10-13, KJV)

Here all the way back in Numbers which was about 1440 BC we see that God was already speaking about an everlasting covenant of a priesthood which was fulfilled in Christ. One need only look at Melchizedec in Hebrews 5-7 and see the characteristics he had. Only one person could fill that role and that is Christ. We also see in both the Ezekiel and Numbers passage we read about a "covenant of peace." What is this peace which God talks about?

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (Rom 5:1, KJV)

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. (Psa 46:9, KJV)

The covenant of peace is the Gospel itself which brings peace between God and man. Unsaved man is at war with God until a person becomes saved then there is peace. *And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (Eph 6:15, KJV)* The wars that God makes to cease are the wars between Himself and unsaved man. When God saves someone, He ends the war and He does this all over the world as he saves His elect out of every nation and tongue.

Notice the Ezekiel passage emphasizes that the covenant of peace will be an everlasting covenant. If God was speaking about physical wars between countries or individuals, then something is wrong because as soon as one war ends another one starts somewhere. Since this is a perpetual covenant, we are on safe ground viewing this covenant as the Gospel itself.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (Rev 21:3, KJV)

The Ezekiel passage speaks of the sanctuary of God being in the midst of the believers forever. This seals the understanding that this Chapter is not speaking of the physical nation of Israel but rather of the Redeemed of God.

Ezek 37:27-28

My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. {28} And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? {15} And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? {16} And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. {17} Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, {18} And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Cor 6:14-18, KJV)

God is saying that when we come out of the heathen and sinful practices, He will redeem us and be our God and Father forever and we will never be forsaken. Remember Isaiah 62:4? God continues to build the tabernacle of David or otherwise known as the eternal church as we see in the Acts passage. The result of this building will be those who will seek the Lord, whom the Lord has called.

And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, {16} After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: {17} That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. (Acts 15:15-17, KJV)

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. {2} And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. {3} And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. {4} And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. {5} And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. (Rev 21:1-5, KJV)

What a beautiful passage to end up the study of Ezekiel 37. The heathen knows when God has sanctified Israel because every born again believer is a testimony to the faithfulness of God. Remember, "I once was lost but now am found." We are found in the sanctuary in the midst of the New Jerusalem. God is our refuge and our strength.

Summation

We have come a long way in the study of Ezekiel 37 and we have safely concluded that this chapter is not speaking of the founding of Israel in 1948 nor does it apply to a future golden reign where all the physical Jews will become saved. This chapter deals specifically with the church as it is built one bone at a time. So the next time you read about Ezekiel 37 referring to national Israel, see if they go in depth as we did or if they just do a cursory "pick and choose" to make their prophecy fit into their personal molds.

The Church Age in Scripture

I was pondering the term “Church Age” and have taken that term “church age” and I have looked for it in the Scriptures and have been unable to locate it. The church age is a term which is used by those in the Dispensational movement as a period of time between Pentecost and the pre-wrath rapture of all the saints before the time of the Great Tribulation begins.

The church age has been defined by Dispensationalists with the seven churches found in Revelation 2 & 3. There is not the slightest indicator in these two chapters that they are to be understood as each church representing an era.

Dispensational Church Age Chronology

Ephesian - 53-170 AD

Smyrna - 170-312 AD

Pergamos - 312-606 AD

Thyatira - 606-1520 AD

Sardis 1520-1750 AD

Philadelphia - 1750-1906 AD

Laodicean - 1906-Present

The Dispensationalist teaches that the church age is partitioned into seven distinct eras. The problem with this analogy is that no church characteristics in Revelation 2 & 3 were unique to each time period. The problems listed in each church could be found in various churches at various times throughout the entire 1965 years. For example, the Dispensationalists teach that the Philadelphia period produced a very faithful church. Can anyone give proof that during that 156 years, that no false or apostate churches existed? The answer is no because there was apostasy in every time period of theirs as there is today. In fact it was in the mid 1800s that the German schools of liberalism started having an impact on local churches. In 1859 Darwin produced his “On the Origin of Species” and many pastors started accepting evolution. Many started to believe the Gap theory between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. There was even those who started to believe the seven days of creation were

long periods of time. Then in 1859 Constantine Tischendorf brought to light the Sinaiticus manuscript which has now been overwhelmingly proven that it was a 19th century counterfeit. In 1871 two Roman Catholic occultists, Hort and Westcott, convened a group of men to print a corrupt Bible and Greek text which became the source for all the modern versions of the Bible. This was followed by the 1901 ASV which was based on the Hort-Westcott corrupt Greek text. So much for the ultra-faithful church between 1750 & 1906.

There was no period in church history of a perfect church consisting of 100% saved people. Before John Wesley began to preach in England, there was much debauchery as England sunk into a spiritual low. This was supposed to be the time of the church of Philadelphia, the faithful church. This is why it is dangerous to take a doctrine like the seven dispensations and try to make them blanket doctrines, applying them to every church in the world. America was having an awakening under Jonathan Edwards while England was suffering spiritually. To judge the entire world by what happens in one place is a very flawed practice and will lead to false conclusions.

Meeting Places

Now when we read the book of Acts and the Epistles, we read that at the beginning of the church, after Pentecost, the believers met in homes and because of persecution they met clandestinely in different places to avoid persecution. Even today, the church in countries hostile to the Gospel meet in that same manner. Now during the early church era and the Middle Ages, the Christians were not meeting in any specific buildings designed for worship. It was only after the Reformation in 1517 when Christians began to build buildings to assemble in. Those buildings became known erroneously as “churches.” The church is not a physical building but it is the body of believers. Fancy artwork, steeples, and other things were taken from the paradigm of cathedrals. In fact, I was born into the Hungarian Reformed Church in Perth Amboy, NJ and within the confines of that building is an exact replica of the pulpit that Luther preached from. I must be honest, it is a beautiful wooden pulpit, true to old cathedral style.

Since Christians in the middle ages had to avoid persecution, they could not build, nor could afford to build buildings where they met corporately. This would invite the local Catholic sympathizers and Inquisitors to have the ability to hold them inside the church and burn it down with them in it. Since Christians could not nor did not meet in specific buildings (there may have been some exceptions), for the first 1500+ years, this means that the church age is only about 500 years old and not 1965 years old. For the first 1500 years, evangelism was done by groups of people and not by local churches. It was basically in the 1600's when Protestant Denominations started to form and then Christians felt safe attending, so the number of church buildings grew and with it came the different forms of governing the local bodies. Then missionary societies grew out of those church bodies and the church organizations have continued until the present day. Some of the dates of the founding of the denominations are below:

Presbyterian Church - Founded 1523 in Geneva, Switzerland
Episcopal Church - 39 Articles in 1563 - To USA in 1607 – To USA in 1640

Congregational Church - Founded 1581 in England - To USA in 1620 with Pilgrims

Reformed Church - Founded in 1628 in New Amsterdam (NYC) by Dutch immigrants

Lutheran Church - Founded circa 1529 in Germany - To USA in 1623

Methodist Church - Founded in 1739 in England - To USA in 1761 by Philip Embury

Mennonite Church - Founded in Zurich, Switzerland 1525 - To USA in 1683

Plymouth Brethren - Founded in Schwarzenau, Germany in 1708 - To USA in 1850

So we see that the “church age” is really a very recent event. Church buildings for true Christians have not been around for 1965 years and the majority of Christian work for the first 1500+ years was done outside of any denominations or church assemblies as we know them today.

Biblical Duration of the Church Age

A question arises. How does the assembling of Christians together in a building constitute an age? The answer is simple! It doesn't! Whenever we look at periods of time or ages, as the Bible puts it, we must go to the Scriptures for our answer and not a systematized theology based on human creation.

The church began with the calling of the first believer, whether it was Adam, Eve, or Abel, and will end when the last one is saved. Then cometh the end. Look at the following Scriptures:

The Present Age

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom 8:18, KJV)

I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, *I say*, that *it is* good for a man so to be. (1 Cor 7:26, KJV)

Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: (Gal 1:4, KJV)

For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. (2 Tim 4:10, KJV)

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (Titus 2:12, KJV)

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. (Mat 13:40, KJV)

And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: (Luke 20:34, KJV)

And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. (John 8:23, KJV)

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Rom 12:2, KJV)

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. (1 Cor 3:19, KJV)

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

Look at the characteristics that represent this present world:

Romans 8:18 - This is a time of suffering

1 Corinthians 7:26 - This world is a time of distress

Galatians 1:4 - This world is evil

2 Timothy 4:10 - This world draws us back with all its sinful enticements

Titus 2:12 - This world is comprised of ungodliness and worldly lusts

Matthew 13:40 - This World will have an end

Luke 20:34 - There is physical marriage

John 8:23 - Christians are not of this world but are of Heaven

Romans 12:2 - Christians are not to be conformed to this world

1 Corinthians 3:19 - The Wisdom of this world is foolishness

Ephesians 2:2 - Before Christians were saved, they walked according to the world.

This is how the Bible sums up the present world or age that we live in. It is an age that began at the time of creation and will not end until the last one becomes saved on the last day. Now let us look at the other age that the Bible speaks of:

The Age to Come

For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. (Heb 13:14, KJV)

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; (Heb 9:11, KJV)

And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, (Heb 6:5, KJV)

Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. (1 Tim 6:19, KJV)

For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. (1 Tim 4:8, KJV)

That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (Eph 2:7, KJV)

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: (Eph 1:21, KJV)

Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting. (Luke 18:30, KJV)

But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. (Mark 10:30, KJV)

Every one of these nine verses carry a common theme, and that is eternal life. The things of this world are passing away and are but shadows. As we read them we see there is a permanency attached to the ages or world to come. That next age is going to be the New Heaven and the New Earth. *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.* (2 Pet 3:13, KJV)

Absence of a Church Age

We have seen that the Bible speaks of only two ages on earth. The present age began with Adam and Eve, and will end when the last one of God's Elect will be saved. The second age is the eternal age. The Bible does not designate a specific age for believers

meeting in special buildings. In fact, the Bible is silent on how Christians are to meet. There is nothing commanding us to meet in special buildings nor is there any command for us to meet in homes. The command for the believers is that they gather on the Lord's Day which is Sunday and not Saturday. The meeting place is academic. Throughout history believers have met in many different places and as I already have pointed out, church buildings did not come into permanency until the 16th-17th century. The word church is the Greek word "ekklesia" and it means "called out assembly."

This means that the church is the body of believers and not the building. In the Epistles of Paul, there were the seeds already planted for future church buildings and congregations. This is why God gave Elders, Pastors, and Deacons to care for the flock of God. These offices were already in use at the time of Paul. These offices were then transferred to the larger churches when they began to multiply and grow. House churches are to be under the same type of government as the large churches.

If there was a church age and an end to this church age, before the Lord's return, would not that constitute a sign that we are living in the final hours? Did not Jesus say that an evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign? Then He said the only sign was that of Jonah. So if we try and start piecing together all these numbers in Scripture to try and come up with a date of Christ's return, then we are seeking a sign, in fact, many signs, and that is against Scripture. Is it not true that there will be two in one field and one bed, and one will be taken and the other left? This means business as usual. If God revealed the date of Christ's return and if people knew what day that was, how could they sleep and why would they work? What would be the purpose?

Summary

There is not one Scripture in the Bible that teaches a dispensational "church age," whether seven time periods or one time period. The church age is imbedded with this present age as God is saving His Elect out of it to prepare them for the next age, which will be eternity. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are just as much part of the church as any other blood bought believer. God is calling out of this present world system His children for eternal life. When the last one

becomes saved, then that ushers in the end of the church/present age otherwise known as the end of the world.

Time

Old Testament and New Testament Timing Methods

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: (Eccl 3:1, KJV)

While every single thing on this earth is governed by time constraints, there emerges a definite difference in the method of timing which God uses in both the Old and New Testament. When we read the Old Testament, we will see that timing plays a great part in the law. Now the first encounter we have with time is the genealogies found in Genesis 5. Then we move to Genesis 6 and there we read about Noah who built the Ark and we read that Noah took 120 years to build the ark. (Gen. 6:3) Then seven days before the flood began, God told Noah to get his family and the animals on to the ark. (Gen 7:4) Then we are told that it rained for forty days and nights. (Gen. 7:17) Then we are told that the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat in the seventh month and seventeenth day. I went through this to show that in the Old Testament, God had used specific times and dates for every event which was planned. We will see this under the Mosaic Law as well.

Then when we look at the Old Testament Feasts, they were to be celebrated at certain times of the year and for a certain length of time:

- 1) Passover was to be celebrated on the fourteenth day of Nisan (Lev. 23:5)
- 2) Fifteenth day of Nisan is the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days (Lev. 23:6)
- 3) Feast of Pentecost - 50 days after Passover (Lev. 23:16)
- 4) In the seventh month Tishri, on the first day, the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:24)
- 5) In the seventh month Tishri, on the tenth day is the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:27)

There are other feasts but these five will give us examples of how meticulous God was in instituting the feasts at certain times of the year and for specific lengths of time. Not only was God very specific on the Old Testament Feasts, He was also very specific on the timing of the Judges and how long the land had rest as a result of their deliverance:

Othniel - 40 years (Judges 3:9-11)
Ehud - 80 Years (Judges 3:30)
Gideon - 40 years (Judges 8:28)
Elon - 10 years - (Judges 12:11)
Samson - 20 years (Judges 16:30-31)

God was also very meticulous in letting us know the length of time the Kings of Judah and the Northern Kingdom ruled.

Northern Kingdom (Israel)

Jeroboam - 22 years
Nadab - 2 years
Zimri - 7 days
Shallum - 1 month
Hoshea - 9 years

Southern Kingdom (Judah)

Rehoboam - 17 years
Ahaziah - 1 year
Uzziah - 52 years
Manasseh - 55 years
Zedekiah - 11 years

As you can see in these ten kings of Judah and Israel, God gives us the length of time they served as kings. Then we not only find the genealogies in Genesis chapters 5 and 11, but sprinkled throughout the Old Testament are other genealogies.

Other Old Testament Genealogies

Ruth 4:18-22
1 Chronicles 1-9
1 Chronicles 14:3-7

New Testament Genealogies

Matthew 1

Luke 3

The New Testament genealogies are the culmination of all the genealogies found in the Old Testament. This is because the genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3, end with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Two Different Time periods

There are two totally different time periods in reference to Scripture. Before the Bible was completed, God had used prophets as He stated in Amos 3:7 but now we live in a different time. We now live in a time when the Bible has been completed. The message we have today is different than the one in the Old Testament. Our message is to proclaim Christ and him crucified.

New Testament Timing Methods

1) The Apostle Paul was beheaded - Did God tell him before when it would happen?

2) The disciples were told by Christ that they were to stay in Jerusalem until the

Promise of the Father, which was the Holy Spirit, would be given to them. - They

were given no time frame as to when it would happen.

3) In Matthew 24:1-2, Jesus speaks about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. which

signaled the end of the Mosaic era. Notice the word "here." No time frame was given

at all as to when that would happen. In fact, it is not even mentioned in the book of

Revelation written 25 years later. *And Jesus went out, and departed*

from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the

temple. {2} And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto

you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. (Mat 24:1-2, KJV)

4) The return of the Lord is going to happen but there are no specific time frames in the

NT as to when it is going to take place. *Which also said, Ye men of*

Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up

from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into

heaven. (Acts 1:11, KJV)

We are only told that certain events will precede the Lord's return but again, for example, no time frame is given as to how long the Great Apostasy would last till it dovetails into the Lord's return.

Now these four instances, and there are others, show us that there is a difference in the way God uses time in both the Old and New Testament. The times in the OT are specific times such as three times a year all males must appear before the Lord, the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies yearly, the Feast of Pentecost was seven weeks after Passover, the men of Israel could not go to war until they were 20 years old, etc. In the OT, time was governed by law but in the NT it is governed by grace. What I mean by that is simply found in a verse like Luke 19:13. *And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. (Luke 19:13, KJV)* The Christian is told to occupy, till when, the next feast day or new moon? No, until the Lord returns or He takes us in physical death. In the temple service in the Old Testament a person had to retire at 50 years of age. There is no such thing as retirement for a Christian in the New Testament.

The New Testament, under which we live right now, is governed by different rules. In the NT, believers do not have a High Priest who goes into the Holy of Holies each year, Christ is our High Priest. In the NT, there are absolutely no feasts for the believer to keep because they were all kept in Christ and done away with under the

Mosaic Law. This is why when people use these timed events from the OT and try to force them on the NT, they fall into a trap by building upon the length of the feasts which lead to total disappointment because OT law was a different dispensation than NT Grace (even though grace was present in the OT). This is why we are told to be ready because we do not know the day nor hour because the timing of the NT is much different and readiness is the required key given throughout the NT.

When will the Holy Spirit be taken out of the way?

One of the questions which many Christians have today is concerning the Holy Spirit and when will he be taken out of the way, or has He already been taken out of the way? The Scripture which we will look at is 2 Thessalonians 2:7 along with surrounding verses which we will look at.

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. (2 Th 2:7, KJV)

The primary focus is on the words, "the way." There is no doubt that there will be an end to the work of the Holy Spirit in this present world. The question, is when will that end? Before we can determine that, we must first look at the two-fold mission of the Holy Spirit. Below are four verses which give us the insight into the first reason God will be giving the gift of the Holy Spirit. The first group is John 16:8-11.

John 16:8 KJV

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

The first task the Holy Spirit will perform will be to "reprove the world of sin. The word "reprove" is "elencho" which means to convict or convince. The Holy Spirit will be convicting the world while He is convincing the believer of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Only the people that the Holy Spirit applies the word to will be convinced, the unbelievers in the world will be convicted on the last day by the word.

John 16:9 KJV

Of sin, because they believe not on me;

The first conviction is the unbeliever will not believe on Christ because they were not chosen unto salvation. They will be convicted of their sins, and will spend an eternity in Hell.

John 16:10 KJV

Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

The Holy Spirit is going to convince the believer of the righteousness of Christ and this will be proven because God the Father will accept the finished work of His Son on Calvary and afterwards receive Him back into Heaven to once again sit on His throne to reign over the church. This convincing will come through indwelling because all will be by faith since the Lord Jesus Christ will go back to heaven and the next time He will be seen is when He will appear on the last day. On Judgment day the unbeliever, will be convicted on this charge of denying the substitutionary atonement of Christ.

John 16:11 KJV

Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

The unbeliever will be convicted of denying the judgment of Satan and also denying there would be a judgment at the end of time where all those not in Christ will be judged for their sins. If you follow Satan, you will be judged as Satan is judged. Just like the verse which states that if you give a cup of cold water in the name of a prophet, you will receive a prophet's reward. In other words, you are sharing in the ministry of that prophet. If you do works in the name of Satan, you will receive Satan's reward.

We saw that conviction and convincing are going to be the initial ministry of the Holy Spirit. Now let us look at the second reason that God will be giving the gift of the Holy Spirit. We see that in the following verse.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.
(John 16:13, KJV)

Once the person has become saved and has received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, His next mission is to guide the believer into all truth. This means that the Christian will not be easily deceived or deceived at all. He will open up the Scriptures to the searching Christian and He may close them to those who are abusing the Scriptures, thus allowing them to go deeper into apostasy. It is also possible for the Lord to remove the candlestick of truth from a believer. He did it with Solomon, and He can do it to any Christian who strays from the truth and refuses to objectively study the Scriptures. After all, where does apostasy start?

Does it start with everyone in the congregation of a church hermeneutically abusing a Scripture? No! Apostasy comes into the church or a ministry by means of one person and then it spreads. How does it spread? *As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (2 Pet 3:16, KJV)*

If you think that the above warning does not apply to Christians, then hold on to your spiritual hat. Look at the following verse:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. {2} Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. (John 15:1-2, KJV)

Did you see it? He didn't say, "any branch!" He didn't say, "every branch!" He said, "Every branch IN ME." If you are a Christian, you are in Christ. "In Christ" is used 77 times in the New Testament, 74 times by the Apostle Paul. God reserves the right to remove (take home) any Christian who is abusing the true interpretation of Scripture and causing others to do the same. *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. (Mat 18:6, KJV)* This verse is not teaching about children, unless they are Christians. Christ was showing that the children of God are likened to the children in the world. Christ is saying that if anyone offends just one of His

children, they may be in danger of judgment and may have never been truly saved.

Just to summarize this first section, we see that the Holy Spirit will be serving two basic functions. He will convict the world and convince the believer. He will then guide the Christian into all truth. Now let us go to 2 Thessalonians and apply what we have learned so far.

2 Thessalonians

Does God judge the local church? The answer is yes, beyond the shadow of a doubt that God indeed judges congregations but He does this judgment by individual congregation and not as a blanket judgment. Each of the churches in Revelation had a different problem except Philadelphia. Did God say He was going to judge Thyatira for the sin of Sardis? No, He planned on dealing with each individual congregation according to their faithfulness or faithlessness. Did God judge the Northern Kingdom and Judah together? No He didn't! He judged them individually as shown openly by the 135 year period between the captivity of Judah and Israel. The blanket theory does not even exist in the Old Testament, let alone the new.

2 Thessalonians 2:1

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,"

The chapter opens with Paul setting the theme for the following set of verses. We read that Paul is speaking of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the rapture of the believers which is our gathering unto Him. Paul sets the theme as the events which will happen just prior to the return of Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:2

"That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand."

Paul was assuring the Thessalonian church that the day of the Lord has not happened and they did not miss the gathering of the saints.

There must have been false teachers bellowing forth false teachings at Thessalonica and scaring all the Christians that the Lord returned and they were left behind or that the final days of earth's existence were upon them. There may have been someone faking Paul's signature and this is why these Christians were upset and confused. 2 Thessalonians was written about 10-15 years before the first major persecution of Christians began under Nero. There would have been no outside evidence to conclude that the day of the Lord had come. It was just convincing letters and arguments which confused these Christians.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; {4} Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

Before the Lord Jesus Christ will return and gather all His Saints to be with him, some things must take place first which give a sign that the coming of the Lord is near. In these two verses, we are made aware of them.

Falling Away

What does this mean? The word in the Greek for "falling away" is one that is extremely applicable to our day. It is the word "apostasy." Now the word "apostasy" means "departure or rebellion." It basically means that one has departed from the long-established proper teachings of Scripture. Paul says that in the days prior to Christ's return there will be a departure from the teachings of Scripture. Walk into any Christian book store and you will find departure written on almost every book. False Bible versions have departure written on them. Many churches have departure written on them. Many radio, TV, and Internet ministries have departure written on them. Every cult has departure written on them. In the day we live, it is hard to find a faithful church but they are out there because the Lord said: *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (Mat 24:35, KJV)* His words are found in a true church and the true Bible, the King James

Bible. So we see that prior to the Lord's return, there will be a great departure from biblical truth.

Man of Sin, Son of Perdition

In the Scriptures, "Son of Perdition" is mentioned twice. Once here to describe Satan and the other to describe Judas. *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. (John 17:12, KJV)* Now we see in Verse 3 that the son of perdition will be revealed or disclosed. Who will he be disclosed to and how will we know it is Satan? The key is the progression of this verse. First, there must come apostasy in the Christian community and the only ones who are going to know when there is a departure are those who are truly saved. Even Jesus said the Elect cannot be deceived. Didn't the Holy Spirit come into the world to guide the true believers into truth? Satan as the false teacher will be revealed to Christians through the false teachings he brings. We cannot physically see him but through his evil works, we know he is there. A church that teaches truth in 2008 and then in 2018, does not teach truth, has slowly succumbed to the teachings of Antichrist. The term "perdition" may also be understood as "destruction, ruin, or waste." Is not this a proper description of the works of Satan?

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Th 2:4, KJV)

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: {14} I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. (Isa 14:13-14, KJV)

In these verses in Isaiah we have almost an exact parallel to 2 Thessalonians 2:4, of Satan's desire to be like the Most High or God Himself. Satan said he is going to exalt his throne above all the stars of God. I doubt that he is speaking of stars in space, he is obviously speaking of the believers since the next phrase is that he going to sit upon the mount or above the congregation. Satan has a

lust to be worshipped. What better place to assault for that worship than the local church? So then how does Satan get to control the church? He does it through the false teachings which are prevalent in many churches. Go to some main line churches and you will hear more sympathy for a whale than a soul. Why should the question even come up as to whether homosexuals should be ordained? What about signs and wonders churches? The abomination which makes desolate are the works of Satan in the churches. When Satan's minions have been successful to destroy truth in a congregation, they go on to the next one.

Satan receives worship by means of the acceptance of his false gospels both in and out of the church. In the last days, Satan and his ministers come as an angel of light to deceive. That is the method Satan uses to gain worship or adoration. There will never be a time, even in a dead church, when Satan will get direct worship. It will always come through deceit. This is how he shows himself to be God. He takes over congregations and diverts them from the truth, then the Lord Jesus removes the candlesticks of truth, and there you have a desolate congregation.

In verse 4, the word "so" means, "for this reason or in order that." This is the conjunction which gives us the key to this verse. Satan opposes and exalts himself in order that he may sit in the temple or the local church. His reason for opposing God is to gain the adulation of his people. True believers will not accept false teachings and therefore will not give Satan worship. So the true believers leave the dead church and go to another one which has not been adulterated with false teachings yet. While Satan has his emissaries in every congregation, he will not be ruling in every congregation. For not every congregation is dead.

2 Thessalonians 2:5

"Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"

Obviously when Paul was with them there may have been much discussion concerning the return of the Lord. This is probably owing to the fact that he mentions the rapture of the Saints.

2 Thessalonians 2:6

“And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.”

Paul resumes his teaching on the subject of Satan. Paul now introduces the reason that Satan will never have absolute power on earth or in the churches. This is because he is being restrained. Since there is no human being which can restrain or withhold Satan, this is definitely speaking of the Holy Spirit who is eternal God Himself. Now there is another aspect which must be considered although minor in comparison to the work of the Holy Spirit Himself. Whenever the truth is proclaimed, then Satan is being restrained. Whenever a true believer brings the gospel to someone and they become saved, Satan has been restrained. Now Pre-tribulationism believes that the Holy Spirit will be removed when all true believers will be raptured before the great tribulation begins. This theory falls flat because they also claim there will be some who will be saved during the final tribulation period. How can a person become saved unless the Holy Spirit will be present to apply the word to one of God's chosen?

If a false teaching is rampant in a church and then someone comes in and teaches the truth and displaces the false teaching, then Satan has been restrained, but not by human effort. It was done through the power of the Holy Spirit confirming the work of the word of truth in that place. We can safely conclude that only the Holy Spirit is powerful enough to restrain Satan.

2 Thessalonians 2:7

“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.”

The word for “the way” is the Greek word “mesou.” This word may easily be translated “midst” and this is how the proponents use it. In translating it this way, does it hurt the case for true interpretation? The answer is no! For the Bible is speaking here that there is going to be a time when the ministry of the Holy Spirit will be at an end. The word “work” in this verse is a present tense verb which means the mystery of iniquity was already working in the churches in Paul's time. So that means that the mystery of iniquity is going to

work simultaneously with the work of the Holy Spirit until an appointed end. (Wheat and Tares) The question then, is when is the end? Is it the present? Or is it something else? The answer to our question is found in the next verse.

2 Thessalonians 2:8

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:”

Notice this verse starts with “and.” This is a continuing thought not a separate one. The Holy Spirit will be active in all the world, including the churches, saving all the elect until the last one is saved. Then the Holy Spirit will be removed from the midst because His salvation work is done. Verses 7 & 8 are speaking of the last day when Satan will be destroyed upon the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us look at the following verses which puts a confirming edge to this.

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. {16} They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; {17} That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? (Isa 14:15-17, KJV)

Here Satan is spoken of as a man as in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. He will be revealed as the man of sin upon his destruction. The Bible speaks that he has already been judged so his sentence is now being carried out. In comparison to the might of the Lord Jesus, Satan will be looked on as a defeated, weak foe. When the last one of God’s elect is saved, this will usher in the last day. The Christians will be taken to Heaven, Satan will be taken to Hell, the unbelievers judged, and the Universe will be remade by God. This is when the Holy Spirit will be removed, simultaneously with the removal of every last Christian on earth. Remember how Paul started the chapter, with speaking of “our gathering to the Lord Jesus Christ?” Well that is the context of these verses. Let us go back to the John verses. What was the Holy Spirit’s two-fold mission? To convict the unbeliever and convince the believer by

bringing them into all truth. Once the last one is saved, these two ministries will have ended.

Summary

We have openly seen that these eight verses in 2 Thessalonians are dealing with the end of the world, namely the last day. We have seen how the context flows uniformly concerning the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and we did not even allegorize or over-spiritualize any verse. We have safely concluded that the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the midst of the world on the last day and not before. God's elect, which haven't been summoned yet, are still in the world, in false religions, in cults, in dead churches and other places. Once they are all called out and saved, then the end shall come and the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way.

The Great Apostasy is Already Here!

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

In 2 Thessalonians 2:3, we were warned by the Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that there would be one major sign of the impending return of Christ. Paul states that the return of Christ would be immediately preceded by a great falling away.

That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. (2 Th 2:2, KJV)

These teachings were believed and had actually caused the Thessalonian church to waver. The word “shaken” in 2 Thess. 2:2 is the same word found in Acts 16:26 and used in the same inflection. *And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.* (Acts 16:26, KJV) We get an idea of how bad the Thessalonian church was wavering by looking at Acts 16:26. When Paul and Silas were in the jail at Philippi, they had sung songs and praised God and then at midnight there was a great earthquake.

Paul had assured them that the Day of Christ was not at hand in their day and that they should not concern themselves with what they had heard. Apparently, there were some false teachers who had convinced the Thessalonians that the Day of Christ was at hand in their time. Paul then goes on in verse 3 to assure them that the Day of Christ will not arrive until the one major sign precedes it and that is “the great falling away.” While Satan has all the prophecy pundits and the majority of Christians looking at the nation of Israel, Satan has almost freed himself up to bring in the great apostasy unnoticed.

Diversion is a great tool which Satan uses against the Christian and he continues to use it because it is his most effective tool. You can't be watching west if you are facing east! The great end time sign which the Bible warns us of is not dealing with the nation of Israel but is dealing with Christianity. I am speaking about Christianity in total which means those who are in the churches and those who are not, such as, preachers on the radio, shortwave radio, and TV plus the Internet, etc.

While Satan has the Christians looking in an opposite direction, he has brought in damnable heresies which are now pervading the church and the tentacles of false teachings have reached the general Christian population. When I speak of Christians, I am speaking of those who are truly born again, not those who claim to be Christians.

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. (2 Pet 2:1, KJV)

2 Peter 2:1 warns us that in the time of Israel and Judah, there were false prophets among the people who were leading them astray. As you know both Judah and Israel went into captivity because of their acceptance of false teachings which led to the worshipping of other gods. The same caliber of false prophets are in the churches today causing the Christians to go astray in their beliefs. Now sometimes it is unbelievers which have undue influence over Christians and we will look at some who do.

Falling Away

The major sign which Paul gives is that there must come a falling away. The word "falling away" is the word "apostasy." The word "apostasy" carries with it the general idea of a departure or abandonment of what one has learned. In this case it would be the orthodox teachings of Scripture. The word "apostasia" is used only twice in the New Testament. It is used in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 for the English words "falling away" and in Acts 21:21.

And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs. (Acts 21:21, KJV)

In Acts 21:21, the KJV translators rightly translated it as “forsake.” When someone has the truth of Scripture and then begins following false teachings, no matter how innocuous they are, it is still a forsaking of the truth. If a Christian sinks into heresy, they go apostate. Heresy and apostasy are cause and effect. Heresy is the cause and apostasy is the effect. The sad fact is that in our day, the majority of Christians cannot tell the difference between truth and heresy.

The great falling away, which is well under way in our day, is not an event which will take place in a short time. For Christians to accept or be duped by false teachings, they must be fed slowly and if they are fed slowly, the apostasy will take a firm foothold and when it does, Satan will have Christians defending it. The great falling away will be a progressive apostasy, where we will see where major movements have affected the teachings of the church. It started out slow and will eventually increase in intensity until it gets to the point where it is layered, that is, false teachings coming in extremely rapid progression from all areas.

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (Isa 5:20, KJV)

Isaiah ran into the same problem where the theology of Israel had become so distorted, that they could no longer tell what was evil and what was good, and which was which. This same situation exists today in Christianity and we can see the fruit of it as “confusion.” Just as Israel and Judah listened to false teachers, the Christians go to commentaries to look for truth rather than the Bible itself. Where is truth, in what man writes or in what God has written?

The Progressive Apostasy

In this section I want to point out some of the major movements and their dates, which have been used of Satan to infect Christianity with false teachings thus beginning and maintaining the great falling away and this is in no way exhaustive.

1609

Prior to this there were false teachings which existed but they did not have the major effect on bible teaching as these movements. Satan makes this move just 92 years after the Reformation.

This was the year that Jacob Arminius brought in his five points which puts man at the helm of salvation and removes God as the initiator. Arminius taught:

Free will of man - Partial Depravity
Conditional Election
Universal Redemption or General Atonement
Holy Spirit can be resisted - Resistible Grace
Loss of Salvation - Conditional Perseverance

In 1618-19 the Synod of Dort was convened in the Netherlands in Dordrecht and it was for the purpose of comparing the works of Arminius to the works of Calvin to determine which view was the true biblical one. Arminius had requested this meeting for this purpose but he died in 1609. The final determination of the meeting was that the views of Jacob Arminius were considered heretical and the teachings of John Calvin became the official teachings of the Dutch Reformed Church and the Netherlands in general. Even though the teachings of Arminius was considered heretical, nevertheless, the die was cast and his views would become the major belief in 99% of Christianity. One of the greatest proponents of Arminius was John Wesley (1703-1791) who started the Methodist Church. The views of Arminius makes God the beggar and man the higher authority with the belief that he can control God by making Him their savior.

1707

This was the year that John Mill created his critical Greek text. It did not have a great impact at that time but nevertheless, here too, the die was cast.

1830

In 1830 in Port Glasgow Scotland, there were prophecy meetings which were held called the Port Glasgow Prophecy Conferences. One of the main attendees was a woman named Margaret MacDonald. She had trance channeled a new teaching called “the two-stage appearance of Christ.” This meant that Christ was going to return in a secret rapture and rapture all His believers before the tribulation period started. The second time He would come would be on the last day of the tribulation period and then He would establish a literal thousand years to rule on this earth.

And he shall speak *great* words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (Dan 7:25, KJV)

This teaching caught on like wildfire because as we see in Daniel 7:25, Satan would change times and laws. The Bible clearly teaches that the rapture of the Saints is on the last day and not 1,007 years earlier. Satan had succeeded in changing the times. This does not mean he changed the times in the Bible because the word of God is forever settled in Heaven. This means, he took a cardinal doctrine of last things and changed it. Since the pre-trib rapture will allow Christians to escape the so-called 7 year tribulation period, it became the new teaching in the church handed down through Edward Irving and John Nelson Darby and Scofield. Now today, 98% of all churches are pre-trib and have discounted the true timing of the rapture found in the Bible. (John 6:39; 40; 44; 54; John 11:24; and John 12:48 teach a last day rapture.)

Mid-Nineteenth Century

The teachings of Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) spawned the JEDP Theory which compartmentalized the Bible and gave very late dates for its authorship. J stands for Yahwehist which denies Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch and places it about 850 B.C.

The E stands for Elohist and takes writings of the Old Testament and places them at 750 B.C. D stands for Deuteronomist which basically takes Deuteronomy and places the date of writing about 620 B.C. The P stands for Priestly and takes some of the writings from Genesis 1 to the death of Moses and places it about 500 B.C. German theological liberalism gave rise to American liberalism because it was another attack upon the Scriptures and this liberal attack on the Bible spread throughout many churches and is still in vogue today.

1859

Up until the mid 1800's, there was a general orthodoxy in the churches and it did not matter what Protestant denomination, they basically taught the same things with the same Bible. Then Satan made another major move in 1859, Charles Darwin published his "Origin of Species" and many clergy began to adopt the teachings of his book and that began the concept of 1,000 years for each of the creation days, the gap theory between Genesis 1:1 and 2, the questioning of the first three chapters of Genesis. With these began the questioning and the rejection of significant parts of the Bible. If someone questions the veracity of the first three chapters of Genesis, they are, in essence, questioning the existence of God. The first four words of the Bible are, "In the beginning God..." Darwin's book precipitated the war between science and the Bible, when before this time, they were harmonious.

1859

This was the year that Constantine Tischendorf gave rise to the Sinaiticus manuscript which was heralded as a New Testament manuscript from the 4th century. This manuscript along with the Vaticanus manuscript here touted by "scholars" as the oldest and best manuscripts even though they differ from each other in 3026 places in the gospels alone. Recently the Sinaiticus has been proven to be a 19th century counterfeit making all the bibles translated from it as false. The reality is that all the modern bibles use Sinaiticus and Vaticanus as their sources negating the truth and usefulness of the modern versions.

1871-1881

Then on top of that apostasy, in 1871, in England, two professors, Hort and Westcott, both of whom accepted Darwin, had taken those two corrupt manuscripts, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, and created their Revised Version which was published in 1881 and on the tails of that version, in America there was a translation made from the same corrupt manuscripts called the American Standard Version of 1901. These two professors were unbelievers and occultists. They rejected the first three chapters of Genesis and were Roman Catholic sympathizers. The Revised Version in 1881 did not break any sales records and contained massive omissions and deletions along with attacks on the cardinal doctrines of Scripture. Even though sales were very low, nevertheless the die had been cast for the modern versions which would prove extremely heretical.

1906

On the tails of the 1901 American Standard Version in 1906 came the Azuza Street Mission phenomenon with the resurgence of the speaking in of tongues but these were not the tongues of Acts or Corinth which were legitimate languages, but these modern tongues were nothing but gibberish. Along with these tongues came signs, wonders, dreams, visions, and prophecies. There was also much occultic activity recorded at these meetings. There were tongues phenomenon going back to the mid 1800's but these were far and few in between but it wasn't until 1906 when Satan made his move. The Azuza Street mission became the catalyst for the modern tongues movement. Now Satan had people looking to prophecies, signs, and wonders instead of the Bible.

1908

In 1908 the Federal Council of Churches was formed under Harry F. Ward. He was known as the Red Dean of Union Theological Seminary. He was a communist and had persuaded many Protestant ministers to adhere to Communism. This was Satan's first attempt to bring all the churches together regardless of whether they were true or false churches. This was the point where communism made its inroads into the church thus changing the message of many churches from the true Gospel of the Bible to the communist platform of Social Justice. Satan was successful

through these unbelievers to refocus the direction of the church from Heaven to earth.

1909

In 1909 the first edition of the Scofield Bible was published. The notes became the foundation for Christian Zionism. When the 1967 revision of the Scofield Bible was published, it stated that no one was to speak against Israel and her policies because this would be equal to speaking against God. It is the Scofield Bible which is the catalyst for those who endorse Christian Zionism, which is the belief that if Israel wants it, then God wants it, even if it means wholesale slaughter of other people groups. The notes in the Scofield Bible have diverted many Christians from the truth.

1913

The Federal Reserve was created after a meeting on Jekyll Island off the Georgia coast in 1908. The Federal Reserve is an illegal organization because it is a private organization run by private bankers. This gets a place in the Apostasy dates because the money it creates is not money but notes which are instruments of debt. Congress relinquished its duty to coin interest free money to the International Banking community that prints money and then loans it into circulation. At this writing, the Federal Reserve extracts \$400 billion dollars a year from the American economy forcing higher taxes and more workers to pay the taxes which are used to repay the bankers for their loans to the USA. They caused the great depression by restricting the money supply causing there to be less money in circulation than is needed to run the country which meant a crash of the economy. Finances always have a ripple effect when it comes to giving to ministries. If ministries cannot get funded, they have to close up shop and with each true ministry that dries up, another gospel outlet is silenced.

1914

The modern charismatic movement was now on its way with the founding of the Assemblies of God in 1914. The AOG printed a booklet which is called "Our Distinctive Doctrine" and it is the "Baptism in the Holy Spirit." (Both I have in my possession) This baptism would allow a person to speak in other tongues. This concept has spread like wildfire when it was first introduced. No

longer was the tongues movement consigned to a mission, it was now being formed into a church denomination which would spawn other churches and denominations such as the Four Square church in 1923 founded by Aimee Semple MacPherson who claimed to be a faith healer, yet she died anyway. The charismatic movement also spawned the idea of women preachers.

The IRS was formed one year after the Federal Reserve. It is also an illegal organization which is the collection agency for the Federal Reserve. Taxes are as high as 40-50% of a person's salary thus hindering the amount they can give to send forth the gospel. The IRS controls the churches by hanging their tax exempt status over their heads and threatens to remove it if they don't fall in line and be a good government controlled church. 501c3 takes a church from Christ being the head to the government being the head.

1948

In 1948 the nation of Israel was founded and it immediately became the "American Idol" of the majority of Christians. The book of Revelation focuses on the time period from the ascension of Christ to the last day in regards to the body of believers. The prophecy pundits have taken the book of Revelation and replaced the true meaning of it with all kinds of fantasy events focusing on Israel. Since that has happened, there have been prophecy books by the thousands written and they have all been wrong concerning end time events, nevertheless, Christians have taken their eyes off the true meaning of Revelation and end time events and continue to keep them focused on Israel. The dispensationalists claimed it was a fulfillment of prophecy and since it was formed, it has become an idol in most churches and has usurped the place of Christ.

In 1948 the World Council of Churches was formed which was Satan's attempt to unify all the churches of the world under this communist organization. The WCC has sponsored terrorism and many Christians have died under the grants given to communist organizations by the WCC. One organization is the African National Congress.

1950

In 1950 the National Council of Churches was formed at the Rockefeller funded Riverside Chapel in New York City. It was to replace the Federal Council of Churches in name only but their goals of communism and social justice were the same. This was Satan's second attempt to merge all the churches of the USA and the world together.

1954

The Johnson Amendment was passed in Congress. It was introduced by Lyndon Johnson and has prevented churches from endorsing any political candidate and from getting involved in politics. The Christians are to be the salt of the earth but the Johnson amendment prohibits that or else the church will lose their tax exempt status. Without the church being the conscience of the nation, we see what losers are being elected to Congress and the Senate. One just has to look at the morality level of those in Washington and we see why the Johnson amendment has been successful in tying the spiritual hands of the churches.

1957

Dr. Harold Ockenga, Dr. Billy Graham, and Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse became the fathers of the New Evangelical Movement which melded the Gospel with the social justice gospel. It was a compromise of the true Gospel and spread throughout the world. It gave rise to statements like "Jesus was a revolutionary." It replaced the true Gospel with the gospel of global politics. It places souls last and material goods first such as re-distribution of wealth. It adopted the Communist agenda and many of the seminary professors who attached themselves to it were Communist sympathizers.

1964

In 1964 the Beatles made an appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show in New York and it was from this moment that Rock and Roll took on a new form. When the Rolling Stones came on the scene shortly after the Beatles, their music went from the love style rock and roll of the 1950's to the rebellion which finally culminated at Woodstock in 1969. This type of Rock and Roll eventually became the catalyst for Christian Rock. This music style has invaded most churches

and you can tell which ones when you walk in and see all the instruments and the Praise Band looks like a Rock and Roll band. *Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD. (Lev 19:30, KJV)* The reverence of the sanctuary of God departed when the drums and guitars walked in. Now the same churches which sang the old hymns are now using overhead projectors and rock bands to lead the singing.

1967

In 1967, Satan made another major move and that was the introduction of the New Testament of the NIV, which was completed with the Old Testament in 1973. This counterfeit bible was going to replace the King James Bible in the majority of Churches. This counterfeit bible had two sodomites working on its translation team. This Bible made 8,000 changes in the Greek text and over 100,000 changes in the English text. It is probably the most corrupt of the modern versions and was Satan's attempt to remove the true Bible from the churches and replace them with a counterfeit that has much missing.

1977

Malcolm Boyd became the first openly gay clergyman in a main stream Christian denomination. He was in the Episcopal Church. This opened the door for other sodomites to be ordained into the offices of Bishops and pastors of other local congregations. Today sodomy is promoted by denominations such as the Methodists, Presbyterian USA, Lutherans and others. This is not to say that every person in the denominations I mentioned endorse sodomy. The Christian Gay and Lesbian Foundation was founded in 1976.

Early 1990s

The latest attempt by Satan to neutralize and destroy the true gospel is the Emergent Church Movement which is based totally in occultism. Their belief is that as culture changes, then the church must change along with it. Their teachings stress the teachings of Roman Catholic Mystics like Teresa of Avila who levitated in front of people and was demonically controlled, John of the Cross, Thomas Merton, etc. These churches have their people walking labyrinths, stressing experience over biblical studies, emptying the mind which makes it open to demonic suggestion, something called

soaking which causes the people to sit still and empty their minds as if they are doing a Hindu meditation, feelings over truth are stressed, ecumenism with all kinds of false religions, not just churches. Beware of any church or pastor which advocates this ungodly movement.

1993

Rodney Howard Browne introduced the “holy” laughter movement which caused people in the pews to laugh uncontrollably, falling down, gyrating on the floor, etc. This phenomenon had also received the endorsement of many of the charismatic TV evangelists and pastors. He also claimed that this movement was a new move of the Spirit.

1995

In 1995 Rick Warren introduces his Purpose Driven Church Movement. It is a humanistic mindset based upon numbers and growth rather than biblical truth. Rick Warren is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations which is dedicated to the destruction of the United States. This movement resulted in thousands of Christians having to leave or being thrown out of churches so the dungaree and t-shirt wearing pastor can grow his church and magnify himself.

1995

At the Brownsville revival in Pensacola, Florida at the Brownsville Assembly of God, a new phenomenon was ready to enter the local church. It began to spawn, under the guise of the Holy Spirit, a shaking and almost epileptic type gyrations in the churches. However, this was not under the Holy Spirit but was started by a demonic force called the Kundalini spirit which theoretically was at the base of the back and was to be worked up to the top by chakras. At the end of the services people would come forward and go into a trance or a coma like experience. There would be shaking and screaming and demonic activity right in the church. That activity is still going on today and none of the churches it is happening in will really see it as demonic. Kundalini spirit can be awakened through Kundalini Yoga. Yoga is offered in many churches which invites demonic activity right in the front door.

Summary

We have seen many major movements and events which have influenced Christianity in the negative. If the Lord's return is still in the distance, there will be more evil influences upon Christianity. *And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. (Luke 21:20, KJV)* Just as Jerusalem was desolated in 70 A.D by the Romans, which represented the kingdom of Satan because of their hatred for Christians, the same situation will be taking place right at the end. Jesus said that when we see Jerusalem compassed, that is, surrounded by armies, then we know that desolation is near. The Jerusalem in view is the body of believers and the armies are the kingdom of Satan coming in various ways to try and destroy Christianity and knowing that he cannot, he will do his best to neutralize it which is what these movements have done. As we have seen clearly, the focus of Satan in the last days, which is from the ascension of Christ to the last day, will be the destruction of Christianity as Revelation points out in its visions.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, {2} Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (Heb 1:1-2, KJV) The Great Apostasy is here and how much worse will it get, only the Lord knows. The greatest and only defense we have against the apostasy is the King James Bible. If we know our Bible, we will not be trapped by the movements and false teachings they bring. Christians must remain vigilant and must study their Bibles and not turn to the teachings of man but must compare all conclusions to the Scriptures. The Bible is the authority for the Christian and we must never forsake it for the teachings of man. If we have learned anything from this chapter, it is the fact that Satan has targeted Christians and not false world religions and that is why the Christian must be and remain strong in the Word.

Matthew 24:36 means what it Says

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

God states emphatically in this verse that no man will ever know the day and hour of the return of Christ.

The term "no man" is in the cardinal form in the Greek making it a specific number. It is the word "oudeis." That fact illuminates the reality that not one man on earth will ever know the day or hour. Cardinal form means a specific number like one or two in contrast to the ordinal form which would be translated first or second. The word is only used in the cardinal form in seven inflections and over 100 times in the New Testament. Its meanings are "none, no one, not one, in no way, nothing, worthless, no." Some uses of the word which illustrate this are found in the following verses:

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (Mat 6:24, KJV)

But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. (Mark 13:32, KJV)

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. (Luke 5:37, KJV)

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6, KJV)

Each of these four verses uses the same word as used in Matthew 24:36. Notice that the same word is used in John 14:6 when Jesus states that no man cometh unto the Father but by Him. This means that not one person in all of creation can come to the Father except through Christ. This is the essence of the cardinal form when it

speaks of not even one. The word in Matthew 24:36 is also in the Nominative Case. The Nominative Case is the naming case. It is used to show the subject of a sentence or a clause. This means that God is emphasizing the fact that NO ONE will ever know the exact timing of the Lord's return. The word is also in the Nominative Case in the other four verses above and we see the emphasis in John 14:6 that NO MAN comes to the Father except through Christ.

So now when we do a comparison of John 14:6 and Matthew 24:36, we see that the emphasis is on NO MAN. The logic is like this, if a man can come to the Father without Christ, then that means one can also know the day and hour of Christ's return. God has written it to us very plainly and used the same words to emphasize the fact that that NO MAN can come to the Father without Christ and that same word also states unequivocally that no man will ever know the day or hour of Christ's return. One more principle concerning the word and its usage. There is absolutely no time frame connected with this word which means it is in effect until the last day.

Two Major Events Pointing to the Lord's Return

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

There are two major events which are presented to us quite plainly in the Scriptures which directly precedes the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophecy preachers of today keep telling us that we are to look to Israel as the place where final events will be happening. That is a total error and causes a diversion of where the Christian should be focusing on. God's prophetic timetable is not some country in the Middle East but the actual body of believers.

That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; (2 Thessalonians 2:2-3, KJV)

God had warned us that the day of the Lord will not come, that is, the return of Christ until there was first a falling away. The words "falling away" in the Greek is the word for "apostasy." We see that Christianity is deep in the apostasy. All one has to do is look around and look at the counterfeit bibles, the teachings, the preachers, the music, the man centered Gospel of free will, the signs and wonders of the charismatic movement which is accepted in just about every church, women preachers and elders, unbelievers as pastors, ecumenical mindset, emerging church, the rejection of certain parts of Scripture, the rejection of Christ as God in the flesh, and who knows how many other false teachings which are heartily accepted by the modern church. The church has become a spiritual wasteland and that is one reason why so many Christians cannot feel at home in the majority of churches. The spirit in the churches do not bear witness with the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer.

Dovetailing the sin of the Apostasy in the church is the first of the two major signs which precedes the return of Christ. We have seen this openly in many countries around the world and that is Sodomy or Homosexuality. This sin had taken the front place in many news shows, TV programs, newspapers, and many churches have embraced the idea of same-sex partners.

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. (Romans 1:26-27, KJV)

Of all the sins which are listed in the Bible, God focuses in on this one and it is something how it came to the forefront of almost every situation. Politicians could not get elected unless they were in favor of same sex marriages. Christians have been punished by having their businesses attacked and closed down because they refused to embrace sodomy. Christians have faced heavy fines in courts because of their refusal to bow the knee to the homosexual lifestyle. But in a poll the American public is starting to wane in their endorsement of the homosexual lifestyle. Between September 2-9, 2014, 2002 people were polled and their endorsement fell from 54% to 49%. So we see that even though the homosexual issue will not go completely away, its support does seem to be leveling off, but now with the Supreme Court voting in favor of Gay marriage, the support will probably rebound through the roof. This was the first major sign indicating the lateness of the hour and now we see this sin taking the forefront as it is being promoted even in the schools to children as young as 5. Let us look at the second major event which will happen just prior to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Recently we have seen the incredible worldwide war on Christians and Christianity. We have seen that Christians are being persecuted like never before. The Muslims in countries like Iran want to completely rid the country of Christians and one way these hatemongers are doing it is by killing as many as they can. In almost every country, Christians are being murdered and

persecuted. In Revelation 6, we read about this very event which is happening right now.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: {10} And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? {11} And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. (Revelation 6:9-11, KJV)

Notice what we read in revelation 6:9-11. In verse 9, we read about those who were slain for their testimony of the Word of God. In many Muslim countries it is against the law to even own a Bible. Then in verse 10, those true Christians who were slain are asking the Lord, how long will it be until He avenges their death. In verse 11, they are given white robes to rest, and here is the major end time prophecy which affects all of us. He tells them that there are going to be a certain number of Christians which are going to be killed because it is a prophecy which must be fulfilled. The word “should” in the Greek carries with the meaning of “be about to, must, intend, purpose.” In other words there are a certain number of Christians which are to suffer physical death but we do not know how many will suffer death nor do we know how long the pogrom will take.

Then once the last Christian which is predestined to physically be martyred is martyred, then the end comes.

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. {12} And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; (Revelation 6:11-12, KJV)

Notice the transition from the revealing of the martyrdom of the

Christians to the opening of the sixth seal which ushers in the last day, the return of Christ.

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; (Revelation 6:12, KJV)

Revelation 6:12 parallels the truth taught in Matthew 24:29.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: (Matthew 24:29, KJV)

Notice that in both verses that the sun is darkened and because of that the moon cannot give its light. This is the great sign we look for right before the return of Christ. Notice it also states after the tribulation of those days. Right now Christians are going through a tribulation to the point of sacrificing their lives for the cause of Christ. It is now coming to the zenith because only a certain number of Christians are to be killed and then the Lord returns.

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:30, KJV)

And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. {15} And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; {16} And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: {17} For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Revelation 6:14-17, KJV)

Matthew 24:30 and Revelation 6:14-17 are parallel verses teaching the same truth. Once the sun is darkened, then it will be a short time when the Lord will return or it could be at that moment.

Is this same event found elsewhere in the Bible? Yes, this same event was prophesied by Isaiah in Isaiah 13, about 750 years before Matthew was written.

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. {10} For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. {11} And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. (Isaiah 13:9-11, KJV)

When will the Lord destroy all the sinners off the earth? That will occur on the last day when He returns and notice the same scenario exists in Isaiah's prophecy as does in Matthew 24:29 & 30 and Revelation 6:14-17. The last sign mankind is given is the darkening of the sun and the moon will not give her light because she is only reflective and not a source of light. The stars in the heavens will also be darkened and not give their light. In other words, this universe will be plunged into total darkness right before the Lord returns.

Once the last Christian is killed, right on the heels of that event will be the events leading up the return of Christ. We see the killing of Christians and the persecution of them even on the main stream news which normally could not care less about Christians. Since this is a prophesied event, God is allowing it to be broadcast to the whole world. Revelation is not a chronological book and do not be duped into believing that it is. What we see happening here right before our eyes on the nightly news is a biblically prophesied event leading to the return of Christ.

The time is very short and I am not making any date predictions but many Christians believe the hour is late and the reason for that is, IT IS! The whole world is against Christianity and they make no bones about it. Once the unbelievers believe they have sufficiently quelled Christianity, they will believe in peace and safety but then

sudden destruction will come upon them. *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.* (1 Thessalonians 5:3, KJV) The time is short and we need to continually be giving out the Gospel until the last day, whenever that will be.

Summary

The Bible is very clear that right on the heels of the martyrdom of the number of Christians which are predestined to be martyred, the second coming will occur. Right now, Christians are being murdered but there will be a last one someday and then we are going home. Let us look to the Lord for the day of our redemption is drawing near.

Heaven: Eight Promises for the Believer

The Promise for those who have died

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, {29} And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:28-29, KJV)

One of the greatest promises in the Bible is the promise that the Believer will be raised from the dead, that is, they will be reunited with their body and will live eternally in the New Heaven and the New Earth. There will be one general resurrection where the unbelievers and believers will be raised and this will happen on the last day of history.

The Promise for those still alive

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

When the Lord Jesus Christ returns to earth on the last day, there will be billions who will be alive. Those who are saved will be changed in an instant and will be taken to Heaven to live with the Lord forever. *Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, {52} In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* (1 Cor 15:51-52, KJV) It is at this time that we will receive our new bodies which we will live in for eternity.

The Promise of the Preparation

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. {2} In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (John 14:1-2, KJV)

The Lord Jesus Christ was speaking to His disciples about His impending crucifixion. In John 14:2, He is telling them that He was about to go to prepare a place for them and the preparation had required that He go to the cross to completely pay for their sins. Once He had completed the cross and was resurrected, then all the sins of His people were now paid for and their place was now prepared for them.

The Promise to be in His Presence before the End

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. (2 Cor 5:8, KJV)

The Apostle Paul shares with all the readers of Scripture that when any believer physically dies before the return of Christ on the last day, they are immediately ushered into the presence of the Lord. The body goes into the ground but the soul into the presence of God to await the reuniting of body and soul on the last day. The Christian does not experience anything such as soul sleep or any judgment because all sins were paid for and removed at Calvary. *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; {14} Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (Col 2:13-14, KJV)*

The Promise of a Prompt Exchange

Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. (John 8:52, KJV)

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

Here is one of the greatest promises in the Bible for the Christian. The Lord Jesus states that anyone who believes in Him will never taste of death which teaches us that the transformation from this life to eternal life in Heaven will be so immediate that the Believer will not see one moment of darkness or even know what death is. We

will be more alive one moment after death than we have ever been in this life. The twinkling of an eye will be less than a second in fact in the 1980s General Electric measured the twinkling of an eye and it was 11/100 of a second. As soon as we close our eyes here, we are there!

Promise of a Pristine Place

For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. (Rev 22:15, KJV)

Never will the Believer ever have to face any sinful things nor any temptations anymore. We are free from all temptations for all of eternity. It is temptation that causes much anxiety in the Christian life and with that gone, there will only be the purest form of peace for the Christians.

Promise of a Pain Free Existence

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (Rev 21:4, KJV)

One of the chief promises God gives us is that never again will there be any pain in our bodies. All the suffering the Believer will ever face will be on this earth. Take the greatest pain or chronic sickness you have in your body and try to envision yourself eternally without that pain or sickness. God promises it will be no more, therefore it shall be no more.

Promise of the Eternal Presence of God and the Lamb

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: {4} And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. (Rev 22:3-4, KJV)

Probably the greatest promise of all is that every redeemed believer will live in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father. No longer will there be any separation between us caused by sin. Since all our sins have been washed away in the blood of

the Lamb, we now stand fully qualified to be in the Holy presence of God.

The Exact Date when Christ will Return!

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. (Acts 17:31, KJV)

UNTIL THEN

And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. (Luke 19:13, KJV)

AND

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (Eph 5:16, KJV)

Final Thoughts

This book was a hard hitting book and challenged the status quo on prophecy preaching just by using the Bible alone. I make no apologies for that. This can only go two ways, either you hate me or agree with me. At the beginning of this book I had mentioned what prophecy preachers teach and what the Bible teaches will be two totally different things. This is because the cross of Christ had changed many things such as: who is a true Jew; the timing of the Rapture; the fact there is not going to be a physical millennium; the great apostasy is not future but we are smack dab right in the middle of it; the only way to come to truth is to stop interpreting the Bible according to news broadcasts; the biblical method of timing for both Testaments; the great tribulation has been going on since Christ returned to Heaven. If we are going to come to truth, then we need to interpret the Bible the way God instructs us to and that is comparing Scripture with Scripture. Only by that method will we arrive at truth. Isn't it something that when we compare what the Bible teaches and what prophecy preachers are disseminating we find two different gospels. The truth is that these prophecy books are heretical when they teach something different than what the Bible teaches. Many Christians have had their biblical understanding derailed because of what is taught in these prophecy books.

I remember some years ago Noah Hutchings of Southwest Radio Church wrote an entire book on Isaiah 19:19 entitled "The Great Pyramid: Prophecy in Stone." *In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD. (Isaiah 19:19, KJV)* He claimed that this was speaking of the Great Pyramid in Egypt. When one studies the Bible about Egypt, we find that it is a representation of the world. The Altar that will be in the midst of the land of Egypt is the Lord Jesus Christ himself who became our Altar of sacrifice on Calvary. Are we on the right path?

And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was

crucified. (Revelation 11:8, KJV) Revelation 11:8 states that Christ was crucified in the great city which represents the whole world and the name is Sodom and Egypt. If you compare Scripture with Scripture you will come to understanding. One key for biblical understanding is that no Scripture stands alone but will always have corroborating Scriptures to give the meaning. My great desire for you is that you realize that you will come to truth only if you compare Scripture with Scripture and never interpret the Bible through worldly entities like newspapers or other news outlets. May the Lord bless your biblical understanding!

About this Book

The subject of Bible prophecy has grown into a multi-million dollar entertainment industry because many authors have taken biblical prophecy and made it a Hollywood style action script. God did not give us biblical prophecy for the purpose of creating sensationalism. Biblical prophecy was given to us for our own encouragement to teach us that God will someday bring this present world to an end and usher in the New Heavens and New Earth for those who have been redeemed through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Biblical prophecy has been hijacked by the sensationalists who adhere to Dispensationalism which is a philosophy that cannot be substantiated by the Bible. Its teachings and events are diametrically opposed to the truths of Scripture as you will read in this book. The author reveals the errors of Dispensational prophecy and its opposition to true Biblical teachings. This system has permeated many churches and is the belief system of many individual Christians.

This book discusses 20 of the top teachings which have been hijacked such as the timing of the Rapture, the Millennium, the Israel of God, et al. When you read the biblical comparisons you will see how far end time prophecy has departed from the truth of Scripture. In Daniel 7:25, the verse teaches that Satan will change times and laws which he has done successfully but these changes are easily refuted when compared to the Scriptures. Christians are unable to deal with adversity because all the end time events of persecution and affliction are placed in the future but the problem is that we are right in the middle of the final apostasy. This book contains hundreds of Scriptures which refute the deceit of Dispensationalism and none of them have been forced to prove some teaching.

About the Author

The author's name is Ken Matto. He was born in Perth Amboy, NJ and now resides in Whiting, NJ. He holds a Doctor of Ministry Degree from Bethany Theological Seminary in Dothan, Alabama. He is Reformed in theology and currently disabled since 2003 so his main ministry is on the Internet. The website "Scion of Zion" has been on line since November 20, 1997. www.scionofzion.com It is viewed in over 170 countries each month.

When he was a new Christian his first desire was to learn Bible prophecy and had purchased many books written by Pre-Tribulation authors. After about 4 years he started noticing that the prophecies in those books were not coming to pass and Scripture was being forced to adhere to the belief system. It was then that he purged his library of all these prophecy books and as he started studying prophecy by means of Scripture interpreting Scripture, it was at that time that proper understanding of this subject began to manifest itself.

The subjects he has included in this book are the main tenets of Bible prophecy with one caveat, the studies in this book are strictly according to Scripture and not newspapers, news broadcasts, magazines or any other secular publication which causes one to stray in understanding because they depart from the Bible. His desire is to see that many Christians will gain a better understanding of their bibles in the area of bible prophecy and would not be tossed around by every wind of doctrine. (Ephesians 4:14).