

The Days of Noah Mystery

***A Paradigm for the
End Times***

Craig R. Cordle

The Days of Noah Mystery
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Introduction

I am writing this book as a sequel to my previous book “The Mystery of the Millennium, Weighing the Evidence.” I have gone through a huge transformation in my eschatological beliefs over the past few years. That led me to write my previous book comparing dispensational premillennialism with amillennialism. As I was writing that book, my beliefs continued to change and I felt the need to write this sequel to clarify my position on end time Bible prophecy.

The purpose of this book is to present another paradigm regarding end time Bible prophecy. A “paradigm” is defined as a model, pattern, or typical example of something. This book will share a system, or model of Bible eschatology, that is in contrast with the popular view today, but is biblically sound and provides the best interpretation of prophetic events surrounding Jesus’s second coming.

I have always had a great interest in Bible eschatology, which is the study of end things. For many years, I have believed in the popular view of the end times. This belief centers on a pretribulation rapture and a literal thousand-year kingdom age. This viewpoint is known as dispensational premillennialism. There came a point in time when I felt led by the Lord to investigate further into the biblical merit of these teachings. That is what led me to change my views on Bible eschatology. We need to based our beliefs on what the Bible says and not what we impose on the text. My recent books have been my way of sharing the information I have learned with the hope to help believers expand their knowledge of Bible prophecy.

When it comes to Bible prophecy, I could write on numerous topics that you have heard many times before, such as the rapture, second coming, the tribulation, mark of the beast, millennium, the final judgment, and various other topics. I could write about things that would confirm what you already know. Do you want to read just

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another book about Bible prophecy, or do you want to consider some solid biblical information that could challenge your understanding of the end times?

Many would never consider changing how they view the rapture and the second coming because they are so invested in their system of interpretation. We are inclined to filter all the biblical evidence we get in accordance with that we already believe. That is how our belief system works. Many Christians, rather than investigating the biblical merit of other views, dismiss them as untrue. I did this for many years. Even in the face of strong biblical evidence that may conflict with their belief, believers do not want to change. If you are up to the challenge, I believe you may find what I am going to share with you very fascinating. At least it was for me. I want to follow the biblical evidence, no matter where it leads. If I need to change my eschatological beliefs to conform to the scriptures, then I want to do just that.

The main point I want to emphasize in this book is this. The popular eschatological system, dispensational premillennialism, has issues. I am speaking as one who previously held that position for forty years. I know all the arguments for the dispensational premillennialism view and have taught them many times. I came to realize several questionable interpretations of key biblical passages that alters the way we see the fulfillment of end time events. These questionable interpretations affect prophetic events such as the rapture, tribulation, abomination of desolation, mark of the beast, second coming, the resurrection, and the millennium, just to mention some of these events.

I will be borrowing some experts from my previous books, plus adding additional information I have obtained to present a brief overview of an eschatological system I have termed the Days of Noah/Lot Paradigm. This is not a new doctrine, or my private interpretation, but a name I use to represent my views in this book. This view will be in sharp contrast to the popular view of today which I have termed the Tribulation/God's Wrath Model, that is commonly

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known as dispensational premillennialism. The following points are what caused me to change my eschatological views:

1. The “plumb line” verses (one resurrection marking the end of death).
2. Reading the Olivet Discourse in context using the parallel accounts and comparing it with the writings of Josephus.
3. The time statements of scripture such as “this generation, must shortly take place, and the time is near.”
4. Revealing the identity of the pronoun “he” in Daniel 9:27.
5. Acknowledging an early date for the writing of the book of Revelation.
6. Realizing I was blindly accepting what I was taught without testing it with scripture.
7. Acknowledging that following proper hermeneutical principles are essential in Bible interpretation.

I hope what I share in this book will inspire you to reconsider, or critically analyze your view of the end times. Our beliefs must be founded on the scriptures that we know for ourselves, not relying on what others have told us. Our goal is to dive deeper into God’s Word and respect the views that believers have, but challenge them to gain a deeper understanding of the Word of God.

Chapter 1 - Bible Hermeneutics

Bible topics that deal with controversial teachings, such as end time Bible prophecy, must follow certain fundamentals when interpreting and understanding the scriptures. Many will say that you should interpret the Bible literally, but there are things we need to be aware of as we approach our study of the Bible, that affect how we understand it. Some try to interpret the Bible in its strictest literalistic sense. This does not always work because there are many literary devices, such as metaphors, allegories, similes, analogies, contrasts, and symbols, that writers use to enhance their writing, convey meaning, or evoke emotion through stylistic and structural choices, with the intent to make the work more beautiful.

There are guidelines we can follow in how to interpret biblical writings. Bible hermeneutics is the study of the principles and methods of interpreting the text of the Bible. There are three crucial laws of biblical interpretation. The first is scripture should be interpreted literally by its plain reading unless a passage is intended to be symbolic. Secondly, a passage must be interpreted historically, grammatically, and contextually. When the text was written needs to be taken into consideration and especially, the context in which it was written. What does the scriptures around the main verses being reviewed say? This prevents a verse from being interpreted out of its setting. Finally, scripture is the best interpreter of scripture. We should view unclear/symbolic passages in the light of those that are clear. When it comes to prophetic passages, how does New Testament writers quote sections from the Old Testament.

Hermeneutics involves answering three questions: *What does the text say? What did the text mean* (to the original audience)? *How does this apply to me?*

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The text can be interpreted literally since that is the first principle to use when studying scripture. However, one needs to consider the genre. Genre is a category of artistic, musical, or literary composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content. In the Bible, there are different styles of writing. The major genres of scripture are as follows; *narrative*, *poetry*, *wisdom*, *prophecy*, *gospel*, *epistles*, and *apocalypse*. Each of these genres have characteristics that are unique and distinguish that writing style.

The story of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17) is an example of a *narrative* genre. It was a historical battle that took place using rich storytelling dialogue, and character development. The Book of Acts in the New Testament is another *narrative* describing the early church. The Song of Solomon is an example of biblical *poetry* where it says, “His eyes *are* like doves By the rivers of waters, Washed with milk, *And* fitly set” (Song 5:12). Job and Proverbs use a poetic rhythm to give *wisdom* in exploring deep philosophical and moral truths. The *gospels* provide an historical account of the life of Christ that presents events to prove a specific point in revealing that Jesus is the Son of God. For example, the beginning of John’s gospel he says, “¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:1-3). The *epistles* are letters written to specific individuals or churches to address real life situations. A great example of a message found in an *epistle* says, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

The Prophecy Genre conveys God’s Word to His covenant people, warning them and sustaining them through pronounced spiritual and national danger. Prophecy includes fore-telling of future events, but it also includes God rebuking sin, warning against calamity if people fail to repent, and convicting them of wrong-doing. An example of prophecy is found in the verse that says, “Therefore the

Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

Apocalyptic literature is a literary report of an amazing, often fearful, violent vision that reveals truths about past, present, and/or future times in highly symbolic and poetical terms. It is written in this way to awaken our conscience to the horror of what is going on. The message is given by an angel (or something similar) that is beyond our realm, like heaven or hell. Apocalyptic elements can be detected in the prophetic books of Joel and Zechariah, while Isaiah chapters 24–27 and 33 present well-developed apocalypses. The second half of the Book of Daniel (chapters 7–12) offers a fully matured and classic example of this genre of literature. Revelation is the apocalyptic book of the New Testament. Consider the following passage as an example of apocalyptic literature. “¹²I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place” Revelation 6:12-14).

When we interpret Bible passages, we need to keep these different genres in mind. Some will claim they interpret the Bible literally, but the question becomes, what do they mean by literal.

A word needs to be said about how to literally interpret the Bible. *Sensus Literalis*, is a Greek term meaning “the literal sense of scripture.” What is meant by the term *sensus literalis* is that every text in the Scriptures is not given a “strictly literal” interpretation, but interpreting the Bible in the sense in which it was written. This is recognizing that there are different literary devices that are part of language that take it to the next level. Literary devices are ways of taking writing beyond its straightforward, literal meaning. In that sense, they are techniques for helping guide the reader in how to read the piece. There are many literary devices, but some of the more familiar ones are allegory, metaphor, hyperbole, idioms, symbol, and simile.

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A *metaphor*, or *parable*, is a figure of speech that uses an object or action in a way that is not literally true. It is a comparison between two things that are unrelated. There are many examples in scripture in the use of this literary device. One example would be the comparison of believers to salt. Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men” (Matthew 5:13). The Parable of the Good Shephard (John 10:10-12) illustrates how a shepherd is a type of Christ in caring for His flock.

An *allegory* is a literary device that conveys hidden meaning through the use of symbolic characters or events. The scripture comes out directly to say two people are allegories. When speaking of Abraham’s sons, Ishmael and Isaac, the scripture says, “²³ But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, ²⁴ which things are symbolic (allegory, figurative). For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— ²⁵for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children” (Galatians 4:23-25).

We need to follow a proper method of Bible interpretation rather than defending a particular model of eschatology. This emphasizes the need to follow sound hermeneutics in biblical interpretation.

Hank Hanegraaff, known for his nationally syndicated “Bible Answer Man” broadcast, serves as chairman of the board of the North Carolina based Christian Research Institute. Author of numerous books, I am referencing some information concerning Bible hermeneutics from his book, “The Apocalypse Code.”

He coined the term “*Exegetical Eschatology*,” signified by E² (“E” squared). This is taken from the word “exegesis” that simply means seeking to uncover what the author intended their original audience to understand. This contrasts with the term “eisegesis” which means reading into the biblical text something that is not there. The word “eschatology” simply means the study of end things. So, the term “Exegetical Eschatology” is to understand prophetic passages by

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drawing out of the scripture what it plainly says, not interjecting our own ideas, or biases into the text. This can be difficult for some believers who were taught a particular eschatological system, who impose their presuppositions onto the text. We must discipline ourselves to follow hermeneutical principles, not allowing ourselves to fall back into the realm of the familiar.

The acronym “LIGHTS” can be used to illustrate the essential hermeneutical principles for Bible interpretation. In summary, they are as follows:

- *Literal Principle*: Interpret the Bible in the most obvious and natural sense, considering the use of metaphors. It is interpreting the text in the sense (*Sensus Literalis*) it was intended rather than in a literalistic sense.
- *Illumination Principle*: The Holy Spirit illuminates what is in the text. This illumination does not go beyond what is being said.
- *Grammatical Principle*: Must utilize the basic rules that govern the relationships and usages of words. Emphasizes the context and word usage in a passage.
- *Historical Principle*: The biblical text is best understood when one is familiar with the customs, culture, and historical context of biblical times.
- *Typology Principle*: Persons, places, events, or things in redemptive history (like Jesus becoming the Passover Lamb) serve as types of Christ or spiritual realities relating to Christ.
- *Scriptural Synergy*: The whole of scripture is greater than the sum of its individual passages. Individual Bible passages should not be interpreted in such a way as to conflict with the whole of scripture.

In studying the scriptures, we must follow the hermeneutical principles outlined in this chapter. As you can see, to interpret the Bible literally is not as simple as it seems to be. The concept of interpreting

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scripture in the *literal sense* is the approach we must take. Hopefully, the guidelines giving in this chapter will help as we seek to understand eschatological passages, as well as any portion of scripture.

Harmonization of the Scriptures

Bible eschatology can be compared to a complex jigsaw puzzle where various pieces must be put together to form a picture of end time Bible prophecy. If the pieces are properly put together, the picture that emerges is clear. If pieces are forced to fit into places where they do not belong, the picture will be distorted.

Envision a puzzle where you cannot seem to get the pieces to easily fit together. Then you discover a piece, which I have termed the *plumb line* verses in this book that are the key in helping the other pieces to start fitting together. Suddenly, the whole picture comes out without forcing pieces in place. The key piece of the puzzle governs how you see the other pieces fitting together. It is the missing piece that unlocks the whole image.

The puzzle metaphor illustrates the importance of Bible harmonization, which is the process of properly interpreting different biblical passages to show they do not contradict.

Sometimes the strictest literal approach in interpreting difficult passages is not the best hermeneutical principle to use. "*Wooden literal*" is a phrase used to describe a rigid, inflexible interpretation of text, that takes every word at its most basic, literal meaning without considering context, figurative language, or genre. We need to employ *Sensus Literalis*, as defined earlier, to interpret the Bible in the sense in which it is written. That should be the way we interpret the Bible literally, employing the principles mentioned in this chapter.

I do not believe any of the various interpretative systems of Bible eschatology can give all the answers to the all the questions regarding Christ's return. In our efforts to interpret various eschatological passages, we attempt to interpret biblical passages to the best of our ability, with the honest directive to stay true to the text. We will not get all the pieces to the puzzle put together, but we can get

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enough of the pieces in place to give us a clear picture of the message of scripture. The question becomes, which interpretative system best represents the biblical record. It is important to weigh the biblical evidence in determining what best supports the text. There are key scriptures, which I have termed the “plumb line” verses, that form the foundation of Bible eschatology, in that they set the boundaries of how we should interpret scripture and stay within the big picture of Bible prophecy. That is the art of Biblical interpretation.

Chapter 2 - When are the Last Days

As we get into the topic of Bible eschatology, which is defined as the study of “end things,” Jesus’s Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25, Luke 21, and Mark 13) and the book of Revelation are the passages many go to when thinking of the end times. There are four interpretation methods used for the book of Revelation that affect how we view all eschatological passages.

- The *historicist* interpretation method sees that all the events are fulfilled over the course of history. As history unfolds, historicist interpreters assign various events of history to the visions and symbols of Revelation.
- The *idealist* interpretation method is aligned with the amillennial position, meaning they believe there is no literal 1000 years in which Christ rules on Earth. It views Revelation as apocalyptic literature that must be interpreted symbolically.
- In the *futurist* view, the events recorded in Revelation 4-19 are speaking of future events that occur during the seven-year tribulation period. This view is closely associated with premillennialism and is the popular view in the church today.
- The *preterist* interpretation method maintains that the events recorded in the book of Revelation were fulfilled in our past. There are two forms of preterism. *Full preterists* believe that all the events in the books of Revelation were fulfilled in the first century. *Partial preterists* believe that most of the events were fulfilled in A.D. 70, while there are still some events to be fulfilled at Christ’s second coming.

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Most people believe the book of Revelation is prophesying of events in our future and are surprised to learn that some teach it is speaking of events in the first century. The book of Revelation is an apocalyptic version of the Olivet Discourse. One of the hermeneutical principles to remember when interpreting difficult passages of scripture, is that scripture is the best interpreter of scripture. It is also important to consider how New Testament writers quote sections from the Old Testament. Interpreting the Olivet Discourse, which is a clearer version of Jesus's eschatological discourse, will help us greatly in interpreting the book of Revelation.

In this chapter, I want to define the terms, "last days," "latter times," and the "last day." The question that must be raised is, "What last days is the Bible talking about in each cast the term is used?" I am going to be taking the partial preterist position in this book and will be providing the biblical evidence why I hold to this position. This is not the popular view of the church today which supports the futurist method teaches a pretribulation rapture and seven-year tribulation. Just because teaching is popular does not mean it is correct. Strong scriptural evidence needs to be provided to challenge that position. I believe I can make the case for a partial preterist position in interpretating the Olivet Discourse and the book of Revelation.

The use of the phase "the last days" is understood by many to be speaking of the time just prior to the pretribulation rapture of the church. Christians today think these scriptures are talking about them. However, is that the message the Bible is conveying? The following verse provides a biblical definition for the "last days."

¹ God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² **has in these last days [1st century] spoken to us by His Son,** whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; (Hebrews 1:1-2, emphasis added).

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According to the writer of the book of Hebrews, the Son of God spoke in “these last days” by His Son.” Whose last days was he talking about? It was the last days of the writer’s time, not our time, two thousand years in the future. Jesus was speaking to them in the first century about the **last days of the Old Covenant**. That is what the book of Hebrews is all about. The New Covenant is a “better” covenant than the Old Covenant. The key word in Hebrews is the word “better.” See the references below of what is better about the New Covenant:

- Better Revelation (Hebrews 1:1-4)
- Better Hope (Hebrews 7:19)
- Better Priesthood (Hebrews 7:20-28)
- Better Covenant (Hebrews 8:6)
- Better Promises (Hebrews 8:6)
- Better Sacrifices (Hebrews 9:23)
- Better Possessions (Hebrews 10:34)
- Better Country (Hebrews 11:16)
- Better Resurrection (Hebrews 11:15)

This is overwhelming evidence that the New Covenant is a better covenant. Hebrews also makes this key statement, “In that He says, “A new *covenant*,” He has made **the first obsolete**. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old **is ready to vanish away**” (Hebrews 8:13, emphasis added). The Old Covenant will no longer be in force and is ready (in the writer of Hebrew’s time) to disappear or vanish away. Jesus’s death on the cross and the rending of the temple veil legally made the sacrificial system obsolete. The time from the crucifixion until the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, marked the transitioning out of the Old Covenant era temple practices.

The Old Covenant was called the “ministry of death” (2 Corinthians 3:7) that was written on stones by the finger of God (Exodus 31:18). It was called that by Paul due to continual need for animal blood sacrifices. Moses had to cover his face with a veil because of the glory of his countenance when he came down from the mountain with the ten commandments. It represented the glory of the Old Covenant. The scripture says, “But if the ministry of

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death, written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, **which glory was passing away**" (2 Corinthians 3:7). The glory on Moses's face faded, just as the Law faded, as it was intended to when Christ came.

All the biblical references in the New Testament of the "last days," or the "latter times," are speaking of the end of the Jewish Age, or the end of the Old Covenant. The generation of time (Matthew 24:34) between Jesus's Olivet Discourse and the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 was a transitioning in of the New Covenant era. As Hebrews says at the time it was written, the old was "ready to vanish away."

Dispensationalists teach that the Old Covenant will be revived again in the Millennium. The third, and possibly a fourth temple will be rebuilt with blood animal sacrifices reinstituted. They teach that Ezekiel chapter 40-48 speak of the temple that will exist during the millennium. And that the blood sacrifices will be for the atonement (forgiveness) of sin. The scripture says, "Then it shall be the prince's [the Messiah] part *to give* burnt offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings, at the feasts, the New Moons, the Sabbaths, and at all the appointed seasons of the house of Israel. He shall prepare the sin offering, the grain offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offerings **to make atonement** for the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 45:17, emphasis added). The idea of going back to the Old Covenant system goes against the book of Hebrews that says the Old Covenant was vanishing away to bring in the New Covenant that was a better covenant based on better promises. The coming of Christ fulfilled all the Old Covenant types. See my comment in chapter 9 concerning the temple mention in Ezekiel 40-48.

Here is another example of a passage that uses the term "latter times" which is another form of the phrase "last days.":

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ²speaking lies in

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hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,³ forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. (1 Timothy 4:1-5).

Is Paul in his epistle to Timothy, speaking to an audience of conditions of the times that will be present over two thousand years in their future? Many modern-day prophecy teachers try to make this passage relate to the conditions prior to the second coming of Christ in our time. We do see instances of people renouncing their faith in Christ. There is a long-standing tradition of celibacy in the Catholic Church for priests and abstinence from meat on Fridays for members of the church. Is this what Paul was speaking of in his epistle to Timothy?

We must consider biblical evidence that will help verify that Paul was speaking to conditions of his time in his reference to the “latter times.” In fact, he says “the Spirit expressly says” to emphasize his point. The scripture says, “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” Colossians 2:16-17). Judaism imposed certain dietary laws and the observance of the Jewish festivals. Many Jews that converted to Christianity in the first century tried to force believing gentiles to keep these Jewish laws. Paul’s epistle to the Galatians was a defense of the doctrine of justification and warnings against reversion to Judaism which he called a “different gospel” (Galatians 1:6-10). The question of keeping the ceremonial law was addressed at the council of Jerusalem in Acts 15. We can see the tension of the times of the early church as the Old Covenant was vanishing away at the arrival of the New Covenant. This is another example of the last days of the Jewish age.

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To address Paul's statement concerning an apostasy or falling away from the faith, many dispensationalists believe he was speaking of a falling away from the Christian faith that will occur prior to Christ's second coming. It is easy to read scriptures in the New Testament that mention the last days and assume they are speaking of our current time prior to Christ's return. The truth is they were written to churches in the first century that were living in the Roman Empire, where emperors such as Nero demanded to be worshiped as God. Nero arrested and tortured Christians in Rome, crucifying some, others were thrown to wild animals, and some burned alive. Early Christians were seen as a Jewish sect and faced opposition and persecution from Jews that is recorded throughout the book of Acts. If you take into consideration this historical context, is it logical to think that the Apostle Paul is writing to an audience in the 21st century in his epistles? No, he is writing to a first century audience that had to deal with the political climate of their day. An important point to remember is that the New Testament was not written to us, but it is for us.

Are the dispensationalists correct in their view that there will be a great apostasy in the last days? Contrary to popular thought, the church of God is growing. Consider some statistics (LifeWay Research article by Aaron Earls, 1/22/2024):

1. Christianity is growing faster around the world than the rate of population. The population growth rate is at .87% while Christianity is growing at a 1.058% rate. By 2050, the Christian population is expected to reach 3 billion.
2. Some groups are growing at faster rates than the world average. Protestants (1.63%), independents (1.96%), evangelicals (1.66%), and Pentecostals (1.48%).
3. Africa and Asia are experiencing rapid growth. Asia is experiencing a Christian growth rate of 2.11% and Africa a 2.64% rate.
4. Christianity is spreading globally to new places. In 1900, 95% of the world's Christians lived in Christian countries. Currently,

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51.6% of Christians live in Christian nations (meaning they are spreading out to non-Christian nations).

5. Atheism is shrinking with a growth rate of -.012%. Agnostics are barely growing at a 0.09% rate.
6. More churches are being planted and missionaries sent out. The number of churches has grown from 400,000 in 1900 to 4.2 million in 2024 and expected to reach 5.4 million by 2050.
7. Fewer people are without access to the gospel (54.3% in 1900, 30.1% in 2000, and 27.8% in 2024). Also, more people have the scriptures in their language (227 languages in 1900 and 2,400 in 2024).
8. More money is being given to Christian causes (\$320 billion in 2000, \$1 trillion in 2020, \$1.3 trillion in 2024, and projection of \$5.2 trillion by 2050).

<https://research.lifeway.com/2024/01/22/8-encouraging-trends-in-global-christianity-for-2024/>

As these statistics show, the church is growing worldwide in our time and not experiencing a great falling away from the Christian faith. This does not mean there could not be a reversal of this trend, but the data does not confirm a great apostasy is occurring.

Another verse to consider says, “But know this, that in the **last days** perilous times will come” (2 Timothy 3:1). Many prophecy teachers use this verse to say there will be perilous or difficult times at the last days. Throughout the Bible, God’s people have gone through difficult times, usually of their own making. Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians, spoke of Israel’s mistakes during the exodus and how God was not pleased with them (1 Corinthians 10:1-13). He went on to say, “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for

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our admonition, upon whom the **ends of the ages have come**" (1 Corinthians 10:11, emphasis added). Paul, writing in the first century speaks of that the ends of the ages has come, meaning the end of the Old Covenant.

The phrase "the last day" is found seven times in the gospel of John. Notice that the phrase "last day" (singular) is different from the phrase the "last days" (plural). We can see the distinction between the two terms. It is speaking of the resurrection of the dead (John 6:39-40. 44, 54; 11:24) and the final judgment on the last day when God's ultimate purposes for creation are fulfilled. It is the last day of human history at Jesus's second coming where He raises the dead (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:23-26; 51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18) and conducts the final judgment (Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 20:11-15). It is a single day, the last day of the old creation before God brings in the new heavens and the new earth (Revelation 21-22), also known as the New Creation.

Dispensationalists argue that the "last day" refers to the entire era between Christ's first and second comings. It is a period of time, not a single day. It is my view that it is just what the term says, the "last day," or the final day. The scripture says, "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should **raise it up at the last day**. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and **I will raise him up at the last day**" (John 6:39-40, emphasis added). The Bible also associates the last day with the final judgment. Again, the scripture says, "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken **will judge him in the last day**" (John 12:48, emphasis added).

As I have stated, the "last days" are speaking of the final days of the Jewish age that was coming to an end. The "last day" concerns the final day of the world before Jesus comes to raise the dead, hold the final judgment, and consummate His kingdom with the new creation. The last day may not be a literal 24 hours, but it is the conclusion of time as the new creation is realized.

When are the Last Days

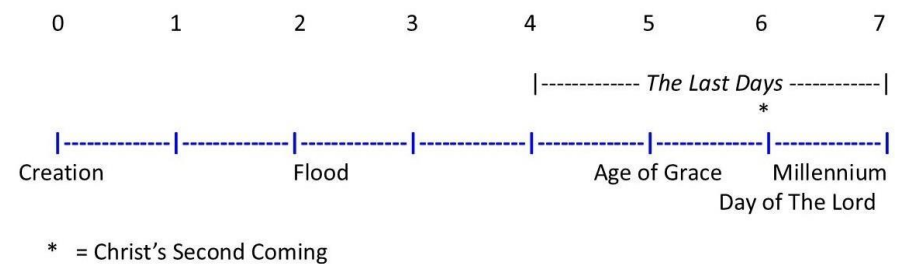
Final Comments

The scriptures concerning the “last days” need to be interpreted based on the perspective of audience they were written to. The New Testament passages were written to a first century audience, living in the Roman Empire that demanded Caesar worship. God’s judgment was being poured out on the Jewish people due to the rejection of their prophesied Messiah. When you analyze all the scriptures that speak of the “last days” or its equivalent, they are speaking from the perspective of the “last days of the Jewish Age.” When Jesus gave His Olivet Discourse, he was giving the signs to the destruction of the temple that occurred in A.D. 70. He said all these things (signs) will happen within the time of the generation that hears His words. The length of a biblical generation is forty years, so from Christ’s crucifixion to the destruction of Jerusalem was approximately forty years. This was a transition period between the end of the Old Covenant (the Law of Moses) the beginning of the New Covenant.

The following two timelines graphically reflects the different opinions as to the meaning of the term “last days.” The dispensational view sees that the seven thousand years of time covered in the Bible is a type of a prophetic week where each day is a thousand years long. The “last days” is in reference to the latter part of the week that covers the entire church age and the millennium. The partial preterist view interprets the meaning of the term “last days” as the final days of the Jewish Age or Old Covenant period of history.

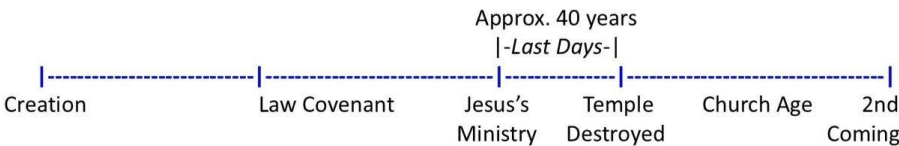
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Dispensational (Popular) View of the “Last Days”



- The Bible covers about 7,000 years of time and can be compared to a week of 7 days.
- Each day in this week would be 1,000 years (2 Peter 3:8).

“Last Days” of the Jewish Age or Old Covenant



In answering the question, when are the last days, I believe that the Bible clearly teaches that it is speaking of the end of the Jewish age. I respect those that hold to the dispensation position of the “last days,” but I believe the biblical evidence supports that the days are referring to the end of the Old Covenant.

Chapter 3 -Two Eschatological Models

Jesus's Olivet Discourse is His most detailed teaching concerning the events coming upon Jerusalem and upon the world at His judgment return. Many believe that the vast majority of what Jesus said pertains to His second coming. All the signs Jesus gives, they say, are referring to His public return. The rapture is His secret return, where no one knows the day or the hour. It will be as the days of Noah where no one was expecting the flood and were taken by surprise when it came. The dispensational premillennial view must infer that the rapture is present in the Olivet Discourse because it is plainly not mentioned by Jesus.

If the Olivet Discourse is read in context, it is obvious that Jesus was addressing the upcoming destruction of the temple and Jerusalem within **their generation** (Matthew 24:34). This occurred in A.D. 70. All the signs Jesus gave were referring to the desolation of the temple. Modern day prophecy teachers have misread this passage, applying the signs to events in our future, and not to events that occurred in His disciples' future (the past from our perspective). However, Jesus does address His second coming by comparing it to the days of Noah. The second coming is His return where no one knows the day or hour, and not the rapture. The rapture and second coming are simultaneous events where **all the dead** are raised, marking the end of death.

Should we be preparing believers to get out of here before things get extremely bad, or preparing believers to stand strong for Christ in the midst of an evil world? I believe the emphasis is on the wrong thing. In John chapter 17, Jesus prays to the Father and says, "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15). A similar verse says, "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to

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test those who dwell on the earth” (Revelation 3:10). Many use this verse as a proof text for a pretribulation rapture. The word *tēreō* (keep) in Greek can either mean *protection through* trial or *removal from* trial. Strong’s defines *tēreō* as to attend to carefully, take care of; to guard; metaph. to keep, one in the state in which he is; to observe; to reserve: to undergo something. Revelation 3:10 and John 17:15 are the only two places where the Greek words translated as “kept from” are used. [*terso se/autos ek*] Not taken out of the world, but kept from evil. Keeping from the “hour of testing” does not mean the church has to be taken out of this world, but believers are not subjected to the test. I believe that is the mindset we should have in our times.

I can see two “eschatological models” that attempt to explain the events surrounding Christ’s second coming. The popular view held by most Christians is what I term the “Tribulation/God’s Wrath Model” and the other the “Days of Noah Paradigm.” Each of these views serve as a blueprint or template for how the end time events will take place. Given below are bullet points that define each of the models.

A. Tribulation/God’s Wrath Model (preceded by signs)

- Seven-year tribulation of God’s wrath being poured out / mark of the beast
- The rapture & 2nd coming are separate events (except post trib. rapture view)
- Multiple resurrections of the dead (at rapture, 2nd coming, end of millennium)
- Three end time battles (Ezekiel 38-39, Armageddon, Gog Magog/Rev. 20)
- Three judgments (Bema Seat, Judgment of Nations, White Throne)
- Literal 1,000-year kingdom age of Christ ruling on earth
- Two peoples/plans of God (Israel & The Church)

B. Days of Noah/Lot Paradigm (no preceding signs)

Two Eschatological Models

- Surprise nature of Christ's return/eschaton (like Pear Harbor & 9/11 attacks)
- Reprobate Society/Culture as typified of the days of Noah & Lot
- God's people will be oppressed/vexed by the filthy/depraved conduct of the wicked.
- The wrath of the Lamb was poured out on the temple and Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
- One resurrection and one final judgment.

In the popular view held by the church today, everything is based on the "*tribulation*," the seven years of God's wrath being poured out on the earth. It is the reference point from which the other eschatological events occur. Notice the terms used for the timing of the rapture, we have the pretribulation, mid-tribulation, and post tribulation rapture views. There is also a pre-wrath rapture view that says God's wrath is pour out later in the tribulation with the bowl judgments of the book of Revelation. The concept of the seven-year tribulation is the foundation for all these positions. What if there is no future seven-year tribulation because it took place in the first century as part of the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem? What if the whole concept of this future seven-year time-period originates from a misinterpretation (gap theory) of Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27)?

Is it possible we are looking for a certain chronology of events to occur that lead up to the second coming of Christ that may not occur (peace treaty, rebuilt temple, reinstitution of blood sacrifices, abomination of desolation) because they have already taken place? I believe that it is.

The problem is taking the events from the 1st century and moving them to the 21st century based upon Jesus's Olivet Discourse. It sets the stage, or lays the foundation of how we view the events leading up to the second coming of Christ. Once you take a particular path of interpretation, it can lead you into the wrong direction.

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The dispensational view of the end times is ingrained in the church at large. If you do not agree with this belief system, you are criticized and looked upon as being deceived by false teachers. It can cause some heated arguments between believers over the rapture, millennium, and the end time events. Christians should not allow our differences to divided us, but need to be in unity on essential Christian doctrines (deity of Christ, the Trinity, virgin birth, the resurrection, etc.). Hence the maxim, in essentials “unity,” in non-essentials “liberty,” and in all things “charity.”

Even though eschatological beliefs do not affect one’s salvation, they are important. The following are some reasons why Dispensational Premillennialism can be harmful to the body of Christ:

1. It is unbiblical. There are no direct statements of scripture to support a pre-tribulation rapture. Presuppositions are read into the biblical text in supporting this position.
2. Creates a false set of expectations.
3. Can bring about complacency among believers who might neglect the call to endure hardship.
4. Improper focus (looking for rapture and not evangelism).
5. May cause divisions in the church.
6. Can cause discouragement (if events not happening as expected).
7. Creates an escapist attitude rather than a perseverance attitude.
8. Could affect other areas of theology (two peoples of God).

In the past few years, I have felt led of the Lord to write several books on Bible prophecy. The first was entitled, “The Rapture Timing Mystery; Weighing the Evidence,” published in 2022. The second book I felt compelled to write is called, The Mystery of the Millennium; Weighing the Evidence,” published in 2024. These books reflect the spiritual journey I have been on in reevaluating my eschatological beliefs. This is especially true for the second book concerning the millennium. In it I contrast the positions held by the premillennial and amillennial views. As I was writing the book, my beliefs continued to

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change, especially regarding the Olivet Discourse. I believe the biblical evidence best reflects the views of partial preterists. To get the full scope of the biblical evidence for this position, you will have to read my book. In this chapter, I have given the main points (which I call the plumbline in the book) that should form the foundation of our eschatological beliefs.

At this point, I would like to give you a picture of what the Days of Noah/Lot may be like. Many Christians are familiar with the popular view of the end times, what I have termed the “Tribulation/God’s Wrath Model,” popularized by John Nelson Darby in the 1830’s. Proponents of this view measure everything happening in the world today using this system of Bible eschatology. They have the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other, attempting to match up news events as fulfilling Bible prophecy. This may work when using the Dispensational Premillennial lens in interpreting Bible prophecy. However, as I have emphasized in this chapter, when reading the Olivet Discourse in context, the signs Jesus warned of point to the first century destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. I believe many are trying to align these signs to the wrong period of history. This is why I believe the Days of Noah/Lot paradigm regarding the second coming is the correct lens of interpretation. What can we expect the signs of the times will be like just prior to Christ’s return?

Please allow me to give two pictures of what I believe those times will be like according to the Days of Noah/Lot paradigm. The first is a more detailed description, but it is using inference by assuming Jesus included the moral condition of the times as described in Genesis in His teaching (Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-30). Jesus did not explicitly mention these moral conditions, but only spoke of people’s unawareness of His coming. The second picture will be briefly stated because it is based only on what Jesus explicitly said. This is to truly exegete the interpretation solely from the scriptures.

The “Days of Noah/Lot Paradigm” (Genesis 6:5, 11-12; 19:1-7), according to the first explanation, is a picture of a pagan culture. When the children of Israel entered the promised land, God commanded

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them to utterly destroy all the Canaanites. If they did not, they would turn their hearts away from following the LORD (Deuteronomy 7:1-6). After the death of Joshua, the following generation did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals, or the Canaanite gods (Judges 2:10-13). Israel forsook the LORD and followed another god.

The worship of Baal, Ashtoreth, Molech, and other Canaanite gods consisted in the most extravagant orgies; their temples were centers of vice (moral or wicked behavior). It involved the confusion of male and female, and the obliteration of the distinction between the two. Infants would be burned alive as a sacrificial offering to the deity. The principal pillars of Baalism were child sacrifice, sexual immorality (both heterosexual and homosexual), and pantheism (reverence of creation over the Creator).

America and the world today have followed the same course as ancient Israel in falling away from the God of the Bible. The woke culture is imposing their godless morality on everyone. Abortion on demand, gay marriage, living together, transgenderism. Drag queens are dancing in front of young elementary school children, young children are coached to question their gender bringing about confusion. School boards will not listen to parents, calling them domestic terrorists, and want to impose their godless woke curriculum. Good is called bad and bad good. It is not just the government forcing these views on people, but companies have become woke and use their products to impose these ideas on the culture.

Evidence of the global society's fall into this anti-God, reprobate system was on full display in the opening ceremony of the 2024 summer Olympics in Paris France. It was a mockery of Christianity by acting out a parody of Christ's last supper.

Everything you hear are lies. Governments lie to their people and tell them what they want them to hear. That is called propaganda. Advertisements lie about their products. We are bombarded with spam calls and emails trying to steal our private information (identity theft) or sell us what we do not need. People lie constantly to one another and do not keep their word. Deception is everywhere and is found in all aspects of life.

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Our government wants to control us by monitoring our bank accounts, controlling our speech if they do not like what we say (closing social medial accounts) or how we vote. If the culture does not like what you say, they label it misinformation and try to censor you. Our elections have become corrupted and when you question it, they label you as election deniers. In America, the IRS has declared war on the American people, yet we give away billions for foreign wars.

The covid-19 pandemic has been used by world governments to exert more control on the people. In essence, it has been a test run of how a one world government can take control and demand compliance. If people do not submit to taking the vaccines, they can lose their jobs, be prevented from travelling, plus other draconian mandates.

The government, speaking of America, will not follow the laws/constitution. We have a two-tiered justice system. Governmental agencies have become politicized and go after candidates of the opposing party. Laws are broken and the violators are not held accountable. Vandals can go into stores and steal what they want and just walk out without being arrested. Inmates are being let out of prison before their sentences are carried out. The city streets in many of our major cities and even our small towns are unsafe. The radical left wants to defund the police, and protect the criminals and not the victims. When someone comes to the aid of a person being assaulted, the good Samaritan is the one who is arrested.

We see open borders in one administration and a crackdown in another, human/sex trafficking, government officials involved in sexual perversion. The wickedness of these actions is profound. Accusations of racism is rampant. The public is propagandized to see a racist society. They claim our laws incorporate institutional racism, or systemic racism. The political climate purposely incites racial tension so that people are divided and hate one another.

The American constitution and bill of rights are under attack. The principles of the constitution are being ignored. The radical left wants to take away gun rights and free speech. It is not woke to be patriotic. They want to rewrite American history. The 1619 Project says

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that the country was not founded in 1776, but rather was founded in 1619. Furthermore, it states that America was not founded as a "democracy," but arguably as a "slavocracy," based upon some of the founders being slaveholders. Critical race theory is being taught in our universities, emphasizing how race has affected society.

Advocates of climate change are forcing their demands on society. Elimination of fossil fuels, discourage meat production, promoting the consumption of insects, abolishing gas stoves, and furnaces. There appears to be an increase in food processing plants being burnt down to the ground to produce food shortages.

Technology has advanced at an unbelievable pace. Using artificial intelligence (AI), robots have been built that look almost human. Through AI, they can analyze your voice, duplicating it and making it look like you said whatever they want. There is talk of being able to merge machine and humans to produce some type of hybrid human by transferring human conscious into these robots, in man's way, attempting to live forever. I believe this is why Jesus said that it will be like the days of Noah before His coming.

There have been very bad times in world history. Living in Europe during World War II had to be a terrifying time, not knowing if you could be killed at any time. Even with war ranging around the world, the moral climate was not in the state that it is today. During the war, I do not believe anyone said that the society had been totally changed.

Many in the church have been deceived by false prophets promoting false teachings. This has always been the case over the course of history. The church has fallen prey to the woke culture and has compromised many biblical doctrines. Many dispensationalists teach there will be a great falling away from the faith prior to Christ's return (1 Timothy 4:1). The great apostasy the Apostle Paul was speaking to occurred in the first century where the Jewish religious leaders experienced a great falling away from Judaism by rejecting their Messiah and tried to suppress the spread of Christianity. In the world today, contrary to popular opinion, Christianity is growing worldwide.

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The tension between the United States, Russia and China is at the worst level to date. America when it is in a weakened military condition makes us a target by these aggressor nations. In the post-World War II era, a strong United States has helped maintain peace in the world. Wars and rumors of wars have always been present in the world, being a sign of coming judgment, and now, as many believe, point to the soon return of Jesus Christ.

These are just some things that are happening in this world that I can think of from the top of my head. I am sure there are numerous other things that could be said that I failed to mention. We may see ebbs and flows of falling deeper into depravity, and then some return of Godly morals, patriotism, and decency, but this is a temporary product of the current political climate and the leaders who are in power. In the long run, the culture and society are spiraling their way downward. The lines are being drawn in the sand like never before. Are you for the Lord, or are you against Him? There will be a dividing of the sheep and goats just as Jesus taught in Matthew 25 concerning the final judgment. Some will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

It is evident that our culture has been turned upside down. You hear news commentators, pod casts, YouTube/TikTok videos, etc. all saying it. Some have said that they have seen nothing like it. A well-known personality said this, "The battle is not over some issue. The battle is over the freedom to believe what you choose to believe. There are people who want to make you not *only* do different things, but think different things. I do not think we have seen that ever" (Tucker Carlson). The things that are happening in our day are unprecedented in world history.

When you put this all together, we see the beast system, that was evident in the first century, emerging that seizes control in all areas of life; political, financial/economic, education, news media, entertainment, culture, social, moral, and spiritual; and demands allegiance/worship to the system. It redefines established norms, systems, laws, and forces changes in daily life. There have been totalitarian governments over the course of history that have

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attempted to dominate the world, but not at the alarming scale we see it today. It goes beyond political changes, but involves everything that is part of the beast system. What we are seeing today is a large segment of society going reprobate/depraved (failing to pass the test). The following portion of scripture describes those who are siding against God.

²⁸And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, malicious-ness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, ³⁰backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³²who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:28-32)

Even during all the wickedness and perversion that we have seen in the world, God can move and bring about a great revival. We have witnessed the assassination of Charlie Kirk on September 10, 2025, a devoted Christian who founded the conservative political group Turning Point USA. His martyred death has had a global impact in pointing the world to having a relationship with Jesus Christ. Many people have attended church for the first time in their lives because of the impact of Charlie Kirk's life. His memorial service was held at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona where there was 100,000 in attendance and millions viewed on television. The anointing of the Spirit was evident on the speakers and those leading the worship service.

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One might ask, why would God allow the tragic death of devoted servant of the Lord at such an early age of 31, leaving behind a lovely wife and two young children. Christians have suffered all through church history, and some have suffered a martyred death. I believe what we are witnessing is his message reaching countless more in his death, that what he could have reached if he had lived. This is the only way one can make sense of this tragedy. I believe this could be the dawn of a spiritual awakening that surpasses the Azusa Street Revival in 1906 that could lead us to the return of Jesus Christ and the bringing in of the New Creation. This is the story of a victorious eschatology, and not one of coming tribulation and God's wrath being poured out on the world. We are looking for the return of Christ, and not the coming of an antichrist.

There were various speakers at Charlie Kirk's memorial service. Those in attendance remarked how they felt the presence of the Holy Spirit in a powerful way. There was a special unction of the Spirit (1 John 2:27), I believe, that inspired the speakers as they gave their eulogies'. One of the speakers, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, gave an outstanding summary of God's redemption of mankind. Lawrence Jones, from Fox News commented that he is a preacher's kid and he never heard a more stirring account. I want to share it below.

"One of the things he wants us to take away from this, from all of this, is the following. His deep belief that we were all created, every single one of us, before the beginning of time, by the hands of the God of the universe. An all-powerful God who loved us and created us for the purpose of living with Him in eternity, but then sin entered the world and separated us from our Creator. And so, God took on the form of a man and came down and lived among us and He suffered like men and He died like a man, but on the third day, He rose unlike any mortal man. And then, and to prove any doubters wrong, He ate with his disciples so they could see, and they touched His wounds. He did not rise as a ghost or as a spirit, but His flesh. And then He rose to the heaven, but He promised He would return and He will. And when He returns, because He took on that death, because He carried that cross, we were freed from the sin that separated us from Him. **And when He**

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returns, there will be a new heaven and a new earth. And we will all be together. And we are going to have a great reunion there again with Charlie and all the people we love. Thank you, and God bless you.” (Marco Rubio, Secretary of State, speech at Charlie Kirk memorial service, 9/21/2025).

I want to emphasize the last statement made by Mario Rubio, **“And when He returns, there will be a new heaven and a new earth.”** Notice he did not mention the millennium, but Christ bringing in a new heaven and new earth, which agrees with the lens of interpretation I am presenting in this book. If his summation was truly an anointed utterance in the Holy Spirit, it would be a confirmation of the Days of Noah/Lot paradigm.

Considering all the things that I have mentioned, I believe this is one **picture of the Day of Noah/Lot paradigm** as stated in the Bible at its heightened form at the end of the age. The whole world has become totally corrupt and nations seeking to do evil and dominate the planet, and that have the capability to destroy it all through nuclear and biological warfare. We are living in perilous times in biblical proportions. To put it in biblical terms, the world has become reprobate. It is not just individual groups that have accepted these values, it is the whole of society that has brought about a change on the culture.

Jonathan Cahn, in his book “The Return of the Gods” said the following about a civilization possessed.

“The larger truth is that possession may involve more than an individual. It may involve an entire culture, nation, kingdom, or civilization. It is this phenomenon, that of *collective, mass, or civilizational possession*, that is critical to understand if one is to understand the radical metamorphosis that took place in ancient times, that altered world history, and equally radical transformation taking place at this very moment” (The Return of the Gods, page 17).

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Some will say that we may be living at the dawn of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The decline of morality and the belief in the God of the Bible have brought societal changes affecting the whole world that hates God and His righteous judgments.

There is another way to interpret Jesus's statement, "But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:37) according to the **"Days of Noah/Lot Paradigm**. Jesus did not mention anything about the moral conditions on the earth prior to His return. To just assume the moral conditions of Noah's time, great wickedness, violence, and homosexuality (Genesis 6:5, 11-13; 19:4-7) was what Jesus was talking about is to read into the text what is not there. The decline of morality and depravity in our world can be present before His return, but Jesus does not mention it in the Olivet Discourse. To follow a sound hermeneutical approach is to not assume and read into the text (eisegesis) what is not there. The only clear expressed fact Jesus attributed to His coming is that no one will know the time of His coming (Matthew 24:42-44) because life will be going on as normal (Matthew 24:38-39; Luke 17:27-30).

This second possible description of the Days of Noah Paradigm means there will be no signs leading up to His coming. Life will be going on as normal and He comes at a time nobody is expecting Him, just as nobody was expecting the flood. As Jesus said, "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matthew 24:44). Today, a lot of people are expecting Jesus to be coming soon, but to stay true to the scripture, He is coming when no one expects it. That goes totally contrary to the mindset of today.

Jesus's instruction for us is to be living in a state of readiness for His coming. We are to be faithful and watching for His return. Some will warn that we need to be ready for the rapture. I do not see that there is anything unique to do to get ready for the rapture. To be ready is to have given your life to Jesus Christ, been born again, and living for Him. Believers should be making plans for their life and looking to the future, and at the same time, living with the expectation that Jesus could come at any moment.

“Left Behind” / One Taken and the Other Left

Dispensationalists believe that Jesus’s analogy to the days of Noah was speaking of the pretribulation rapture. The fact that He said no one knows the day or hour supports the doctrine of imminent return where Jesus could return at any moment because no prophetic signs need to happen prior to His coming. All the signs Jesus gives in the Olivet Discourse, such as wars and rumors of wars, are for His second coming which is preceded by signs. This two phase second coming includes a secret coming known the rapture and a public return at His second coming.

The “left behind” book series by Tim La Haye and Jerry B. Jenkins used Jesus’s teaching that one will be taken and one left (Matthew 24:40-41; Luke 17:35-36) as believers being raptured (caught up) to be taken to heaven while those left behind go through the seven-year tribulation. The true context of what Jesus said is that the believers are the ones left behind as those taken are carried away to judgment. The scripture says,

³⁶ “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. ³⁷ But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the **coming** (*Parousia*) of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, **they** were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and **took them all away**, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰ Then two *men* will be in the field: **one will be taken and the other left**. ⁴¹ Two *women* will be grinding at the mill: **one will be taken and the other left**. ⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. (Matthew 24:36-42, emphasis added)

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The ones who were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage were taken by surprise by the coming of the flood and were the ones who were taken away by the flood. Noah and his family were left behind to replenish the earth (Genesis 9:1). The ark protected them through the flood and they remained on the earth after the flood waters had receded. This is totally opposite of what dispensationalists teach. The popular view today of unbelievers being left behind is an example of a teaching that forces the text to fit a particular eschatological view. The true meaning of those left behind is clear when you just read the passage.

Final Comments

One of the reasons it is difficult to agree on the interpretation of Bible eschatology, is that the terms “The Tribulation” and “The Rapture” have taken on new meanings in the modern church. Much of this can be attributed to the teachings of John Nelson Darby that formed the framework of dispensational theology in the 19th century. Darby’s dispensational thought devised the rationale for the pretribulation rapture view and that that Israel and the Church are two distinct groups with different covenantal relationships with God.

When one speaks of “the tribulation,” it is perceived to mean a seven-year time, just prior to Christ’s second coming, where God pours on His wrath on the earth. When people think of the end times, “the tribulation” is the reference point. People see it as the coming worse times the world has ever seen, and no Christian wants to live through “the tribulation.” It sparks fear in the heart of believers to think of the possibility of going through “the tribulation.” Christians have placed their hope in a pretribulation rapture to escape these times because, we have not been appointed to God’s wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9). So, the term “the rapture” has come to be understood as an event, separate to the second coming, where Christ comes in the clouds to secretly remove believers from the earth, to take them to heaven before God’s wrath is poured out. I have come up with the term “Tribulation/God’s Wrath Model” to reflect this view of the end times.

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The difficulty in introducing another “lens of interpretation” is challenging people’s perception of “the tribulation” and “the rapture.” These terms are ingrained into the minds of people so that everything is measured according to them. The dispensational premillennial view has been adopted into many church denominations’ statements of faith. It must be understood that these reference points do not mean the same thing in other viewpoints of the end times. It is important to set aside one’s previous views and presuppositions when studying Bible eschatology, and use sound hermeneutical principles in understanding scripture. It needs to be understood that I am presenting another interpretative lens of Bible eschatology and it should be evaluated based on its scriptural merit.

Chapter 4 -The Great End Times Misconception

I want to share with you what I call the great misconception of the end times. I know the prevailing view of the church today is that of a pretribulation rapture where believers are secretly removed from the earth prior to a seven-year tribulation where the wrath of God is poured out upon the earth. This view is known as dispensational premillennialism. However, the most popular teaching of the end times does not determine if it is correct. Many people are enthusiastic about what they believe. As a Christian, we want our beliefs to be based on the scriptures and not just blindly accepting what someone else says. The question becomes; do we understand and interpret the scriptures correctly. The interpretative lens you use in studying scripture will have a drastic impact on how you understand the Bible.

What I am about to say will be difficult for some to receive. No one likes to be challenged in what they believe, but if I really feel you are not rightly dividing the Word, wouldn't you want me to tell you? I want fellow believers to let me know if I am misapplying the scriptures. When studying Bible end time prophecy, we cannot allow our disagreements to divide us. There are different ways (i.e., lenses) in which scripture is interpreted, but we should not be insistent that our view is the correct one.

Scripture warns us concerning false teachings by saying, "2preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in

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accordance to their own desires,⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths” (2 Timothy 4:2-4 NASB 1995).

The great misconception of the end times is the myth of the pre-tribulation rapture. A “myth” is defined as “a popular belief or tradition that has grown up around something or someone; a widely held but false belief or idea.” It is my assertion that a pretribulation rapture is not supported by scripture. The belief can be traced back to John Nelson Darby in 1830 who popularized the teaching now known as dispensational premillennialism. It became the view endorsed by the Scofield Reference Bible, first published in 1909. The reference notes in this Bible helped influence generations and is a big reason why the pretribulation rapture is the most popular view today. There are dispensationalists who claim a pretribulation rapture view was held in the early church. They can produce a few quotes from writings of the time to prove their point. These few examples do not provide convincing evidence to show this was a widely held belief.

I call the belief in the pretribulation rapture a “misconception” and not a “deception.” A *misconception* is a view or opinion that is incorrect because it is based on faulty thinking or understanding. A *deception* is the act of causing someone to accept as true or valid what is false or invalid. A deception is a conscious, deliberate, and intentional attempt to mislead someone.

Those who support the pretribulation rapture, in my opinion, are basing it on faulty and incomplete information. When this view is taught, I believe it is done by Bible believing Christians who truly think they are basing their position on sound biblical evidence.

As I read and listen to messages by others who are not dispensationalists, I noticed a definite trend. Many said that they were formally dispensationalists and believed in a pretribulation rapture. Some even stated that they grew up believing that way. However, as they began to critically review the scriptures concerning the end time events, they had to make a change. Many of those who said they changed their views went from dispensationalism to amillennial or post millennial positions. I have read of very few who have changed their view to dispensationalism and a pretribulation rapture. This is not

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a scientific poll, but this does send a message. When Christians critically analyze why they believe what they believe, they sometimes arrive to the conclusion that they need to make a change. This especially holds true as it relates to Bible eschatology.

Please allow me to pose this question to you. Were you taught the pretribulation rapture view, or did you arrive at that position by carefully studying the scriptures? I know in my case, and that of many others, that we were taught it by our pastor or Bible study teachers. Many just accept what they are taught without verifying it with scripture. Many who seriously study Bible eschatology have changed their views on the rapture and the millennium from what they were originally taught. As we grow spiritually by studying the Bible, we are better able to understand difficult passages, and may need to revise our beliefs accordingly. Our beliefs must be based on scripture and not on what is popular, or what people say.

I have two biblical passages to share that I believe settles the questions concerning a pretribulation rapture. They are as follows:

⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴**But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. (1 Corinthians 15:51-54)**

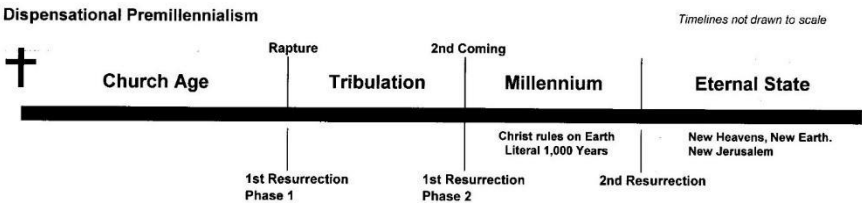
²⁸Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which **all who are in the tombs will hear His voice,** ²⁹**and will come forth;** those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who

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committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.
(John 5:28-29)

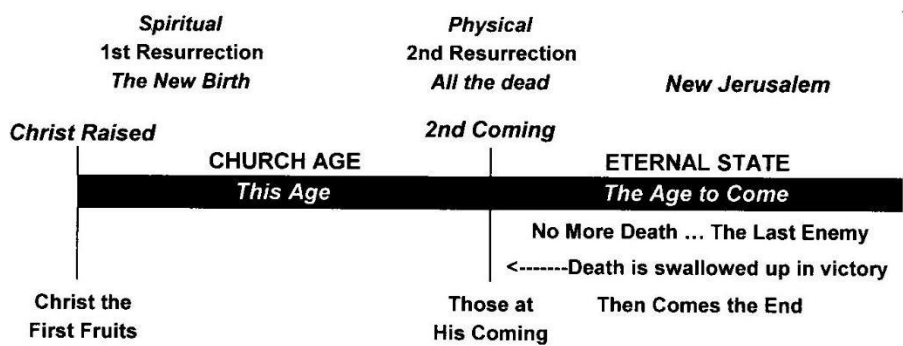
The passage in 1 Corinthians 15 is one of the two main rapture verses. Paul says that when our mortal body puts on its immortal body, it fulfills Isaiah’s prophecy that says “Death is swallowed up.” That prophecy states, “He will swallow up death forever, And the LORD GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken. (Isaiah 25:8). Isaiah is prophesying that there will be a time when death will be abolished forever and God will wipe away all tears from all faces. This very same statement is made by the Apostle John, “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be **no more death**, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4, emphasis added). John’s statement is made from the part of the book of Revelation that is speaking of the new heavens and the new earth, a time known as the new creation or the Eternal State.

According to dispensational teaching, there will be death after the pretribulation rapture during the tribulation. There will also be death during the millennium. **If death is abolished at the last trumpet when believers receive their glorified body, how can there be death after that point?** According to dispensational teaching, there will be multiple resurrections of the dead; at the pretribulation rapture, at the second coming of Christ, and of the unrighteous dead at the end of the thousand years (the millennium or kingdom age). See the chart below that shows the popular dispensational view:



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Jesus says that ALL who are in their graves will hear His voice and be resurrected (John 5:28-29). There is only one bodily resurrection of the dead, **of the just and the unjust at the same time**. How can a view of the rapture that includes multiple resurrections be biblically justified? The scriptures plainly state that the physical resurrection of the dead takes place at Christ's coming. We encounter issues when some say that there are different phases, or multiple resurrections. Does Jesus come secretly, or privately, to rapture believers, and then again at a public glorious appearing at the second coming? The following timeline is in accordance with 1 Corinthians 15.



The only conclusion one can make is that the pretribulation rapture view is not biblical. It is not supported by scripture. The idea of a secret resurrection of believers before a seven-year tribulation has been imposed on the text. The fact of the matter is the secret rapture is just one component of the dispensational millennial system. If that teaching is debatable, then it should raise questions about other aspects of this interpretative system. For example, the seven-year tribulation has also been taught to be a future event following the secret rapture, but the irony is, it was possibly fulfilled in the first century. The whole eschatological system presented by dispensational premillennialism, in my opinion, is based on faulty, or incomplete information. When there are impositions on the text, it leads to error begetting error, that results in a flawed system of interpretation. I will build on that concept later in this book.

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As we grow on the knowledge of the scriptures, we may need to revise our long-held beliefs. As I have stated in my book, “The Mystery of the Millennium Weighing the Evidence, 1 Corinthians 15:54 is a key verse that sets a standard for interpreting end time events. I call it the “plum line,” as I explained it in chapter 5 of my book. This verse does not only impact the timing of the rapture; it also affects the whole concept of a literal thousand-year kingdom age preceding the eternal state.

Another misconception I would like to interject from the popular view of Bible eschatology is that of multiple judgments. According to dispensational premillennialism, there will be three judgments; the judgment of believers/Bema Seat (Romans 14:10-13; 1 Corinthians 3:10-16; 2 Corinthians 5:10), the judgment of nations (Matthew 25:31-46), and the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). They view these as three separate judgments occurring when believers are raptured, at the second coming of Christ, and at the end of the millennium. However, consider what the Apostle Paul says in his charge to Timothy, “I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, **who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing** and His kingdom:² Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Timothy 4:1-2, emphasis added). According to Paul, he speaks of one judgment occurring at Christ appearing, or His second coming. I believe this can serve as another “plumb line” verse in that it establishes a statement of fact concerning the judgment. The question becomes, are there three separate judgments divided by time, or are there three aspects to the one simultaneous judgment at occurs at Christ’s coming? We need to follow where the scripture leads us and not seek to explain the scriptures in a manner to fit a preconceived system of eschatology.

I have no masters or doctorate in theology, so some may think I am not qualified to write and express my opinion. I will say that I am filled with the Holy Spirit and that the Bible says the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13). I believe the Holy Spirit trumps any worldly degree we may have. Any person who reads the

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scripture and wants to understand them can, because the Holy Spirit is the One who teaches us. It is the Holy Spirit that reveals the Word of God to us, because it is spiritually discerned/understood (2 Corinthians 2:14-15).

The church world has sensationalized the rapture. The idea of escaping the tribulation, or the very bad things that will be coming on this world, is very appealing. Who wants to go through hard times? It is very exciting to anticipate an event that will keep us from going through some of the very worse times the world has ever seen. The hype of a pretribulation rapture, as promoted by the “left behind” message, has convinced many Christians to blindly accept this teaching as biblically true. This question needs to be asked. Is Jesus coming to lead a great escape, or a grand rescue of His people?

The word “rapture” has taken on a meaning of its own in the American church today. It is viewed as a separate partial return of Jesus to secretly catch away believers that is separate from the second coming. It brings about thoughts of believer’s being snatched out of planes and then crashing and people’s clothes being left behind. Some say that the rapture is not biblical. In my view, it is biblical in that believers alive at His coming will be “caught up” to meet Jesus in the air, but it is a simultaneous event with the second coming.

Some of the major teachings by dispensationalist are based on inference, not plain statements of scripture. When various scriptures are examined together to form a conclusion that is not based on direct scriptural evidence, it is being done by reasoning or inference. An inference is an educated guess about what the author intended to say. When interpreting the Bible in this way, one can spin it to say whatever they want it to say. The following are some dispensational teachings that build their interpretative case on inference.

- Pretribulation Rapture (a separate secret coming of Christ)
- Seventy Weeks Gap Theory
- Rebuilding of the Jewish Temple
- Millennium required for God to fulfill His promises to Israel

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There are no direct statements of scripture that support these elements of dispensational premillennialism. They were developed by putting various scriptures together, and through a process of reasoning, drawing conclusions that form these teachings. These views have been read into the text. Not one direct statement of scripture can be produced to support these views.

When I came to understand the “plum line” scriptures as I outlined in this chapter, it totally turned my eschatological system “on its head.” It helped lead me to view the scriptures in a new and completely different light, and focus on what the scriptures plainly say, recognizing how easily it was to impose my own ideas into the text. Changing one’s views is a process and does not happen overnight, but with the Lord’s help, you can gain a deeper knowledge of God’s Word.

Chapter 5 - Difficult Verses in the Olivet Discourse

In my view, there are four difficult, or problem passages, in the Olivet Discourse for a partial preterist interpretation of Jesus's teaching to explain. When you read these, it seems obvious that they are speaking of the last days at Christ's second coming. A strong case must be presented to lead anyone to believe that these verses are pertaining to the first century. A preterist interpretation should be used when the text directs us to use it. A preterist reading is required by the context of the Olivet Discourse because of the events transpiring after Christ's triumphal entry. In this chapter, I want to provide sound biblical reasons why these verses are speaking to a first century audience. The verses in question, taken from the gospel of Matthew are as follows:

1. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. Matthew 24:14
2. ¹⁵"Therefore, when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), ... ²¹For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. Matthew 24:15, 21
3. ²⁹"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be

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shaken.³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.³¹ And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Matthew 24:29-31

4. ³⁴ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. Matthew 24:34-35

To properly address the four problem passages, it is imperative that we understand the *context* behind what led up to Jesus's prophecy of the destruction of the temple. If you go back several chapters in the gospel accounts of the Olivet Discourse to the triumphal entry and read forward, you will see what Jesus was going through. The chapters that precede the Olivet Discourse, set the stage for how Jesus answers the disciples' questions regarding when the temple will be destroyed and the coming end of the age.

More than likely, Jesus would have been still feeling the effects from the interactions with the scribes and Pharisees, when He was walking through the temple grounds with His disciples, as they were admiring the buildings of the temple. This is the context that led to Jesus's proclamation that not one stone will be left from the temple. When considering the setting leading up to the Olivet Discourse, is Jesus primarily addressing a distant future generation, or the first century generation facing the coming destruction of Jerusalem? That is the context we must consider in understanding Jesus's response to His disciples' questions. The four difficult passages we will be examining must be understood using sound Bible hermeneutics. This begins by interpreting them literally by the plain reading of the text and allowing for the possibility a symbolic meaning, interpreting them historically, contextually, and grammatically.

Difficult Verses in the Olivet Discourse

It needs to be said that the futurists interpretation method for understanding the Olivet Discourse is used by the popular Bible teachers today as inspired by John Nelson Darby. This means that all of what Jesus said affects a distant future generation that will see those events come to pass. I will provide some brief comments in explaining the four difficult passages. Much could be written, but I will give my concise explanation to present a preterist viewpoint.

Difficult Passage #1:

In addressing the first difficult passage, Jesus makes the statement that the gospel must first be preached in all the world as a witness, and then the end comes. This seems to be speaking of the end of the church age at the second coming of Christ. Surely, the gospel had not reached the whole world during the first century. This is a difficult passage to explain when trying to tie these signs to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. There are several verses of scripture that could verify the fact that the gospel did reach the known world at that time. Paul, in his epistle to the Colossians was speaking of our being reconciled in Christ. The scripture says, “if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from **the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven**, of which I, Paul, became a minister” (Colossian 1:23, emphasis added). If the gospel was preached to everyone under heaven, then it can be used as a proof that it did reach the whole known world. In Paul’s epistle to the Romans, he commended them for their faith where he says, “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of **throughout the whole world**” (Romans 1:8, emphasis added). Again, Paul implies that the gospel had reached the whole world. Paul in his benediction at the close of Romans makes the following statement:

²⁵ Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the

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world began ²⁶ but now made manifest, and by **the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations**, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— (Romans 16:25-26, emphasis added)

The word “world” in Matthew in 24:14 was translated from the Greek word “*oikoumene*” (Strong’s 3625), that is defined as “the inhabited earth, that is the Roman world.” Jesus was not saying the gospel had to reach the ends of the whole earth, but to the ends of the known world, which at that time was the Roman empire. It means a limited geography. The Greek word “*kosmos*” (Strong’s 2889), is the term that applies to the entire earth. “Kosmos” is defined as “the world, or the universe, “and would refer to God’s entire creation. We can see the same reference to the known world, or the Roman empire in Luke 2:1 that says, “And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world (*oikoumene*) should be registered.” The decree is not for the whole earth, but for the Roman empire.

We need to be aware that the various English versions of the Bible may have some bias in their translations on certain passages. Where translations such as the KJV, NKJV, and ESV translate the Greek word “*oikoumene*” as “world,” some of the other translations get it correct. Consider the following, “In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the **entire Roman world**” (Luke 2:1 *NIV*, emphasis added) and “Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of **all the inhabited earth**” (Luke 2:1 *NASB*, emphasis added). When doing a word study on the word “world,” we can see it is entirely possible that the gospel could be preached to the ends of the Roman Empire before A.D. 70.

Another point to make about this difficult passage concerns the word “end.” It comes from the Greek word “*telos*” (Strong’s 5056), meaning “the point aimed at, or the conclusion of an act or state.” The end Jesus was speaking of goes back to the questions the disciples asked in Matthew 24:3, “Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the

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disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of **the end of the age?**” Many understand the “end of the age” as the end of the church age at Christ’s second coming. The King James Version (KJV) translates it as the “end of the world.” The word “age,” comes from the Greek, the word “*aion*” (Strong’s 165), meaning “an age, or cycle (of time). It can be argued that Jesus was referring to the end of the Jewish age, and not the end of the world at Christ’s second coming. The Greek word used for the end of time is “*kosmos*” (Strong’s 2889), which means “the world, or universe.” The use of the word “*aion*” implies the end of a particular age, or cycle of time and not the end of all the ages.

Looking at all these Greek words can get confusing, but looking deeper into the use of words can help in our understanding of scripture. It should be part of our hermeneutical approach in the interpretation of Bible passages.

Difficult Passage #2:

The second difficult passage mentions the “abomination of desolation” and that “great tribulation” will come resulting the worst times ever seen since the beginning of the world, or will ever see. These verses lay the foundation for the dispensational premillennial view that includes a pretribulation rapture followed by a seven-year tribulation.

Futurists interpret the abomination of desolation as occurring in the future at the middle of the seven-year tribulation before Christ’s second coming. It is the time when the antichrist stops the daily sacrifice in the rebuilt third temple and demands to be worshiped as God. The abomination of desolation according to a partial preterist view places this event as taking place in A.D 70 at the midpoint of the First Jewish Revolt in A.D. 66-73.

The Romans, during the siege of Jerusalem, encircled the city with a wall to cut off supplies completely and thereby drive the Jews to starvation. Jesus also said concerning Jerusalem that their house would be left unto them “desolate” (a desert, wildness, deserted place). This agrees to the seventy weeks prophecy where Daniel used

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the same term, “And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate” (Daniel 9:27b). Because of the abominations, the temple will be left desolate because they did not know the time of their visitation (the coming of their Messiah).

Some historians believe the Roman General Titus sacrificed a pig in the temple in A.D. 70. It was part of the Roman ritual called *suovetaurilia*, that consisted of sacrificing a pig, sheep, or bull to Mars, the god of war. It was practiced for land purification ceremonies to cleanse the past and future sins on the land. Some argue that Titus committed the abomination of desolation mentioned by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14). Josephus also mentions that the soldiers brought their ensigns (idolatrous representations of Caesar and the Roman eagle on standards) into the temple (The Jewish Wars 6.6.1), offered sacrifices to them and that the house of God was full of so many abominations (The Jewish Wars 4.3.10). This defilement of the temple was reminiscent of what Antiochus Epiphanes did in 167 BC when an altar of the Olympian god Zeus (2 Maccabees 6:1-9) was erected and sacrificed swine on it.

Jesus may have been speaking of the Jews committing the abomination of desolation. The Jews during the time of Jesus had allowed the temple to become “a house of merchandise” (John 2:16) and “making it a robbers den” (Matthew 21:13). Figuratively speaking, the temple had become infected with leprosy. In the Old Testament, there were laws concerning cleansing a leprous house (Leviticus 14:33-47). The owner of the house was to call the priest who would inspect the house for signs of leprosy. If found, he would quarantine the house for seven days and return on the seventh day to reinspect it. If the leprosy spread, the priest would order any infected stones to be thrown outside the city and replaced. If the leprosy breaks out again after the stones were replaced, the priest would come again to inspect. If he saw the leprosy had spread, it is considered malignant and the house declared unclean. At this point, the priest would order to have the house torn down.

Jesus, as the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:6), cleansed the temple twice (John 2:13-16; Matthew

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21:12-13) during His earthly ministry. He was in effect inspecting the temple for leprosy by following the law of leprosy from the Old Testament. He found the temple to still be leprous after His second cleansing of the temple and said to His disciples, “not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” The priests, scribes, and elders rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Christ offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10:11-14), bringing in the New Covenant, therefore making the Old obsolete (Hebrews 8:13). The high priest standing in the holy place and continuing to offer sacrifices in the temple was an abomination and a rejection of Christ’s atoning work on the cross. When the Jews rejected Jesus and kept offering sacrifices, they were in effect, engaged in idolatry.

Many Christians when they hear the word *tribulation*, automatically think of the dispensational view of the tribulation. They see it as a seven-year time prior to the second coming of Christ. The last three and on-half years is called the great tribulation where God pours out His wrath on the world. The rapture views are all centered on the tribulation. There is the pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, post-tribulation, and pre-wrath rapture views. What if the time of tribulation Jesus was speaking about occurred in the first century. In keeping with the context of the Olivet Discourse and the time reference of “this generation” (discussed in difficult passage #4), this passage must find its fulfillment in the past.

The tribulation corresponds to the First Jewish Revolt in A.D. 66-73. The signs of wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes can all be historically verified as occurring in the time leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem. The siege of Jerusalem occurred from April 14 through September 8, A.D. 70, lasting three months and four days. Many Christians are not aware of the savagery, cruelty, devastation, and monstrosities that occurred during this event, as recorded by the ancient Jewish historian Josephus, and its importance in Bible prophecy. This is the great tribulation Jesus was talking about. Futurists that place the tribulation in the distant future are basing their assumptions on a misreading and misdating of the Olivet Discourse.

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The popular view of the tribulation is connected to the final week of Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27). The dispensational view holds to a "gap theory" interpretation of Daniel's prophecy. It states that this final period of seven years was placed on hold at the time of Jesus's crucifixion and will not resume until the antichrist confirms a covenant with Israel. There is no occurrence of a prophetic gap in scripture. In my view, this is a misapplication of this prophecy in identifying it with a future distant tribulation. I go into more detail on this in chapter six in this book.

Is it possible that the worst times the world has ever seen had taken place in the first century? From our vantage point in history, there have been events that could qualify as the worst ever experienced. Since then, there was the bubonic plague in the fourteenth century that killed more than a third of Europe or 25 million people. In the twentieth century there were two world wars with a combined death count of approximately 100 million people. The Jewish holocaust occurred between 1933-1945 where six million died in the German death camps. Jesus said the great tribulation will be the worst times ever seen and you would expect it to be far worse than the historic events I just mentioned. Surly, He was speaking of the great tribulation just prior to His second coming.

I am making the argument that Jesus was using "hyperbolic language" when He made that statement. "Hyperbolic language," is a figure of speech that uses exaggeration, or overstates a truth, to emphasize a point or evoke strong feelings. In this case, it is used to express great suffering. Many have taken a literal approach in understanding Jesus's statement. My view is that Jesus was speaking figuratively when He made that point. The idea of *the worst times up to that point in history, or will ever be after that*, has been expressed at least five different times in scripture. Allow me to give you the verses below:

1. ⁶Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, **such as was not like it *before*, nor shall be like it again.** (Exodus 11:6, emphasis added)

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2. ⁹ And I will do among **you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again**, because of all your abominations. (Ezekiel 5:9, emphasis added)
3. ² A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, The like of whom **has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them**, Even for many successive generations. (Joel 2:2, emphasis added)
4. “At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands *watch* over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, **Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time**. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Everyone who is found written in the book. (Daniel 12:1, emphasis added)
5. ²¹For then there will be great tribulation, **such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be**. (Matthew 24:21, emphasis added)

The first example occurred at the time of the exodus from Egypt when God sent the tenth plague that killed all the firstborn. The scripture said there was never a cry of grief like that before, nor will ever be again. Is this a literal truth, or is it meant to express a great coming grief. There have been horrendous times since then that can match or exceed that grief.

The second example speaks of a time of God executing judgment on Jerusalem because of their wickedness and rebellion. Here again we find the statement “And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations” (Ezekiel 5:9). How can this judgment on Jerusalem be something that He will never do again? God sent another judgment upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70 that resulted the annihilation of the temple and the city that outweighed what happened in the book of Ezekiel. The statement was not intended to be literal, but an overstatement to express a point. The same is true for the verse in Joel concerning a judgment in 720 B.C. The phrase “the worst ever, or will ever be” is

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hyperbolic language used to express great suffering and coming judgment.

Some have said that the verse in points 4 and 5 relate to the same event at Christ's second coming because that will be a time of trouble unequalled in history. When you read the verses closely, you will see that they are speaking of different events. One is at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Matthew 24:21) and the other at the second coming of Christ (Daniel 12:1). In A.D. 70, Jesus said the destruction of Jerusalem will result in the people being led captive into all the nations (Luke 21:24). In Daniel, the scripture says God's people will be delivered and there will be a resurrection of the dead (Daniel 12:1-2). This did not occur in A.D. 70. Both verses express the idea of *the worst times up to that point in history, or will ever be after that*. This should not be interpreted in a strict literal sense, but as an exaggeration or overstatement to emphasize a point.

When viewing our second different passage in the Olivet Discourse as an example of Jesus's use of hyperbolic language, it can allow for that passage to have been fulfilled in the first century. I believe we need to be aware of the use of language in this way in our efforts to rightly divide the Word of God.

Difficult Passage #3:

Now I will address the third difficult passage in the Olivet Discourse that describes Jesus coming in the clouds. The interpretation of this section of the Olivet Discourse is the most controversial. When interpreted literally, it is easily seen as speaking of Christ's second coming. In examining this passage closer, it can be argued that Jesus is using metaphorical terms in warning of the coming judgment upon Jerusalem that occurred in A.D. 70. These are two vastly differing interpretations that must be examined using sound biblical hermeneutics.

The futurist interpretation of the coming of the Son of Man (Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28) in the Olivet Discourse, relates to Christ's second coming at the end of the age. His

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coming in the clouds is in the same manner as He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11). His coming will be glorious (Titus 2:1), in the clouds where every eye will see Him (Revelation 1:7), when He comes to judge and wage war (Revelation 19:11). This comes from a literal interpretation of these verses in the Olivet Discourse.

The partial preterist view of the coming of the Son of Man is that Jesus is pronouncing judgment on the Jewish people that occurred in A.D. 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem. There are five points in verses 29-31 that I want to provide an explanation that contrasts with the popular futurist interpretation. The five points to be addressed are as follows:

1. Sun, moon, and stars darkened; powers of heaven shaken, coming in the clouds
2. The “sign” of the Son of Man in heaven
3. Tribes of the earth mourn
4. Angels gather His elect
5. The Greek words Parousia and erchomai

Point #1: In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus makes numerous references to Old Testament passages that speak of coming judgment in metaphorical language. “Cosmic language” is used to describe the destruction of Jerusalem. This end of the age (eschaton) language is previewed in describing mini judgments in the Old Testament. Jesus’s use of phrases such as; the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light (Isaiah 13:9-10; Ezekeil 32:7; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15), the powers of the heaven will be shaken (Isaiah 13:13; 34:4; Joel 3:16), the Lord coming in the clouds (Isaiah 19:1), and the flashing of the lightning (Zechariah 9:14) were understood by the Jewish hearers of coming judgment. This is not the physical return of Jesus at the second coming. This passage is not speaking of the coming of Christ at the end of the age, but of the coming of the kingdom of God. Jesus came preaching that the kingdom of God (Luke 4:43; 10:9; Acts 28:31) is at hand (Mark 1:15; Luke 21:31), that it has come upon you (Matthew 12:28), is received as a little child (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17), that it is within you

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(Luke 17:21), and that you must be born again to see and enter it (John 3:3, 5). At Christ's first coming, the kingdom was inaugurated and at His second coming, the kingdom will be consummated (1 Corinthians 15:23-24).

Some may take a more literal approach to this passage concerning the appearance of miraculous signs in the heavens. Luke's version of this passage says, "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars" (Luke 21:25a). In Josephus's "The Jewish Wars," he records occurrences of miraculous signs during the siege of Jerusalem that could be fulfillment of what Jesus said will happen. There were signs in the heavens, a great light shone around the altar, a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year, a heifer giving birth to a lamb, a very heavy gate shutting on its own accord, and soldiers were seen running about among the clouds of heaven (The Wars of the Jews 6.5.3). One of the most difficult parts of the Olivet Discourse is claiming the appearance of signs in the heavens in the first century. The historical writings of Josephus provide an eyewitness account that miraculous signs did occur in the first century.

A unique feature of the New American Standard Bible (NASB) is that it uses small capital letters when the New Testament writers are quoting from the Old Testament. In Matthew 24:29-31, the NASB uses capital letters showing Jesus is quoting from the Old Testament. Jesus is using prophetic language from the Old Testament that reflects coming judgment. No where in these passages does God physically appear. Another point to make is that in the Old Testament, the phrase "sun, moon, and stars" is representative of Israel. We see this in Joseph's dream in Genesis 37:9-11, where the sun and the moon represent Jacob and Rebecca, and the eleven stars Joseph's brothers.

Point #2: The "sign" that appears in heaven mentioned in verse 30 is the reality that Jesus is seated in Heaven as King and was Israel's promised Messiah. The scripture says;

13 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, **Coming with the**

clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14, emphasis added)

The “sign” that judgment was coming was Jesus’s enthronement in Heaven at the right hand of Power. The Jewish chief priests and elders did not recognize who Jesus was. Jesus takes His seat in the heavens at his ascension (Acts 1:9-11). The tribes of Israel will mourn because they failed to recognize Him. There is no physical appearance of Christ in this passage. Where it says “they will see the Son of man coming” is not physically seeing Jesus. It is understanding (to see can also mean to discern or understand) that He is enthroned in heaven. All the tribes of Israel will understand Christ’s enthronement and that judgment is coming. The word Parousia used in Matthew 24:27 is not speaking of His presence on the earth, but His presence in the heavens as He is enthroned at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19; Hebrews 1:3). Jesus’s presence “came to the Ancient of Days (come up to God in Heaven), and not down to the earth.

Point #3: This passage also contains the phrase “all the tribes of the earth will mourn” (Matthew 24:30b). The Greek word for “earth” (*ge*) is defined as earth, soil, land, inhabitants of a region. It could and probably should be translated “tribes of the land,” where the land is Israel and the tribes being a reference to the 12 tribes of Israel. It is not a reference to all the peoples of the earth. It is a local judgment on Israel that occurred in A.D. 70.

Point #4: There is also the matter of the translation of the Greek word “*aggelos*” found in Matthew 24:31 that was translated into our English word “angel.” Strong’s Concordance’s definition for this word is “a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, an angel, a messenger from God.” This can be a human or angelic messenger. Is it possible that the translators of the English versions of the Bible were influenced by the

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dispensational premillennial/futurist eschatological model in rendering “aggelos” as “angel?” Consider how the interpretation of this verse would change if it was translated into the English word “messenger,” such as a minister or missionary. This would mean that God sends His ministers into all the world to preach the gospel in gathering (Ephesian 1:10) His elect from all over the world to be a part of His spiritual body, the church. If this translation is more accurate, then this verse takes a totally different meaning and can be compared to the great commission in Matthew 28:19-20. This interpretation would also place the timing of this passage in the first century, keeping it within the context of Jesus’s response in answering His disciples’ questions.

Point #5: The word “coming” in verse 30 is translated from the Greek word “*erchomai*.” There are several Greek words that are translated into the English word “coming.”

- “*erchomai*,” meaning “to come from one place to another, or to come into being.”
- “*Parousia*,” means “presence, the coming, arrival, advent, and is the word most often associated with the future visible return from heaven of Jesus, to raise the dead, hold the last judgment, and set up formally and gloriously the kingdom of God.”

The Greek word “*Parousia*” is most often used to communicate the visible second coming of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 5:23; 2 Peter 3:12; 1 John 2:28). The Greek word “*erchomai*” is used in connection with Christ’s coming judgment in A.D. 70.

It is important to note the word “*Parousia*” does not always refer to the second coming of Jesus. The word, in its essence, means “coming” “arrival” “presence” “advent.” There can be some confusion because the word “*Parousia*” can be associated at times with His judgment coming. The scripture says, “⁷Therefore be patient, brothers *and sisters*, until the **coming (*Parousia*)** of the

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Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.⁸ You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, **for the coming (Parousia) of the Lord is near.** (James 5:7-9, emphasis added). The time reference of the “coming of the Lord is near, along with other time indicators (Matthew 16:27-28; 24:29-31; 26:64; Hebrews 10:37, Revelation 2:5, 16; 3:11)” puts this in a first century context with the judgment coming of Christ. It is obvious that the resurrection of the dead did not occur in A.D. 70. The reason we know that for sure is the fact there is still death in the world. At the resurrection, there will be no more death (1 Corinthians 15:54), because it is the last enemy to be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:26). As I stated earlier, the “Parousia coming” of Jesus that took place in the first century occurred in heaven when He was presented before the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:13-14) as I explained in point #2.

The use of the word “*Parousia*” in the third question in Matthew 24:3 makes it appear the disciples were asking about the end of the eschaton, but Jesus answers the question from the perspective of the end of the Jewish age. We must remember, in the mind of a Jewish person in the first century, the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem would be the end of their world. In the disciples’ question “what *will be* the sign of Your coming (*Parousia*), and of the end of the age (*aion*)”, the Greek word “*aion*” is translated as “age,” with a meaning of a “cycle of time.” This word usage demonstrates the end of one of a series of ages. If the end of the world at the end of time was intended, the Greek word “*kosmos*” would have more likely been the word used.

The word “*Parousia*” is also used of the Lawless One, the Man of Sin, his access to power and his doings in the world during his *Parousia* (2 Thessalonians 2:9). The word is also used of Paul, or his companions (Philippians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 16:17; 2 Corinthians 7:6-7; 2 Corinthians 10:10; Philippians 1:26). Finally, *Parousia* is used in reference of the Day of God in 2 Peter 3:12. We need to be aware of how this word is used in the New Testament.

As you can see, the verses most attributed to the second coming (Matthew 24:29-31) do not use the Greek word “*Parousia*,” but

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“erchomai.” This could mean that these verses are not speaking literally of Christ’s second coming, but metaphorically of the coming judgment upon Jerusalem for their rejection of the Messiah (Matthew 23:37-39; Luke 19:44). The verses speaking of the Days of Noah and Christ’s second coming (Matthew 24:36-41) use the Greek word *“Parousia,”* which is the word most often associated with Christ’s visible return. I believe that the usage of these Greek words gives us a valuable tool in interpreting these passages.

We also see the Greek word *“erchomai”* used where Jesus is on trial before the Sanhedrin on the night He was betrayed, where Caiaphas inquires if He was the Christ. Jesus replies by saying, “... I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming (*erchomai*) with the clouds of heaven” (Mark 14:62, emphasis added). Jesus uses the phrase “coming with clouds,” but the Greek word used is *“erchomai”* and not *“Parousia,”* keeping in line with the same language used in the Olivet Discourse. When Jesus says “you (Caiaphas) will see,” He is implying that the current generation alive at the time will see the coming judgment when the Son of Man is seated on the right hand of Power.

The word *“Parousia,”* or “presence” is found in verse 27 where Jesus describes His coming as lightning flashing from the east to the west. Lightning is obvious, everyone sees it if they are in the storm. It is used as a metaphor in describing that Jesus’s visible return will be obvious to all, it will come quickly and suddenly without warning, just as lightning. Jesus said this in response to people who were claiming His arrival by saying, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ because of the rise of false prophets. When Christ returns physically, it will be no secret, and very visible to all. *“Parousia”* in verse 27 has a connection to Daniel 7:13-14 where the Son of Man is enthroned in Heaven.

In summary of looking at the Greek words *“Parousia”* and *“erchomai,”* there are two aspects of Christ coming. The first is Christ’s *“judgment coming”* upon an apostate Israel due to their rejection of the Messiah. The judgment coming is communicated by the Greek word *“erchomai.”* This occurred in A.D. 70 at the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. Secondly, there is His *“physical coming,”* to

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raise the dead, hold the last judgment, and set up formally and gloriously the kingdom of God, which is most often associated by the Greek word “Parousia.” This occurs at Christ’s future second coming.

In conclusion, the futurist interpretation of this passage seems very apparent. It is difficult to deviate from this interpretation based on the language used. The problem is, this interpretation does not fit with Jesus’s statement that all these events, including His coming in the clouds statement, will be experienced by “this generation,” which is our fourth difficult verse.

Difficult Passage #4:

The fourth and final difficult passage in the Olivet Discourse concerns what generation was Jesus speaking of in His parable of the fig tree. It serves as a *time statement* for all the events preceding it and should dictate the timing of these events. Are the signs connected to historical events of the first century or events to happen in the future just prior to Christ’s return?

The premillennial position states that Jesus was speaking of a future generation that will see all the signs fulfilled. In the scriptures, National Israel is symbolized by the fig tree (Hosea 9:10; Jeremiah 24). Adherents to this position believe that the rebirth of the nation of Israel on May 14, 1948 was the event represented by the fig tree putting forth its leaves in the parable. The generation that is alive at the time of Israel’s rebirth will be the generation that will see all the events associated with what Jesus said.

The common biblical timeframe for a generation is forty years. During the exodus from Egypt, Moses sent twelve men into Canaan to spy out the land. Ten came back with a bad report saying they could not go against the people of the land (Numbers 13:1-33). They did not believe their God was big enough to give them the victory. Because of their lack of faith, the scripture says, “So the LORD’s anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was gone” (Numbers 32:13; also see Psalm 95:10). Many used this forty-

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year timeframe for a generation to say the rapture would be in 1988. When this did not come to pass, they had to look for other time periods that could be used to define a generation.

Another length of time used for a generation is seventy to eighty years (Psalm 90:10), which is more accurately speaking of the length of a person's lifetime. When you add seventy to eighty years to 1948, it puts you in our current time. Many are looking for the rapture of the church between the years 2018-2028. Based on this interpretation, all Jesus said in the Olivet Discourse was relating to events in the distant future. The signs given by Jesus are still in the future for us today.

Instead of using the rebirth of the nation of Israel as the starting point for "this generation," it can be said Jesus was referring to a future generation that will see all these events take place. Once the signs begin, they will take place rapidly marking the return of Christ. The event does not have to be tied to the rebirth of Israel. Using this view, there is no issue of time running out for the second coming to take place, as it is if May 14, 1948 was the starting point of the generation of time. The point to be made here is that a future generation, namely the people living when these predicted events occur, will be the generation Jesus was referring to.

The partial preterist position argues that the generation Jesus was speaking of was the current generation of His time. The date of Jesus's crucifixion is generally dated between A.D. 30-33. If you add forty years to the time of the crucifixion, which is the biblical time-period attributed to the length of a generation, it brings you to the year A.D. 70, the date of the destruction of Jerusalem. The question we must ask, what evidence is there that would lead us to conclude that Jesus was referring to His current generation? There is a credible historical account of the destruction of Jerusalem that provides valuable information that can help us determine which generation was Jesus speaking about.

How can we interpret the Olivet Discourse so that all the events that occur in Matthew 24:4-35, take place within a generation of time? The CONTEXT of the events that took place between Christ's triumphal

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entry into Jerusalem and His Olivet Discourse demands that Jesus was speaking to a first century generation. To point these events to a distant future generation does not stay true to the text. The issue is that we can see events that clearly seem to point to the destruction of Jerusalem, and events that clearly seem to be pointing to the second coming of Christ. How can all these events occur within one generation of time?

In the eleventh chapter of Luke, Jesus is pronouncing woes on the Pharisees and lawyers, and makes the following statement.

⁴⁹Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they will kill 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,** ⁵¹from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. (Luke 11:49-51, emphasis added)

Jesus said that the current generation He was speaking to will bear the guilt and be judged for the treatment of the prophets and apostles for all history up to that time. This culminated in their rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah. Jesus called His contemporary generation a "wicked and adulterous generation" (Matthew 16:4a). Jesus's comments are also recorded in Matthew 23 where He also says "your house is left to you desolate" (Matthew 23:38), referring to the destruction of the temple that was to occur in A.D. 70 in completing the judgment of that generation. All 15 times in the New Testament where we see the phrase "this generation" is used, it is referring to the generation alive in the first century.

There are other portions of scripture where Jesus uses the same language of His coming in the clouds and it occurring during the lifetime, or generation of His hearers (Matthew 16:27-28; Mark 8:38-9:1). He was teaching of the cost of discipleship, where one must lose his like to save it. In addressing the current sinful and adulterous

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generation, He says, “Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom” (Matthew 16:28). How can Jesus say that the current generation will witness His second coming? The only answer can be that Jesus was using prophetic language of the coming judgment and the coming power of the kingdom of God. Christ’s coming kingdom comes first in its spiritual form, and then later in its physical form at Christ’s appearing.

My argument is that the generation Jesus was speaking of was the generation alive at the time when He was speaking to them, namely that first century generation. Jesus was using both narrative (plain statements) and prophetic language (hyperbolic, apocalyptic) in speaking to His disciples. This is the only way, in my opinion, everything Jesus said can fit into a first century generation timeframe. This is also an answer to the critics who claim Jesus was a false prophet because He did not physically return in the first century. Christ’s second coming is addressed in the last section of the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:36-51), where His coming is as “a thief in the night” (Matthew 24:43; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10) where “no one knows” (Matthew 24:36) when He is coming.

It has been a difficult task to try and reconcile all these scriptures together. This is why the Olivet Discourse is one of the most difficult passages where Christian can agree. This also shows the importance of using sound Bible hermeneutics in the interpretation of prophetic passages.

What we learn from the Olivet Discourse can help us greatly when studying the book of Revelation. I believe we need to recognize the two forms of Jesus’s coming. First, there is His *coming judgment* on the Jewish people for their rejection of Christ, which occurred in A.D. 70. Second, there is His *physical return* on the “last day,” to raise the dead, hold the final judgment, and bring in the new creation. The things written in Revelation were to shortly come to pass because the time was near (Revelation 1:1, 3). Jesus also concluded the book of Revelation by saying He was coming quickly (Revelation 22:6, 10, 20). How can Jesus be coming quickly when it has been two thousand years

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and He has not returned? Some will say that with God, a thousand years can be as a day and a day as a thousand years (2 Peter 3:8), so He can still come quickly even though thousands of years has passed. Certainly, God's perspective of time is different from ours. However, when God gives us indicators of time, He gives us indicators that we understand. I believe that is manipulating the scripture to make it fit a particular viewpoint.

Revelation was addressed to the seven churches in Asia, living in the first century in the Roman empire, ruled by a Caesar who demanded god-like worship. It seems unlikely that God would be speaking of events thousands of years in the future, rather than addressing the coming judgment on the Jewish nation.

Final Comments

The "*context*" surrounding Jesus's Olivet Discourse and the "*this generation*" timestamp He places on the events being described, are the governing factors on what is being said. I believe one must conclude that Jesus is speaking to a first century audience and the events that will befall the temple and Jerusalem in their generation. Jesus's use of prophetic language may appear like He is referring to a distant time when He returns, but in keeping with the language of the prophets, we can understand its deeper meaning, that He is speaking of God's judgment that will befall the city.

The explanation of the difficult passages falls within the partial preterist viewpoint. This is not an attempt to spin the interpretation of these verses to fit a predetermined view, but to provide an explanation that keeps everything in line with what the "*context*" and "*this generation*" timestamp requires us to follow. We must follow where the text leads us, using scripture to help explain scripture.

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Chapter 6- The Seventy Weeks Controversy

Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy, is a very important prophecy concerning Bible eschatology. It forms the foundation in how we understand the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and in our interpretation of the book of Revelation. In this chapter, I want to summarize the popular dispensational premillennial interpretation of this prophecy and then, provide an alternate interpretation that totally changes the timing of the final seventieth week of the prophecy. The key that determines how to interpret this prophecy is identifying who the terms Messiah, prince, and people of the prince represent. The text of the Seventy Weeks Prophecy is given below.

²⁴ "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*.

²⁵ So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

²⁶ Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

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²⁷ And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the One who makes desolate.” (Daniel 9:24-27 NASB 1995).

Dispensational Premillennialism Interpretation

In summary (according to dispensation premillennialism), the prophecy states that God will deal with the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem over the course of 490 years, or 70 weeks of years (a day equals one year, so $70 \times 7 = 490$ years). Verse 24 lists six key activities that will be fulfilled or accomplished at the conclusion of the seventy weeks. Verse 25 states the seventy weeks will begin when a commandment is given to build and restore Jerusalem. There are several decrees given in history that could be this specific commandment with the most probable dates being in 457 BC and 444 B.C. Once the commandment is given, there will be 483 years during which the city will be rebuilt, concluding with the Messiah being put to death, as mentioned in verse 26. His death, or the cutting-off of Messiah, occurred at the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross and the prophecy was put on hold, called the “gap theory.” After this, the Temple and the city of Jerusalem will be destroyed which took place in A.D. 70 by the Roman army. The term “**Messiah the Prince**” is a reference to **Jesus Christ** and the phrase, “**the prince who is to come**” is speaking of the **Antichrist**. The “**people of the prince who is to come**” are **the Romans** and many believe that the Antichrist will come from a modern country that was once part of the Roman Empire. Verse 27 speaks of the final, or seventieth week of the prophecy which begins when the Antichrist confirms a covenant. The final seven years of the prophecy runs its course after two thousand years of being on hold, or put on pause. In the middle of this seventieth week, the Antichrist stops the daily sacrifice (which may have started as part of the

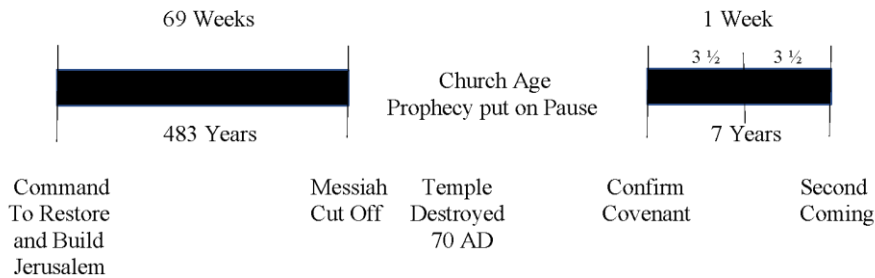
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covenant agreement) and demands to be worshipped as God. The Antichrist sets up an image in the rebuilt Jewish Temple (the 3rd Temple) which is called the Abomination of Desolation. At the conclusion of the seventy weeks, we know from Matthew 24:29 that Jesus Christ comes after the tribulation of those days.

The first 69 weeks (483 years) of this prophecy have passed, ending with Christ’s crucifixion, followed with the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70 A.D. The final week, or seven years has not occurred because the prophecy has been put on pause. The final seven years will be the Tribulation period that leads up to Christ’s Second Coming. This final week of the prophecy is set back in motion when the Antichrist makes a covenant or peace treaty with Israel. The prophecy says, “Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week, He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering... (Daniel 9:27a).” This is where we get the understanding that there will be a seven-year period that leads up to the coming of the Lord.

The following timeline illustrates the gap theory.

Daniel’s Seventy Weeks Prophecy



New Creation / Partial Preterist Interpretation

This interpretative lens does not see an antichrist, a peace treaty, a seven-year tribulation, the reinstitution of blood sacrifices, and a rebuilt Jewish temple. All of those have been imposed on the text. The “He” in Daniel 9:27 is not the antichrist, but Jesus Christ.

Please note in this passage, that we have the terms “**Messiah**” and “**prince**,” Both are speaking of the same person. The coming Messiah is the subject of this prophecy. We need to remember that this prophecy was written over 500 years before the birth of Christ. So, when the prophecy mentions the “**prince who is to come**,” Daniel is speaking in relation to his time, where the coming prince is still future.

The phrase “**the people of the prince who is to come**,” who will destroy the temple and the city, can be interpreted in two ways. First, the “prince” is a reference to Titus, the general who led the Roman army in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. He is called a prince, because he would become the future emperor of Rome (AD 79-81). The people of the “prince” are the Romans. Second, the “prince” is a reference to the Messiah who is yet to come. Remember, this prophecy was written 500 years before it was fulfilled, so the Messiah is the coming “prince.” The people of the “prince” are the Jewish people, who are responsible for the destruction of the temple (Matthew 23:37-39; Luke 19:41-44) because of their rejection of the prophesied Messiah. No matter which of these two interpretations you use, they both end with the destruction of the temple and the city, a first century event. I agree with the second interpretation that the coming prince is the Messiah and not Titus. I believe this becomes apparent as we move to verse 27 in the prophecy.

The identity of the pronoun “He” in verse 27 is Jesus Christ. Again, the Messiah is the subject of this prophecy. If the “Prince” in verse 25 is the Messiah, then keeping with the line of thought, the “prince” in verse 26 should also be the Messiah. The “people” of the prince would be the Jewish people. The “prince to come” is still the prince in the previous verse, but is recognizing the fact that when this prophecy was given, the coming prince will be in the future. On what

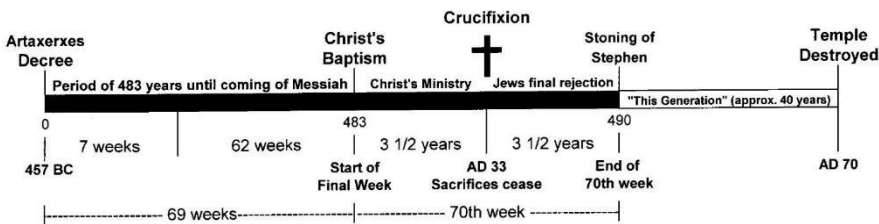
The Seventy Weeks Controversy

grounds would there be a change in the identity of the prince in verse 26. Is it possible some are reading into (eisegesis) the text a change of identity of the prince that is not plainly stated in the scripture? This is why the pronoun “He” in verse 27 is still talking about the prince who is to come, who is Jesus Christ and not the future antichrist as dispensationalist argue.

Knowing the identity of who is the “He” in verse 27 is key of where to place this final seven years of the prophecy in history. Dispensationalists argue that it is speaking of the antichrist and implies that the final week is in our future when Christ returns. This is the foundational basis for the “gap theory” interpretation of the seventy weeks prophecy. If verse 27 is speaking of the Messiah, then the seventy weeks concludes in the first century as there is no gap in time. The timing of the weeks runs consecutively or in sequential order. It makes sense that the seventy weeks are straight sequential weeks without any breaks. There is no example in scripture of a prophetic time-period starting, stopping, then starting again. The idea of a gap in time has been imposed on the text.

The following timeline illustrates the years running consecutively.

Seventy Weeks Timeline – Historicist View:



All six points of verse 24 in the prophecy have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. See the explanation of this verse below:

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Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city,

- to finish the transgression, [Transgressions came through Adam's sin, but God's righteousness comes through Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:15-21). Jesus, as the last Adam, can undo what Adam caused with his sin, and finish the transgression. Jesus was offered once as sacrifice for sins forever (Heb. 10:10-14)].
- to make an end of sin, [Jesus put an end to sin for those who trust in Him for salvation (Romans 4:1-8; Gal. 1:3-5; Heb. 8:12; 10:17), sin is not imputed on their record].
- to make atonement for iniquity, [Jesus's death on the cross paid the penalty for sin in reconciling believers to God (Rom 5:10; 1 Cor. 15:3-5; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; 1 Pet. 2:24)].
- to bring in everlasting righteousness, [This is not speaking of righteousness that comes at the end of the age, but when a sinner comes to Christ at the time of salvation (Rom. 3:20-22; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9). This was made available at the time of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection].
- to seal up vision and prophecy, [To seal up here means to affix one's seal. That shows it is legal and officially approved. The coming of Christ completed or sealed the prophecy in that God placed His seal of approval on the finished work of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 42:1-4; Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; 2 Pet. 1:17)].
- anoint the most holy *place*: [This is a reference to the Messiah, not the Holy of holies in a rebuilt temple. Many translations just say to "anoint the most holy." The Hebrew word "*qadash*" means sacredness, set apart, a sacred place or thing. A more accurate translation

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would be “to anoint the Most Holy One.” The coming of Christ fulfilled this prophecy (Luke 1:35; Acts 4:27, 30; 10:38)].

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the seventy weeks prophecy. There is no part of it that remains to be fulfilled in the future. The following table contrasts the two views discussed in this chapter.

70 Weeks Comparison of the two Eschatological Models:

Terms in the Prophecy	Tribulation/God’s Wrath	Days of Noah/Lot Paradigm
Seventy weeks	Literal period of 490 years	Literal period of 490 years
Messiah the prince	Jesus Christ	Jesus Christ
Messiah is cut off	Crucifixion of Christ	Crucifixion of Christ
The people of the prince who is to come	The Romans	The Romans, or could be The Jewish people
The prince who is to come	The antichrist	Jesus Christ (or Titus)
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary	The Battle of Armageddon	Destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in AD 70
War of desolations	Armageddon	First Jewish Revolt (66-73)
One week (the final week)	Inserts a 2,000+ year time gap between 69 th & 70 th wks.	70 weeks continuous weeks, no time gap.
And he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week	Antichrist makes a peace treaty with the Arabs the starts the 7-year tribulation.	Christ confirms the New Covenant with His ministry.

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He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering	Antichrist commits the abomination of desolation in the rebuild temple.	Christ's sacrifice on the cross ceases the need for further sacrifices.
One who makes desolate	The antichrist	Roman General Titus

Final Comments

The seventy weeks prophecy makes no mention of a seven-year tribulation period. Without a future seven-year tribulation period, the dispensational system falls apart. The prophetic time gap, or parenthesis, must be incorporated into the prophecy, even when there is no hermeneutical justification for doing so. The prophetic gap is required to make the dispensational "God's wrath/tribulation" model work. In addition, knowing the identity of the one represented by the pronoun "he" in verse 27, drastically impacts the interpretation of this prophecy. You cannot force the scriptural text to fit your predetermined eschatological model, but must allow the scripture to form your eschatological model. This is a highly controversial prophecy and I hope the information in this chapter gives you another perspective in understanding it.

Chapter 7 - Dating of the Book of Revelation

The book of Revelation is the Apostle John's apocalyptic vision of Jesus's Olivet Discourse. The two are speaking of the same events, but from two different literary genres. The challenge becomes how to reconcile or harmonize the two together. The Olivet Discourse should be interpreted literally while the book of Revelation is to be viewed allegorically. Jesus gives us the outline or template of the destruction of the temple and His coming. We need to interpret unclear passages (Revelation) with those that are clearer (Olivet Discourse).

The date of the writing of the book of Revelation can provide us the best perspective in how to interpret these passages. Some believe in an early writing of the book of Revelation. They claim that the Roman Emperor Nero banished John to the Isle of Patmos during his rule between 54-68 C.E. where he wrote the book of Revelation. Other scholars believe in a later date where the emperor Domitian, who ruled between 81-96, exiled John near the end of his rule. The time here is of crucial importance. The early date would favor a preterist or idealist interpretation of the book of Revelation where most of the events related to the first century. The later date would favor a futurist interpretation where many of the events point to the distant future when Christ returns at the end of the age. Something to keep in mind, if Domitian sent John to Patmos, he would have been close to 90 years old at the time. If Nero sent John to Patmos, he would have been 62. Bible scholars are divided on the timing of the writing of the book of Revelation,

The date of the writing of the book of Revelation can be determined from external and internal sources. External evidence

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means writings outside the books of the Bible. Internal evidence is speaking of information found in the Word of God. I will briefly provide some examples of each source of evidence.

The main piece of “eternal evidence” is a quote from Irenaeus (A.D. 130-202), who was a student of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John. In his book “Against Heresies,” written in A.D. 180, there is a statement where he is speaking of the number and name of the antichrist. His statement is as follows.

“Had there been any need for his name to be openly announced at the present time, it would have been stated by the one who saw the actual revelation. For ***it was seen (he was seen)*** not a long time back, but almost in my own lifetime, at the end of Domitian’s reign.”
(*Against Heresies*, 5.30.3, emphasis added)

Many have considered this quote as a proof text that the book of Revelation was written at the end of the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian in A.D. 95-96. Well after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The phrase “*it was seen*” is translated from the Greek word ἑωράθη. It is a third-person singular verb, which means the subject can be either he, she, or it. This word could have been translated “*he was seen*.” If “*it was seen*” is correct, then Irenaeus is referring to when John’s apocalyptic vision (the book of Revelation) was written. This would support the later date for the writing of the book of Revelation. If a better translation is “*he was seen*,” then he was referring to the fact that the Apostle John was seen alive during Domitian’s reign, not long prior to the time of Irenaeus. This translation supports the early date for the writing of the book of Revelation. Only the context in which ἑωράθη was used can best determine how to translate this word. I am no Greek scholar, but based on my research, it makes perfect sense to translate Irenaeus’s statement as “*he was seen*.” Irenaeus was speaking of the identity of the antichrist, and that if anyone could have revealed the name of the antichrist, it would have

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been John who received the apocalyptic vision, and he was seen alive not that many years ago.

Which transaction is correct? That is subject to opinion. The popular view favors that Irenaeus was speaking of WHEN John's apocalyptic vision was written. The translation of Irenaeus's statement comes down to which makes the most sense. John could have revealed the name of the antichrist personally because **John was seen alive** not that long ago (based on Irenaeus's time) or **John had the apocalyptic vision** not that long ago. John could have lived many years after he wrote the book of Revelation and could comment on what he saw in his vision. It is interesting that this translation of the word in question is ambiguous (has more than one meaning). Again, in my opinion, I believe the context in which this Greek word was used strongly favors the translation "*he was seen*," thus supporting the early date of the writing of John's apocalypse.

Probably the best evidence for dating the writing of the book of Revelation comes from "internal sources," the Bible itself. There are three key pieces of information we should consider that would support an early date for the writing of the book of Revelation.

1. When John writes, the temple is still standing (Revelation 11:1-2). He expects the events he is writing about to occur soon (Revelation 1:1, 3). He mentions that the temple is in the holy city, which is Jerusalem. There would not have been temple there if he wrote in A.D. 95, but it is there prior to A.D. 70. Revelation 11:2 and Luke 21:24 parallel each other. Both speak of trampling and it being given to the gentiles. The forty-two months mentioned by John (Revelation 11:2) is the exact length of time of the siege of Jerusalem that lasted from the spring of A.D. 67 to August of A.D. 70.
2. Scripture addresses those who have the right to be called "a Jew." The early church, prior to A.D. 70 had a problem of Judaizers who said Christians must to follow the ceremonial Law of Moses. Those who say they are Jews, but are not, are of

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the synagogue of Satan. Paul calls Christians the “Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16); the true circumcision (Philippians 3:3); and that a believer is a Jew inwardly who is circumcised of the heart (Romans 2:28). The true Israel, the right to be called a Jew, are the children of the promise (Romans 9:6-8), those who are in Christ. In the future, the literal Jew will be humbled and will know the truth. This contention in the early church existed before A.D. 70. Since then, Christianity and Judaism have gone their separate directions. John’s writing in the book of Revelation brings this to light and confirms an early date.

3. The reference to seven kings in Revelation 17:9-11 provides evidence to the timing of John’s writing. The passage in figurative language speaks of the city of Rome and seven kings, where five have fallen, one is, and one is to come. This is a reference to seven Caesars: Julius Caesar (49-44 B.C.), Augustus (27 B.C.–A.D.14) Tiberius (A.D. 14–37), Caligula (A.D. 37–41), Claudius (A.D. 41–54), Nero (A.D. 54–68), and Galba (June A.D. 68–January 69). Nero was the sixth and the current Caesar when John had his apocalyptic vision, placing the date of his writing prior to A.D. 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem.

One of the oddest facts concerning the later date for the writing of Revelation, is that no mention is given to the most dateable, climactic, and apocalyptic event in Jewish history, the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. It is incredible to believe that John is silent about this event that occurred twenty-five years prior to his vision with no mention of it. Also, no mention of Christ’s prophecy in the Olivet Discourse being fulfilled, such as the practice of New Testament writers noting the fulfillment of prophecy. Those supporting the early date of the writing of Revelation sees the vision given to John was meant to reveal the apocalyptic events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

If the early date concerning the writing of the book of Revelation is correct, then the date of its writing would be prior to A.D.

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70 and the destruction of Jerusalem. That would greatly favor the preterist interpretation. The generation Jesus was talking about in His Olivet Discourse would have to be the first century generation. That would agree with Revelation in saying that the things it describes must shortly take place because the time is near (Revelation 1:1, 3). It makes perfect sense that Jesus, and John in the book of Revelation, would warn believers of an event, with the magnitude of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, before it took place. If the later date is the correct date. The book of Revelation would have been written between A.D. 95-96, well after the destruction of Jerusalem, so that the things written must refer to events in the future.

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Chapter 8 - The Influence of John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) is credited as being the father of modern dispensationalism, being the first to systematize its concepts. Dispensationalism is a theological framework for interpreting the Bible that divides history into ages called dispensations. Dispensationalists believe that God interacts with humanity in different ways during each dispensation. Darby's dispensational thought devised the rationale for the pretribulation



rapture view and that Israel and the Church are two distinct groups with different covenantal relationships with God (two peoples with two plans of God). He took a sophisticated literal approach in interpreting the Bible and held a futurist view in the interpretation of the book of Revelation.

Darby, an Irishman, was born in London, England to a highly honorable family and received a very good education. He entered Trinity College in Dublin Ireland at the age of 15 and studied law. He was an excellent student and won the Classics Prize. After about one year practicing law, he was converted to Christ. In 1825, he entered the ministry and was given an Anglican Irish parish. He quickly became

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disillusioned with the church because of a degree that all converts must swear allegiance to the King of England. Considering this to be a compromise with the lordship of Christ, he decided to leave the Anglican Church in 1829 and became independent. After braking ties with the church, Darby and other dissenters from the state church inaugurated a movement known as the Plymouth Brethren. Biblical prophecy and the second coming of Christ were emphasized. Darby was the dominate individual in the movement.

Many of Darby's beliefs that formed the framework of his dispensational theology came from the influences of the faculty at Trinity College where he was a student. His primary influence come from a professor named Richard Graves, a futurist postmillennialist, who believed prophecy must be interpreted literally. In Darby's view of scripture, the days and years in Genesis are literal as well as the days, months, and years in the book of Revelation. He was involved in translating the Bible into German, Dutch, and French. Darby also published his own translation of the Bible from the Hebrew and Greek texts, first published in 1867. It is a fairly-literal, word-for-word translation.

In 1827, Darby suffered a broken leg during a horse-riding accident that required an extended time of convalescence. It was during this time that he began to believe that the "kingdom" described in the Book of Isaiah and elsewhere in the Old Testament was entirely different from the Christian church. During this time, he developed the fundamental principles that would define his new theological system, now known as dispensationalism.

There are four distinctive features of dispensationalism. First, there is a distinction between Israel and the church. It sees Israel as an earthly people with earthly promises, and the church as a heavenly people with heavenly promises. Prior to Darby, the belief was that there was one people of God and the theological framework for interpreting the Bible was "covenant theology." There was a connection between Israel and the church. Darby made a distinction between those two, teaching that there are two peoples of God, with two distinct and unique plans of God.

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The second feature of Dispensationalism was scripture was divided up into time periods that represents God's progressive plan through the ages. Darby taught seven dispensations, as well as the Scofield Reference Bible. Dispensationalists have not always agreed on the number of dispensations, but they did agree on the concept. A dispensation is a period-of-time when God deals with His people in a particular way. God gives a commandment, it was broken, then judgment came from God. These dispensations progress through time as God builds upon His redemptive plan.

The third feature is a literal hermeneutic that gets applied to prophecy and apocalyptic literature. Bible hermeneutics is the study of principles and methods of interpreting the text of the Bible. There are three crucial principles of Bible interpretation. The first is that the text should be interpreted literally by its plain reading unless a passage is intended to be symbolic. Secondly, the passage must be interpreted historically, contextually, and grammatically. Finally, scripture is the best interpreter of scripture by comparing passages with others, especially how New Testament writers quote Old Testament writers. Darby followed a strict literal interpretative hermeneutic.

The fourth feature of dispensationalism deals with Bible eschatology, the study of end things. All the events of the end times, or the second coming of Christ, revolve around the seven-year tribulation, which is a time when God pours out His wrath on the world as a judgment for their rejection of Christ and their treatment of Israel. The tribulation is preceded by the secret rapture of believers so they will not have to live through God's wrath. The main scriptural evidence cited is, "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9). I have termed Darby's interpretative eschatological system as the "Tribulation/God's Wrath Model." This system of eschatology is the popular view today.

Three things helped dispensationalism spread and become popular in the twentieth century. The first was the beginning of the Bible Institute movement. These institutions started in the United States and Britain. The most influential one was started by D.L. Moody in Chicago. These institutions taught dispensationalism. A second

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reason for the spread of dispensationalism was prophecy conferences that were popular in the early 1900s. The third reason was the publication of the Scofield Reference Bible by C.I. Scofield in 1909. It was the first Bible to include commentary to help the reader understand the scriptures. He applied the dispensational hermeneutic to the texts. This reference Bible helped influence generations in dispensationalism and the pretribulation rapture. Scofield's impact had a major influence on Lewis Sperry Chafer who founded the Dallas Theological Seminary which became the most prominent dispensational seminary in the world. Some of its well-known graduates include J. Vernon McGee, Hal Lindsey, Bruce Wilkerson, Tony Evans, and David Jeremiah.

Dispensationalists take offense at the claim that the pretribulation rapture view is an invention of the nineteenth century. There are some biblical scholars who cite ancient examples of the dispensational premillennial view. There was an early church father named the Shepherd of Hermas, who wrote in the second century that a great tribulation was coming and that people need to prepare and repent so it would be possible to escape it. Another example comes from a sermon by Ephraem the Syrian, dated between the fourth and sixth centuries, encouraging believers to prepare to meet the Lord because they will be gathered prior to the tribulation to come. In the early church, elements of the schemes of ages and dispensations are found in the writings of Justin Martyr (110-165), Irenaeus (130-200), Tertullian (160-220), Methodius (died 311), and Victorinus of Petau (died 304). This evidence shows that long before Darby, there was a foreshadowing of dispensationalism as it is held today. Their views were less defined and sophisticated, but they reflect rudimentary features of dispensationalism. These early examples of dispensationalism went underground during the middle-ages because they violated Catholic dogma. These few examples I have mentioned, in my opinion, do not provide convincing evidence to show dispensationalism was a widely held belief. In the early church, premillennialists generally lacked a detailed framework for dividing history into dispensations or distinct epochs of God's dealings with

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humanity. This framework is a hallmark of dispensationalism, defined by John Nelson Darby in the 19th century. The early Church did not teach a pretribulation rapture, a key feature of modern dispensational premillennialism.

When speaking of John Nelson Darby and the pretribulation rapture, the name of Margaret MacDonald will come up. She was born in 1815 in Port Glasgow, Scotland and died around 1840. She gave a charismatic utterance, or message in tongues, in 1830 that some say Darby used in forming his pretribulation rapture view. At that time in history, it was believed that the world's problems could only be addressed through an outbreak of the spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit. MacDonald was part of these manifested experiences and many came to investigate and validate these events. Darby never considered her message in tongues to be from God, so her messages did not have a part in the development of the secret rapture view. Darby had written out his pretribulation views in January 1827, three years prior to MacDonald's utterance. When MacDonald's message is read closely, it appears to be referring to a post tribulation rapture, rather than a pretribulation rapture.

The eschatological system constructed by John Nelson Darby appears to be biblical, but it does not stand the test of scripture. There is not a single passage in scripture that speaks of Jesus coming to secretly rapture the church to escape a seven-year tribulation, and then coming again publicly after the seven-years. Their position for a secret rapture is determined by reason or inference, which can be subjective in nature. If some idea or interpretation is scriptural, it should be supported by direct statements of scripture that are objectively understood. The differences in our interpretation of passages can be influenced by either personal opinions (*eisegesis, to lead into*), or by reflecting directly at what the text says (*exegesis, to draw out*).

The idea of a seven-year tribulation (Daniels 70th week) is imposed (assumed) on the text (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18) by saying believers are caught up prior to the tribulation. The scripture does not

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plainly identify it. Interpreting scripture in this manner will allow one to manipulate its meaning to support a desired outcome.

There are some key points that Darby misinterprets that affects his whole eschatological system. One is applying ALL of Jesus's Olivet Discourse to the distant future based on his interpretation of which "generation" (Matthew 24:34) He was speaking to, totally ignoring the coming destruction of the temple and Jerusalem that occurred in A.D. 70. Another key error is the "gap theory" interpretation of Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy where the final week of the prophecy is disconnected from the first 69 weeks by more than a two thousand year time interval. When one prophetic passage is misinterpreted, it can lead to other prophetic passages being misinterpreted so that they will support a particular eschatological system. You can say that error begets error. The whole eschatological system of dispensational premillennialism was defined by one person making impositions on the scripture. This teaching for a secret rapture was further advanced by others, such as C.I. Scofield and his reference Bible that endorsed Darby's position, Hal Lindsey's "The Late Great Planet Earth, and the "Left Behind" series of books written by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, published from 1995-2007.

Dispensational premillennialism has given rise to date setters for the coming of the rapture, even though Jesus said no one will know the day. Many believe Israel gaining statehood in 1948 was the fulfillment of Bible prophecy that started the countdown in which Jesus will rapture the church. This is based on a misinterpretation of which "generation" Jesus was speaking of in the Olivet Discourse. This in turn, impacts how dispensationalists understand the Seventy Weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27). Darby's eschatological views made many impositions on the biblical text to frame his end time Bible model. I have referred to this model, as the "Tribulation/God's Wrath Model." This is one way, or "interpretative lens" to understand prophetic passages. In this book, I have introduced another lens of interpretation I have called the "Days of Noah/Lot Paradigm." This lens is based on plain statements of scripture and a reevaluation of prophetic passages

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to draw out the they say, rather than reading into them a predetermined outcome.

Darby has had a profound impact on Christianity today, since his secret rapture teaching has infected most conservative, evangelical churches. Jesus compared the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees to leaven (Matthew 16:1-12), a substance which makes dough rise. Figuratively, leaven means to permeate something throughout. The leaven of Darby's eschatological system has filled the church, becoming the dominate view among believers today.

The rapture doctrine is one of the most recent new doctrines in the history of the church. The pretribulation rapture position was systematized around 1830, and no church taught it prior to that time, even though there were some illusions to it made by the early church fathers as I said earlier. Darby's secret rapture teaching has no biblical basis.

If you were reading the Bible for the first time, you probably would not come away with seeing two phases of Christ's second coming, a secret rapture, and later a public return. When I first became a Christian, I remember being taught the pretribulation rapture. I did not arrive at that belief by reading the scripture for myself. Many Christians just blindly accept John Nelson Darby's eschatological teachings without examining the biblical evidence for themselves.

The church has totally dropped the ball in not vetting the views of John Nelson Darby's eschatological system of dispensational premillennialism. This failure has allowed this system to become the popular view of the modern-day church. In a sense, one could say dispensationalism has "hijacked" the church in establishing its eschatological system. Critics of dispensationalism often use the term "hijacked" to describe how a relatively recent theological framework became the dominant lens through which millions of Christians view the Bible and world events.

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Chapter 9 - Building the Third Temple

This chapter will address seven commonly asked questions concerning the rebuilding of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. The popular view of Bible eschatology, what I have called the Tribulation/God's Wrath Model, requires a temple to be in existence during the seven-year tribulation. A temple needs to be present so the Antichrist can commit the abomination of desolation (Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), stop the daily sacrifice (Daniel 9:27), and demand to be worshipped (Revelation 13:11-13). I will be answering the seven questions using the prophetic lens of the Days of Noah Paradigm that I have been presenting in this book.

This is not a simple matter of just finding a location and building another Jewish temple. There are numerous biblical requirements for the temple, as well as the exact location of where it would be built. Some of the requirements include; the cleansing of the altar with the red heifer sacrifice, establishment of the Jewish priesthood, the reestablishment of the blood sacrificial system, the ark of the covenant, construction of the temple building on the exact site of the first and second temples where the Muslim Dome of the Rock currently stands, just to name a few. Besides all the requirement to build a third temple, there is the current political climate that involves the Temple Mount, that makes rebuilding the temple no easy task.

Now I will address the seven questions concerning the building of the third temple.

1. What happened to the Ark of the Covenant?

The Ark of the Covenant disappeared from history at the time the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 586 B.C. There are several theories of what

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happened to the Ark. One is that the priests hid the Ark in tunnels deep underground in the Temple Mount beneath the Temple itself. Another possibility was that the prophet Jeremiah hid the Ark, the Tabernacle, and the Altar of Incense on Mount Nebo according to 2 Maccabees 2:4-8. Some believe, such as amateur Christian archaeologist Roy Wyatt, that the Ark was hidden in a secret chamber under Golgotha where Jesus was crucified. Finally, the Ark and the Temple may have been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's army in 586 B.C.

It may be that it is God's will that the Ark is never found. The scripture says, ¹⁶ "Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days," says the LORD, "that they will say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit *it*, nor shall it be made anymore. ¹⁷ "At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts" (Jeremiah 3:16-17). The Ark represented the presence of God. With the coming of the Messiah, God took on human form, which is called the incarnation. Jesus is the Ark, God with us (Hebrews 2:17-18), so the original Ark of the Covenant is not needed.

2. Why is there no Temple in Jerusalem today?

The second Jewish temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 by the Roman army under General Titus. Not one stone was left upon the other just as Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24:2. It was a judgment upon the Jewish people for the rejection of their Messiah (Matthew

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23:37-39; Luke 19:41-43). Jesus said their house, the Temple, would be left unto them desolate. The fact that the Temple was utterly destroyed illustrates the fact that the Temple is no longer required after the coming of Jesus. At the Temple's destruction, the Jewish people were scattered over the whole world, called the diaspora. I believe it was God's will to totally remove the Temple from Jewish life because Jesus the Messiah is the fulfillment of the Temple and the believer is the Temple of God (1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16) because the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer.

3. How could Judaism continue without a Temple?

The destruction of the second temple in A.D. 70 brought about a dramatic change in Judaism. Rabbinic Judaism is a religion centered around the teachings and writings of rabbis. After the destruction of the temple the rabbis reorganized Judaism, adding many new laws, rules, and traditions. Today, their writings and commentaries (Talmud, Midrash, etc.) form the foundation of Rabbinic Judaism. Temple or Biblical Judaism practiced animal blood sacrifices and all the ceremonial laws. Rabbinic Judaism replaced temple ritual with prayer service in synagogues that was built upon practices of Jews in the diaspora dating back to the Babylonian exile. The form of Judaism practiced today is not the same as at the time of Moses to Jesus Christ. To re-establish temple worship and blood sacrifices would be a major change for Judaism today.

4. Will a Third Temple be built?

It has been in the heart of Orthodox Jews to rebuild the Temple. Since 1987, the Temple Mount Faithful,

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founded by Gershon Salmon, began preparing for the rebuilding of the Third Temple. They have been called an extremist movement. A large part of the Jewish people is secular and have adopted a Diaspora mentality and spiritual way of thinking, losing hope in a literal Third Temple, but these Orthodox Jews do not believe these people will play a role in the rebuilding of the Temple.

Over the years, all the ritual vessels necessary for the function of the Temple have been recreated (except the Ark of the Covenant). Family lines of Jewish men have been researched in identifying those who are Levites (the tribe responsible for the rituals and work performed in service of the Temple), and training them in this future work. The Sanhedrin, the ancient religious body that was the final authority on religious matters was reinstituted to ensure the Temple is built in the proper way. The cornerstone to be used in the building has been obtained and work is being done on acquiring the Red Heifer needed to be sacrificed so its ashes can be used in ceremonies to purify the priests in performing their service in the Temple according to Numbers 19.

The importance of the Temple is expressed in this quote from the Jewish Voice website. "For Orthodox Jews committed to reestablishing the Temple, both the present problems of the world and the problems faced by the Jewish people will be solved only by rebuilding" (Update on the Building of the Third Temple, by Dr. Randall Price. 10/7/2022). Let me emphasize, many believe the Temple will solve the problems faced by the world and the Jewish people. Jesus the Messiah has already come and He is the answer, not a building of

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stone. Jesus is the fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning the Temple. Jesus said, "... Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). He was referring to His body as the temple of God.

In my opinion, there is no requirement by God for the rebuilding of the Temple. God commanded the children of Israel to build the tabernacle in the wilderness (Exodus 25:8). King David wanted to build the first Temple, but God did not allow him because he was a man of war. God permitted Solomon, David's son, and a man of peace, to build the Temple and God honored it and the Shekinah Glory filled the house (2 Chronicles 7:1-3). God did not directly command the Temple to be built, but He honored it by His presence. If a Third Temple is built, I do not believe it is mandated by God, but can be done by the will of the people.

The main reference in the New Testament that implies that there will be a Third Temple is found in 1 Thessalonians 2:3-4. ³Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." It needs to be said, in the New Testament, the believer is the Temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16). The interpretation that this is a reference to the Third Temple is being imposed on the text. Another way of interpreting these verses is that whoever you worship as God, sits on the throne of your heart. People who reject Christ, in essence, are making Satan their lord. If a person is meant to be a temple of God, and the enemy

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comes and takes His place, Satan therefore is sitting on the throne meant for God.

5. What is needed to re-establish Temple worship?

The obvious need is to have a rebuilt temple on Mount Moriah (the Temple Mount). Many preparations have been made for a rebuilt Temple and the reinstitution of blood sacrifices (see the answer to question #4). One of the things necessary for the reestablishment of Temple worship is the ashes of the Red Heifer. The red heifer was to be perfect, meaning that there are no hairs that are not red. Only nine have been sacrificed throughout history in the Old Testament. The difficulty is finding a red heifer that meets all the criteria.

A major issue preventing the reestablishment of Temple worship is the present political situation on the Temple Mount. After Israel took control of the Temple Mount after the Six Day War in 1967, it granted the Islamic Waqf responsibility for the administration of the site. Jews are not allowed to pray on the site. There are no signs of this situation changing. Of course, God could intervene in some way and make it possible. That remains to be seen.

6. Is a Temple required for the antichrist to commit the abomination of desolation?

The answer to this question is yes, based on the popular view of end time Bible prophecy. This view is based on an interpretation of Jesus' Olivet Discourse. However, a strong case can be made that the abomination of desolation spoken of by Jesus took place in the first century during the destruction of the Temple and

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Jerusalem. The events mentioned in the Olivet Discourse may have been totally misunderstood by modern day scholars in applying them to the distant future, rather than the generation of Jesus's time. It must also be understood, that the book of Revelation is apocalyptic literature, that needs to be interpreted symbolically. Attempting to interpret Revelation literally can lead to misinterpretation of the text. If the abomination took place in the first century, then a Temple does not need to be built. If the abomination is to occur in the end time prior to Christ's return, then there needs to be a Temple for that to be fulfilled.

7. How can the Temple be built on the Temple Mount with the Dome of the Rock on that location?

The presence of the Dome of the Rock on the temple site on Mount Moriah is a problem. Along with the political climate surrounding the Temple Mount, it would seem unlikely a Jewish Temple will be built. I can be wrong, but the scriptures indicate that there will be no need for a Temple building. The answers to the other questions in this chapter help support this conclusion.

Other Comments Regarding the Temple

At this point, I want to provide some additional information concerning the temple. As it was mentioned in question #4, the New Testament states that our bodies are the temple of God because of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. I want to expand on my previous comments concerning the temple.

A simple biblical definition of the word "temple" is that it is *a place where God dwells*. The word "temple" in the Greek is "naos" (Strong's 3485), meaning "a temple, a shrine, that part of the temple, where God himself resides." In Hebrew, we translate our English word

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“temple” from “bahyith” (Strong’s 1004), meaning “a house,” that has various applications. It has always been God’s desire to dwell with His people. We see this in God’s command to Moses to build the tabernacle in the wilderness during the exodus from Egypt. God told Moses to say to the people, “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8). In the Old Testament, God dwelled in the tabernacle/temple in the Holy of Holies. It was that building that was the house of God. In the New Testament, there is no longer a need for a building to be the temple of God, because we (believers) are the temple of God because the Holy Spirit dwells in us. This is the ultimate end that God was working toward in His plan of redemption. “For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1).

The phrase, “temple of God” appears nine times, in eight verses in the New Testament. See the references below:

- Then Jesus went into the **temple of God** and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. (Matthew 21:12)
- and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the **temple of God** and to build it in three days.’” (Matthew 26:61)
- Do you not know that you are the **temple of God** and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the **temple of God**, God will destroy him. For the **temple of God** is holy, which temple you are. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)
- And what agreement has the **temple of God** with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.” (2 Corinthians 6:16)

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- who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in **the temple of God**, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
- Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure the **temple of God**, the altar, and those who worship there. (Revelation 11:1)
- Then the **temple of God** was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail. (Revelation 11:19)

When Jesus entered the temple of God to drive out the money changers, He entered the existing second temple. This is a definite reference to the temple as a building and we know this by the context of the verses around Matthew 21:12. The two references to the temple of God in the book of Revelation chapter eleven, are also speaking of a temple that is a building. Premillennialist say this is speaking of the third temple that is rebuilt in the time prior to Christ’s return. My argument is that the book of Revelation was mainly fulfilled in the first century, and that the reference to the temple concerned the second temple (Herod’s temple) that was still standing at the time Revelation was written (an early date prior to A.D, 70). We can understand these references to the temple of God are speaking of the building. The context of these passages makes that clear. That means, three out of the nine uses of the phrase “temple of God” are speaking of a physical building.

The clear meaning in the New Testament of the phrase “temple of God,” is that the children of God are the temple of God, because He dwells in us. We see this in six of the nine references to the temple of God. The Apostle Paul was very explicit in saying that our bodies are the temple of God. However, many have taken Paul’s reference to the “temple of God” in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, as a proof text for the need of a third temple where the antichrist will sit in the temple and proclaim himself to be God. This interpretation seems out of step with Paul’s other reference to the “temple of God.” My position is that the

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requirement for a third temple to be present so that the antichrist can commit the abomination of desolation is being imposed on the text.

Satan has always wanted to replace God as the scripture states, “For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High’” (Isaiah 14:13-14). If God’s plan was to one day dwell in the hearts of His people, then it follows that Satan wants to do the same. In this context, we can interpret 2 Thessalonians 2:4 as Satan forcing his way into people’s hearts to take the place meant for God.

What about Ezekiel’s Temple?

The detailed description of the Ezekiel 40-48 temple is symbolic of the intricate details and complexity of God. The descriptions are overwhelming and so is God’s presence. In the eternal state, there is no temple building because God and the Lamb are the Temple (Revelation 21:22). Ezekiel, using imagery familiar to the people of the time it was written, was speaking of future things beyond their understanding at the time. It is a description of a temple that never will be built because it does not need to be built due to the redemptive work of Christ.

The offerings mentioned Ezekiel 46, if required during the millennium or the eternal state, would be offensive to the Word of God. The book of Hebrews says the new covenant is a better covenant based on better promises (Hebrews 8:6) and that the new covenant has made the old obsolete (Hebrews 8:13). Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross was sufficient to pay the penalty for our sins (Hebrews 10), so why would God require us to go back to the sacrificial system? If Jesus is the one who put a stop to sacrifices in Daniel 9:27, then there is no longer the need for further sacrifices. Why would God require sacrifices and offering in the millennium or eternal state based on these passages? We must conclude that the Ezekiel temple in chapters 40-48 is speaking figuratively.

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Comments concerning Ezekiel's Temple by Hank Hanegraaff,
Bible Answer Man broadcast, Equip.org:

"To understand the Prophecies of Ezekiel, we need to understand that Ezekiel was writing from a refugee camp, in the south of Babylon, and from there he looks into the Eastern sky and he longs for the glory of the Lord to return to a temple that had vanished into the rocks that once surrounded it. He yearned for the promise of a temple whose glory would exceed even the glory of Solomon's Temple. In the spirit he looks forward to events that would take place a generation later, a time when Zerubbabel would rebuild the Glorious Temple. A time when Ezra would rebuild the spiritual condition of the Exiles. A time in which Nehemiah would challenge his fellow countrymen to arise and rebuild the shattered wall of Jerusalem. The point is simply this, we must not presume that Ezekiel longed for a third, or even a fourth temple when a second temple had not yet arisen from the ashes. We should not presume that Ezekiel looks into the 21st century, and there sees the emergence of a temple on the very spot where the Dome of the Rock now stands.

Remember this principle, the magnifying glass through which we read the Law and the prophets must ever remain in the hands of the New Testament writers. They do the interpretive work for us and therefore, we should not be fooled by modern day interpreters. To suppose that the Shekinah Glory will return to a shrine in Jerusalem in the present epic, is to regress from substance to shadow, and to impugn the finished work of Jesus Christ. It is Paradise, the new Heaven, and a new Earth and not Palestine for which Ezekiel ultimately yearned. It is the holy city the New Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven from God prepared as a bride

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beautifully dressed for her husband upon which he fixed his apocalyptic gaze. It is the master teacher, not a majestic Temple, that would forever satisfy the deepest yearnings of a prophet exiled in a dry and thirsty land.”

There has been a tremendous amount of anticipation for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. As I have presented in this chapter, I do not believe the scriptures require the building of a third temple. If a temple is built, it will be from the desire of the people.

Chapter 10 - Israel in the End Times

Dispensationalism believes that Israel will be an exalted nation during the millennium, serving as the favored head of nations with Jerusalem as the capital under Christ's rule. The nation of Israel will be restored to their ancient land. The gentile nations will experience the blessings of the millennial reign, but they will be in a subordinate role to Israel. Jerusalem will be the world's spiritual and political capital, and the Jewish people will experience a prominent position among the nations. Natural Israel in the last days is the fulfillment of the promises God made to Israel.

The Jewish people today share the same view as the dispensationalists that they have a special status with God. Even when Jesus was about to ascend into heaven, the disciples asked, “⁶Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority” (Acts 1⁷7-8). The Jewish people look for Israel to be restored to an exalted status in the world. See the following scripture.

¹⁶ “This day the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments; therefore, you shall be careful to observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹⁷ Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice. ¹⁸ Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His **special people**, just as He promised you, that *you* should keep all His commandments, ¹⁹ and that He will set you **high above all nations** which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people

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to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken.”
(Deuteronomy 26:16-19, emphasis added)

Notice that Israel will be set high above the nations IF they keep His commandments. We know that the Old Testament records how Israel would follow the Lord for a while and then backslide and fall away. This process happened repeatedly. The Mosaic Covenant promised blessings (Deuteronomy 28:1-14) for obedience and various curses (Deuteronomy 28:15-68) for disobedience. The Law of Moses was a conditional covenant, which meant the blessings were dependent upon the conditions being met. If Israel obeyed the commandments, they would be God’s own possession (Exodus 19:5-6). The Jews did not keep God’s commandments, and by breaking the covenant, they experienced the curses described and were scattered among the nations. The people agreed to do what the Lord commanded them (Exodus 19:8), but they were unfaithful.

There is a passage in Jeremiah 18 that communicates God’s policy in dealing with nations. This includes Israel or any other nation. The scripture uses the analogy of a potter who is working with clay to form a vessel. The Lord compares Himself to the potter and Israel, or any other nation as the clay. The passage is given below.

¹The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: ²“Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause you to hear My words.” ³Then I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. ⁴And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

⁵Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: ⁶“O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?” says the LORD. “Look, as the clay *is* in the potter’s hand, so *are* you in My hand, O house of Israel! ⁷The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom,

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to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy *it*,⁸ if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.⁹ And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant *it*,¹⁰ if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.

¹¹ “Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.” ’ ”
(Jeremiah 18:1-12)

The point to be made is that God’s promises are conditional on keeping His commandments. If God pronounces judgment on a nation, and that nation repents, God will not carry out that judgment against them. We see an example of this when God sent Jonah to Nineveh to declare judgment against them (Jonah 1:2). However, Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, so God relented in the calamity He was to bring on them (Jonah 3:10). The opposite of this is also true. When God promises blessings on a nation, such as Israel, and they do evil in His sight and not obey Him, He will relent of the good that He promised them. As scripture says Israel was God’s chosen people, His blessings were contingent on their obedience to the covenant.

Even though Israel broke the covenant, God is merciful and promised to restore them if they repent. See the passage below.

¹“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you,² and **you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice,**

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according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, ³ that the LORD your **God will bring you back from captivity**, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. ⁴ If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. ⁵ Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. ⁶ And the LORD your God will **circumcise your heart** and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. (Deuteronomy 30:1-6, emphasis added)

The continual backsliding of Israel got to a point that God divorced the northern kingdom of Israel. See the following scripture.

⁸ Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding **Israel had committed adultery**, I had put her away and given her a **certificate of divorce**; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. ⁹ So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. ¹⁰ And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense,” says the LORD. (Jeremiah 3:8-10, emphasis added)

I must emphasize that God did not divorce Judah, even though Judah played the harlot also. Since they broke the covenant, they were disqualified from the promised blessing of being set high above the

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nations. Even in this spiritual condition, God promised to make a new covenant with them.

³¹ “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, **My covenant which they broke**, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. ³³ But *this is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31-34, emphasis added)

Jesus brought in the new covenant which was a better covenant based on better promises as established in the book of Hebrews. The question needs to be asked. Is modern Israel the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the promises made to the Jewish people? In the New Covenant, does the church replace Israel as God’s chosen people?

I support what can be called “*expansion theology*.” There is not a replacement of Israel as God’s chosen people, but there is an “expanded” definition of who is Israel. A True Jew is not saved by the fact of their ethnicity, but by their faith and becoming children of the promise (Romans 9:8). The scripture says;

²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into

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Christ have put on Christ.²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.²⁹ And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:25-29)

Paul makes us aware the God's promises were to Abraham and his Seed, not seeds. The scripture says, "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ" (Galatians 3:16). When God originally gave the promises to Abraham (Genesis 12-17), it appeared they were to Abraham and his physical descendants. Later we learn that it was limited to the descendants of Isaac and not Ishmael (Genesis 17:19-21). The promises are narrowed down even further to the descendants of Jacob and not Esau (Genesis 25:19-34). Finally, in the New Testament we learn the Abrahamic blessing is narrowed down to one, Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16). The result in who receives the promised blessings is not based on being an ethnic Jew or Gentile, but if you are in Christ by faith.

This expanded definition of the people of God reflects the relationship of Israel and the Church. In Ephesians chapter two Paul makes this relationship clear. Believing Gentiles are now equal members of the "commonwealth of Israel" (2:12), creating "one new man *from* the two" (2:15). and are "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (2:19). Believing Jews and believing Gentiles are co-heirs of the promises made to the Old Testament patriarchs.

The book of Romans chapters 9-11 discusses the sovereignty of God in salvation, focusing on His unchanging purpose for Israel and His inclusion of Gentiles through the Messiah. Many dispensationalists use Romans 11:26 as a proof text that all of Israel will be saved when Jesus returns (Zechariah 12:10) and that they will be the exalted nation during the millennium. They interpret this verse as the timing when all Israel will be saved. That is reading this verse from an eschatological

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view, but it can also be read from the theological view that all “true Israel” will be saved as symbolized by the olive tree example (Romans 11:16-22). We need to define who is Israel in the New Covenant.

One can speak of Israel in three different ways. There is “ethnic Israel,” which is the Jewish people or nation. There is “national Israel” which is the political or governmental Israel. Finally, there is “spiritual Israel” that is defined in scripture as the believing remnant, made up of both Jews and Gentiles, originating with God’s promise to Abraham where He said, “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Genesis 12:3b).

I selected some verses out of Romans chapters 9-11 that help define spiritual Israel according to the Bible. See the following verses:

- ⁶ But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, ⁷ nor *are* they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” ⁸ That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. (Romans 9:6-8)
- ²⁷ Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved. (Romans 9:27)
- ⁴ For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Romans 10:4)
- ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. (Romans 10:12)
- ⁵ Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. (Romans 11:5)
- ²³ And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

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- ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; ²⁷ For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.” (Romans 11:26-27)

We can summarize these verses in this way. Biblically speaking, spiritual Israel is not defined by being ethnically a Jew, but being a child of the promise through faith in Jesus Christ. We must allow the scriptures to define who is Israel. Jews and Gentile believers are equal in Christ and are part of the believing remnant according to grace. In the Old Covenant, righteousness came from the perfect obedience to the Law, which no person could do (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Jesus came to fulfill the Law (Matthew 5:17; Romans 8:2; Galatian 2:21; Philippians 3:9), redeeming believers from its curse (Galatians 3:13-14) so that a person can be justified by faith in Christ (Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16). Even unbelieving Jews, who repent and believe in Jesus Christ, will find salvation. All of Israel being saved is speaking of the Israel of God (Galatians 6:15-16), or spiritual Israel, and not all ethnic Jews.

The Holy Spirit revealed a mystery to the Apostle Paul that the gentiles shall become part of the people of God. The scripture says concerning this mystery, “which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel” (Ephesians 3:5-6). When Paul says “all of Israel will be saved,” he is speaking of spiritual Israel which included both Jew and Gentile believers.

Paul speaks of one cultivated olive tree (Romans 11:17-24) that symbolizes national Israel. Its branches symbolize those who believe, or spiritual Israel, while the olive tree’s root symbolizes Jesus Christ as the “root and offspring of David” (Revelation 22:16). Natural branches broken off represent Jews, ethnic Israel, who reject Jesus. The wild branches grafted in represent Gentiles who receive Jesus. The message is that all who are clothed in Christ, both Jew and Gentile, constitute one congruent covenant community connected by the cross.

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Romans 11 is not speaking eschatologically as to the timing of when all Israel is saved, but to the method of how all Israel will be saved. We need to let the Bible speak for itself in defining Israel. In the Old Testament, there was always a remnant (Isaac and not Ishamel, Jacob and not Esau), an election according to grace (Romans 9:10-11).

Many believe that the rebirth of the nation of Israel in 1948 was the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel (Ezekiel 37:21-28) and the major sign of the soon second coming of Christ. Christian Zionism is a movement within Christianity that supports the State of Israel and the right of the Jewish people to their homeland based on biblical and theological interpretations. Adherents believe that the return of Jews to Israel is a fulfillment of prophecy and a prerequisite for the Second Coming of Jesus.

Dispensationalist believe that Israel is entitled to the land based on God's unconditional covenant with Abraham. They believe Israel should receive unwavering financial and political support. If a Christian does not agree with the dispensational view of Israel, they are labeled as a replacement theologian and false teacher. The following verses from the book of Genesis give the scriptural basis for this view.

- ²I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Genesis 12:2-3).
- ⁵for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants [*seed*] forever. (Genesis 13:15)
- ¹⁸On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants [*seed*] I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— (Genesis 15:18)
- ⁴"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be

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called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you." (Genesis 17:4-6)

A Key point made from these verses is that anyone who blesses Israel will be blessed and those who oppose Israel will be cursed. The scripture literally says those who bless Abraham will be blessed, with no mention of the nation of Israel. Notice the emphasis by the continual use of the word "you." God made His covenant with Abraham and His seed. The "seed" God was speaking of was "Christ" and not all ethnic Jews (Galatians 3:16). The word "*descendants*" is translated from the Hebrew word "*zera*" meaning a sowing, seed, offspring. The modern establishment of the nation of Israel is not the fulfillment of God's promise in Genesis, but Jesus Christ as confirmed by the Apostle Paul as the "Seed."

All the prophecies concerning Israel were fulfilled in Christ, as the scripture says, "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ" (Galatians 3:16).

Another example that some use to argue that modern Israel is the fulfillment of prophecy come from Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14). A strong case can be made that the passages in Ezekiel 37 were fulfilled during the time of Esther when Haman plotted to kill all the Jews (Esther 3:6, 13-14). Many scholars and historians point to the return of the Jewish people from Babylonian exile as the primary historical fulfillment of this vision. The Edict of Cyrus in 538 BC, following the defeat of Babylon by the Persians, decreed that the Jews could return to their homeland to rebuild the Temple. Over 42,000 Israelites returned to settle the land, effectively bringing "life" back to a nation that had been "dry bones" in captivity. The popular view today is to place the fulfillment of Ezekiel 37 in 1948, over two and one half thousand years after the prophecy was given.

How can we determine Ezekiel 38-39 were fulfilled as recorded in the books of Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah and are not a future

prophecy concerning modern Israel? To fully explore this topic would require a book of its own, so I will just give a few brief points. The war described was fought with ancient weapons with the army riding on horses. There is no way a modern war would revert to such weapons. Dispensationalists who take pride in the literal interpretation of scripture, have to say that these represent modern weapons of war or that the conflict is fought with ancient weapons of swords, shields, bucklers, spears, war clubs and bows and arrows (Ezekiel 39:9). The invading nations came to take a plunder of silver, gold, cattle, and goods (Ezekiel 38:13) which is the same articles mentioned in Ezra 1:4 that the exiles brought back from the Babylonian captivity. The term “latter days” is not a reference to the end of the world, but simply to future events (see chapter 2 in this book regarding the term “latter days”).

Another passage that is applied to modern Israel is the following, “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn” (Zechariah 12:10). It is taught that this is speaking of Israel’s future conversion to Christ at His second coming. However, this verse is quoted in John’s gospel (John 19:37) as being fulfilled at Christ’s first coming. The siege of Jerusalem mentioned by Zechariah (12:2-3) occurred in A.D. 70. The judgment pronounced on the nations that come against Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:8-9) was a common practice of the prophets who first describe God’s judgment against Israel, using these nations, and then His later judgment against those nations He used as an agent of His judgment. We see this when God used Nebuchadnezzar to judge Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36:14-21) and then later sent judgment on Babylon (Isaiah 13).

A scripture often quoted as referring to the regathering of Israel into the land is Isaiah 11:11-12. Dispensationalists teach that this is another prophecy that was fulfilled when Israel became a nation in 1948, and became the main sign that we are living in the last days prior to Christ’s return. The scripture says, “¹¹ It shall come to pass in that

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day *That* the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. ¹² He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth” (Isaiah 11:11-12). The dispensational view claims that the second time that the Lord recovered His people into the land is a reference to our time. The first-time being Israel’s return from Babylon.

The scripture says In Isaiah 11 that the Lord will make a highway for Israel to return just as He did for them during the time of the Exodus. It is written, “There will be a highway for the remnant of His people Who will be left from Assyria, As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt” (Isaiah 11:16). This verse is plainly telling us that the first time God brough His people into the land was after the Egyptian bondage. The second time would be the return from the Babylonian captivity. Why would the prophet Isaiah, writing in 732 B.C. be speaking of a recovering of God’s people over 2,700 years in the future, when the return from Babylon was approximately two hundred years in his audience’s future. This prophecy was fulfilled in our past, which was Isaiah’s future, and not in the distant future that was not relevant to Isaiah’s time.

Dispensationalists teach that the millennial kingdom, with Israel having a special status, is needed for God to fulfill all the land promises made to them. It is their argument that Israel never possessed all the territory God promised to Abraham. A strong case can be made that the land promises from the Abrahamic covenant were totally fulfilled at the conquest of Canaan by Joshua. Consider the following passage.

⁴³ So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. ⁴⁴ The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood

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against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. ⁴⁵Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass. (Joshua 21:43-45)

Based on the scripture, Israel took possession of all the land God promised them. It goes to say God gave them rest from their enemies and not one word of His promises failed because they ALL came to pass. The need for a millennial age so that these God can fulfill His promises to national Israel is not necessary because they have been realized.

Even during Solomon's reign, when the temple was constructed, the kingdom was at its height in the world (2 Chronicles 9:5-8, 22-24). The scripture says, "So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river (Euphrates) the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. *They* brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life (1 Kings 4:21). This matches the borders of the land God communicated to Abraham. The Bible also says, "Blessed *be* the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses" (1 Kings 8:56).

The land promises will be fully and completely consummated during the Eternal State (Revelation 21-22). Canaan is typological of a renewed creation. The scripture says, "By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God" (Hebrews 11:9-10). There is no need for a millennial kingdom to fulfill these promises to Israel. Scripture says they have already been fulfilled.

Final Comments:

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There is no prophetic significance for modern Israel's rebirth as a nation, other than they are evidence of God's love and faithfulness in preserving His people over the course of the centuries. God, in His mercy, allowed a FUTURE for national Israel. They will not be exalted above the nations because they broke the covenant, but they will return as a nation as a demonstration of the mercy of God. There are two ways in which one can view how God fulfills His promises to Israel; (1) Christ is the fulfillment of the promises to Israel, or (2) natural Israel in the last days is the fulfillment of the promises made to Israel. It is my position that Christ is the fulfillment.

I do not see that the return of the nation of Israel in 1948 is a fulfillment of Bible prophecy that MUST take place before the return of Christ as explained by dispensational premillennialism. Some of those events, such as the return of Jews to their homeland, fulfillment of the land promises from the Old Testament, and an exalted position among the nations were fulfilled in the Old Testament. The millennium is not required so that the unfulfilled promises to Israel can be realized.

The Bible does not identify two distinct peoples of God as the dispensationalists argue, but speaks of one people of God, both Jew and Gentile, united in their faith in Jesus Christ. It is a true miracle that Israel has been restored as a nation in modern times. However, their restoration is not to fulfill the unrealized promises made to Abraham. The promises were fulfilled in Christ and the land promises of the Abrahamic covenant were fulfilled in the Old Testament (Joshua 21:43-45; 1 Kings 4:21; 8:56; 2 Chronicles 9:5-8, 22-24).

Modern Israel is a modern nation-state founded in 1948, sharing a historical and geographical connection to Biblical Israel (ancient kingdoms and people), but they are not the same. Biblical Israel refers to the historical people, land, and covenant, while modern Israel is a contemporary political entity shaped by Zionism and global events, leading to different views on continuity, spiritual vs. political identity, and territory. Ancient Israel was a theocratic monarchy in covenant with God, a covenant centered on the Torah, the Law of Moses. Modern Israel, while making special provision for Jewish citizenship and drawing on Jewish ideals and values, claims to be a

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secular liberal democracy. God gave Israel the ownership of the land, but it does not mean they will always occupy the land.

Modern Israel was not established according to this directive of the Word of God; it is a political creation motivated by the will of man. Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) is recognized as the father of modern political Zionism. He dedicated his life to advocating for the creation of an independent Jewish state. His goal was realized forty years after his death by edict of the United Nations 1947-1948. This is why modern Israel is not a fulfillment of a specific prophecy because it was not created as prescribed by Deuteronomy 30. Approximately 70%-80% of the global Jewish population identifies as following the Jewish religion. Only about 1.9% of the Israeli population identifies as Christian. This includes both Jewish and non-Jewish believers. Approximately 78% of all Christians in Israel are ethnically Arab. This means there is a small number of ethnic Jews that have believed in Jesus as their Messiah. This does not reflect Israel has repented as a nation and accepted Christ to warrant them being restored to the land based on biblical grounds. This is why the establishment of Israel in 1948 is not a fulfillment of prophecy because it does not meet the criteria as set forth in scripture.

Christian Zionism is a religious and political movement where Christians support the modern State of Israel and the Jewish people's right to a homeland. This support is often rooted in the belief that the gathering of Jewish people in the Holy Land is a biblical prerequisite for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Critics argue that the ideology conflates the modern nation-state of Israel with biblical Israel, using eschatology to justify policies that harm Palestinians and undermine historic Christian communities in the Holy Land. If one does not totally support Israel, they are labeled as antiemetic.

The Six-Day War in June 1967 dramatically reshaped the Middle East. Israel took control of territories including the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. During the 1967 Six-Day War, Israeli paratroopers recaptured the Temple Mount (Haram al-Sharif) from Jordanian forces on June 7, 1967, marking a historic reunification of Jerusalem and restoring Jewish control over their holiest site after nearly two millennia. The

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soldiers, filled with emotion, reached the Western Wall, a remnant of the ancient Jewish Temple, and danced and prayed, a moment commemorated annually as Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day). Israel later annexed the Old City but maintained Muslim control over the holy sites on the Mount, allowing freedom of Jewish access but not Jewish worship. Many believe the reunification of Jerusalem set the stage for the building of the third Jewish temple. See chapter 9 in this book for further information on the rebuilding of the temple.

The United States officially recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and moved its embassy there in May 2018. The international community largely does not recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, maintaining that the city's final status must be resolved through negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. Israel, however, has declared the city its "complete and united" capital since 1980. Dispensationalists see the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital as another major step leading toward the rebuilding of the temple.

I love the Jewish people and the nation of Israel. However, the rebirth of Israel in modern times is an act of God's mercy to them, and not a necessity to complete unfulfilled prophecies. I do not believe my position concerning modern Israel makes me antisemitic, or a replacement theologian, but we need to stick with the biblical definition of "true Israel."

Modern political Israel, established in 1948 is not a parallel to biblical Israel that was established on Mount Sinai under Moses in the Old Testament. The tabernacle, and later the temple, were the center of their nation. If Israel obeyed God's commandments, then they would be a holy nation unto God based on their covenant with Him. Israel today is a modern nation-state sharing a historical and geographical connection to Biblical Israel, but they are not the same. Modern Israel, while making special provision for Jewish citizenship and drawing on Jewish ideals and values, claims to be a secular liberal democracy. Israel formally denies that Jesus is the Christ, which fits the biblical definition of antichrist (1 John 2:22). God said He would restore Israel if they "repent" and "return to the Lord" to keep His commandments, then He would gather them from where they were scattered and place them in

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in their own land (Deuteronomy 30:1-6). Modern Israel has not met the conditions of being restored to the land based on biblical grounds.

Chapter 11 – Other Comments

In this chapter I want to cover a few subjects in which I did not devote a whole chapter in this book. The following topics cover some areas of special interest that need to be addressed in laying the foundation of the Days of Noah/Lot Paradigm, which follows a partial preterist interpretation method for the Olivet Discourse and the book of Revelation. Much could be written when dealing with Bible eschatology, but there are some questions that frequently come up that should be answered.

Olivet Discourse Arrangement

To properly interpret Jesus's Olivet Discourse, it is important to understand how the gospel accounts are arranged. The three synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all record the Olivet Discourse. John's gospel does not include it, but he gives an expanded apocalyptic view of it in the book of Revelation. Since the Olivet Discourse is so important in Bible eschatology, I need to make a few points concerning the organization of the synoptic gospels.

Matthew's gospel is primarily organized topically and thematically, rather than strictly chronologically. While it follows a general biographical and geographical outline of Jesus's life, its internal arrangement frequently groups material by subject or theme, not necessarily the precise order in which events occurred. Matthew is structured around five large sections of Jesus' teaching; namely the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7), Mission Discourse (chapter 10), Parables of the Kingdom (chapter 13), Discourse on the Church (chapter 15), and the Olivet Discourse (chapters 24-25). When compared to Mark and Luke, which tend to be more concerned with a sequential timeline, Matthew's non-chronological arrangement becomes evident. Events that are scattered throughout Luke's and

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Mark's Gospels are often consolidated into a single, unified discourse in Matthew, such as the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5-7).

In a parallel reading of the Olivet Discourse, Mark and Luke only record two questions the disciples asked Jesus, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?" (Mark 13:4). Matthew also records these additional questions, "And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3), which are two additional questions. All three synoptic gospels record Jesus's answer to the first two questions which give signs for the upcoming destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. Then Matthew switches to what Jesus said about the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-40) that deal with His second coming. Mark's gospel does not mention the days of Noah, but Luke records it in chapter 17 and is not grouped with the Olivet Discourse. This illustrates the topical arrangement of Matthew's gospel compared to Luke's chronological arrangement.

The arrangement of the gospel narratives can affect how one may interpret the Olivet Discourse. The additional questions Matthew inserts in chapter 24 regarding Christ's coming can influence how all the questions are understood. Those who take a futurist view of the Olivet Discourse apply all of what Jesus said to His future second coming. When you understand that Matthew placed these additional questions where he did for topical reasons, it should help clear up any confusion concerning the dating of the signs given by Jesus, that they apply to the destruction of the temple and not the second coming. However, this is not the case and some stay loyal to the futurist position.

Matthew's two additional questions are answered by Jesus that deal with His coming, but this involves a first century coming and not His physical second coming that is still in our future. This is another example of Matthew's topical organization where in verses 23-28, he references Christ's coming, but uses the Greek word "*Parousia*" for coming that is used to refer to Christ's "presence." We normally see "Parousia" used where referring to Christ's physical second coming (1

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Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:15), but this text is speaking of a first century coming. The parallel gospel account to Matthew 24:23-28 is Luke 17:23-24, 37.

There was a first century coming (*Parousia*) of Jesus, but it was in heaven (Daniel 7:13-14) and not on the earth. This is where Jesus appeared before the Ancient of Days and took His throne in heaven. Jesus's judgment coming (Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28) was in A.D. 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem. The gospel writers use the Greek word "*erchomai*" (to come into being) in reference to His judgment coming (Matthew 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27). Even though these texts sound like they refer to Christ's second coming, Jesus is using the language of the prophets to warn of coming judgment. Today, there is an ignorance of biblical expression and the culture of the time when these texts were written, whereby the language of the prophets is unfamiliar with modern readers.

Early Christian Preterist Interpretation of the Olivet Discourse

Eusebius, the early church historian, interpreted much of the Olivet Discourse as having been fulfilled in the first century with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in A.D. 70. This aligns him with a preterist (past fulfillment) or a mixed (partial preterist, partial futurist) viewpoint.

In A.D. 325, Eusebius, as the influential Bishop of Caesarea and a respected scholar, played a lead role in the First Council of Nicaea, which was convened by Emperor Constantine to address the Arian controversy and unify the Christian church.

Eusebius is cited in early Christian writings as providing historical evidence that the events in the Olivet Discourse concerning the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple were fulfilled in the first century. His work, *The Ecclesiastical History*, records that Christians were able to avoid the Roman atrocities during the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 because they heeded a divine warning to leave the city.

Eusebius's account is a cornerstone of the preterist view, which holds that many biblical prophecies, including most of the Olivet

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Discourse, were largely fulfilled by the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. He interpreted the "Abomination of Desolation" proclaimed by the prophet Daniel as standing in the temple just before its final destruction by fire, an event that had already happened in his view. Other keys aspects of his interpretation:

- Viewed Jesus's specific prophecy that "not one stone here will be left on another" (Matthew 24:2) as literally and completely fulfilled during the siege by the Romans under Titus.
- He recorded the historical account that Christian believers in Jerusalem, heeding Jesus's warning to "flee to the mountains" when they saw the "abomination of desolation," escaped the impending destruction by relocating to the city of Pella in the region of Perea. This historical event, documented by Eusebius, is often cited by scholars as evidence for the first-century fulfillment of a significant portion of the discourse.
- The signs mentioned by Jesus, such as wars, rumors of wars, famines, and persecution of believers, were interpreted by Eusebius in the context of the tumultuous period leading up to the Jewish-Roman War (AD 66-73) and the subsequent Roman suppression.

Eusebius's interpretation emphasizes that Jesus was providing practical, immediate warnings to his contemporary disciples about the imminent national crisis facing Israel, rather than solely focusing on a distant, global "end of the world" scenario. His perspective has significantly influenced preterist and historicist views of the Olivet Discourse throughout Christian history.

For many scholars and theologians, Eusebius's testimony is significant because it suggests that an early church father understood Jesus's prophecy as having a specific, near-future fulfillment within the first century, rather than being solely about the distant end of the world. This stands in contrast to futurist interpretations, which see the bulk of the discourse as referring to events that are yet to come.

The Mark of the Beast and Buying and Selling

There has been much speculation about the mark of the beast being a computer chip placed under the skin that is required to buy and sell to transact business in the last days prior to Christ’s return. This is the popular view of the church today. Since I am writing this book from a partial preterist perspective, I believe it is important to present another viewpoint of the meaning of the term the “mark of the beast.” The book of Revelation was written to a first century audience, with information that was relevant to them. To try and take what was written and apply it to the 21st century is doing injustice to the text.

The “beast” is a symbolic term that represents a figure representing a power that opposes God, such as tyrannical empires demanding worship. The “beast” can be described an evil spiritual being that worked amidst several generations of Caesars to bring about his will. The connection between Nero and the mark of the beast is based on the interpretation that the number 666 from Revelation 13:18.

In both the Hebrew and Greek languages in which the original Bible manuscripts were written, the letters in their alphabets represented both letters and numbers. Because of this dual usage of the symbols used, every word and name has a numerical value. This value is called “gematria.” Applying this concept to the name Nero Caesar arrives at a value of 666. See below:

"Neron Caesar" in Hebrew		
נ	Nun	50
ר	Resh	200
ו	Waw	6
נ	Nun	50
ק	Quph	100
ס	Samekh	60
ר	Resh	200
		666

By transliterating "Neron Caesar" from Latin into Hebrew and adding the numerical values of the letters, the sum is 666, identifying Nero as the "Beast" to early Christians without explicitly naming him.

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If a Christian was caught with any written material that put Nero in a bad light, they would have been seized to be imprisoned and possibly sent to the Roman coliseums to be killed. This method, often used in apocalyptic literature to bypass censorship and avoid immediate detection, served to warn early Christians about the nature of the Roman state while keeping the message hidden from Roman authorities. Most likely the code utilized the Hebrew form rather than the Greek or Latin form to avoid detection from the Roman authorities who would know Latin and Greek.

Nero's persecution of Christians began in A.D. 64 and lasted 42 months (Revelation 13:5-7) until June A.D. 68 when he committed suicide. The Roman historian Tacitus described the horrific punishments inflicted upon Christians, which were so severe that they even evoked pity from some Romans. The methods of Christian executions included being torn apart by animals, crucifixion, and set on fire as human torches.

The phrase "buying and selling" is linked to Nero through the Roman emperor's image on coins and his name on legal and financial contracts, which would have made participation in the economy dependent on allegiance to the emperor. To engage in commerce, Christians would have to use currency bearing the image of an emperor, which was seen as a form of worship of a pagan ruler. This created a predicament for early Christians who could not participate in the economy without compromising their faith by acknowledging the emperor's authority over their lives.

Buying and selling in the Jewish temple involved the sale of sacrificial animals and the exchange of currency by money changers. Merchants sold animals like lambs, cattle, and doves, often to pilgrims who could not bring their own, and money changers converted the various currencies of the day into the required Jewish or Tyrian silver half-shekel for temple tax and offerings. This commerce was situated in the temple's outer courts and was seen by some, including Jesus, as a corruption of the space meant for prayer. This corruption and commercialization of a sacred space is what famously prompted Jesus's act of cleansing the Temple, where he overturned the tables of the

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money changers and drove out the merchants (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46).

Revelation 13:16-17 is not describing the worldwide control of financial transactions, but rather access to the temple controlled by the Jewish anti-Christian religious establishment. The key to understanding this passage is the phrase “to buy or to sell” if the worshipper does not have the mark of the beast. Those refusing the mark of the beast are not permitted to buy and sell and were expelled from the temple and the synagogue.

In Jesus’s ministry, the temple officials were *selling* and the worshippers *buying* access to the temple, turning it into a robbers’ den (Matthew 21:12-13). Only those Jews who sided with the priests, the sacrificial system, and the ordinances of the temple, were allowed entrance to the temple for worship. One needed to buy or sell to obtain the appropriate animal sacrifice to worship in the temple that was required under the Old Covenant. Christian Jews in the first century avoided the mark of the beast by showing their allegiance to Christ. It did not matter to them if they could buy or sell because Jesus’s sacrifice no longer requires the blood of sacrificial animals (Hebrews 10:4-14). The continued practice of the temple sacrificial system was now an act of rebellion a total rejection of the Messiah. This denial of Christ is what places Satan’s mark on a person and brings on the wrath of God (Revelation 14:9-11).

Early in the church’s history, the disciples taught in the temple (Acts 5:20-21, 24, 42; 24:12). Some even continued to practice some of the temple rituals (Acts 21:26). As Jewish Christians taught that Jesus was the Messiah, the temple officials eventually realized what they were doing and they were shut out of the temple (Acts 21:27-30).

Being marked in your forehead or hand is symbolically speaking of who one gives their allegiance to. In numerous places in the Old Testament, we read of binding God’s Word as a sign on our hand and head (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:18-21; Exodus 13:9). God places His mark on the heads of those who belong to Him (Ezekiel 9:4-6; Revelation 14:1). It signifies that God rules your thoughts (head) and your actions (hand). The mark of the beast in the book of

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Revelation (13:16-18) in a parody of the mark of the Lamb (14:1). Just as God did not put some physical mark on His people, a physical mark is not placed on those who follow Satan.

Taking the “mark of the beast” can be defined as totally rejecting Christ, which results in giving one’s allegiance to Satan. The scripture says, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36).

Inference

Dispensationalism makes various inferences, most notably that history is divided into distinct eras (dispensations) where God interacts with humanity in different ways, leading to key conclusions like a sharp distinction between Israel and the Church, a literal interpretation of Old Testament prophecy, and a future, pre-tribulation rapture, and millennial reign of Christ. This view infers that the promises made to national Israel have not yet been fulfilled and will be completed in a future, earthly kingdom.

The dispensational eschatological system is built upon “inferences,” which can be defined as drawing conclusions using contextual clues and prior knowledge to understand what is not directly stated. The process involves combining existing knowledge and observations to “read between the lines” and figure something out that has not been plainly stated. In contrast, “direct scriptural evidence” is information that is explicitly, or plainly stated.

The following are some of the teachings of dispensationalism and its use of inference in forming its eschatological views.

- **Pre-tribulation rapture:** The most distinctive and well-known inference is the pre-tribulation rapture. Since prophecies concerning the tribulation are considered part of God’s program for Israel, it is inferred that the Church must be “caught up” and removed from the world before this seven-year period of judgment begins.

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- **Future fulfillment of prophecies for Israel:** Prophecies in the Old Testament regarding Israel's future restoration, land, and dominance over the nations are inferred to be fulfilled literally during the millennium. This implies a physical, Jewish-centered kingdom on Earth with Christ reigning from Jerusalem.
- **A restored Jewish Temple:** Based on prophecies in books like Ezekiel, it is inferred that a rebuilt Temple will exist in Jerusalem during the millennial kingdom. This is also connected to the seven-year tribulation period, during which the Antichrist will desecrate the Temple.
- **Satan's binding during the millennium:** It is inferred that Satan will be bound for the duration of the 1,000-year reign of Christ, allowing for a time of global righteousness and peace.
- **Final judgment and the eternal state:** At the end of the 1,000-year reign, a final rebellion led by Satan will be defeated, followed by the final judgment and the creation of a new heaven and new Earth.

The entire dispensational premillennial view, systematized by John Nelson Darby, is built on these numerous inferences to lay out the eschatological events to take place. For example, there are no direct statements of scripture that distinguish two separate comings of Christ, namely the rapture and the second coming. This is read into the text. The interpretation of passages, such as Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27), can be formulated to support a particular view. Dispensationalists have used the "gap theory" to prove that the final seven-years (week of the prophecy) is on hold and represents the seven-year tribulation where the wrath of God is poured out. All this detail is imposed on the text and cannot be supported by plain statements of scripture. The whole concept of a future seven-year tribulation is made by inference.

I do not hold a partial preterist view in to follow a particular eschatological model, but my understanding of the scriptures has led me to the way I now view eschatological events. I see most of Jesus's

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Olivet Discourse describing the coming destruction in A.D. 70, meaning the things Jesus said would take place happened in the first century. I believe the dispensationalists have mis-dated these events by not considering the context leading up to how Jesus answered the disciples' questions on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24:3; Mark 13:3-4; Luke 21:7). Inference has been used to reason out an eschatological system by reading certain things into the scriptures (eisegesis) that are not simply there.

Chapter 12- Eschatological Statement of Faith

The purpose of this statement is to define an eschatological model of the events surrounding the second coming of Jesus Christ. These views do not fall precisely into the common views of the end times held by many believers, but they are based on biblical evidence found in the scriptures. It should be recognized that there are different lenses, or harmonical approaches in which to interpret biblical prophetic passages, and that these different interpretative systems should not cause divisions in the church. The name of this eschatological viewpoint is “The Days of Noah/Lot Paradigm.”

The difficulty in navigating the New Testament’s eschatological references is distinguishing between the events of A.D. 70 and that of Christ’s second coming. What events were fulfilled in the first century and what events will be fulfilled at Christ’s return? It is essential to use Jesus’s Olivet Discourse as the key reference that helps us place the timing of prophetic events and how to separate events fulfilled in the first century and events fulfilling at the end of the eschaton. This impacts how we interpret the book of Revelation, Daniel’s seventy weeks prophecy, and other prophetic passages. This is where it is very important to follow sound hermeneutical principles in our interpretation of eschatological passages. The following views form the framework of this eschatological system.

1. The eschatological system known as “The Days of Noah/Lot Paradigm” will strive to follow sound hermeneutical guidelines when interpreting prophetic passages. Three crucial laws of biblical interpretation will be employed which are; (1) scriptures will be interpreted literally by its plain reading unless a passage is intended to be symbolic, (2) the passage must be interpreted historically, contextually, and grammatically, and

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- (3) scripture is the best interpreter of scripture, taking into consideration how New Testament writers quote Old Testament passages. Books in the Bible that are classified as apocalyptic literature (such as Revelation and parts of Daniel) will be primarily interpreted with a symbolic hermeneutic with strict attention given to the context and historical setting. Every effort to exegete the scriptures will be taken, without imposing any presuppositions into the interpretation of a passage in rightly dividing the Word (2 Timothy 2:15), exercising the Bereans (Acts 17:1-15) eagerness to receive the Word, examining what is commonly taught verses what the scriptures plainly say.
2. A partial preterist interpretative approach is taken in understanding the Olivet Discourse and the book of Revelation. Most of the events prophesied were fulfilled by A.D.70. It sees that the kingdom of God is here now. It started with a small group of twelve apostles and grew to be the largest religion in the world with over two and one-half billion believers as Jesus taught with the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13: 31-32) and the Parable of the Leaven (Matthew 13:33). This view maintains an optimistic view of the future, while at the same time, realizes that evil will exist alongside the good as illustrated by the Parable of the Wheat and Tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). This concept is known as the “now and not yet” aspect of the Kingdom of God, which describes the dual reality of God’s reign as both present and future.

The Kingdom of God is an ever-expanding kingdom (like yeast in the dough) and “of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be no end*” (Isaiah 9:7a). It starts small but continues to grow. Jesus will reign from heaven until all His enemies have been made His footstool (Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 10:12-14). Then comes the end when Jesus gives the kingdom over to the

Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-25). This is the historic teaching of the Christian Church.

3. There is one second coming of Jesus Christ at the last trumpet which marks the end of death (1 Corinthians 15:51-54; Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 21:4) when “death is swallowed up in victory.” In connection with this, there is one resurrection of the dead, of both the saved and the unsaved (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15), at the “last day” (John 6:39, 44, 54; 11:24). These passages form the foundation of this interpretative method which is known by the metaphor, “**the plumb line**,” meaning they provide the straight line in which all Bible prophecies concerning the end of the age must agree with. All prophetic events must be interpreted in such a way that they will stay true with the timing of when death, which is the “last enemy” (1 Corinthians 15:26), shall be abolished forever.

Considering the “plumb line” passages, a pretribulation rapture cannot be supported by scripture. In addition, the idea of a seven-year tribulation, the 70th week of Daniel’s seventy weeks prophecy, is an imposition on the text. The second coming, or the Day of the Lord, is not preceded by literally the worst times the world has ever seen, but a time when Christ comes as a “thief in the night” (Matthew 24: 42-44; Peter 3:10-13). Believers have dealt with tribulation throughout the entire church age (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Romans 5:3). The idea of *the worst times up to that point in history, or will ever be after that*, has been expressed at least five different times in scripture (Exodus 11:6; Ezekiel 5:9; Joel 2:2; Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:21). These statements are not to be interpreted in a strict literal sense, but as an exaggeration or overstatement (hyperbolic language) in emphasizing a point, that of a coming great time of suffering.

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4. The final judgment occurs when Christ returns, as He will judge the living and the dead (2 Timothy 4:1). The three judgments associated with the end times; the judgment seat of Christ/Bema Seat judgment (Romans 14:10-13; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10), the judgment of nations (Matthew 25:31-46), and the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15) are different views of the final judgment. They are not three separate judgments at different periods of time, but one judgment that occurs at the "last day" (Matthew 13:49-50; John 12:48; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:7).
5. The thousand years, known as the Millennium in Revelation Chapter 20, is viewed as Christ ruling in heaven now with believers in the intermediate state (the position held by a-millennialists and postmillennialist). The kingdom of God was inaugurated with the coming of Christ and it will be consummated when He returns (1 Corinthians 15:22-26). The term "a thousand years," found many times in scripture, is not used in a literal sense, but is a symbolic number representing "a long period of time" (Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 50:10; 90:4; 105:8; 2 Peter 3:8). In Revelation 20, there is the binding of Satan (Matthew 12:28-29), and the casting out of Satan (John 12:31) that occurred at the crucifixion. Jesus won the victory over Satan at the cross and disarmed him (Colossians 2:14-15) and cast him out (John 12:31). Satan was bound in his ability to deceive the nations by preventing the gospel to spread around the world. His work is still to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10), but he cannot stop the spread of the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20).

The church fights an ongoing spiritual war with Satan until Christ returns (Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5). At Christ's return He will judge the living and the dead (2 Tim 4:1-2) and the righteous will be separated from the wicked (Matthew 13:30, 41-43; 47-50; 25:31-46). Those who are saved will enter

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the eternal state while the unsaved will suffer the second death in the lake of fire.

6. The new heaven and a new earth mentioned in Revelation 21 are speaking of the “New Creation,” also called the New Jerusalem, the bride, when a person comes to Christ. “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Jesus brought in the Kingdom of God which is the New Creation, or the New Covenant when He said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17b). A believer enters the Kingdom when they are born again (John 3:3-8).

The Kingdom/New Creation came at Christ’s 1st coming and has been progressively implemented in the earth. It is an ever-expanding kingdom (like yeast in the dough) as expressed in the kingdom parables in Matthew 13, and “of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end” (Isaiah 9:7a). It starts small but continues to grow. Jesus will reign from heaven until all His enemies have been made His footstool (Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 10:12-14). At Christ’s return, the dead will be raised and the final judgment conducted (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:23, 51-54; John 12:48; 2 Timothy 4:1). At that time the Kingdom will be consummated and delivered up to the God and Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-26). This is when there will be no more death, sorrow, mourning, crying, and pain (Revelation 21:4). The former things (the old world) will pass away as He makes all things new (Revelation 21:5), and there will be no more curse (Revelation 22:3). The final condition of the New Creation/Kingdom of God is known as the eternal state.

There is no intermediate, semi-perfect age, known as the millennial kingdom where Christ rules over a kingdom where

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there is still sin and death, and Satan has still not suffered his ultimate end.

7. A partial preterist interpretation method is required for Jesus's Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21) when it is read in context. This becomes very clear when reading a parallel, side-by-side version of the Olivet Discourse. The generation Jesus is addressing is the first century generation of His disciples concerning the destruction of the temple (Matthew 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32). There are four difficult passages to reconcile to a first century fulfillment (Matthew 24:14, 21, 29-31, 34-35), but they can be explained by emphasizing the context of Jesus's teaching, His use of Old Testament prophetic language, and the time reference of "this generation." Jesus also compares His future glorious coming with the days of Noah/Lot analogy (Matthew 24:36-42; Luke 17:26-30). No one knows the day or the hour of His coming (Matthew 24:42-44) because He comes at a time you do not expect. This comparison to Noah and Lot is the backbone of the Days of Noah/Lot model of Bible eschatology.
8. The book of Revelation is an apocalyptic version of the Olivet Discourse, written in highly symbolic language. One must make some hermeneutical decisions in how to interpret the book. This view recognizes Revelation as being fundamentally symbolic with some literal, rather than being fundamentally literal with some symbolic things in it. This position holds that much of Revelation was fulfilled in the first century contrary to popular opinion. Revelation is a very complex book and has been interpreted in various ways. That alone shows the difficulty in interpreting apocalyptic literature. Scripture is the best interpreter of scripture. Complex passages such as the book of Revelation must be interpreted by comparing them with passages that are clearer, such as those found in the Olivet Discourse. When interpreting passages in Revelation, the Olivet

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Discourse can be used as a guide to understand what is being said.

9. This eschatological view supports an early date (pre-A.D. 70) for the writing of the book of Revelation rather than the widely held view of the later date of A.D. 95-96. This is based on both internal and external evidences. The main piece of “eternal evidence” is a quote from Irenaeus (A.D. 130-202) in his book “Against Heresies” (A.D. 180). “Internal evidences” are taken from the Bible itself, such as the temple still standing when John wrote his apocalyptic vision (Revelation 11:2; Luke 21:24), and the reference to seven king/Caesars (Revelation 17:9-11), namely Julius Caesar (49-44 B.C.), Augustus (27 B.C.–A.D.14), Tiberius (A.D. 14–37), Caligula (A.D. 37–41), Claudius (A.D. 41–54), Nero (A.D. 54–68), and Galba (June A.D. 68–January 69). Nero was the sixth and the current Caesar when John had his apocalyptic vision, placing the date of his writing prior to A.D. 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem. The first century context for much of the Olivet Discourse also supports the early date.
10. The Seventy Weeks Prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27) has been fulfilled by Christ’s redemptive work. This follows a historicist viewpoint. The gap theory which states that the final week of the prophecy is the future seven-year tribulation period is based on a misinterpretation of Daniel 9:27. The terms “Messiah” and “prince,” are speaking of the same person, namely Christ. This prophecy was written over 500 years before the birth of Christ. So, when the prophecy mentions the “prince who is to come,” Daniel is speaking in relation to his time, where the coming prince is still future. There is no grammatical reason for changing the identity of the term “prince” from one verse to the next. Jesus Christ is the one represented by the terms “Messiah” and “prince,” therefore “the people of the prince who is to come” are the Jewish people who were responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

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(Matthew 23:37-39; Luke 19:41-44) and not the Romans, who were used by God as His agent to carry out the judgment. The need for daily sacrifices ceased because of His sacrificial death on the cross. This misapplication of the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy is the foundation for the dispensational premillennial view of Bible eschatology that was systematized by John Nelson Darby (1800-1882).

11. The word "antichrist" is only mentioned four times in scripture (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:1-3; 2 John 7). Many associate the beast in Revelation 13, the one who puts an end to sacrifice in Daniel 9:27, the one who commits the abomination of desolation in Matthew 24:15, and the man of lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, as the antichrist. However, the scriptures say there are many antichrists and defines the term as one who denies Jesus Christ came in the flesh, and that the antichrist is already in the world (1 John 4:3). The Bible does not give any passage that says there will be an individual, prior to Christ's return, who will be "the antichrist." The beast and the man of lawlessness/son of perdition, were first century individuals. The apostle Paul gives three-time references for the "man of lawlessness that show he was alive during Paul's day, "6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way" (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7). The main candidate for the identity of the beast in Revelation is Emperor Nero, who's name in Hebrew adds up to the gematria sum of 666.

The scripture says "he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," (2 Thessalonians 2:4) should not be interpreted that the Antichrist commits the abomination of desolation in the rebuilt third temple. The temple of God in the New Testament is our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthian 6:16). Sitting in the temple of God is a way of saying Satan is

ruling in one's heart, rather than the Holy Spirit. Whenever anyone pledges allegiance to Satan by rejecting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, they are in effect taking the "mark of the beast." The "man of sin" is everyone who is dead in sin, just as the "body of Christ" is everyone who is alive in Christ (John 5:24; Ephesians 2:1; 1 John 3:14).

12. The Bible speaks of one people of God, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles (Genesis 12:1-3; John 10:16; Galatians 3:13-14, 25-29; Ephesians 2:14-22) as symbolized by the olive tree (Romans 11:16-36). The scriptures do not teach there are two peoples of God (Israel and the Church), neither are there two plans of God. The Days of Noah Paradigm does not endorse replacement theology, but a remnant theology, that the Church is to be a subset of faithful ethnic Israel who receives Jesus as the promised Messiah. The Gentile Church partakes of the covenants and promises given to remnant Israel. Not all who are born Jewish are part of the saved remnant (Romans 9:6-7). The Church is incorporated into the chosen remnant of Israel, and not the other way around. (Romans 2:28-29). This faithful subset of Israel is called the Remnant or the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:15-16).
13. Old Testament prophecy finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ and is realized in the new creation (Psalm 40:7; Luke 24:26-17; John 5:39). Passages that appear to be speaking of a millennial Temple (Ezekiel 40-48) and the offering of blood sacrifices for the atonement (Ezekiel 45:17) of sin are symbolic, and will never be physically built because they were fulfilled in Christ (Hebrews 8:13). Ezekiel, using imagery familiar to the people of the time it was written, was speaking of future things beyond their understanding at the time. It is a description of a temple that never will be built because it does not need to be built due to the redemptive work of Christ. Ezekiel's temple is about the kingdom of Christ, and that has already been built in principle in His completed work.

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Zechariah Chapter 14 is another difficult passage that sees sin in the kingdom age. Those living in Old Testament times had no understanding of the redemptive work of Christ and the implementation of the New Covenant. Zechariah is using language and concepts familiar to the people of his day. When the Messiah came and died on the cross, it was no longer necessary to keep the feasts from the Old Testament because they found their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. To go back to animal sacrifices and literally keeping the feast of tabernacles is to conflict with the redemptive work of Christ.

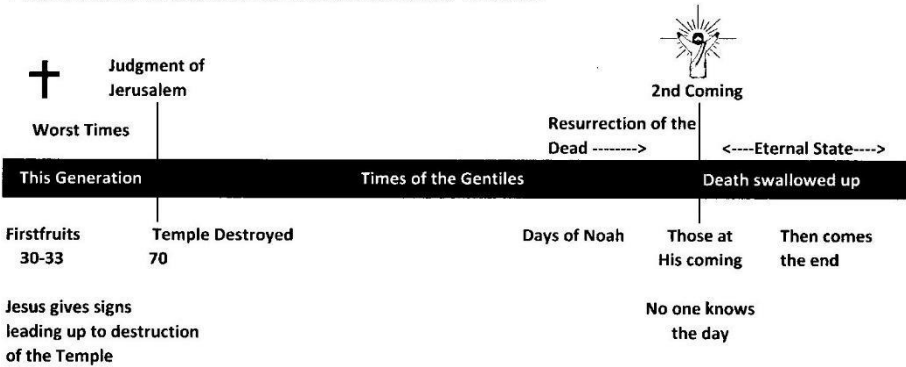
14. A thousand-year kingdom age is not required so that all of God's Old Testament promises can be realized. The land promises from the Abrahamic covenant were totally fulfilled at the conquest of Canaan (Joshua 21:43-44). Based on the scripture, Israel took possession of all the land God promised them. The need for a millennial age so that God can fulfill His promises to national Israel is not necessary because they have been realized. Even during Solomon's reign, when the temple was constructed, the kingdom was at its height in the world (2 Chronicles 9:5-8, 22-24; 1 Kings 4:21; 8:56).

In conclusion, to summarize the end time Bible prophecies, Jesus Christ will come again physically for all the world to see. He will raise the dead, conduct a final judgment, and create a new heavens and new earth, with the new Jerusalem being the final dwelling place for God with His people. It will be the consummation of the kingdom of God. This statement incorporates positions held by a-millennialism, partial preterist, and even futurist viewpoints.

The following timeline provides a basic picture of how the end time events will take place. It incorporates Jesus's Olivet Discourse and facts concerning the resurrection from 1 Corinthians 15.

Days of Noah/Lot Paradigm Timeline:

1 Corinthians 15 & Olivet Discourse Combined Timeline



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Other Books Published:

Are We Alone in the Universe; A Biblical Perspective
The Rapture Timing Mystery; Weighing the Evidence
Mystery of the Millennium; Weighing the Evidence

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