

Bible Prophecy Concerning Israel and the Gentiles

An Outline Study

by

Garland H. Shinn

Table of Contents

Chapter One - Introduction to Bible Prophecy.....	1
Chapter Two - The Mediatorial Kingdom in the Old Testament.....	12
Chapter Three - The Covenants and the Promised Land.....	19
Chapter Four - The Dispersion of Israel.....	37
Chapter Five - The Olivet Discourse.....	50
Chapter Six - The Resurrection of Old Testament Believers.....	67
Chapter Seven - The Judgment of Israel.....	76
Chapter Eight - The Kingdom of God and The Millennium.....	81
Chapter Nine - The Kingdom of God in the Gospels.....	98
Chapter Ten - The Course of the Gentile Nations (Daniel 2, 7).....	105

Chapter One

Introduction to Bible Prophecy

The Importance of Prophecy

It is Biblical

2 Timothy 3:16,17

All scripture is Godbreathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The “all scripture” of 2 Timothy 3:16 includes the predictive elements of the Bible. While not directly applicable to Christian living, Old Testament prophecy is of great value for the believer. It speaks to God’s control over His creation, His faithfulness in completing His program, and His concern for the future of mankind. That so much prediction is included in Scripture speaks to the importance that God places on believers’ need to understand His prophetic program.

The amount of prediction in the Bible is indeed staggering. The great topics of the future of Israel, the gentile nations, and the church are all presented in sometimes great detail. Prophecy deals not only with truth already accomplished, but with events and persons yet future from today. Because there is so much prediction in Scripture has caused some to step back, and not study the truths presented. Such a reluctance is understandable, but should not deter the serious Christian from spending time in serious pursuit of this area of biblical truth.

Since it is biblical, prophecy speaks to the very nature of God Himself. It brings glory to Him in a way that is real and exciting. As previously stated, we see God in His faithfulness as He deals with not only Israel, but with the Gentile nations and the Body of Christ. A normal understanding of the biblical text brings about an attitude of worship on the part of the believer who must marvel at the intricate presentation of future events scattered through a text that was literally hundreds of years in the making. Only the great God of creation could ever provide such a detailed plan of His program of predictive prophecy.

It is Comforting and Edifying

1 Thessalonians 4:18

Therefore comfort one another with these words.

In the above passage the context deals with the resurrection of the church, including the rapture and related events. A correct view of this prophetic truth, as well as others, is comforting to believers. And a necessary comfort it is, indeed. The human tendency is to allow present circumstances to overcome the positive attitudes of life that God requires of us. Through predictive prophecy, not only that for the church, but that for other programs, the believer can be encouraged through the negative circumstances of life.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

The context of 1 Thessalonians 5:11 deals with the coming Day of the Lord, another prophetic theme. Again we see that a correct view of Bible prophecy brings the believer to a place of personal comfort and edification, and the ability to comfort others who may be having a difficult time circumstantially.

It Relates to the Spiritual Life

The Family Hope

1 John 3:1-3

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

One of the direct results of looking forward to the future revelation of the Son of God is the desire to live a life of purity, a life of pleasing God rather than oneself or others. Perhaps one of the most difficult things for a believer to remember is that he will have a glorious future. He will stand in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and will see Him as He actually is. The glorious truth, sincerely held, and constantly considered, can have no other result than to bring about purity in the Christian's life and activity.

The True Value of Things

2 Peter 3:10-14

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless....

The strongest of Christians is not immune to the pull of the physical. In these later times the bounty of material goods is a lure which cannot be ignored. To do so leads the individual into making wrong decisions. While Scripture nowhere says that the material is evil in and of itself, it can lead the believer into a set of false attitudes and perspectives. No Christian's primary concern in this life, for himself or for his loved ones, should be primarily the accumulation of physical goods.

When one realizes the temporary nature of the current state of this creation, there is at least the ability to think beyond the present. Peter encourages a spotless and blameless lifestyle based on the fact that the current physical world will go through a future purification. A new heaven and a new earth will take the place of the current one. Therefore, no one should become enamored of the state of material opportunity now available. The saint of God should see beyond the present temptations in time and space and understand that it is but temporary, and should not be the motivating factor in how the Christian life is to be realized.

The Godly Life

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

No more succinct statement of grace can be found in the Bible than that made by Paul to Titus. One function of grace is to bring the Christian to the place where he lives “soberly righteously and godly in the present age.” But that statement is tied to a predictive element, “looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” This is the application of the same grace that Paul relates as having been dispensed by himself in Ephesians 3:2. It is grace in contrast to law, not for the purpose of distinguishing between ways of salvation, but between methods of practical sanctification. The application of this grace to the Christian life is directly related to how one looks to the future, specifically to the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The blessed hope” should be taken to mean the happy expectation of Christ’s future appearance to resurrect the church. This future expectation is what brings about the correct attitude concerning the current age, the present evil age (Galatians 1:4). It is one of the perspectives that allow the Christian to live according to grace. No longer are believers to pay attention to the means of keeping the law, but to the coming of the Lord. Grace works only when the believer is looking beyond his current circumstances and is paying attention to the Father and the Son.

Clearly, then, predictive prophecy, especially that which deals directly with the church, but even that which deals with other elements of God’s future program, has partly the design to aid Christian godliness. To neglect this great truth is to neglect one method, a vital method, of placing oneself correctly in God’s life program.

It Guards Against Serious Error

1 Timothy 1:18-20

This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

2 Timothy 2:15-19

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

In both First and Second Timothy, Paul mentions serious biblical error into which some had fallen. This error dealt with predictive prophecy; some men had said that the future resurrection had already occurred. If we take the two references to Hymenaeus to refer to the same individual, which seems most likely, we will understand the seriousness of the offense. Paul’s reaction to their error is harsh, to say the least. While such a response would not be appropriate today, during the time that Scripture was

still being formulated, and the apostles were charged with the responsibility to guard the truth of revelation, the act was indeed worthy of Paul's delivering the miscreants unto Satan.

According to 2 Timothy 2:15 is possible to rightly handle (divide) the word of truth. Some did not do that, so Paul warns Timothy against them. These men had strayed from the truth, and it was not necessary for them to have done so, any more than it is necessary to do so today. The implication of Paul's charge to Timothy is staggering. It is possible to correctly handle the "word of truth." Indeed, there is truth, those statements and doctrines which are accurate and which can be understood and held to be of godly veracity.

As previously state, the specific error involved was prophetic, having do with the doctrine of the resurrection. Specifically, these men had misplaced the resurrection in time, and they did it in such a way to bring out spiritual shipwreck of some. They had said that the future resurrection had already happened. In some sense they must have spiritualized or allegorized the apostolic teaching concerning this vital doctrine. Obviously, if the resurrection had already taken place it could not be a literal resurrection, as the believers were still on earth, and there was no objective evidence that the resurrection of the body of Christ had taken place. To shipwreck the faith of some probably then is related not just to the error in doctrine, but to the serious sidestepping of correct interpretive method.

If indeed Timothy had the ability to correctly handle the truth of God, then the implication is that he could use correct interpretive tools to do so. The first affirmation of truth must be that God's word is a communication to man using normal principles of interpretation to come to correct and specific conclusions. Any other approach is reprehensible in God's site. Is it any wonder that in today's relativistic world man is floundering? Not only is predictive prophecy denied, the very historicity of the biblical text is regularly being undermined. In order to maintain one's faith system, to not become spiritually shipwrecked, a nonallegorical, normal interpretive process must be maintained.

Hymenaeus and Alexander are accused by Paul, therefore, of having blasphemed. Such an accusation must be correctly understood if the force of this situation is to be maintained.

The Meaning of Blasphemy

Titus 2:5

to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Mark 3:22-30

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." So He called them to Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. "And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. "And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. "No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house. "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; "but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation" -- because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

The basic meaning of blasphemy is "to make an accusation." In its most negative sense it came to mean to make a negative untrue comment. A Christian can "blaspheme" the word of God by acting in a way contrary to its teachings. By so doing he is claiming to others that the Bible teaches his error. He is "accusing" the word of teaching something that it does not teach. Therefore, it became possible to

“blaspheme” the word of God by claiming to be a believer, but by not performing consistently with what God has said. Such was true of those women mentioned in Titus 2:5.

How were the scribes mentioned in Mark 3 blaspheming the Holy Spirit? They were making false accusations against Christ by saying that His works of casting out demons was done by Satan. In other words, they were attributing the works of the Holy Spirit to Satan, and in so doing they were blaspheming the Holy Spirit. This was a kind of blasphemy that could only occur as the result of Christ’s ministry on earth. People today cannot commit this kind of blasphemy. Nevertheless, this incident remains as an excellent example of blasphemy being a false accusation.

So when the word of God is blasphemed, that is, subjected to false meaning by using incorrect methods of interpretation, it is possible for the faith of individuals to be “shipwrecked.”

The Shipwreck of the Faith

1 Timothy 1:19

...having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck...

By “the shipwreck of the faith” Paul uses a nautical metaphor meaning that Alexander were no longer holding to true doctrine. In this case, as we have seen, they were holding to wrong *prophetic* doctrine because they had abandoned normal interpretive methodology. When one suffers a literal shipwreck, he is no longer on the true path toward his destination, but is, if he survives, cast upon a foreign shore. Spiritual shipwreck is much the same, except it involves the violation of the correct path that one’s own conscience dictates, and his spiritual direction is subverted.

The word conscience refers to the internal apparatus built into a human whereby his actions either accuse or excuse his behavior (Romans 2:15). A good conscience, such as Paul had, indicated that Paul had not violated his personal system of truth and value. When a person violates his good conscience he is violating his value system. These two men had heard the truth, had evidently accepted it, but had, at some point, rejected their own value system, invented a false doctrine through false method, and arrived at the “foreign shore” of error.

The Error Involved

2 Timothy 2:18

...who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

A more detailed discussion of the error of these two men is in order. Since the nature of the blasphemy deals with the future resurrection, why does Paul consider this error so serious?

This error was very serious to the apostle’s mind. First, it misplaced the resurrection of the church in time. In that way it is similar to the errors of mid- and posttribulationism, and of the pre-wrath rapture error. This confusion of the time of the resurrection causes believers to have their faith overturned (see below) with the result that they tend to live a legalistic, non spiritual productive, life style. Why? The reason is that the forward look to the blessed hope is the prophetic attitude upon which the current Christian life is lived. See the above discussion of Titus 2 where the blessed hope is directly linked with the dispensational grace approach to the Christian life.

The second reason for the seriousness of the error of Hymenaeus and Alexander has to do with interpretive procedure. In order to hold that the resurrection is past, the meaning of the word

resurrection must be modified. Since the believers in Ephesus had not resurrected, at least not visibly so, the idea of resurrection has been modified to mean some kind of non-physical, or at least non-visible resurrection. Perhaps Hymenaeus and Alexander had spiritualized the resurrection and made it to be somehow not bodily.

Today we live at a time when “dispensationalists” are seeking rapprochement with covenantalists. Paul sought no such rapprochement with error. Rather, he condemned it in no uncertain terms. While the spiritual believer should never be guilty of assuming the position of an apostle and acting toward errant individuals as Paul did, or of attacking the motives of those in error, it is nevertheless his responsibility to point out that error, and to condemn it. Such an approach is not comfortable for many, but we must maintain it.

The Results of the Error

It Led to Ungodliness

2 Timothy 2:16

But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

After encouraging Timothy to rightly handle the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15) Paul encourages Timothy with the above statement. Starting then with 2 Timothy 2:17, Paul uses Philetus as an example of this sort of empty chatter.

The word “ungodliness” in verse 16 actually refers to a lack of respect. Contextually, this is a lack of respect for the communicative value of the word of God, and therefore for God Himself. In short, these men were not “rightly handling the word of truth,” and thereby were being disrespectful to God. By so doing they imply that God is incapable of communicating clearly and precisely.

Sadly, Christians often take the correct handling of God’s word lightly. Some have even accepted the idea that the Bible cannot be clearly understood. This author remembers an almost frightening conversation that he had with a deacon of the church in which he was raised. The man flatly refused to believe that the Bible could be understood through correct human diligence. Since understanding the word of God was beyond his ability, he seemed to think that it was beyond everyone’s ability. If that doesn’t frighten you, reader, it should, especially from one who considered himself a leader in his church.

It Fed like Gangrene

2 Timothy 2:17

And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,

Concerning the word gangrene (KJV), or cancer, Vine says that it is, “eating sore, spreading corruption and producing mortification . . . [used] of errorists in the church, who, pretending to give true spiritual food, produce spiritual gangrene.”

Error in this vital area, then, spreads. It is not static. Since it spreads like a cancer, it should be particularly onerous to the modern believer, as it was to the apostle.

It Overthrew the Faith of Some

2 Timothy 2:18

who have missed the mark concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

By misplacing the resurrection in time, Paul says these men “missed the mark” (Greek, *astoi cheo*) concerning the truth. Clearly Paul considers the future resurrection of prime importance. It is possible to understand the truth concerning this vital doctrine.

In missing the mark, Hymenaeus and Philetus have “overturned the faith of some.” The word “overturned” has serious implications. and Milligan (*Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*) give an apt illustration from a 2nd century papyrus, of the complete upsetting of a family by the riotous conduct of a member. When believer’s faith is overturned in this manner, it causes harm to them personally, because the word of God is no longer viewed as trustworthy when using normal interpretive procedures. And without normal understanding of words, there is no identifiable truth, and grace principles for daily living are impugned as being unreliable.

The idea that predictive prophecy is of little value in the Christian life cannot be sustained. Both Paul and Peter certainly teach that how one views God’s predictions in Scripture will effect his daily walk.

The Interpretation of Eschatology

In introduction to this vital area we can do no better than to quote Dr. Alva J. McClain, who clearly presents the need for the correct method of interpretation.

“Probably this method (the literal method) has never been stated better than by Ellicot: ‘The true and honest method of interpreting the Word of God [is] the literal, historical, and grammatical.’ This method, as its adherents have explained times without number, leaves room for all the devices and nuances of language, including the use of figure, metaphor, simile, symbol, and even allegory. In their criticism of this literal method, most of its critics have been guilty of a ‘crasser literalism’ than ever used by any reputable adherent to the method in its application to the Word of God. Certainly the literal method is not without its problems, but these problems are only such as naturally arise out of the nature of human language. Basically the method is extremely simple. For example, the 72nd Psalm speaks of the Messianic King as follows: ‘He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass’ (vs. 6). Here we have a literal coming-the Lord ‘shall come down.’ Also the effect of His coming is literal, although in this case it is described by a simile-‘like rain upon the mown grass’. Those who have seen the glorious effect of a summer shower coming down on a field of grass which has been cut will have some idea of what the literal effect of our Lord’s coming will be upon a troubled world. Of course, if one wishes to depart from simple common sense, he might say that in this text ‘grass’ stands for the church at Pentecost; ‘mown’ stands for the unsanctified state of the disciples upon that occasion; and the ‘rain’ stands for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Once launched on the sea of conjecture, it is not surprising that interpreters finally arrive at strange ports, as far removed from reality as the popular ‘beautiful isle of somewhere.’” - Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, page 140.

“Doubtless we should thank God that not all men are logically consistent in holding their erroneous opinions. What can happen when men cut loose from literalism may be seen in Gregory the Great’s exposition of the Book of Job, where we learn that the

patriarch's three friends denote the heretics; his seven sons are the twelve apostles; his seven thousand sheep are God's faithful people; and his three thousand hump-backed camels are the depraved Gentiles." - McClain, *Greatness*, page 143.

The Literal, Historical, Grammatical Approach to Interpretation

Always Interpret in Light of the Context

The Literary Context

Generally when people speak of the context what they mean is the literary context. In biblical studies *the immediate context* refers to the sentences immediately preceding and following the passage in question.

The literary context, however, should be expanded to include the entirety of the Bible book, or *the book context*, in which the passage is found. The means of studying the literary context of a passage is called the synthetic method. It is a form of the inductive approach to Scripture study.

Ultimately the literary context includes the *biblical context*, that is, the entirety of God's written revelation. Particularly in undertaking important doctrinal studies, the student should study the entire revelation of God to discern each passage that touches on the doctrine being examined.

The Historical Context

The historical context of a passage is easy to overlook. Historical context refers to the historical facts that influenced the human author in his writing.

Included in historical context are such elements as geography and cultural facts. One should study these areas as background so as to apply them when appropriate to the understanding of the biblical text.

The cultural background of a writing also includes the study of the language that the original writer used. It is unwise to rely solely on translations, since rarely can a translation carry the nuances and emphases of the original work. The human author wrote or spoke in a language other than English. Correct interpretation includes the study of the lexical and grammatical meanings of the language (Hebrew, biblical Aramaic, or Greek) in which the original communication was made.

Always Interpret from the Point of View of the Original Writer or Speaker

A major discussion in modern interpretive methodology deals with "authorial intent." That is, what did the author intend to communicate in his writing? The ultimate answer to this question is found in the general practice of sound hermeneutics (development of principles of interpretation.)

Always Understand Words and Phrases to Mean What They Meant by the Recipients at the Time They Were Originally Written or Spoken.

One way to maintain an even balance in the discussion of authorial intent is to interpret from the point of view of the original recipients of the message. This is, in some ways, at the very heart of historical interpretation. If we ask the question "How did the original recipients understand the message?" we have taken a basic step toward understanding the intention of the author.

A corollary to the above approach is to attend closely to the use of pronouns in a passage. The words *I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they, us, our*, etc. often provide the basis for understanding the structure of a passage. Remember, these pronouns never refer to the modern reader. They always have historical references that much be discerned.

The Meaning of Some Terms

Prophet/Prophecy

The Basic Meaning

The Hebrew language has two words that are often translated prophet. The word prophecy is also derived from one of these Hebrew roots.

The earlier Hebrew word means “to see,” hence the word meant “seer.” The later and much more common Hebrew word is derived from a root of uncertain origin, but apparently is related to Semitic root meaning “to announce.”

The essential idea of the word (prophet) is that of authorized spokesman. (*TWOT*, v. 2, page 544)

Likewise, the Greek *prophetes*, from which the English word itself is derived, means “to speak forth, to announce.”

The idea of prediction is not inherent in the meaning of the words translated prophet, prophesy, or prophecy. The idea is of one who receives direct revelation from God and who then announces or speaks it forth

Predictive Prophecy

Since prophets were receiving direct revelation from God, and since some of that revelation related to future events, a common meaning of the word prophecy has to do with prediction. It is this use of the word with which we are primarily concerned in this study.

Non-predictive Prophecy

2 Peter 1:20

...knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation...

One must realize, however, that the Bible uses the word prophecy primarily in its non-predictive sense. Since all Scripture is prophecy because it all speaks forth the word of God, the word prophecy is used to include both predictive and non-predictive revelation. In 2 Peter 1:20 the phrase “prophecy of Scripture” refers to the entirety of the written revelation, not just to the predictive elements.

Eschatology

The technical term *eschatology* is derived from the two Greek words *eschatos*, meaning *last*, and *logos*, meaning *a consideration concerning, a word about*. So the word means “a consideration of last things.”

Whereas the word *eschatology* has come to refer to the doctrine of predictive prophecy. This is generally broken down into three areas: The eschatology of Israel; the eschatology of the gentile nations; the eschatology of the church.

Older theologians used the term *eschatology* only to mean a discussion of heaven and hell, and the intermediate state of the soul before resurrection. Today this use of the word rarely occurs except in older theology books.

Views Concerning the Kingdom of God

Amillennialism

The word *amillennial* can be broken down into three roots: *a* + *mill*+ *ennial*. The first element *a-* is a word that simply means *no*. The second element *-mill-* is from the Latin for *thousand*. And *-ennial* is derived from the Latin *annum*, meaning *year*. Thus, amillennialism is the doctrine that there is no thousand years (millennium) that makes up the first part of the Kingdom of God on the earth. The word “thousand” is viewed in an allegorical way.

Walvoord describes amillennialism as follows:

It's most general character is that of denial of a *literal* reign of Christ upon the earth. Satan is conceived as bound at the first coming of Christ. The present age between the first and second comings is the fulfillment of the millennium. Its adherents are divided on whether the millennium is being fulfilled now on the earth (Augustine) or whether it is being fulfilled by the saints in heaven (Kliefoth). It may be summed up in the idea that there will be no more millennium that there is now, and that the eternal state immediately follows the second coming of Christ. (John Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, page 6)

Postmillennialism

Like the word *amillennialism*, *postmillennialism* is derived from three root ideas: *post* + *mill*+ *ennial*. The last two terms are identical to those for amillennialism. The first term, *-post*, means *after*.

Concerning postmillennialism Walvoord says:

Originating in the writings of Daniel Whitby (1638-1726), a Unitarian controversialist of England, postmillennialism holds that the present age will end with a period of great spiritual blessing corresponding to the millennial promises accomplished through the preaching of the Gospel. The whole world will be Christianized and brought to submission to the gospel *before* the return of Christ.... A great many variations exist which are comprehended in this general title, and some forms of amillennialism are akin to postmillennialism. (Walvoord, *Kingdom*, pages 7,8)

The one great element that both amillennialism and postmillennialism share is a refusal to accept normal interpretive procedures when it comes to Bible prophecy. While among themselves both amillennialists and postmillennialists are not sure of the exact elements of their system, they are agreed on one thing. They refuse to believe the clear teaching of Scripture concerning the nature of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, the problem is not so much intellectual as it is spiritual.

Premillennialism

The *pre-* of *premillennialism* means before. The other elements are the same as the previous words discussed.

Concerning premillennialism Walvoord comments:

Practically all students of the early church agree that premillennialism, or, as it is also called, chiliasm, was the view held by many in the apostolic age. It is the oldest of the various millennial views. Chiliasm, from the Greek word *chilias* meaning *one thousand*, is the teaching that Christ will reign on earth for one thousand years following His second advent. Premillennialism as a term derives its meaning from the

belief that the second coming of Christ will be before this millennium and therefore premillennial. (Walvoord, *Kingdom*, page 5)

There have been over the years several different approaches to pre-millennialism, but all of them are characterized by taking the Old Testament predictions concerning Israel at their face value. However, some views are not as consistent as others, and fall into various doctrinal camps.

Covenant Premillennialism

While somewhat rare, there are a few covenant theologians who are also premillennial. They apply some of the legal program of Israel to the church, but they recognize the literal interpretation of enough predictive prophecy to believe that the Lord will return before the millennium to set up His kingdom.

Historic (Independent) Premillennialism

This view, popularized by George E. Ladd, is a non-dispensational, non-covenantal view of prophecy. Historic premillennialists desire to still apply kingdom truth to the church, but recognized that the “primary” applications of these passages is to Israel in the future. One can see that, like covenant premillennialism, historic premillennialism is very inconsistent.

Dispensational Premillennialism

Dispensational premillennialism is a view that was the majority view of the independent church movement in the United States, as well as a view of the non-conformists in England. It holds that Israel and the church are distinct households of God and that the information concerning the two households is not to be intermixed. However, some who call themselves dispensational are not always consistently so, and many do attempt to apply kingdom passages to the church.

Dispensational premillennialism, like dispensationalism itself, has suffered almost as much at the hands of its adherents as it has by its opponents. While holding to a nominal dispensational position, some insist on applying kingdom truth to the church, and thus confounding and confusing many believers. The result is often the taking of verses or entire passages out of context and applying them to the church without actually interpreting the passages. The danger is clear. Once a person engages in this act, it becomes difficult for him or her to give up their false application in favor of the normal interpretation of their favorite passages.

Technically, the phrase “dispensational premillennialism” is a misnomer. The word “dispensation” as used by the apostle Paul in his epistles does not relate directly to millennial teaching. The application of this term to a particular prophetic/kingdom viewpoint is probably because the interpretive procedure that results in dispensational thinking also results in premillennial thinking. Most modern dispensationalists see themselves as premillennialists because their hermeneutics require it. And they would say the same thing about why they are dispensational.

Modern dispensationalists rarely think of the millennial state as a dispensation. Most would say that the dispensation of that future time is the one called “the fullness of times” by Paul in Ephesians 1, but the kingdom itself is today more likely to be thought of as an age rather than as a dispensation. And the distinction between an age and a dispensation is crucial to biblical dispensationalists because the one is a period of time, while the other is a dispensed relationship that God establishes with some people, a household. Technically, the act of dispensing this relationship, often called the “rule of faith,” takes place during a short period of time. But the relationship itself, once dispensed, is applicable to the household for as long a time as it exists.

But the two are not to be confused. The act of dispensing grace, translated as “dispensation” in Ephesians 3:2, was given to one man, the apostle Paul, and that act only occurred when he began to distribute (or dispense) the new revelation which he received from God, and it ended when he stopped dispensing those spiritual goods with which he was entrusted. What lasted was, and is, the grace relationship which was the content of that dispensation.

The same could be said of the dispensation of law of Moses. The actual act of dispensation lasted a very short time near the end of Moses’ lifetime, but further revelation was given to later prophets. These further revelations which were duly recorded in writing are not part of the “household requirement” distributed by Moses. That is, they are not to be considered part of the dispensation of law, but of further distribution of truth after that original act of dispensation ended. Hence, it is not technically correct to speak of “dispensational premillennialism.” The doctrine of premillennialism is the direct result of interpreting those later prophetic writings in the long period of time after Moses, and up through the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nevertheless, it seems that we are stuck with the designation “dispensational premillennialism.” While it is biblically meaningless, it does carry forth a particular interpretive and doctrinal understanding, the normal, historical, grammatical approach to the Old Testament.

Chapter Two

The Mediatorial Kingdom in the OT

While the Bible seems quite straightforward in its presentation of the kingdom of God, because many do not accept that clear presentation many different views of what constitutes God's kingdom have been presented. We will briefly describe several views that are held by various these various approaches.

The National Kingdom Idea

Jews view the kingdom as belonging to Israel exclusively. Even modern liberal Jews see the Old Testament as teaching that the Kingdom of God was Jewish. This is a partly correct Old Testament idea of the Kingdom. In fact, the future kingdom will embrace not only Jews but Gentiles. Christ Himself indicated that the kingdom was prepared for Gentiles "from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:31-34).

The Future Literal Kingdom Idea

This view sees the Kingdom of God as a government of God to be established on the earth at the second coming of Christ. It is a literal, earthly kingdom that will last for a thousand years, and then will ultimately be brought under the universal Kingdom of God for eternity. This view is held by most all who call themselves premillennial.

The Celestial Kingdom Idea

Some believe that the Kingdom consists of heaven, which probably comes from their interpretation of the term "kingdom of Heaven" as used by Jesus in the book of Matthew. This is a popular, non-theological view of the Kingdom, and many unbelievers, if asked what is meant by the Kingdom of God, may simply answer "heaven."

The Ecclesiastical Kingdom Idea

Roman Catholic theologians often identify the kingdom of God with the Roman Catholic Church. Augustine is the originator of the "kingdom-church" idea. This idea was brought into the reformation as the "invisible" church.

The Spiritual Kingdom Idea

This position was expounded by A. B. Bruce who said that the kingdom of God is "not to be sought or found in any existing society, civil or ecclesiastical. It is an inspiration rather than an institution. It possesses the quality of inwardness. It comes not with observation, but has its seat in the heart." In other words, the kingdom of God is found in the human heart. This is a popular idea, but totally without biblical foundation.

The Moral Kingdom Idea

The idea that the kingdom of God is mainly ethics and morals was devised by the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). The idea is humanistic and appeals is greatly to the "intellectuals" who reject the supernatural, but see value in morals.

The Liberal Social-Kingdom Idea

A quite popular liberal view is that the kingdom is a progressive social order in which society rather than the individual is given first place. It is, according to this view, the primary function of the church to establish a Christian Social Order. Ultimately, this view became a political, socialistic approach advanced by such liberals as R. J. Campbell, Shailer Mathews, H. C. King, Harry F. Ward, E. Stanley Jones and J. Bromley Oxnam.

The Two Modern Eschatological-Kingdom Ideas

Some liberals, more honest with the Bible than the above “Christian Socialists,” viewed the kingdom as mainly eschatological. That is, they agree with modern premillennialists that the Kingdom is viewed in the Bible as future from the point of view of the original writers of the Bible.

Albert Schweitzer, for example, believed that Jesus taught a future kingdom with Himself as king, but that Jesus was *mistaken* and *deluded*. According to Schweitzer, Jesus intended to set up the kingdom during His time on earth. He had no intention of dying, but believed that He would be translated like Elijah. When this didn’t happen, Christ decided to die, and took deliberate steps to force the Jews to kill Him. With Jesus, according to Schweitzer, the kingdom of God died, and will never be realized.

Contrary to popular belief, Schweitzer was not a Christian, at least in any sense that the biblical writers would have recognized. The only interest his view holds for us is that he rejected the socialistic notions of the kingdom held by liberals, though he was himself a liberal, and came to a view that the kingdom as taught in the Bible was, indeed, eschatological. To this extent he was honest with Scripture, seeing it from the perspective of the original readers.

The second modern Eschatological-Kingdom is a peculiar view held by the Neo-orthodox theologians. They hold that the kingdom of God is “outside of history.” (They redefine the whole concept of eschatology as being outside of history.) Since God is outside of time, and cannot touch it, they say, His kingdom must be “eternal” in the sense that it never encroaches upon history. Unlike the premillennial view that says the kingdom of God brings history to its correct conclusion, these theologians see the kingdom of God as not relating to creation at all. The kingdom exists now “in eternity” (whatever that means) and is outside “time-space.” This view is still held in many “liberal” churches who have exchanged classical liberalism for neo-orthodoxy.

The Elements of a Kingdom

A Kingdom must have a Ruler

Unless the kingdom is viewed as a theocracy (God rule) then the king must, of course, be a human being. Jesus Christ presents Himself as King of Israel as the result of His descent from David. He is clearly the fulfillment of the Davidic line, and therefore has a direct claim to the throne. As we shall see, the kingdom of God is in fulfillment of the predictions concerning the royal line of David.

A Kingdom Must have a Realm

A realm is an area of rule. In the normal sense of this word it means a geographical location populated by subjects of the king. Many today see the church or some spiritual force as the kingdom of God. But the biblical meaning always carries the idea that there will be a literal earthly kingdom with geographical boundaries. While it is true that the future Davidic kingdom will influence all nations on the earth, it will not originally encompass all those nations. During the millennial state the kingdom of God will be limited to the fulfillment of the land covenant to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It will not be

until the end of the thousand years, when a new heaven and a new earth appear, that the kingdom will encompass the entire earth.

A Kingdom Must have Rulership, that is, a Reign

By “rulership” we mean that the king must function as a ruler in the governmental sense. The metaphorical idea of a king, while acceptable in some situations, has no place in the theology of the kingdom of God.

“It is true, of course, that the primary and most important idea is that of the ruler with regal authority. It is also possible that the ruler may withdraw from his realm, and the exercise of his ruling function may be interrupted temporarily. But all three elements are nevertheless present in the biblical concept of a kingdom; and there can be no kingdom in the total sense without the ruler, the realm, and the reigning function.” - McClain, *Greatness of the Kingdom*, page 17.

The Meaning of the Term “Kingdom of God” in Scripture

A kingdom is a rulership of an individual king over a specified people for a explicit period of time. The term has more than one content in the Bible. That is, there are several kingdoms mentioned in the Bible, and they all follow the above general definition.

The Universal Kingdom of God

The phrase “kingdom of God” is used in Scripture in two distinct ways. Sometimes the phrase refers to God’s universal rule over His creation. At other times, the phrase refers to the mediatorial rule of God. The mediatorial rule implies a human king who rules in God’s stead. The following outline summary is taken largely from McClain’s discussion of the universal Kingdom of God.

This Universal Kingdom Exists without Interruption Throughout All Time

Psalm 145:13

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations.

The word translated “everlasting” is the Hebrew *olam*. The word has a variety of meanings, but is used “over three hundred times to indicate indefinite continuance into the very distant future”¹ (TWOT). No other Hebrew word comes as close to the idea of “forever” as this word. In fact, it is the closest Hebrew root to the meaning “eternal.” Interestingly, in modern Hebrew, this word has come to mean “world,” and is used with virtually all the variety of nuances as that English word.

The Universal Kingdom Includes All That Exists in Space and Time

1 Chronicles 29:11-12

Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, And You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all.

The Divine Control in the Universal Kingdom Is Generally Providential

Psalm 148:8

Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;

¹Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, “Olam.”

“By the term ‘providential’ we mean control by means of second causes; for example, the accomplishment of God’s purpose at the Red Sea by using a ‘strong east wind’ to sweep aside the waters from the path of Israel (Exod. 14:21).”²

God’s providence is no less significant than His supernatural intervention into history. The idea of the providence of God in no way diminishes His sovereignty, nor lessens His control over the events in this creation. It is simply a secondary means of “fulfilling His word.” It is part of the degree program just as much as the supernatural and miracles are.

The Divine Control in the Universal Kingdom May Be Exercised at Times by Supernatural Means

Daniel 6:27

He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

The Universal Kingdom Always Exists Efficaciously Regardless of the Attitude of Its Subjects

Daniel 4:35

All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, “What have You done?”

The above example from Daniel deals with Nebuchadnezzar, who at the time thought he controlled his kingdom and his own destiny. Unbelievers regularly reject the idea of God’s rule over creation, but this does not make it less so.

The efficacious existence of the universal kingdom also eliminates the deistic idea that God would have man act independently of Him in ruling the earth. God is intimately concerned with the control of the universe on more than a mechanistic level. That is, not only does God hold things together physically, He holds things together historically. Were it not for God’s kingdom control, man would have surely destroyed himself by now.

The Rule of the Universal Kingdom Is Administered Through the Son

Colossians 1:17

And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Hebrews 1:1-2

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

The Lord Jesus Christ is the person of the trinity endued with authority over the physical maintenance of the current creation. He is the person of the trinity who established the program of ages which includes all activity throughout time performed by men and spirit beings (Heb 1:2).

This Universal Kingdom Is Not Identical with That Kingdom for Which Our Lord Taught His Disciples to Pray

Psalm 103:19

The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all.

Revelation 3:21

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Matthew 6:10

Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

The throne of Psalm 103:19 is the heavenly throne through which God sovereignly reigns over all creation. Christ is currently occupying it in Heaven, but Christ in no sense occupies the throne of David today. Instead, He sits on the Father's throne, which is not Davidic but universal. In Revelation 3:21 it is the Lord Jesus who is speaking from heaven.

In Matthew 6:10 Jesus is instructing His disciples how to pray. It would be foolish to pray "Your kingdom come" if it were already here, as the universal kingdom clearly is. The disciples would have understood the reference to be referring to the fulfillment of OT prophecy concerning kingdom predictions. This is not a legitimate prayer for believers today because we are not looking for the coming kingdom, but rather for the translation of the Church. Not until the 70th week of Daniel will this prayer again be applicable.

In explaining the differences between the universal and mediatorial aspects of the kingdom, on page 36 McClain states,

"This distinction is also supported by the Greek text of the Prayer. In each of the petitions concerning God's name, kingdom, and will, the Greek verb is not only in the emphatic position but also aorist imperative in form, thus indicating 'single or instantaneous' action. Thus, in harmony with all Old Testament prophecy, the prayer taught by our Lord suggests not only that His kingdom is to be prayed for, but also that its coming to the 'earth' will be a definite crisis in history, not a long and gradual process of evolution. This is in sharp contrast with the Universal Kingdom which has always been present in the world, on earth as well as in heaven."

However, lest we go too far, McClain on page 28 also expresses the unity of the kingdom of God,

"In one sense it would not be wholly wrong to speak of two kingdoms revealed in the Bible. But we must at the same time guard carefully against the notion that these two kingdoms are absolutely distinct, one from the other. There is value and instruction in thinking of them as two aspects or phases of the one rule of our sovereign God."

The Mediatorial Kingdom³

The Historical Aspect of the Mediatorial Kingdom

Adam was Given Mediatorial Control in the Garden

³What follows continues a summary with comment on Dr. McClain's discussion of this issue in his eschatological presentation *The Greatness of the Kingdom*.

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

The Hebrew word for “rule” (*radah*) in Genesis 1:26 is the same as the word for “rule” used of the Messiah in Psalm 110:2.

Hebrews 2:7

You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands.

God appointed Adam to rule in His stead. It has always been inherent in God’s earthly program that mankind would rule. In the grand theological sense man was created as a ruling being, and only because of the fall of man was that rule perverted. It will be reestablished on the messianic reign of Jesus Christ.

From Adam to Moses Mediatorial Rule was Granted to the Patriarchs, Heads of Families, and Finally Judges

Genesis 14:17-24

And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” And he gave him a tithe of all. Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself.” But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, “that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich’ -- “except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.”

Melchizedek ruled as a recognized king and priest of God. Abram himself recognized Melchizedek’s authority by handing over a tenth of the spoils.

1 Samuel 12:11, 12

And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, Bedan, Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and you dwelt in safety. And when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, ‘No, but a king shall reign over us,’ when the LORD your God was your king.

Prior to the establishment of Saul as king over Israel, Israel was ruled by God directly through human agents. These agents were not kings themselves, but heads of families and households who acted as judges. God used these judges to deliver Israel, and therefore exercise mediatorial power when required.

Moses Was Provided to Rule as well as Prophecy

Acts 7:35

This Moses whom they rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’ is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush.

Exodus 4:16

So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God.

Saul Failed in His Mediatorial Duties

1 Samuel 15:17, 26

So Samuel said, "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel?"

But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

The Mediatorial Kingdom was Established Historically in the House of David

1 Samuel 16:1, 13

Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

The Mediatorial Rule is Held in Abeyance During "the times of the Gentiles"

Luke 21:24

And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The term "times of the Gentiles" is identified by Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost:

"The 'times of the Gentiles' has been defined by the Lord as that period of time in which Jerusalem was under the dominion of Gentile authority (Luke 21:24). This period began with the Babylonian captivity when Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Gentiles. It has continued unto the present time and will continue through the tribulation period, in which era the Gentile powers will be judged. The dominion of the Gentiles ends at the second advent of Messiah to the earth." - Pentecost, J. Dwight, *Things to Come*, page 315.

Chapter Three

The Covenants and the Promised Land

The Nature of a Covenant

The Meaning of the Word Covenant

The Old Testament Word

“Uniformly the word used to express the covenant concept is the Hebrew *b^erit*. The original meaning of this word was probably ‘fetter’ or ‘obligation,’ coming from a root *bara*, ‘to bind.’” - Harrison, Everett F., et. al. eds. *Baker’s Dictionary of Theology*, page 142.

A covenant was the legally binding act of entering into an agreement. That is to say, the parties who entered into the covenant were legally obligated by its statements.

The New Testament Word

“The term for covenant employed in the NT is *diatheke*, the word used constantly in the LXX for *b^erit*. Since the ordinary Greek word for ‘contract’ or ‘compact’ (*syntheke*) implied equality on the part of the contracting parties, the Greek speaking Jews preferred *diatheke* (coming from *diatithemai* ‘to make a disposition of one’s own property’) in the sense of ‘a unilateral enactment.’” - Harrison, *Dictionary*, page 143, 144.

The word *diatheke* is used even in the NT to refer to a kind of covenant which is established only after the death of the testator. In other words, it is a “last will and testament” kind of covenant, rather than just a legal obligation.

The Kinds of Covenants

The Conditional Covenant

A conditional covenant, as the name implies, contained an element of condition within its legal framework. If the condition, usually placed on one party of the covenant, was not met, the other party was no longer obligated to fulfill their part of the covenant.

The Unconditional Covenant

An unconditional covenant was binding on one party, even if the other party did not meet its requirements as stated by the covenant.

The Ratification of a Covenant

Galatians 3:15

Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.

It was an apparent act of ratification entered upon by one or both parties that made the covenant a legally binding agreement. In the OT this sometimes involved the exchange of a piece of personal property, such as a shoe.

The Unchangeableness of a Covenant

Galatians 3:15 (see above)

It is this unchangeable nature of a covenant that has been often overlooked by Bible students. Since it is unchangeable, a covenant cannot be simply reworded later to make a new, similar covenant with some different elements. Nor can it be set aside on a whim. It is legally binding in the same sense that a contract in modern times, once signed, is binding.

Because of the unchangeable nature of a covenant, two or more covenants can exist with some of the same elements, but with certain different features.

The Abrahamic Covenants

The Promises to Abram

At the time of God's original promises to Abram he was still in an unjustified state in Haran. This promise was morally and ethically binding on God, and was sufficient to establish God's intentions for Abram. However, the promise was not a covenant. In the following years God brought Abram to faith (Genesis 15) and began to produce a series of covenants with Abram based on the promises made to him in Haran. It is for this reason that Paul refers to them as "the covenants of promise (Eph 2:12)."

The Difference between a Covenant and a Promise

The Personal Promises to Abraham

Genesis 12:1, 2

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. ² I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.

Note that nothing is said in the context about making a covenant with Abram. This is actually a series of promises that formed the basis for further covenants.

"I will make you a great nation." At the time God said this, Abraham had no heirs. God's promise was fulfilled in the continuation of Abraham's line that resulted in the Jewish nation.

"I will bless you." God gave Abraham land (Genesis 13:14-15), servants (Genesis 15:7), wealth (Genesis 13:2; 24:34-35), as well as spiritual blessing (Genesis 13:18; 21:22).

"I will make your name great." Who hasn't heard of Abraham?

The Universal Promises through Abraham

Genesis 12:3

I 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."

Divine blessings or cursing of people are based on how they treated Abraham personally. The word "you" refers to Abram, as it is the singular pronominal suffix showing the object of the verb. This is not a reference to Abram's descendants, or to the nation of Israel, or to individual Jews, as it is often applied.

The promise that all the families of the earth would be blessed, is said to be "in you." If the "all" is an inclusive word here, which seems the most likely meaning, then all the families of the earth refers to all

of humanity. Therefore this promise could only be fulfilled in Christ. The word “earth” here is *ad^emah*, not *eretz*. The promise therefore is *not* to “all the people of the land” (meaning the land of promise) as some have it, who desire to limit this blessing to the Jewish people. All humanity is blessed in Abram, believers and non-believers alike.

The Covenants of Promise Between God and Abraham

Ephesians 2:12

that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

(1) The Covenant of Genesis 15:1-21 - An Unconditional Land Covenant

Genesis 15:1-21

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.” But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” Then Abram said, “Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!” And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.” Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Then He said to him, “I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.” And he said, “Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?” So He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. “And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. “Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. “But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates -- “the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, “the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, “the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.”

Note the extent of the land promised to Abram’s seed. This covenant is not to be confused with the second covenant of Genesis 17, which also is a land covenant. They are not, and cannot be, the same covenant. No matter how one interprets the phrase “the river of Egypt,” the boundaries of the land area are different here in Genesis 15 than in Genesis 17.

The land covenant of Genesis 15 is broader in area than the one in Genesis 17, which does *not* extend to the River Euphrates. While both land covenants deal with seed, the first one is to “Abram’s” seed and the second to “Abraham’s seed.” When studying the fulfillment of the land covenant to Israel (Genesis 17) we will see that it does not cover the entire land area mentioned in Genesis 15. Rather it is limited to the land of Canaan.

Why then two covenants? Undoubtedly this first land covenant includes *all of Abram’s seed*, including the descendants of Abram who do not make up Israel. Remember that Abram had male child other than Isaac named Ishmael. Also Isaac had a male child, Esau, that is not an ancestor of the nation Israel, but

rather of Edom. But Esau was descended from Abram, and would therefore participate in this land covenant. The second land covenant of Genesis 17 is certainly limited to the twelve tribes, but could *not* include the Ishmaelites or the Edomites, both descendants of Abram. Nor would it include descendants of any daughters that Abram, Isaac, or Jacob might have had who married outside the chosen line, though their descendants could be included in the land covenant of Genesis 15.

(2) The First Covenant of Genesis 17:3-6 – The Unconditional Name Covenant

Genesis 17:3-6

Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. “No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. “I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

This covenant is clearly for Abram alone, and does not apply to his descendants Throughout the statement, the word “you” is singular.

Several elements make up this covenant 1) Abram will be the father of many nations (*goyim*); 2) Abram’s name (“exalted father”) is changed to Abraham (“father of a multitude”), in connection with which; 3) Abraham will be “exceedingly fruitful,” and 4) kings will be descended from him.

This covenant sets the stage for the next covenant, which would be meaningless without Abraham having a multitude of descendants.

(3) The Second Covenant of Genesis 17:7, 8 – An Unconditional Land Covenant

Genesis 17:7,8

“And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. “Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

This covenant is clearly distinguished from the previous in that it is directed toward not only the one now named Abraham, but also to the descendants promised in the previous covenant.

Unlike the first covenant in this chapter, this covenant is called “everlasting” (Hebrew *olam* meaning perpetual or on-going in this context), a statement that would not be applicable to the previous one which was applicable to Abraham alone.

This land covenant is not to be confused with the land covenant of Genesis 15. Here only the descendants of the promise are included (in their generation)⁴, not the other descendents of Abraham. Indeed, this is the covenant which later is described as being the covenant to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (Vs. 19 indicates that an “everlasting” covenant will be made with Isaac, not including Ishmael.) The land portion here is limited to Canaan, whereas the land of the Genesis 15 covenant covers from “the

4 The phrase “in their generation” (לִדְרֹתָם) has provoked multitudes of comments and interpretations. The best view seems to be that the Hebrew phrase means “according to their generations” and is distinguishing the various groups that would come from Abraham’s loins, not all of whom will participate in the future land of promise.

river of Egypt” to the Euphrates, a land area never considered under the title “Canaan.” There is no reason (except, perhaps, perversity) to attempt to make these two covenants the same.

The covenant of Genesis 17 will be fulfilled when Israel comes into the land of promise permanently. It has not been brought to fulfillment in any literal sense of the word. If it had been, there would be no question that Israel is permanently attached to the land. Nor has the land ever been divided as it is predicted to be in Ezekiel 47:13-48:35, a direct reference to the geography of Canaan in the future. As we shall see later, this division is quite precise and includes an accurate understanding of the members of the twelve tribes, something not yet possible at the time that God gave this covenant to Abraham.

(4) The Third Covenant of Genesis 17:9-14 – The Conditional Circumcision Covenant

Genesis 17:9-14

And God said to Abraham: “As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. “This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; “and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. “He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. “He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. “And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

This covenant is the only covenant to Abraham with a statement that Abraham was required to do anything. Both Abraham and his descendants were required to keep this covenant. Indeed, it is this covenant that provides the individual basis for claiming to participate in the unconditional covenants.

It must be kept in mind that the condition is upon individuals here, not the entire Abrahamic family. The only issue is whether any given individual would remain attached to the covenant people or would be “cut off from his people.” This is actually very insulting language. The uncircumcised male is referred to here using the feminine pronoun “her.” Such males were viewed as women, which at the time, was as bad an insult as one could give a man.

This covenant includes a way for people who are not physical descendants of Abraham to also be counted as part of Abraham’s family. It includes one bought from a foreigner as a slave. This person, “who is not of your descendants” is included Abrahamic program.

(5) The Covenant of Genesis 22:15-18 – The Unconditional Seed Covenant

Genesis 22:15-18

Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: “By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son -- “blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

Gal. 3:15, 16

Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. 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.

This event was actuated by Abraham's willingness to slay his own son. Interestingly, here Isaac is called Abraham's "only son." In the program of God for His chosen family, Ishmael is clearly discounted. The meaning of "only" becomes "unique," a meaning which is reflected in Hebrews.⁵

The willingness to sacrifice is not unimportant. According to the author to the Hebrews, Abraham was placing faith in the fact that God could and would raise Isaac from the dead. This was only possible because Abraham took the promise concerning Isaac previously made by God literally and seriously. No allegorizing exists here! Abraham was a literalist.

This is the only covenant where the argument of Galatians 3:15, 16 can be applied. Previously in Genesis the word "seed" referred to Abraham's descendents broadly. It is only here that the singular seed will bless all the families of the earth.

The word "seed" is a collective noun in Hebrew, and has no singular vs. plural form. The same form can be translated "seed" or "seeds." How then do we know that this passage refers to a singular "seed" since the same form is used for both? It is because we read in the context "your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." The Hebrew form for "his" is, and can only be, singular." It's antecedent is "seed" and therefore the word "seed" can be seen only as a singular. This is true despite the NASB's sad translation of the word as "their." (Shame, shame!)

The ultimate referent here is clearly the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only through the Lord Jesus Christ that all the nations (*goyim*) of the earth will be blessed.

The Objections to the Unconditional Nature of the Covenants

"The unconditionality of the Abrahamic Covenant furnishes an important support for premillennialism, since the land promise needs a future time (the Millennium) in which it will be fulfilled. Therefore, amillennialists allege that there were in fact conditions attached to the fulfillment of the covenant which make it impossible to view the covenant as unconditional." - Ryrie, Charles C. *Basic Theology*, page 455.

Because they confuse the Genesis 12:1, 2 passage with a covenant, and because of a lack of the clear distinctions referring to the "covenants of promise," amillennialists attempt to make the Abrahamic covenant conditional. Unfortunately, many premillennialists do not adequately deal with the covenants, as the above quote from Dr. Ryrie clearly shows. Dr. Ryrie attempts to defend the unconditional nature of the covenants by defending against the attack of Genesis 12:1-2.

As we have seen, Genesis 12:1-2 does not meet the requirements of an established covenant. This was a morally binding promise made by God to Abram. Abram, though not yet justified, had a belief in God and acted upon the promise. Had he not, say the amillennialists, he would not have received the benefits that God promised.

In fact, God chose Abram precisely because God had brought Abram to a place of action in his life. God not only knew, but planned, that Abram would respond positively to the promise of Genesis 12:1-2.

⁵ Compare the Hebrew *yachiyd* Genesis 22:16 with *monogenes* in Hebrews 11:17. The writer to the Hebrews evidently understood the Hebrew to refer to the uniqueness of Isaac rather than to his aloneness, which is universally the meaning of *monogenes*.

Concerning the promise of Genesis 12, the amillennialist, treating the promise as though it were “THE” Abrahamic covenant, claims following conditions exist: 1) Genesis 12:1 “Go forth from your country” expresses a condition that would have invalidated the covenant if Abraham had not obeyed; 2) Genesis 12:2 “Be a blessing” expresses a condition; and 3) Genesis 17:1 “Walk before me” is a condition for fulfillment of the covenant.

In fact, even if this were “THE” Abrahamic covenant, the following are actually the case: 1) the command is imperative “go,” not a condition “If you go” as the covenantalist would have it; 2) The series of *cohortative imperatives* in verses 2-3 express intention, not condition, including the statement “Be a blessing” which is, grammatically speaking, an expression of an intended consequence of the previous statement, not a condition (The *Hebrew Grammar* by Gesenius, Kautzsch, Cowley cites this passage as an example of intention, not condition); and 3) This is the same kind of expression as Genesis 12:1 and expresses intention rather than condition.

The Fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenants

The Amillennial Viewpoint

All the promises have been fulfilled, including the land promise. Usually this is done by spiritualizing the land promise so that the church fulfills it. Others see it fulfilled in Israel’s past history, such as in Joshua’s day, or during the reign of Solomon.

The Premillennial Viewpoint

Since the covenants are unconditional, they must be fulfilled in all provisions. Those parts of the covenants that have been fulfilled already, were fulfilled literally. Therefore, what is still to be fulfilled must be fulfilled literally.

While it is true that Israel has occupied part of the land she was promised temporarily, never has Israel occupied all the land promised. Clearly the Old Testament prophets expected a literal fulfillment of these “covenants of promise.” See the vision of the future temple beginning in Ezekiel 40, for instance. See also the previously mentioned division of the land beginning in Ezekiel 47.

The Palestinian Covenant

Deuteronomy 30:1-10

“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, “and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, “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. “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. “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. “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. “Also the LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. “And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments which I command you today. “The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, “if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

The Palestinian Covenant is of great importance. Deuteronomy 30:1-10 is a “contingency prophecy” made in association with the covenant which is established in Deuteronomy 29. A contingency prophecy is a prophecy that will only come to pass if warnings attached to it are ignored. The blessing and the curse mentioned in Deuteronomy 30:1 refer back to the elements required by Moses in Deuteronomy 28. Based on these “blessings and cursings” the covenant is established in Chapter 29.

The prophecy of Deuteronomy 30:1-10 speaks of the future time when Israel is brought permanently back into the land of promise. It contains the following elements:

1. To Israel God says, “return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.” Note that God will do the restoring. This is a supernatural return based on a spiritual relationship with Israel. It has not yet been fulfilled.
2. This prophecy is land specific in that God says to Israel, “And the LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.”
3. The “spiritual requirements” of retaining of the land are part of the prediction that God makes to His people, “Moreover 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, in order that you may live.” Concerning the generation that enters the land, God says that He will “circumcise your heart” meaning that He will perform that internal change that is necessary in order that “you may live” which refers to maintaining residence in the land.

Note that not only the generation entering the land will be internally modified by the Lord, but their descendants. In other words, God is promising that the descendants of the Israelites who enter the promised land permanently will themselves be changed internally by God to remain in the land. This can be nothing less than God promising to bring to faith all the children of the initial Israelites.

Prosperity is promised with an abundance in, “all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers.”

To Israel God says that this prophecy is time contingent based on when, “you obey the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.” From other prophecy in Scripture we recognize that these conditions will be met during the second half of Daniel’s 70th week, commonly called the tribulation.

The Ratification of the Palestinian Covenant

Deuteronomy 29:1

These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.

So that there be no confusion, this covenant is distinguished from the law covenant by explaining that it was made in the land of Moab rather than Horeb (Sinai). The Palestinian Covenant is *based on Israel’s keeping of the Mosaic Covenant*, but is not the same covenant.

The Scope of the Palestinian Covenant

Deuteronomy 29:14-15

“I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone, “but with him who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, as well as with him who is not here with us today

The scope of the covenant renewal also embraced future. Therefore the obedience of that present generation had a great effect on those not yet born.

The Danger of Violating the Palestinian Covenant

Deuteronomy 29:16-29

(for you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we came through the nations which you passed by, and you saw their abominations and their idols which were among them -- wood and stone and silver and gold); “so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood; “and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart’ -- as though the drunkard could be included with the sober. “The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven. “And the LORD would separate him from all the tribes of Israel for adversity, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law, “so that the coming generation of your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, would say, when they see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which the LORD has laid on it: ‘The whole land is brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in His anger and His wrath.’ “All nations would say, ‘Why has the LORD done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?’ “Then people would say: ‘Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt; ‘for they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods that they did not know and that He had not given to them. ‘Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against this land, to bring on it every curse that is written in this book. ‘And the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.’ “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

In fact, Israel did violate the covenant and that violation had consequences that are in effect today.

The Historical Circumstances of the Palestinian Covenant - It is a National Covenant.

The participants in the covenant include, “man or woman or family or tribe” who are enjoined not to turn away from God to the gods of the surrounding nations.

This covenant is given to Israel after the wilderness wanderings. It is the last great presentation of Moses’ life, and brings for the conditions upon which Israel will be allowed to remain in the land which they are about to occupy.

“And when all these things have come upon you (30:1)” refers to the failure of Israel to keep Moses’ commandments.

The View of Future Dispersion Predicted by this Covenant

Deuteronomy 28:63-68

“And it shall be, that just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess. “ Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known -- wood and stone. “And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. “Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. “In the morning you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were evening!’ And at evening you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were morning!’ because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see. “And the LORD will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which I said to you, ‘You shall never see it again.’ And there you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you.”

Israel is to be scattered throughout the gentile nations.

The Land in View

Deuteronomy 30:3-5

“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. “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. “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.

This is a reaffirmation of the land promise given by God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Ezekiel Connection

Ezekiel 16:60-62

“Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. “Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed, when you receive your older and your younger sisters; for I will give them to you for daughters, but not because of My covenant with you. “And I will establish My covenant with you. Then you shall know that I am the LORD,

God calls the land covenant an everlasting covenant by which He is bound.

The term “days of your youth” refer to the nation Israel, and are best connected to the statements in Deuteronomy 28-30.

The Davidic Covenant

2 Samuel 7:12-16

“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. “He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. “I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. “But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. “And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”

The Elements of the Davidic Covenant

The physical seed of David will be set up after David's death. This is a reference to the ascendancy of Solomon to the Davidic throne.

God will establish Solomon's kingdom. The kingdom is not simply historical, but theocratic.

Solomon will build the House of God. Indeed, this element of the covenant was fulfilled literally in the days of Solomon as will the rest of the covenant. In 7:13 the word "house" is to be taken literally. An actual building will be built. See the statement below concerning the use of the word "house" in 7:16.

Solomon's throne will be perpetual. The ultimate fulfillment of this, of course, can only be found in God Himself, and will be accomplished in the establishment of the millennial state.

Even though he commits iniquity, God's mercy shall not depart from him as from Saul.

David's house, kingdom, and, throne will be established forever (*ad o'lam*, lit. "until forever"). The word "house" and the word "throne" in 7:16 are figures of speech known as synecdoche. "House" refers to the lineage of David and the word throne refers to the government that is vested in that lineage. Dr. Walvoord makes the following cogent remark:

"What do the major terms of the covenant mean? By David's 'house' it can hardly be doubted that reference is made to David's posterity, his physical descendants. It is assured that they will never be slain *in toto*, nor displaced by another family entirely. The line of David will always be the royal line. By the term 'throne' it is clear that no reference is made to a material throne, but rather to the dignity and power which was sovereign and supreme in David as king. The right to rule always belonged to David's seed. By the term 'kingdom' there is reference to David's political kingdom over Israel. By the expression 'forever' it is signified that the Davidic authority and Davidic kingdom or rule over Israel shall never be taken from David's posterity. The right to rule will never be transferred to another family, and its arrangement is designed for eternal perpetuity." - Walvoord, John F. *The Millennial Kingdom*, page 197.

The Certainty of the Fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant

Psalm 89:3-4 (4-5)

"I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David: 'Your seed I will establish forever, And build up your throne to all generations.' Selah."

God speaks to Israel through Ethan the Ezrahite, who is the human author of this Psalm. Ethan was a man of wisdom living during the days of Solomon (1 Kings 4:31).

In two parallel statements God says that David's seed (his genetic line or descendants) forever (*ad olam*). Then he restates that David's throne will be applied to all generations. As in 2 Samuel 7:16, the word "throne" is the figure of speech synecdoche indicating the right to govern over Israel.

Jeremiah 33:25-26

"Thus says the LORD: 'If My covenant is not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, 'then I will cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his descendants to be rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will cause their captives to return, and will have mercy on them.'"

Jeremiah recognized that the Davidic Covenant is unconditional, and will certainly be fulfilled by God. In a negative conditional statement God affirms that He has a metaphorical covenant with day and night, and that He has established fixed laws of heaven and earth. This “if” clause is an example a condition of the second class. “If my covenant is not with day and night (but it is) and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth (but I have)...”

Also, the “then” clause continues the elements of the negative condition. God will not cast away the descendants (seed) of Jacob and David His servant. He will take David’s descendants to be rulers over the descendants (seed) of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The entire conditional statement is an example of the figure of speech litotes. This figure states a negative to mean a positive. See Romans 1:16 for another example of litotes.

The final statement in vs. 26 repeats the need for a regathering of the descendants of Abraham from captivity. God will apply His mercy to them.

The New Covenant for Israel

The Context of the New Covenant for Israel in Jeremiah 30-31.

The context is dealing with the future of Israel.

Jeremiah 30:1-3

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, “Thus speaks the LORD God of Israel, saying: ‘Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you. ‘For behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,’ says the LORD. ‘And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.’”

Jeremiah 30:1-3 deals with the return of Israel to the land after the dispersion. The statement “the days are coming” clearly indicates that the events of the context were future from the perspective of the human author.

The predicted return from captivity includes “my people Israel and Judah.” While Jeremiah was living in the last days of Judah, and Israel had long been in captivity, God includes all the tribes in His statement.

Some take this to refer to the partial return in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra, but the context does not allow for this. See comments on the further statements below.

Jeremiah 30:4-7

Now these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah. “For thus says the LORD: ‘We have heard a voice of trembling, Of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, Whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins Like a woman in labor, And all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.

Jeremiah 30:4-7 deals with the future tribulation of Israel and Judah known as “Jacob’s trouble (vs. 7). Unified Israel is called Jacob, will be delivered from that future time. This is a reference to the time of tribulation predicted by Christ in Matthew 24, rather than to the current dispersion, as some have it. Note the statement, “For that day is great, so that none is like it.” It reflects the statement of Jesus in Matthew 24:21, “For 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.”

Jacob (Israel) will be saved “out of it” (Heb. *mimenah*, lit. “from her” as the word “trouble” is feminine). The word “saved” refers to the national salvation of Israel. The same use of the word is found in Romans 11:26.

Jeremiah 30:8-17

‘For it shall come to pass in that day,’ Says the LORD of hosts, ‘That I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them. But they shall serve the LORD their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them. ‘ Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob,’ says the LORD, ‘Nor be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, And your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, And no one shall make him afraid. For I am with you,’ says the LORD, ‘to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished.’ “For thus says the LORD: ‘Your affliction is incurable, Your wound is severe. There is no one to plead your cause, That you may be bound up; You have no healing medicines. All your lovers have forgotten you; They do not seek you; For I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy, With the chastisement of a cruel one, For the multitude of your iniquities, Because your sins have increased. Why do you cry about your affliction? Your sorrow is incurable. Because of the multitude of your iniquities, Because your sins have increased, I have done these things to you. ‘Therefore all those who devour you shall be devoured; And all your adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; Those who plunder you shall become plunder, And all who prey upon you I will make a prey. For I will restore health to you And heal you of your wounds,’ says the LORD, ‘Because they called you an outcast saying: “This is Zion; No one seeks her.” ‘

The repetition of the word “day” and the phrase “that day” is significant (30:3; 30:7; 30:8). An actual future time is contemplated. While the word “day” is metaphorical, in that it refers to a period of time, it is not to be divorced from its basic temporal idea. Only by understanding that “day” refers to a specific event can the context have any understandable meaning.

Jeremiah 30:8-17 deals with the deliverance of Israel from the tribulation. The wording here cannot refer to an event that has already taken place, such as the partial return from captivity in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra.

The events here take place after the resurrection of Israel, which is to be placed at the beginning of the millennial period. David will be raised up to occupy again his throne, a clear reference to his regency during the future earthly kingdom.

Even though God will thoroughly punish Israel, He will not utterly destroy her (“I will not make a complete end to you,” vs. 11) . Also in verse 11 we again have the use of the word “save” referring to the national salvation of Israel.

Her enemies will ultimately be brought under captivity, another reference to the millennial state wherein Christ will rule them with a rod of Iron. Yet Israel will be healed and will return to the land.

Jeremiah 30:18

“Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will bring back the captivity of Jacob’s tents, And have mercy on his dwelling places; The city shall be built upon its own mound, And the palace shall remain according to its own plan.

Jeremiah 30:18 begins an extended section that goes through Jeremiah 31:40. This section deals with the joyful establishment of Israel in the land. It is in this section that the New Covenant for Israel is established.

The statement “The city shall be built upon its own mound (Heb. tell)” refers to the rebuilding of Jerusalem in the future state. The word mound refers by implication to the destruction of the city, as a tell was the mound of rubble left after a city was destroyed. The next city would be built upon the mound of the previous one. This happened so often that the tells in the middle east have several layers or strata, of ruins. Archaeologists still refer to those mounds as tells.

The Statement of the New Covenant for Israel is found in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Jeremiah 31:31

“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 --

The New Covenant is for Israel and Judah exclusively. At the establishment of the Covenant, Israel had been divided into northern and southern kingdoms for over 300 years. Indeed, the northern 10 tribes had been taken captive and scattered well over a hundred years before. Yet this covenant was made by God with both parts of Israel, even though the northern kingdom, for all practical historical purposes, had ceased to exist. But those tribes will exist again.

Jeremiah 31:32

“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.

The New Covenant is *not* like the Mosaic Covenant. This covenant is of a different kind than the Mosaic Covenant. The writer undoubtedly is referring to the unconditional nature of the New Covenant, evinced by the fact that Jeremiah mentions that they broke the Mosaic Covenant. The New Covenant is a covenant that requires no action on the part of Israel. God will perform the covenant unilaterally. Therefore, the New Covenant will replace the Mosaic Covenant as the covenant of relationship between God and His people. No longer will it be left up to Israel, by meeting a covenantal condition, to maintain the relationship with God.

Jeremiah 31:33

“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.

The Covenant is an internal law covenant which includes several important elements:

1. The unilateral nature of the covenant is mentioned in the words “is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel.” The “I” refers to God. Israel has no part in making this covenant, but is the recipient of its blessings. It is an unconditional covenant.
2. The phrase “after those days,” undoubtedly refers to the time of Jacob’s trouble.
3. God will put His law “within them.” Unlike the Mosaic Covenant, which was written externally on tablets, this covenant is an internal covenant. The only way a law covenant could be expected to function in fallen man is through a supernatural endowment by God to perform the acts. This will be accomplished by God when he writes the His law on their hearts. The implication is clear. Israel will be in a faith relationship with God at this time. This is indicated by the words, “I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” This unique relationship will be true of all of the combined

nation of Israel at that time. Clearly this relationship has not yet existed in any literal sense during history. It is yet future.

Jeremiah 31:34

“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.”

The Fulfillment of this Covenant is still future today.

Romans 11:26-27

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; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”

The covenant mentioned by Paul is for a future day when all Israel will be saved. This will take place, according to the apostle, when the deliverer comes from Zion, a reference to the 2nd coming of Christ. Paul refers to the new covenant for Israel by the words, “when I take away their sins.” This covenant, then, is brought to fruition at the 2nd coming of Christ, and will be in force during the earthly kingdom period. It is, in fact, the new covenant of Jeremiah 31.

The Distinctions Between New Covenants

Hebrews 8:7-13

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: “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 -- “not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. “None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” 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.

The purpose of Hebrews 8:7-13 is not to apply the new covenant of Jeremiah 31 to the church. Rather the purpose of Hebrews 8:7-13 is to show that the Mosaic covenant, that “first covenant” as the writer states it, is inferior and that the Hebrew Christians should not desire to return to it. This is done by showing that the Mosaic covenant was obsolete.

No where in the above passage, nor in any passage in the New Testament, is the new covenant of Jeremiah 31 applied to the body of Christ. In fact, it cannot be, as the author makes sure those Hebrew believers understood by his extensive quote. He includes from Jeremiah 31 the statement “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days...” Though it is popular to confuse the church with Israel, it is not possible to do so if one maintains the biblical writers’ understanding of these terms. This new covenant was given to Israel and relates to a specific period of time, “after those days.” In the context the only possible time to apply this new covenant to Israel is after Israel is restored to their position of blessing with God. In other words, Jeremiah 31:31ff applies to the future earthly kingdom age, not to the present evil age.

The contents of that covenant also prove that it is not intended for today. At the time that covenant is in force there will be no need for one to teach his neighbor “know the Lord.” How can that be applied to today? How can anyone today say that everyone of his neighbors knows the Lord? No, a simple, straightforward analysis of this passage makes it clear that it cannot be applied to today.

This statement is supported by the author’s insistence that the word “new” showed the temporary nature of the Mosaic covenant. A better translation of the expression “In that He says, “A new covenant,” is “By saying “new” he has made obsolete the first.” The word “covenant” does not actually occur in the text. The author is pinpointing the word “new” and his argument is simply that when God gave the revelation of the new covenant to Jeremiah, by logical process the implication was that the first covenant was somehow inferior. If it had met the spiritual needs of Israel, there would have been no need for a “new” covenant.

The writer to the Hebrews ends his discussion by saying that if anything has been made obsolete and is growing old is near to destruction. In other words, the Mosaic covenant, by design, was not intended to be an everlasting covenant. He grew old, even for Israel, and at the time of Jeremiah’s writing, was already near to vanishing. Once the kingdom is established that old, external law covenant will be replaced by the new, internal law covenant. God will write His laws on the hearts of individual Israelites at that time.

But that has not happened today. The church has no part in that new covenant. That does not mean however that the church does not participate in the benefits of a new covenant, but it is a different, a distinct, new covenant. For a discussion of that new covenant see the comments beginning with 2 Corinthians 3:6-7 below.

Hebrews 10:11-18

And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

Hebrews 10:11-18 shows the inferior nature of the priests and sacrifices under the old Mosaic covenant, which sacrifices will not be needed when the superior new covenant of Jeremiah is in effect. The purpose of this passage is not to apply the new covenant of Jeremiah to the church. While the church does participate in a new covenant, it is a totally different new covenant than the new covenant for Israel.

2 Corinthians 3:6-8

“...who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of 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, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?”

The new covenant for the church⁶ is to be distinguished both from the new covenant for Israel and the Mosaic law covenant. Our new covenant is not a law covenant. The distinction here is between our new kind of covenant and the Mosaic covenant. The Mosaic covenant is called a ministry of death.

Hebrews 9:14-17

“...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.

Some have objected to the idea that the new covenant for the church is a “last will and testament” kind of covenant. However, it seems clear from this passage that some elements of that type of testament is involved in the new covenant. Several times in the New Testament writings this new covenant is associated with the blood of Christ, which is used as a figure of speech (metonymy)⁷ for the death of Christ.

This new covenant is contrasted with the Mosaic covenant, which could not deliver an individual from the consequences of transgression.⁸ However, the new covenant by Christ’s blood did deliver those individuals. This deliverance, translated here “redemption” does not refer to the redemption of mankind, but to the deliverance of those under the program of the covenant. The Mosaic covenant could not redeem, or deliver, those who were under it. But once an Israelite, such as those Hebrews to whom this epistle is addressed, exchanged their relationship from the Mosaic covenant to the new covenant, those transgressions under the Mosaic covenant had no binding power over them. They could not be punished for them.

This paragraph in Hebrews 9 is designed to encourage these Christian Hebrews who were being tempted to return to the old covenant. In essence the author is saying, “Why would you want to do that? Under the old covenant you were condemned to death, while under the new covenant you have been delivered (redeemed) from that consequence.

While the OT involved death, or may have been ratified by death, their applications were not established by the death of one of the parties to the covenant. The new covenant in which the church participates can only be applied after the death of Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:25

In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

6 That is to say, the new covenant by which the church benefits. Unlike the new covenant of Jeremiah which God made between Himself and Israel, the new covenant which is applied to the church is not made between the church and God. Rather it is a new covenant between the Persons of the Godhead, of which the church, and presumably all mankind, benefit. See the discussion of Hebrews 13:20-21 which follows.

7 Metonymy is a figure that substitutes one word or phrase for another word or phrase to which it is closely related. For instance, the word “crown” is often used of the government of a king or queen, while the phrase “the White House” is used for the executive branch of the government of the United States.

8 The Greek word here is παραβασις, and refers to a technical violation of law. It is not, as is so often assumed, simply another word for sin. Under the new program, while it is possible to sin, it is impossible to commit a transgression because the believer is under no law, but is under grace (Romans 6:14).

The new covenant in which the Church finds benefit is based on the blood of Christ. The phrase “in My blood” is best understood as an instrumental, “by My blood.” The wording here is quite important, and several concepts need to be emphasized.

First, the cup of which Christ speaks is not the cup or cups of the passover meal. Notice that Paul says that Christ took this cup after the meal. Why another cup after the meal? Because the act here is inaugurating a new covenant, and the passover was part of an the old Mosaic covenant.

Second, this covenant is by the blood of Christ, and was not yet in force at the time of the Lord’s statement. Christ had not yet died. So this statement is by way of prediction of the future change brought about by the new covenant. But this covenant is only new from the perspective of those who participate in its benefits. As we shall see, the Lord actually established this as an eternal covenant, which changes the very nature of the covenant itself.

Third, the cup does not represent the blood of Christ. Actually, the cup represents the new covenant itself, which is expressed in the words “This cup is the new covenant by My blood.” Exegetically speaking, the “Lord’s table” was never associated by Paul with the meaning of the last passover. It is a brand new thing, and has no direct relationship to that passover event, except the historical fact that Christ mentions it after the supper. That He did so should not be surprising. It is a convenient way to direct His disciples attention to His coming crucifixion.

Fourth, the act of remembrance that Christ expressed is not the remembrance of His death, but of His person. And the best manuscript evidence currently available indicates that the Lord did not state “do this in remembrance of me” after the last passover. It appears that these words were stated to Paul directly in Christ’s revelation to him about the significance of the new covenant.

Hebrews 13:20-21

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

The word “everlasting” is actually “eternal.” When used of God the word “eternal” always carries the concept of timelessness. Some have contrasted eternal with “everlasting” by saying that everlasting means that something had a beginning, but no ending, while eternal means something (or someone) who has neither beginning nor ending. Such a distinction is, however, misleading. God is eternal not because has neither beginning or ending, but because He exists apart from time, and does not experience sequence or duration. To say that He has no beginning implies a time relationship. It is more accurate biblically to say that God is apart from time, and is not related in anyway to sequence, including beginnings or endings.

Think of God’s existence as encompassing time. He stands outside of time and sees the entire sequence of events in time as one, single, instantaneous event. So at the same time that God sees the creation of the universe, He sees the birth of Christ, the resurrection of the church, and the final judgment, and all other events and facts which man only sees as it is unfolded to him.

The new covenant related to the Church is eternal, and is, therefore, outside of time. It is not a covenant between God and the Church, but between God and Himself, that is, between persons of the Godhead. Therefore, it was ratified outside of time, and apart from any relationship to human beings.

The word “blood” by metonymy refers to the death of Christ on the cross. It is “through the blood of the eternal covenant,” that is, based on the application of the covenant through the death of Christ, that the believer is to be made “complete” that is, mature, “in every good work to do His will.”

This new covenant, then, relates to Christian maturity rather than salvation per se. The cross work of Christ is applicable not only to initial salvation from the penalty of sin, but also to the sanctification process of salvation from the power of sin. The persons of the Godhead, in eternal agreement, established a covenant between themselves for this purpose.

Chapter Four

The Dispersion of Israel

The Reason for the Dispersion of Israel

Deuteronomy 28:15-19

But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: “Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.

Deuteronomy records the second giving of the law to the Israelites after the forty years wandering in the wilderness. As Moses has been forbidden to enter the land of promise, he instructs the people in the law and the consequences of not keeping it.

The Mosaic code carried curses for violations as well as blessings for obedience. These curses were not only on the people, but on the land and their other possessions. Since God’s program with Israel was a physical one, it is not surprising that such should be the case.

The curses of Deuteronomy 28:15-19 were fulfilled literally during the days of the prophet Jeremiah. Israel had fallen into desperate times, and would not heed the words of the prophet. As a result, the land became desolate, even before the final stage of the dispersion in 586 b. c. The situation became so bad in the city of Jerusalem during the final siege that we read the following words penned by Jeremiah describing that terrible time:

Deuteronomy 28:62-64

You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God. And it shall be, that just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess. Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known -- wood and stone.

This prediction, made prior to Israel’s entering the promise land under Joshua, was fulfilled literally. As a result of the invasions of the Assyrians and Babylonians, the people of Israel became much fewer in number than in the days of Israel’s prosperity under David and Solomon. In 586 b.c. the final deportation of Israel took place. God plucked them from off the land as predicted in Deuteronomy 28. They were indeed scattered “from one end of the earth to the other.” They indeed did “serve other gods” because of their refusal to live consistently according God’s law.

And yet the final act of dispersion is yet future to today, and will take place during Daniel’s 70th week, at which time Israel will be cast out of the land for the last time. This yet future act was predicted by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 24:15-22:

“Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the housetop not go

down to get the things out that are in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. “But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! “But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. “And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.

As we shall see, “of desolation” which will take place three and one half years after the beginning of the 70th week, is direct cause of the final flight by Israel from the land.

During this time of great tribulation, Israel will be decimated numerically to the point that if the days were not cut short Israel would not survive. Most of Israel is destroyed, and only a small remnant will remain to enter the millennial state.

The Violation of the Land’s Sabbaths

Leviticus 26:31-35

I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas. I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies’ land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall rest -- for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it.

2 Chronicles 36:20, 21

And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.

Leviticus 26 is explicit about the consequences of violating the land sabbaths. Every seven years, said the Mosaic code, the land was to lie fallow. In an era when it was not known how to artificially fertilize farm land, letting the land rest was essential. If the land becomes useless, famine can result. And once the land is worn out, it’s worn out for many years, causing long term privation and hardship.

1 and 2 Chronicles were written to the remnant of Israel that returned from Babylonian captivity to remind them of the events of the previous history, that is, the history before their being taken captive to Babylon. The length of the Babylonian captivity, seventy years, was not arbitrary, but was based on the failure of Israel to keep the Sabbaths of the land required by Leviticus 26. Since the law required that they let the land lie fallow every seven years, it appears Israel had not done so for 430 years, building up a 70 year deficit. God took that 70 years out in one lump sum.

The Initial 70 Year Period

Jeremiah 25:9-11

Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Because you have not heard My words, ‘behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,’ says the LORD, ‘and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations. ‘Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. ‘And

this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

God uses even the ungodly as His instruments. In this case, it was Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He was God's servant, though he certainly thought when he was taking Israel captive that he was doing so of his own will and design.

Jeremiah, the final prophet before the Babylonian captivity, accurately predicted the seventy year captivity, which was fulfilled literally, as are all prophecies in the Old Testament. The literalness of the seventy years of which the prophet speaks cannot be denied. Some have attempted to say that Jeremiah didn't write these words, but that they were added after the remnant returned from exile. But the only reason for such a view is because of unbelief in the supernatural. In fact, Jeremiah did predict the exact amount of time the Judeans were to be captives.

Daniel 9:1, 2

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

It was based on Daniel's reading of Jeremiah 25 that the subsequent prophecy of the seventy weeks is given. He was an old man, and undoubtedly realized that he would not live to return to his beloved homeland. Therefore he supplicates to the Lord concerning the sins of Israel, and is rewarded by an angelic visitor who gives him the prophecy of the 70 weeks.

The phrase "the desolations of Jerusalem" is significant. The city was the focal point of Israel's existence at the time of Daniel's writing. Israel indeed reoccupied Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah, thus bringing about the end of the Babylonian Captivity.

The Continuation of the Dispersion

The return from Babylon did not end the dispersion. Even in that day, it was recognized as a limited return, with only a fraction of Israelites actually making the trek back to Jerusalem. The question in Daniel's mind had to do with the final culmination of Israel's dispersion. He must have understood that the Babylonian period represented but a short duration of the ultimate scattering of God's people. The prophecy of the 70 weeks answered the question, "How long will Israel be scattered until the final restoration of the theocratic kingdom?"

As we will see, the present continuation of the dispersion is the result of the rejection of the messiahship of the Lord Jesus Christ. See below "The Olivet Discourse" and "The Kingdom of God in the Gospels."

The Return from the Dispersion of Israel

Deuteronomy 30:1-3

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, and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 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.

The regathering is a work of God, based on His time-table. The cursings of Deuteronomy for violation of the Mosaic law are thus seen to be temporary. But the return to the land at that future time of the restoration of the Kingdom will be because God has gathered them again from all the nations where He scattered them. In no sense was this accomplished at the end of the Babylonian Captivity.

It might be argued that God has done that today. With the restoration of Jews to Palestine, and the establishment of an essentially Jewish state, might it not be that God that God is fulfilling the statements of Deuteronomy 30:1-3?

Must one must not be misled by these modern events. Today only a small handful of Israelites inhabit the land. Indeed, more Jews inhabit the United States than Israel. And the same could be said of other countries. According to one source,⁹ there were approximately thirteen million Jews in the world as of 2002. Only 5,600,000 (35.7%) live in Israel, whereas 6,150,000 (38.62%) live in the United States. The rest are scattered throughout the nations of the world. It is difficult to see how God has gathered Israel “from all the nations where the LORD” has scattered them.

The regathering of Deuteronomy 30 is yet future. It will take place finally at the establishment of the Davidic kingdom after the 70th week of Daniel is complete.

Jeremiah 3:11-18

Then the LORD said to me, Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: Return, backsliding Israel, says the LORD; I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful, says the LORD; I will not remain angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the LORD your God, And have scattered your charms To alien deities under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice, says the LORD. Return, O backsliding children, says the LORD; for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. 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. 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. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers.

The twelve tribes of the nation Israel, represented by the terms Israel and Judah, will be reunified. Jeremiah 3:11 contrasts the already dispersed ten tribes that make up Israel with the two tribes that make up Judah, soon to be taken captive. Judah comes out second best.

Jeremiah, a prophet to the two southern tribes of Judah, is commanded by God to invite the backsliding¹⁰ northern tribes to return (not physically, but spiritually). The promise is that God will not remain angry with the northern tribes forever.

9 “The World Jewish Population Survey of 2002.” This survey is somewhat controversial, and other sources list different numbers. However, for the sake of this discussion this source is as good as any, and the differences with other census data is problematical. All sources indicate that the majority of Jews in the world today live outside the nation of Israel.

10 Three Hebrew words are translated “backslide” in the OT, all from the same Hebrew root. The one here, SN 4878, *meshuvah*, is used only twelve times in the Scriptures, once in Proverbs, twice in Hosea, and the rest of the time in Jeremiah. It means to turn away, and is the from the Hebrew root equivalent of the Greek *apostasia*, which simply means “to turn.” “Backslide” should never be used of carnal Christians, which is done sometimes by the biblically uneducated. In fact, it can only be used rightly of the nation Israel.

Here we have a clear picture of future kingdom blessing. No longer will the Ark of the Covenant be God's throne as it was throughout Israel's early history. Instead, Jerusalem will be the throne of God, and the gentile nations will be gathered to it. Vs. 18 contains the promise of the reunification of the two divisions of God's people, Israel and Judah. They shall come "out of the north" a reference to the direction taken by the invading armies of both Assyria and Babylon, and the direction toward which the children of Israel were led captive.

Jeremiah 31:1-7

At the same time, says the LORD, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people. Thus says the LORD: The people who survived the sword Found grace in the wilderness -- Israel, when I went to give him rest. The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, And shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice. You shall yet plant vines on the mountains of Samaria; The planters shall plant and eat them as ordinary food. For there shall be a day When the watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim, Arise, and let us go up to Zion, To the LORD our God. For thus says the LORD: Sing with gladness for Jacob, And shout among the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give praise, and say, O LORD, save Your people, The remnant of Israel!

This section begins an introduction to the New Covenant for Israel which is presented starting in 31:31. Vs. 1-7 concerns a future time in which all the families of Israel will be related to God. The word Israel is used in the sense of the reunited kingdom. "At the same time" refers back to Jeremiah 30:24, "the days of the end," a clear reference to the future messianic era.

As the Lord brought Israel to rest out of the wilderness, as they survived the sword of the conquest, so God's lovingkindness will draw them again at that future time.

Jeremiah refers to a future time of celebration when Israel is conceived again as an unsullied virgin. At that future time God will rebuild (Hebrew, *banah*, as to rebuild a house) the nation. It will be a celebration in the sense of the feasts of Israel, where tambourines were in abundance.

The statement that those who planted vines would eat them as "ordinary food" is particularly telling. According to Leviticus 19:23, Israel was not to eat the fruit of a planting for five years after the vines were started (see also Judges 9:27). The point is, that there will be time to wait for the fruit of a first planting. Israel will again permanently enjoy the fruits of their labors in the land.

Jeremiah, writing to the two southern tribes, refers to planting vineyards on the hills of Samaria and the watchmen on the hills of Ephraim. Israelites from both those areas were in captivity when Jeremiah wrote. He is looking forward to a time when Israel will be reunified. The watchmen are not looking for those who would invade in this passage. This is undoubtedly a reference to the practice when watchmen were posted on the mountains, that they might observe and given notice of the first appearance of the crescent of the moon after new-moon, so that the festival of the new-moon and the feasts connected with it might be fixed. Again, it's a time of rejoicing because of harvest, of blessing.

Yet it will be the "remnant of Israel" that will enjoy these blessings. Israel must go through a time of culling, a time when unbelievers among the people are removed. This purification of Israel will take place shortly after the end of the 70th week of Daniel. Israel will be returned to a state of belief, and only believers will enter the kingdom.

A different word from the same root, SN 7726, is used in 3:14 and is translated "backsliding." This word and third word from the same root, SN 7728, are both translated "backslide," and together are used a total of six times.

Micah 2:12¹¹

I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, Like a flock in the midst of their pasture; They shall make a loud noise because of so many people.

Micah's prophecy was given many long years before even the northern kingdom was taken into exile.

This passage refers to a future time when Israel will be regathered "like sheep in the fold, like a flock in the midst of its pasture," a reference to their rightful place in the land of promise. "They will be noisy with men" refers to the fact that the fold and pasture will again be populated by people who will make the normal noise of occupation. Note that the word "many" is italicised. It is not the number of people at issue, but rather the fact of people. Gradually the kingdom size will increase from the beginning remnant to a great multitude.

Micah 4:7

I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcast a strong nation; So the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever.

Here the emphasis is on God's action of making those who are lame (unable to perform that which is necessary to guarantee a strong nation) and those who are outcasts into a strong nation (Hebrews *goy*). Again a future reference to the time when God will reign. Note the place of reigning, Mt. Zion, and the duration of reigning, forever.¹²

Micah 5:7-8

Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples, like dew from the LORD, like showers on the grass, That tarry for no man nor wait for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, who, if he passes through, both treads down and tears in pieces, and none can deliver.

The remnant of Jacob (Israel) is seen to be on the move in a series of similes. While still scattered among the Gentiles, they are likened to: 1) dew and showers, which depart quickly (wait for no man); 2) lions among the beasts of the forests (Gentiles); and 3) young lions among flocks of sheep. Both the lion similes indicate that destruction will come upon the Gentiles at the time that the remnant returns to the land.

The entire fifth chapter of Micah looks forward to the coming of Messiah (Micah 5:1-2), when Israel will be restored, and her gentile enemies will be destroyed (Micah 5:9-15).

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel

Introduction

The prophecy of the seventy weeks is basic to the interpretation of both the Olivet Discourse of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Revelation of John. Both are based on the time-table set forth in Daniel 9:24-27.

Liberal scholars, rejecting the idea of predictive prophecy, have concluded that Daniel was written in the second century BC and reflects to a great extent the history of the Greek empire. Especially, they

¹¹ Micah was a preexilic prophet who ministered to the southern kingdom. He was a contemporary of Isaiah.

¹² Hebrew *ad olam*, "until forever."

favor the idea that Antiochus Epihanes is the “little horn” and “the prince who shall come” of Daniel’s prophecy. They also criticize the 2nd century “Daniel” for not being historically accurate. In other words, they use a circular argument to maintain their position, based on an anti-predictive assumption. Such is the way of all flesh.

Amillennial scholars do no better. Montgomery and Young, both conservative amillennialists, find no successful interpretation to this prophecy. Their conclusions are basically that no conclusion can be found. They sometimes attempt to end the seventy weeks with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. This, they realize, does not exactly fit the text. But since they do not want to be premillennial, they have no better explanation.

Other amillennialists allegorize the text and make the people and the city refer to the church, which is an irrational approach.

“Unlike the prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, and 8, which primarily related to the Gentiles, this chapter is specifically God’s program for the people of Israel, as Daniel would obviously interpret it. To make this equivalent to the church composed of both Jews and Gentiles is to read into the passage something foreign to the whole thinking of Daniel. The church as such has no relation to the city nor to the promises given specifically to Israel relating to their restoration and repossession of the land.” (John Walvoord, *Daniel, the Key to Prophetic Revelation*, pg. 220).

Only premillennialists, who see a continuity of prophetic elements in the Old Testament have an adequate answer for this great chronological prophecy.

The Occasion for the Prophecy

Daniel 9:1-2

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

The Babylonians, who had taken Israel captive in 586 BC, had been conquered by the Persians. The first year of Darius was, according to current scholarship, 538 or 539 BC, 48 years after Daniel had been taken captive if he were deported in the 586 BC deportation, which seems unlikely. More likely, Daniel and his friends were taken captive in the original deportation in 605-606 BC. That would make Daniel nearing 90 years old. This event in the life of Daniel took place shortly after the “hand-writing on the wall” incident.

Who was Darius? This name does not occur in secular records of the time, though it was a common name among Medo-Persian rulers. Several theories have been put forth as to who this man actually was. Some believe Darius was another name for Cyrus, the Persian Emperor. Others believe Darius was Ugbaru, the general who actually commanded the Persian army when Babylon was overthrown. Another view is that Darius is to be identified with Cambyses, the son of Cyrus. According to this view, is another name for Cyrus. Finally, some see Darius is an officer in the army of Cyrus named Gubaru. However, if Gubaru is another spelling for Ugbaru, this is the same person as the second alternative above. In fact, it is impossible to know for sure which of these solutions is the correct one. The liberal idea that this is an historical inaccuracy coined by the second century “Daniel” is unacceptable to the Bible believing Christian.

Daniel had been reading Jeremiah 25:11 about the length of time the Israelites would be in captivity.

And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

In fact, it was in the year of 538 BC that Cyrus made the actual decree allowing the Israelites to be set free. Calculating from the 606-605 initial deportation, 538 BC was the 68th year of captivity. It took approximately two years from Cyrus' decree for the first returnees to enter the ruins of Jerusalem. According to Nehemiah 3:8, the foundation to the temple of Jerusalem was laid in the spring of 535 BC, which brought the 70 year captivity to an official close.

The Subject of the Prophecy

Daniel 9:23,24

At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I¹³ have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

The prophecy deals specifically with two subjects: "your people" meaning Daniel's people Israel, and "your holy city," meaning Jerusalem. That Israelites would be the subject of this prophecy is not surprising. However, the importance of the city of Jerusalem has been often overlooked. From here on, and throughout prophecies dealing with Israel, Jerusalem becomes the focal point of the geographical elements of the revelation.

"Even in ruins, Jerusalem remains the city set apart in the heart of God and Daniel shared this love for the city which is central in God's program for His kingdom both in the past and the future. Unlike the prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, and 8, which primarily related to the Gentiles, this chapter is specifically God's program for the people of Israel, as Daniel would obviously interpret it." (John Walvoord, *Daniel the Key to Prophetic Revelation*, pg. 220.)

Six elements are expressed by Daniel with reference to the purpose of the 70 weeks prophecy. Many attempt to find interpretations for these six elements outside the immediate historical contextual situation of Daniel and his reader, a very dangerous approach to take when interpreting any Scripture.

Several of these six elements are given a soteriological (salvation) rather than an eschatological (future events) interpretation. In fact, the first five are very often given a soteriological meaning, even by dispensationalists who one would presume should know better! Several reasons, however, can be presented to show that such an approach cannot stand. 1) The context does not deal with salvation but with prophecy and end times. In other words, the context is not soteriological, but eschatological. 2) As a corollary to number one above, it must be stated that the original recipients of the prophecy would never have transferred its meaning from a eschatological to a soteriological perspective. The soteriological (salvation) work of Christ is not the subject of the prophecy. 3) The six statements are associated with the entire prophecy of the seventy weeks, not the gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week.

13 The pronoun "I" refers to the spirit being Gabriel, an angel. He is sometimes identified as an archangel, but this is wrong. The archangel's name is Michael.

The completion of the entire period of 70 weeks is in view in these six statements. . Therefore, the best understanding of each of these six elements associates them with the future kingdom period after the 70 weeks rather than the time period of the unfolding of the seventy weeks. Larkin, a much aligned author because of his excessive use of charts, makes this correct statement:

“We are told that these ‘Six Things’ concern only **Daniel’s PEOPLE** (the Jews), and the **HOLY CITY** (Jerusalem). This is very important. It discloses the fact that the ‘Seventy Weeks’ have nothing to do with the ‘Gentiles’ or the ‘Church,’ but only with the **JEWS** and **JERUSALEM**. While the ‘Messiah the Prince’ (Christ) when He was ‘CUT OFF’ (Crucified), as described in verse 26, made an ‘**End of Sin**’ (Hebrews 10:12), and ‘**Reconciliation for Iniquity**’ (Romans 5:6-10,) that was for the whole world. But the Atonement of Christ for the whole world is not in view here. It is the ‘putting away’ or ‘finishing’ of the ‘**Transgression**’ of one class of persons – **THE JEWS.**” (Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, pg. 177.)

Larkin correctly states that when Messiah the Prince was “cut off” the passage deals not with the “Atonement of Christ for the whole world.” Rather, it deals with God’s people, the Jews. Each of these six elements are dealt with as follows:

1. To finish the transgression

The concept of finishing transgression is taken by some to be a soteriological (salvation) reference. However, the transgression here is not a general word for “sin,” but a specific word dealing with the Jewish economy. “To finish the transgression” then is not referring to Christ’s work on the cross to overcome sin.

Some (Ryrie, Walvoord, Larkin, Tatford) believe this refers to ending the apostasy of Israel. That is, it is the twelve tribes’ transgression against God that is being brought to an end. This is a possible explanation, as the end of that apostasy will take place during the 70th week.

However, *the transgression* (articular in the Hebrew) could refer to the transgression against Israel by her enemies. In this case, the phrase refers to establishment of the righteous rule of the Messiah in delivering His people from their enemies, and thereby ending the nations transgression against God’s people, Israel. This seems the more likely possibility.

2. To make an end of sin

The soteriological interpretation of this statement refers it to the work of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, which, as previously stated, is not the context of the passage.

Both Ryrie and Walvoord believe this *can* refer either to bring sin to an end (the millennial period) or to bring final judgment on sin (perhaps Christ’s sacrifice, the soteriological interpretation, or, perhaps the tribulation period, an eschatological interpretation).

Larkin holds that the end of sins happens at the second coming when “God turns away ungodliness from Jacob and take away from Israel all their sins.” Tatford says, “The people’s sins would come to a definite end.” (Frederick Tatford, *Daniel and His Prophecy*, pg. 154). This is an eschatological interpretation that associates the ending of sin with the New Covenant for Israel of Jeremiah 31:31ff.

To refer this to Christ’s sacrifice is unsound exegetically, as that is not what would have been in the mind of Daniel or his readers. Even after receiving the prophecy, the event of the Messiah’s being “cut off” does not refer to the 70 weeks period per se, but to the gap between the 69th and 70th weeks.

The more likely understanding is to the millennial period, the end of the time during which Israel is dispersed because of failure to keep the Mosaic code. Daniel himself refers to this failure earlier in this passage (vs. 13). Thus Larkin's and Tatford's view that this takes place at the second coming of Christ seems the correct view. Once the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31ff is instituted, which will be at the beginning of the millennial period, God will remember Israel's sin no more. Israel will be established in righteousness in the land.

3. To make atonement for iniquity

The word "atonement" (NASB) is a better translation than "reconciliation" (KJV, NKJV) in this statement. Again we see that this is often taken to refer to the death of Christ (Ryrie, Walvoord, Tatford). However, Walvoord goes on to say, "While the basic provision for reconciliation was made at the cross, the actual application of it is again associated with the second advent of Christ as far as Israel is concerned, and an eschatological explanation is possible for this phase as well as an historic fulfillment."

A better interpretation is to refer this to the culmination of the events of the 70th week (Larkin) during which Israel's final judgment (atonement) takes place, at the end of which the atonement is complete and the millennial period begins. The word atonement (Hebrews *kaphar*, covering) cannot be legitimately applied to the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, which does not actually take place during the 70 week period, but in the gap between the 69th and 70th weeks. Even Walvoord recognizes the "eschatological explanation is possible." It is actually not only possible, but *required* by the context. No soteriological explanation can find a legitimate place here as this interpretation is not consistent with the historical circumstance nor viewpoint of the author or original readers.

4. To bring in everlasting righteousness

Strangely, Walvoord and others attempt to make this a reference to Christ's first advent and His work for the "justification of the sinner." This approach is simply not possible, as the original writer and readers would not have understood such an idea. Walvoord goes on to say, "The many Messianic passages, however, which view righteousness as being applied to the earth at the time of the second coming of Christ may be the ultimate explanation." He goes on to refer to Jeremiah 23:5-6, Isaiah 11:2-5, etc. which support this approach.

The only legitimate interpretation is the eschatological one. Daniel and his readers would undoubtedly have understood this in the Messianic sense of the establishment of God's rule on the earth. (Larkin, Ryrie, Tatford hold this view.)

5. To seal up vision and prophecy

Walvoord identifies this as: "The cessation of the New Testament prophetic gift seen both in oral prophecy and the writing of the Scriptures," a very strange view, indeed, for a dispensationalist.

However, the statement must refer to the ending of prophecy during the 70th week, during which prophets will again work among the people of Israel. During the millennial period no prophetic concerning God's people Israel activity will occur, as no new revelation will be necessary. (Larkin, Ryrie, Tatford hold this view.)

6. To anoint the most holy.

The term "most holy *place*" (NKJV) is better than simply "the most holy" (KJV, NKJV). However, the most correct translation from the Hebrew is "Holy of Holies." This refers to the inner room of the

sanctuary in the Temple in Jerusalem where in the Old Testament the presence of God dwelt as manifested by His cloud of glory over the ark of the covenant.

The ultimate “anointing” of the Holy of Holies will take place when the “anointed one” (Messiah) returns to take up His appointed residence in the Sanctuary in Jerusalem. Again, the millennial period will see the Messiah of Israel ruling from the Temple in Jerusalem, seated on His throne in the most holy place. This is the view held by virtually every premillennialist.

The Meaning of “Week”

The phrase “seventy weeks” is more accurately expressed “seventy sevens.” This is a Hebrew shorthand method of saying “seventy periods of seven periods each.” All scholars, liberal and conservative, agree. This is a prophecy of seventy sets of seven *year* periods. In other words, each “week” is seven years, rather than seven days, long. Seventy times seven is four hundred ninety. In other words, the entire period of the prophecy is 490 years.

The Time Table of Prophecy

Daniel 9:25-26

Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

The Beginning of the 70 Weeks

The decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem begins the time-table.

Four different decrees have been suggested:

1. The Decree of Cyrus that the Temple be Rebuilt (2 Chronicles 36:20-23; Ezra 1:1-4; 6:1-5)
2. The Decree of Darius confirming the decree of Cyrus (Ezra 6:6-12)
3. The First Decree of Artaxerxes to Rebuild the Temple (Ezra 7:11-26)
4. The Decree of Artaxerxes given in Nehemiah authorizing the rebuilding of the city (Nehemiah 2:1-8)

As can be seen by a careful reading of Scripture, the first three decrees deal with the temple, not with the city itself.

Only the decree of Artaxerxes recorded in Nehemiah 2:1-8 fulfills the conditions of Daniel’s prophecy. The actual building of the city and the wall did not begin until Nehemiah’s time. It is this decree that actually begins the 70 weeks.

The Structure of the 70 Weeks

The First 69 Weeks, or 483 years, is divided into two parts of 7 weeks (49 years) and 62 weeks (434 years).

The first 49 years is the period during which the city and wall were being rebuilt.

The subsequent period of 434 years is that long period during which no prophecy occurred referring to the coming of Messiah. Those post-exilic prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi bring to a close the prophetic statements dealing with the nation of Israel. In a real sense, the historical narratives of

Matthew, Mark, and Luke express the events leading up to the culmination of Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks, to which Jesus alludes during His earthly ministry (Matthew 24:1ff; Mark 13:1ff; Luke 21:5ff).

Further, the 70th week is itself divided into two parts, as is seen by the term "*in the middle of the week.*"

The End of the Sixty-Ninth Week

The most likely event which terminated the 69th week was the triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

The Gap between the Sixty-Ninth and Seventieth Weeks

After the 69th week, Messiah is cut off. This refers to the death of Messiah. By application we understand this to refer to the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Note that the crucifixion is *not* part of the timetable of the 70 weeks, but is in a gap period between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks. Daniel 9 does not say that the Messiah is cut off DURING the 69 weeks, but AFTER the 69th week.

Also during the Gap between the 69th and 70th weeks, Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed. This destruction is accomplished by "the people of the prince who is to come," rather than by the prince himself. This destruction took place by the Roman general Titus in 70 AD. Therefore, the "prince who is to come" refers to a subsequent Roman leader, not to Titus himself, as some have thought. This future prince is the one called the "little horn" in Daniel 7:8

Note the following, then:

1. The people of the prince who is to come do the destroying, NOT THE PRINCE HIMSELF. The best explanation for this peculiar wording is that the people refer to the ethnic or political group from which the prince comes. These people were the Romans, who under Titus destroyed the city and the temple in 70 AD.
2. It is clear that "the prince who is to come" is not Messiah the prince, but another prince who is antagonistic to God and His program for Israel. "The prince who is to come" is to be identified with the "little horn" of Daniel 7, commonly called the antichrist. He is also seen represented in the second beast of Revelation 13. He is a Roman prince, who will lead the "revived Roman Empire" during the period of the 70th week. (See the discussion below dealing with the Gentiles in prophecy for more information concerning this prince.)
3. The gap continues today. The prophetic program for Israel is held in abeyance until the present prophetic program for the church is completed.

The Beginning of the 70th Week

Daniel 9:27

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

The 70th week of Daniel begins with the confirmation of a covenant (Hebrew *berit*). This event has not yet taken place. Therefore, we are still in the gap between the 69th and 70th weeks.

The word "*he*" at the beginning of verse 27 refers to the Roman prince who is to come.

The "*covenant*" is best understood as a treaty of some kind, perhaps guaranteeing the safety of Israel.

This covenant is time limited, in that it is confirmed for 1 week (7 years). However, the covenant is violated by the prince “in the middle of the week,” that is, after three and one half years.

The word “many” often refers to Israel, especially in prophetic passages. During the first half of the week, Israel is in the land, but in unbelief. See Ezekiel 37:1-8.

However, sometime during the 70th week God begins to bring Israel to faith. Scripture indicates that this is but a “remnant” of the original people. The synagogue system will be in effect, and many will reject the messianic message (Luke 21:12).

The Middle of the 70th Week

In “*the middle of the week*,” the Roman prince violates the covenant by bringing an end to sacrifice and offering. Using the 30 day calendar as a basis, this is 1260 days after the signing of the covenant. See Revelation 12:6.

“*The wing of abominations*” refers to swift actions that bring about the destruction of Israel.

“*The one who makes desolate*” refers to the terrible infliction of suffering brought about by the Roman prince.

Many Jews will betray their own kin (Luke 21:16). Yet the 144,000 Israelites from the 12 tribes will truly serve God and remain pure (Revelation 7). The gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the world to the gentile nations (Matthew 24:14). This may be partly accomplished by the fact that beginning at the middle of the 70th week believing Israelites will be led captive into Gentile nations (Luke 21:24).

The Culmination of the 70th Week

“*The consummation which is determined is poured out on the desolate*” refers to the bringing to an end of the activities of the Roman prince, that is, the end of the 70th week.

While not directly mentioned in Daniel 9, the events which lead up to the end are discussed in detail by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24 and 25) and related passages. See next chapter.

Chapter Five

The Olivet Discourse

The Setting

Matthew 24:1-2

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

Nowhere in Matthew 24 and 25 is the church mentioned. None of the prophetic events in these chapters are to be associated with the body of Christ, nor with the present dispensation of grace, nor with the present evil age. Normal interpretation recognizes that the church is distinct from Israel, that the dispensation of the law is distinct from the dispensation of grace, and that the prophetic age of Israel is distinct from the present evil age. Only confusion results when one attempts to put the church, the current dispensation, or the current age into these chapters. The temple is not symbolical or typical of the church, and Jesus' prediction of its destruction must be taken normally (literally), as His disciples would have done.

The Prophetic Importance of the Temple

The temple in Jerusalem is central to the truth concerning the tribulation period. In His prediction that the temple will be destroyed, the Lord is indicating that the tribulation temple must be rebuilt after the ruination of the temple of His day. This was true in Danel's day, as it was in the days of the earthly ministry of our Lord.¹⁴

The Prediction of the Destruction of the Temple

The Lord predicts the destruction of the temple under Titus in 70 AD, which is the event predicted in Daniel 9:26. This destruction took place in the gap between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel and is not to be confused with the prediction of the later destruction expressed in Zechariah 14:1-2:

Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst. ² For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

The destruction of the city of Jerusalem foretold in Zechariah 14 is not the same event as the one that Jesus is predicting in Matthew 24, nor the event predicted in Daniel 9:26. Zechariah is referring to the events during the 70th week of Daniel, and of the city, with its temple, that will exist in that day. Jesus, on the other hand, is predicting the destruction of the so-called "second temple" which was begun at the time of the partial return under Ezra and Nehemiah, and continued beyond the day in which Jesus was speaking by various individuals, the final construction of which was the great building project of Herod the Great.

Later in the Olivet Discourse the Lord Jesus Christ makes it clear that the "abomination of desolation" had not yet occurred in His day. Some have attempted to relate this abomination to Titus, but the prophecy of the 70 weeks simply will not fit into this scenario. No covenant was made with the many

¹⁴ See the previous discussion of Daniel's 70 Weeks.

for 7 years, in the midst of which Titus destroyed the temple. Therefore, Christ expected His disciples to recognize that the temple program has a stage subsequent to His prediction of the Titus event.

The Beginning of Sorrows

Matthew 24:3-8

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the 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?" 4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

The Mount of Olives

One can view the temple from the Mount of Olives, only a short journey from viewing the temple buildings. The term Olivet Discourse, comes from this geographical location. Not all of the twelve accompanied the Lord to the Mount of Olives (see the next note).

Evidently only Peter, James, John, and Andrew heard this discourse (Mark 13:3). These four were representative of the leadership among the twelve. We are not told that the rest of the twelve heard this information, and it was kept from the multitudes, who had no need to hear the intimate details of this discourse which was designed for believing disciples only. The Lord repeatedly refers to "you" in the discourse, which can be applied only to those believing disciples who are expected to survive the 70th week of Daniel.

The Three-Fold Question (Matthew 24:3)

1. When shall these things be?

This question deals with Jesus' prediction concerning the destruction of the temple. Matthew does not record the Lord's answer to this question, if indeed He gave one, as it had no direct bearing on the subject that He desired to discuss, that is the end of the age which was going on at that time, and of the return of the Lord.

2. What is the sign of Your coming?

This question is answered in detail in verses 29-31. The word "coming" here refers to the second coming of Christ, which is a kingdom related event. It does not, and cannot, refer to the rapture of the church, a totally different event. When Christ comes to receive the church, He does not actually return to the earth, but meets the believers in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

The disciples asked for a sign. This was common practice when thinking in terms of prophetic events. They were not asking about the actual coming of Christ itself, but wanted to know when to start looking for it.

3. What is the sign of the end of the age?

It is necessary to define the word "age" in order to answer the third question. An age is a period of time with a specific beginning and a specific ending. Ages relate to, among other things, the revelation of God and His program to mankind. A full discussion of the ages of Scripture must be left to another time.

To which age was Jesus referring? See the chart entitled “The Ages and the Millennium.” The age during which Christ was ministering is represented on the chart as the Age of Prophets, which refers to the time from Moses when God dealt with Israel as a nation through His prophets of old (Luke 1:70).

The Time Scope of the Events of Matthew 24:4-14

Several schemes have been suggested in order to identify the time period covered by these verses. Virtually all commentators who are premillennial, pretribulational, identify verses 9-14 as belonging to Daniel’s 70th week. However, a common view has been that verses 4-8 refer not to the 70th week of Daniel, but to the present age.

The idea that verses 4-8 refer to the present age cannot be sustained. As we will see, the perspective is that of the Jews living in the land of promise. At the time the Lord spoke these words, there was no understanding of the present age, nor of the church, in the mind of the disciples. Their understanding was a Jewish one, and it is clear that the context has to do with the temple, and by inference, the city of Jerusalem and the land of Israel.

Therefore, the best understanding of the time scope of this section is that it deals with the two distinct halves of Daniel’s 70th week. Verses 4-8 deal with the first 3 ½ years, and verses 9-14 the second 3 ½ years. It is based on this understanding that we will discuss this passage.

The Description of the First Half of Daniel’s 70th Week (Matthew 24:4-8)

The doctrine of the future coming of Christ is open to deception. Christ’s warning is that His disciples be not deceived. During the 70th week of Daniel this will be a constant problem. As Israel observes events among the Gentile nations, she will certainly desire the coming of Messiah, which could lead to false hope and a willingness to accept the claims of false messiahs (vss. 4-5). Such is the meaning of those who proclaim “I am the Christ.” The Lord makes it clear that there are certain prerequisites to His coming as Messiah for Israel.

This description (vss. 6-7) is from a Jewish point of view during the time when Israel is in the land of promise. Many false messiahs will arise during the first half of the 70th week. These false messiahs will deceive “many,” certainly a reference to Jews living in the land at that time. (Note that the “you” in this passage is plural, referring to the disciples as representatives of believing Israel.)

Ezekiel 38:11

“You will say, ‘I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates’....

Israel is in peace in the land. The events of the first half are “heard” by the Jews, but they are not participants. This passage is consistent with Ezekiel 38:11, which refers to Israel as living in “unwalled cities,” until Gog and Magog invade, probably at the middle of the 70th week. Undoubtedly “unwalled cities” refer to the idea that Israel will not be in a highly defensive mode. This is certainly not the case today, but is consistent with the time during which a covenant has been made with the Roman prince.

There will be warfare among the Gentile nations. Various types of governments will vie with one another for supremacy. The predictions concerning the state of the Revived Roman Empire expressed in Daniel 2 and 7 indicate that ten kings will be in some sort of confederation, but that the “little horn” will displace three of them, and gain supremacy over the land of Israel. These events appear to take place prior to the beginning of the 70th week, but the instability of the Gentile governments will continue into the first three and one half years of the week.

Christ's prophetic pronouncement was designed to bring comfort to those who would go through this time of trouble and deception, represented by the four disciples to whom He was speaking. "Do not be disturbed" by the wars and the rumors of wars. These events must take place in fulfillment of God's program for Israel's nationhood, her coming kingdom under the Lord Jesus Christ. In connection with the question you asked, the end of the age is yet some time off, it is "not yet."

In vs. 7, "nation against nation" and "kingdom against kingdom" indicate the political turmoil through which believing Israelites must observe in the world around them. Kingdoms (the ten kings of Daniel 2 are probably indicated), will come to blows over the political control available at that time.

But vs. 7 also indicates a time of physical calamity: "famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places." Not unlike today, but yet different than what is currently occurring world wide. These events are part of God's prophetic program for Israel's restoration, not part of His providential program through which Christians are currently struggling. The perspective of the disciples is here brought into focus. From within the land of Israel they will see these things happening around them, but not to them. These elements of God's wrath on unbelieving Gentiles are the fulfillment of God's predictions concerning His righteous judgment of those who have oppressed his people.

The picturesque term "beginning of birth pangs" indicates that the problems for Israel are at their initial stage. These series of events must take place before the series of events beginning in verse 9 commence. The first half of the week is the "initial labor" which gives birth to the "intense labor" of the second half of the week.

These events line up remarkably with the first six seals of the book of Revelation beginning in Revelation 6 (qv).

The Middle and 2nd Half of Daniel's 70th week

Matthew 24:9-14

9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

The nations will be persecuting Israel (vs. 9).

The best identification of the change that takes place between verses eight and nine is the transformation of Israel's circumstance that occurs in the middle of Daniel's 70th week. By a comparison of verse 9 with verse 15 this is confirmed. Verse fifteen returns to the same event as verse 9, but from the perspective of the very event that will inaugurate the second 3 ½ year portion of Jacob's trouble.

That a time sequence is in view cannot be denied. Verse 9 begins with "then," indicating that the scope is temporal and not logical. The first half of the week ends, then....

The "they" of verse 9 must refer to Gentiles. Note that "you" (Israelites) will be hated by all nations (Gentiles) on account of Christ's name (who He is in reference to the messiahship of Israel). It therefore appears that many Israelites have accepted the fact that the Christ of the New Testament, Jesus of Nazareth, is in fact the Messiah of the Old.

The middle of Daniel's 70th week is identified in Daniel by an event dealing with the Roman prince. This event is called "abomination of desolation" (see vs. 15). The second half of Daniel's 70th week is therefore inaugurated by an attempt by Gentiles to destroy believing Israelites.

Jews will betray one another (vs. 10).

Also "at that time" (in the middle of the week, another time reference indicating the temporal scope of this prophecy) "many will be offended" referring to a rejection of Christ's messiahship. Some Israelites will then have hatred of believing Israelites. This refers to Israelites living in the land of Israel at that time. The word "be offended" is not *apostasia*, which could refer to a physical or spiritual departure, but *skandalidzo*, to stumble, or metaphorically, be offended. The idea is that many Israelites will not have faith that Jesus of Nazareth is truly the Messiah of Israel.

Some have attempted to say that in the first half of the week all Israel comes to faith in Christ, but some Jews become apostate at the middle of the week. The word *skandalidzo* cannot sustain that interpretation. It seem better to simply say that not all Israelites living in the land at the middle of the week will have become believers in Jesus of Nazareth. Then the unbelieving Israelite will persecute the believing Israelite. Hatred of the unbelieving for the believing Israelite is indicated.

False prophets will arise (vs. 11).

During this time many false prophets will arise and many will again be deceived. "The "many" again most likely refers to Israelites who have not believed the gospel of the Kingdom.

A "false prophet" is an individual who will claim to have received direct revelation from God concerning the events of this time. During a time of distress for Israel such charlatans will be sometimes accepted by the persecuted unbelieving Israelite, but the believing Israelite will not accept their false expressions of new revelation.

It should be noted that false prophets can only flourish where true prophets exist. Today there are no false prophets, only false teachers because today there are no true prophets, only true teachers. See 2 Peter 2:1 where this distinction is made clear.

2 Peter 2:1

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

The change from a false prophet to a false teacher is time related. In the past there were false prophets. In the future there will be false teachers. From Peter's perspective, the time element provided the nexus of his argument. Only when there are "true" prophets can there be false prophets. A false prophet, a "pseudo" prophet, like false currency, can only exist when a true prophet exists. Today there can be no false prophets, no matter whether such people claim to be prophets or not. They are, in fact, false teachers.

The 70th week of Daniel will again see true prophets. Revelation from God which is specific to that time period will be necessary for the believers going through the agony of their circumstances. But false prophets will arise, and many Israelites will be led astray.

Lawlessness will abound and the love of many will grow cold (vs. 12).

“Because lawlessness increases” perhaps refers to the incursion of gentile governing bodies into the land. The Roman prince is himself called “the man of lawlessness” by Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Because of the lawless situation “many people’s love will grow cold.”

Lawlessness is not simply the absence of law, but the removal of God’s law for other law. The “man of lawlessness” will substitute his own laws for God’s.

“The love of many will grow cold.” This is a difficult statement. Does the phrase “the many” refer to believing or unbelieving or believing Israelites? As we examine the context, it appears to be referring to believing Israelites, not to those who betray believing Israelites in verse 10. Why? A distinction between love and hate is found when examining the two verses. In vs. 10 unbelieving Israelite will hate believing Israelite. But here love does not turn to hatred, it simply grows cold, ineffective. Believers, who love God and His program, wilt under the onslaught of the events of the time.

Another reason “the many” refers to believers is found in the next verse, which indicates that not all believing Israelites will survive the second half of the week. The teaching of Jesus throughout the Gospel of Matthew is that an Israelite must maintain his righteous character and practice in order to be eligible to enter the Kingdom of God at the end of the 70th week (see Matthew 5:20).

Some will endure to the end (of the age) and be saved (vs. 13).

This endurance cannot refer to anything other than remaining in a live state during this period. The “end” must refer to the end of the age, as it is the only “end” mentioned in the previous context. Therefore, those Israelites who survive the second half of the tribulation will be saved. But in what sense?

This salvation cannot refer to spiritual redemption, as that depends not at all on enduring, but on believing. This salvation is of the same type as that mentioned by Paul in Romans 11:26, which refers to the national salvation of Israel. Israel will be saved in this sense when it enters the Kingdom of God.

Romans 11:26

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;

“Enduring” refers not simply to surviving the second half of the week, though that is inherent in the nature of the salvation. Rather it refers to the ability of those individual believing Israelites to maintain the requirements of God’s pre-kingdom program to be eligible to enter the Kingdom. They must “take up the cross” in a way that is not possible in the current age. They must be willing to face death through the actions, and trust that God will indeed preserve them. If they seek to keep their live they will lose it, if they are willing to lose it, they will keep it (Matthew 10:38,39; 16:24-27).

Matthew 10:38, 39

“And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. “He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

The word “life” is to be take as one’s physical life. Jesus is addressing His disciples concerning the nature of the Gospel of the Kingdom that they were to proclaim throughout Israel.

Matthew 16:24-27

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

This passage deals with the second coming of the Lord to establish Kingdom on earth. Christ did not come in glory in His first coming, but in the lowliness of a baby. But at His return He reward each believing Israelite according to his works.

The pre-kingdom program is counter intuitive. It consists of doing the opposite of what one would expect in order to survive. A believing Israelite must be willing to lose his life in order to find it. This is not a reference to the resurrection, but to entering into Kingdom glory in a natural body. The losing of one's soul in this context refers to losing one's life, not spiritual condemnation. It is clear in the context that physical reward for works is in view, not spiritual benefit such as we today enjoy in Christ.

The Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the Gentile nations (vs. 14).

"The gospel of the kingdom" is not to be confused with the gospel of salvation for the current age, nor the gospel of the edification of the believer which consists of the mystery dispensation.

"The gospel of the kingdom" is summarized earlier in Matthew's Gospel as, "Behold the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand (lit. "near")." See Matthew 3:2 and 4:17. This indicates that the rest of Jesus teaching is concerning the coming kingdom. It is near because He is on earth presenting Himself as the Messiah who will bring in the kingdom when Israel believes.

During the tribulation period again the Kingdom will be near. During this time, however, the nearness will be temporal because Christ will not return until it is time to impose the kingdom on earth. At that event, the world system which consists of gentile world rule will come crashing down. See Daniel 2:31-35 (Nebuchadnezzar's dream) and Daniel 2:36-45 (Daniel's interpretation of that dream).

This preaching is throughout "the whole world to all the nations." The word "world" here is the Greek word *oikoumene*, which refers to the inhabited earth, the place where men dwell. The concept of the gospel of the kingdom being proclaimed to Gentiles is found elsewhere in Scripture. Many Gentiles will come to faith in the Messiah of Israel during this time. Matthew 28:19-20 appears to be a commission for Kingdom bound Israelites to preach this gospel.

The end (of the age) will come (vs. 14).

Verse 14 culminates the matter. The end is, of course, the end of the age, the prophetic age. When the 70th week is over, the age comes to an end as well. All Israelites who survive until that time are guaranteed to survive until the kingdom is actually set up, some 75 days after the end. See Daniel 12:11-13.

The Detailed Description of Great Tribulation

Matthew 24:15-28

"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For

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. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

Verse 15 reverts to the middle of the 70th week of Daniel. This kind of recapitulation is common to prophetic utterances. In fact, it is one of the major characteristics of both the Old Testament prophets and the book of Revelation in the New Testament.

It is related to the "abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (vs. 15)

The "breaking of the covenant" of Daniel 9:27 is associated with "the abomination of desolation" in this passage. The specific event must be that of which Paul spoke in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4:

Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

The abomination of desolation then is the act of desecration in the temple of the tribulation period. The "seat in the temple of God" must refer to the lid of the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat, which is the location where God met resided with Israel before the glory departed.

Jesus words "standing in the Holy place" refers to the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary of the temple which no man save the high priest was to enter. This statement confirms the place of the abomination.

The statement "whoever reads, let him understand" was added by Matthew and is addressed to the readers of the book. Clearly Matthew expected his readers to understand the references to the Holy place, and the abomination of desolation.

Israel will be in general flight (vs. 16-20).

The geographical location of these events is clearly stated. Those in Judea are to flee. The reason is undoubtedly because of their proximity to the temple in Jerusalem, where the abomination takes place. It will be a dangerous place for the Israelite to remain.

The immediacy of the situation is indicated in that the Israelites are to flee to the mountains. A map indicates that the closest "mountains" to Judea are due east in what is today Jordan. While some have thought that they might flee north to Mt. Herman, or south into the rugged mountains of Sinai, both these destinations seem unlikely, the first because of its relative great distance, and the second because of the difficulty of the terrain. This is not to say that tribulation Israelites will not occupy those locations, but it is probable that the individual flight will be so precipitous that the nearest mountains are the more likely object of their travel.

The importance of speed is indicated clearly in verses 17-20. Because of their nearness to the events of the abomination, those in Judea are most likely to feel the soon wrath of the man of sin. The message is, simply, "stop for nothing." Don't enter your house, even though you are on its roof. Don't return home from the field. Do without your cloak. The pregnant or have nursing children have a problem because they will not be able to maintain due speed. If the event takes place in winter, the conditions may slow your flight. If it's on the Sabbath, you may not travel far without breaking the Mosaic code, which is clearly in effect at this time.

Israel will be under the worst tribulation in her history (vs. 21)

The intensity of the tribulation is indicated by the fact that this will be the worst tribulation the world has ever seen. The statement must be with reference to the Israelites as a nation. It is upon their geographical territory that the great events of the 2nd half of the 70th week come. This will be a greater holocaust than any previous.

The daylight hours will be shortened (vs. 22)

The statement that “the days will be cut short” has been interpreted in two distinct ways: 1) that there will be fewer number of days, and 2) that the day itself will be shorter.

If there are to be fewer days, one must ask, “Fewer than what?” Certainly not fewer than the 1260 days predicted! Some have speculated that they are fewer than they could have been, that they are not interminable. (See the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*.) But this seems to beg the question. The Greek verb means they will be shortened. Therefore the question remains, from what will they be shortened?

A more likely interpretation is that the day itself will be shorter. This could be performed in either of two ways: 1) the earth could be sped up on its axis, or 2) the number of daylight hours could be shorter. The first seems unduly difficult, as no scripture seems to indicate any such thing. However, we know that the second will in fact happen. The sun loses 1/3 of its light, perhaps meaning that it is only up 1/3 as long, but more likely that it is only 2/3 as bright as it was. In addition, the land of Israel particularly will be darkened by the much smoke that appears to be generated during the second half of the 70th week.

The “elect” here refer to the chosen of Israel who will survive the 70th week.

False messiahs and false prophets will perform miraculous works (vs. 23-26)

Spiritual discernment is necessary – vs. 23. False Christs, or messiahs, will abound. Don’t believe it! The true Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, has not yet entered the world. At this point He is still sharing the throne with the Father in the third heaven.

Both false messiahs (christs) and false prophets will arise – vs. 24. Since the gospel of the Kingdom is being preached, which includes the nearness of Messiah, false messiah’s will appear. False prophets will attempt to blunt the message of true prophets during this period.

These pseudo messiahs and prophets will give forth signs and wonders (miraculous works). Even during a time when there are true miracles being performed people will be misled by the falsity of their works.

Some have wondered whether these are true miracles. Every indication is that they will be, which is possible up to a point using Satanic methods. However, even if they are “slight of hand” or “misdirection” such as done by the modern magician, they will be sufficiently credible to mislead many.

It is not possible for the elect to be led astray by these deceivers. The statement “if possible” is probably a shortened 2nd class condition indicating the impossibility of the act. Again, the word “elect” is used of those Israelites who will become believers during the 70th week, not church saints. It may include both Jews and Gentiles, but the issue is one of messiahship.

The Lord repeated His previous message at this time. Some will evidently claim that Christ is in the desert, and others that He is in the inner rooms of the temple. Such false claims are not to be heeded. – vs. 25-26.

The Lord's return will be visible to all, like the coming of lightening. – vs. 27. The direction also seems to be indicated. In the same way that the glory of God went from west to east when it departed the temple in Ezekiel's day (Ezekiel 9 & 10, especially 10:19 and following), so the Messiah will return from the east to the west at His second coming. Therefore, the second coming of Christ is directed at the city of Jerusalem. Only those in that vicinity will see His coming, though it will be visible to all who are there and who look.

The point is simple and straightforward. Do not look for messiahs in the temple or in the desert, or anywhere else. During the last half of the 70th week, the Messiah is not here yet, and when He gets here, you will know it because His coming will be visible.

Vs. 28 seems to speak of the judgmental aspect of the coming of the Lord. Some believe this refers to a spiritual corruption, followed by the tribulational judgment:

“Wherever there is a carcass (physical corruption), vultures will go there to eat it. Similarly, where there is spiritual corruption judgment will follow. The world will have become the domain of Satan's man, the Antichrist, the lawless one (2 Thessalonians 2:8), and many people will have been corrupted by false prophets (Matthew 24:24). Louis A. Barbieri, Jr., *Bible Knowledge Commentary*.

Toussaint believes that the vultures or eagles are specifically the false prophets,

“The King vividly portrays the state of Israel by referring to it with the word “corpse....” It is lifeless and hopeless and going unto putrification.... Thus the nation is and will be in such a spiritual condition that false prophets will be able to feast on it as vultures consume the flesh of a dead and decaying body.” Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, page 276.

However, the most reasonable explanation is that the corpse-vulture reference is to the result of judgment, physical death, which produces literal vultures as scavengers. There is no need to make the reference non-physical in this context. Dead and petrifying flesh will abound to the extent that scavenger birds will have a feast.

The Coming of the Son of Man

Matthew 24:29-31

“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 shaken. 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. 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.

The time of the 2nd coming of Christ is specific (vs. 29).

The return of Christ is post-tribulational in this context. It is after the 70th week of Daniel. This event is not to be confused with the coming of Christ for His church, which is not judgmental in character.

Passages such as this confuse the non-distinctive theologian. It is common to confuse this event with the event mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

The difference between the two events is obvious to the careful reader. The Thessalonians passage deals with those who sleep “in Jesus” while the Matthew passage is related in the context only to the city of Jerusalem and its environs. The church meets Christ in the air, in Matthew the Lord returns to the earth. Other distinctions can be easily observed by the careful student.

Heavenly events will accompany Christ’s 2nd Coming (vs. 29).

The darkening of the sun and moon, and the elimination of the stars from an earthly perspective make a magnificent backdrop for the events of the context.

The sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven (vs. 30).

Three popular views of this sign have been given: 1) some church fathers held that the sign was a supernatural display of the cross in heaven, 2) some modern students (English, Gaebelein), hold that this is a shining light, the Shekinah of the Old Testament, and 3) some (Darby, Kelly, Lenski) believe that the sign is the coming of Christ himself.

This event appears to be the actual coming itself. No previous signs are in view and this event coincides with the prophecy found in Daniel 7:13,14. Thus, the Lord gives the ultimate answer to the question posed in Matthew 24:3, “What is the sign of Your coming?” In fact, there is no sign apart from the actual appearance of the Lord Jesus Himself.

Christ sends angels to gather those saved during the 70th week (vs. 31).

The elect appear to be the same as those in 24:22. They are, in this context, the elect of Israel. See Colossians 3:4.

Many expositors take this to be a reference not to Israel but to the gathering of the church. For several important reasons it is evident that the faithful of Israel are in view. First of all, the word “elect” is used in the Old Testament of Israel (1 Chronicles 16:13; Psalm 105:6, 43; Isaiah 41:8, 43:20; 45:4). It was not only used of Israel as a nation but also of the faithful ones in that nation (Isaiah 65:9, 15, 22). It is in this latter sense that Christ uses it here. When He comes again, the believing remnant of Israel will be regathered from the corners of the earth to be placed in the land. This is prophesied clearly in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 16:14-15; Isaiah 11:11-16; 27:13). Herein is the second evidence that the church is not in view in this passage. A third is found in the Jewish context of the discourse from Matthew 24:3-25:30. Such terms as the gospel of the kingdom (24:14), the holy place (24:15), the sabbath (24:20), and the Messiah (24:23-24) indicate that Israel as a nation is in view. Fourthly, the discourse relates to the end time described in Daniel’s prophecy of the seventieth week (Matthew 24:15). Finally the church cannot be in view since it will

not go through the tribulation period (Revelation 3:10; Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 5:9). Toussaint, *Behold the King*, page 277.

The Fig Tree

Matthew 24:32-35

“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”

See also Mark 13:28–31; Luke 21:29–33, where this parable is also presented.

One major error in interpreting this parable indicates that it refers to the return of Israel to the land. This is supposed to have been fulfilled in 1948. In fact, this does not refer to the return of Israel to the land for several reasons: 1) Matthew views Israel being in the land as an uninterrupted continuity; Israel’s return is not mentioned; 2) No specific fig tree represents Israel here, as can be seen from the parallel account in Luke 21:29, where Christ says “Behold the fig tree and all the trees;” 3) the contextual subject is the second coming of Christ, not the return of Israel to the land; 4) the phrase “recognize that it is near, right at the door” is a mistranslation. The word “it” should be translated “He” and refers Christ, the One Who is coming shortly; and, finally, 5) the phrase “all these things” refers to the various events mentioned in the previous context that take place during the last half of the 70th week.

The parable of the fig tree relates to the generation that will go through the 70th week of Daniel. The “this generation” of vs. 34 does not relate to the contemporaries of Jesus, but to those who are the “elect” of verse 31.¹⁵

The Conditions at the End of the Age

Matthew 24:36-44

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 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, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

This passage is often erroneously taken as a description of the rapture of the church. However, it is actually a discussion of the conditions that will prevail on the earth just prior to the second coming of Christ. The end of the age refers to the end of the tribulation period.

Verse 36 is a segue between the previous parable of the fig tree, and the discussion of verses 37-44. The phrase “that day” refers to the day the 70th week of Daniel begins. It is impossible to set a date for that event, and therefore it is impossible to set forth an accurate time table for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who attempt to “set dates” will never be successful.

15 See the author’s paper, “Interpretation of ‘Generation’ in Matthew 24:32-35.”

The “coming of the Son of Man” in vs. 37 refers to Christ’s post-tribulational coming mentioned in the previous passage, *not* the rapture of the church. In fact, the conditions prior to the rapture are in no way to be identified with the conditions mentioned here.

The period under consideration is not tribulational, but post-tribulational. It refers to the condition of Israel after the 70th week is complete. After the tribulation of those days, Israel will immediately go back to its regular living situation. The nation has been preserved, but Messiah has not yet appeared.

The days of Noah are similar *in certain respects* to the days after the end of the tribulation period. In Noah’s day people were busy with the affairs of life, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. The people were ignorant of the coming judgment. So it will be in the short gap between the end of the 70th week and the establishment of the kingdom of God. Surviving Israelites will rapidly return to a lifestyle of ordinary interaction, perhaps as a way to put the time of terrible trial behind them.

Vs. 40-41 refer to people who are “taken” and those who are “left.” This is often confused with the rapture of the church. However, the people who are taken away are taken in judgment like those who were destroyed in the flood of Noah’s day. The ones who are left will enter into the millennial state. The judgment is the final division of Israel into believers and unbelievers. Believers will be eagerly awaiting His coming, while unbelievers will re-enter society as though nothing had happened. They will attempt to get back to normal as quickly as possible. Indeed, this is the normal reaction of people immediately after a disaster. Amid the ruin and rubble of the 70th week, Israelites will attempt to normalize their lives.

The point of the analogy with Noah’s day is to warn those who survive the 70th week that all is not accomplished. The final judgment of unbelieving Israelites (as well as Gentiles) will not occur during the 70th week, but afterward. Believers will be looking for the coming of Christ; unbelievers will go back *en masse* to the lifestyle prior to the time trouble began. This will take place in the 75 day period prior to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. See the discussion of the resurrections of Daniel 12 in subsequent notes.

The Faithful and Evil Servants

Matthew 24:45-51

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

This section is a parable that deals with Jews who are awaiting the Second Coming of Christ in the 75 day gap after Daniel’s 70th week. They are portrayed as slaves awaiting the coming of their master.

1. The faithful and wise slave is the believing Israelite who follows God’s program as appointed by Jesus during His earthly ministry.
2. The master is, of course, the Lord Jesus when He comes “after the tribulation of those days” (Matthew 24:29).

3. Vs. 47 indicates the rewards the surviving believers will receive. The time of the reward of verse 47 is the subsequent kingdom. The nature of the reward is the receiving of authority over the possessions of the king. This seems to indicate that those believers of that generation will be first in line for the highest of the kingdom rewards.
4. The evil slave of verses 48 and 49 is the unbelieving Israelite who does not keep Christ's program during the 70th week and persecutes his Israelite neighbors who do believe. While both unbelieving as well as believing Israelites survive the 70th week, the unbelieving Israelite is pictured as the persecutor while the believing Israelite is seen receiving the persecution. This is consistent with the teaching of Jesus on the Sermon on the Mount concerning Israelite verses Israelite persecution (see Matthew 5:10-12, which can only be applied to Israelites persecuting one another).
5. The clear statement is that the time of the coming of the master is unexpected. Those living at that time cannot know the exact hour of the coming of their master. This parable is consistent with the idea that the 2nd coming of Christ will be geographically centered in the land of Israel after the Israelite persecution is no longer in process.
6. The weeping and gnashing of teeth refer to the ultimate destruction of the unbelieving Israelite. This is probably a reference to the "place of the dead," to be identified with Hades, which is the place mentioned by Jesus in Luke 16:22ff.

The Wise and Foolish Virgins

Matthew 25:1-13

"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

The wise and foolish virgins represent the same two groups of Israelites as in the previous parable. The emphasis of this story is on faithfully waiting and expecting the bridegroom (Christ at the Second Coming). Do not attempt to make symbols out of such elements as the oil, the trimming of the wicks, etc. The point to the story is found in vs. 13. This is not to be applied to the Church. Believers today are not in the same prophetic situation as Israel will be when awaiting the return of Christ. Therefore, Israel is pictured as 10 virgins who are awaiting the return of the bridegroom.

In wedding customs in Jesus' day, the bridegroom would return from the house of the bride in a procession leading to his own home, where a wedding banquet would be enjoyed. A number of unmarried women would be there, with lamps. The bride and her family would accompany the procession. It was usually during this procession that the bride's veil was removed and laid upon her husband's shoulder.

It often comes as a surprise to note that marriage ceremonies were not religious but cultural events. The only "religious" aspect was the pronouncing of God's blessing on the couple. Otherwise, the actual

ceremony consisted of drawing up and agreeing to a legal contract. No vows, rings or other artifacts were exchanged. The idea of a priest or rabbi officiating is a rather recent idea.

In Jesus' story, the procession is delayed, and the unprepared virgins ran out of oil. When they went to get some, the bridegroom came with the procession, which entered his home. After the feast began the late virgins were not allowed in. These virgins are those unbelieving Israelites who were not really expecting the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some have wondered at the importance of the lamps and oil. Clearly they do not have to do with seeing their way in the dark since these processions took place during the daylight hours. Their use apparently has to do with the consummation of the marriage process. Christians are often shocked to realize that in the darkened wedding chamber, the virgins were required to verify that sexual intercourse had taken place. Then, as now, no marriage was actually legal until the sexual act had been consummated. But at that time the consummation was actually witnessed by the virgin attendants.¹⁶ Prior to the middle ages in Europe, the idea of privacy for sexual activity was Generally unknown in Europe. It was certainly not part of the agrarian culture of the Israelites. It was not until the development of large domiciles that could be divided into compartments where the idea of private sexual intimacy began. Eventually this idea was normalized, and as a result of the Catholic and later Puritan ideas of sexuality, codified as necessary to modesty.

Some have extended this parable to include the church as the bride of Christ. Such is the view of Louis A. Barbieri, Jr. in the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, "He as King will return from heaven with His bride, the church, in order to enter into the Millennium." This is based on the truth that Christ will return from heaven with the church. However, this addition extends the parable beyond the bounds of normalcy. This certainly would not have occurred to those who originally heard the parable. Does the church return with Christ? Undoubtedly. Does *this parable* teach that? Absolutely not!

The Talents

Matthew 25:14-30

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' "But his

¹⁶ Prior to the middle ages in Europe, the idea of privacy for sexual activity was unknown in the world. It was certainly not part of the agrarian culture of the Jews. It was not until the development of large domiciles that could be divided into compartments where the idea of private sexual intimacy began. Eventually this idea was normalized, and as a result of the Catholic and later Puritan ideas of sexuality, codified as necessary to modesty. This makes sense in an agricultural society where the breeding of animals was viewed without titillation. Some have suggested that the virgins were to accompany the bride and witness the consummation as a kind of sex education. This seems unlikely, in as much as the sexual union of animals was a common event which most would have witnessed.

lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Under no circumstances should this parable be applied to Christians or unbelievers living today. The parable emphasizes the responsibility of the Israelite who lives following the 70th week. To attempt to gain general spiritual information from it and to apply it therefore to the church is to completely set aside the teaching of the Lord. Those who originally heard the parable would not have thought beyond the predictive context of the message the Lord was giving. To remove it from this context and reinterpret it in order to come up with some fanciful application, as so many have done, is to reject the normal communicative value of Scripture.

The term *talent* refers in the Gospels to measure by weight of gold or silver. A talent was an enormous amount of money in Jesus' day. The gold talent was worth approximately 16 years worth of *average* daily wages for a field worker. A silver talent was worth somewhat less. Only the most wealthy could hand out talents such as the man in this parable.

The responsibility of the Israelite after the 70th week will be to fulfill God's program as God has given him the ability. Fulfilling this program shows that the individual *believing* Israelite is actually expecting his master, the Lord Jesus Christ, to return. He is not attempting to return to normal life and get rich. He realizes that his reward is in the immediate future. That there is a large conversion of Jews to the correct understanding of God's messianic program through Jesus of Nazareth, there can be no doubt. However, the Israelites who remain after the 70th week is completed will not all be believers. A culling of the nation will continue at this time.

It is interesting to note that both faithful slaves receive exactly the same reward regardless of the fact that one started out with more than the other. Those living during this time will have various abilities and responsibilities. But faithfulness in carrying out the program is the issue, not one's abilities or resources. This thinking was quite contrary to the view of Israelites in Jesus' day, who believed that a person was more valuable to God based on his resources and abilities.

The unbelieving Israelite does not responsibly use his master's goods. Rather he squanders the opportunity to live according to the master's program, and to meet his responsibility.

The individual Israelite who does not use the talent wisely will undoubtedly not be expecting his master to return. The problem is *not* that the unbelieving Israelite has only one talent. The problem is that he did not follow the master's program, and therefore did not really believe the required truth concerning the master.

Note on the Three Previous Parables

All three of these parables teach similar things about the 2nd coming of Christ. All reflect an Israelite setting. All emphasize some aspect of the responsibility of those who survive the 70th week of Daniel and who are supposed to be expecting the return of the Messiah. But each has a slightly different emphasis.

The parable of the evil and wise slaves emphasizes the fact that believing Israelites will actually be looking for the soon return of Messiah after the 70th week.

The parable of the virgins emphasizes the fact of preparedness and watchfulness of the true believer.

The parable of the talents emphasizes the fact of the responsible attitude and action of the believing Israelite, versus the characteristic irresponsibility of the unbelieving Israelite, who will act in a manner not consistent with true belief after the 70th week.

The Judgment of the Gentile Nations

Matthew 25:31-46

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ ‘Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ ‘Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ ‘Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

This does not appear to be the same event as mentioned in Joel 3:1-16. The Matthew 25:31-46 judgment occurs after the 70th week is concluded, at the time of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ during the gap between the end of the 70th week and the beginning of the millennium. Again Chisholm is correct when he says concerning the events of Joel 3:

So the event described here should be equated with Armageddon (cf. Rev. 14:14-20; 16:16; 19:11-21), rather than the judgment of the nations prophesied in Matthew 25:31-46.

The judgment of Matthew 25 refers to those Gentiles, and Gentiles only, who have survived the 70th week of Daniel. They are divided into two groups according to whether they are believers or unbelievers. Louis A. Barbieri correctly states:

The words the nations ($\blacktriangle \checkmark \neg \blacktriangle \bullet \bullet \neg \oplus$) should be translated “the Gentiles.” These are all people, other than Jews, who have lived through the Tribulation period (cf. Joel 3:2, 12). They will be judged individually, not as national groups. They are described as a mingling of sheep and goats, which the Lord will separate. (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, “Matthew”)

This cannot refer to the church as some mistakenly believe. That the church mostly consists of Gentiles is certainly true, but when a believer enters the body of Christ he loses his spiritual relationship to the Gentiles. This passage is dealing with Gentiles as Gentiles, not with Gentiles as members of the body of Christ.

The “sheep Gentiles” consist of those believing Gentiles who have supported Israel during the 70th week. These Gentiles are brought into the kingdom of God, which was designed originally to accommodate them. They are described in vss.37 and 46 as “the righteous.”

“These brothers of mine” (vs. 40) can only refer to the Lord’s Jewish brothers. During the difficult period of the 70th week, they will be persecuted terribly, and some righteous Gentiles will aid them in their suffering. Barbieri points out:

A Gentile going out of his way to assist a Jew in the Tribulation will mean that Gentile has become a believer in Jesus Christ during the Tribulation. By such a stand and action, a believing Gentile will put his life in jeopardy. His works will not save him; but his works will reveal that he is redeemed.¹⁷

“Eternal life” (vs. 46) is clearly associated with entering into the kingdom of God (vs. 34). See also Mark 10:30.

The “goat Gentiles” are those unbelieving Gentiles who have rejected Israel during the 70th week. They will be sent into “eternal fire” (vs. 41) and “eternal punishment” (vs. 46).

17 Barbieri unfortunately uses the term “redeemed” when he really means “saved.” The word “redeemed” does not mean “saved.” Rather, it refers to the work of Christ on the cross, once for all mankind. Salvation occurs each time a person places faith in the work of Christ. In other words, redemption occurs once, salvation a multitude of times.

Chapter Six

The Resurrection of Old Testament Believers

Introduction

Daniel 12 is one of the most revealing passages in Scripture dealing with the last days of Israel's domination by the gentiles. God had previously given Daniel the revelation of the 70 weeks. But that revelation did not actually answer the question Daniel had in mind. He desired to know when the end of Israel's dispersion was going to take place (Daniel 9:1-2).

The answer to that question was again given by God through a spirit being in Daniel 12, and Daniel was given information that he may not have realized was relevant to his question. Israel's dispersion will end not at the end of the 70th week, but a short time later. Furthermore, it is inexorably linked to the resurrection of believing Israel.

This passage answers many questions that arise in the gospel accounts of Christ's prophetic teaching. He gives information about a period of time after the 70th week of Daniel, but before the establishment of the Kingdom of God. It's clear that after the 70th week not all Israel is yet believing. Christ's parables must be understood as referring to an Israel that has two groups still associated together, believers and unbelievers. These two groups are first introduced in Daniel twelve, but in the context of the resurrection.

The Background of Daniel 12

Daniel 12 is part of a large predictive section of the book. This section begins at chapter 10 and continues to the end of chapter 12.

The occasion for the prophecy of Daniel 12 is presented in Daniel 10:1-9. This is the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, or 536 b.c. We read that Daniel was troubled. He had been in mourning for three weeks because he had understood the revelation of Daniel 9 about the 70 weeks. In so understanding, he knew that he would never return to his homeland.

Because Daniel was "greatly loved" (10:11) God sent a messenger to comfort Daniel. Many details of the years between the return to Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time until the beginning of the Roman Empire are presented in chapters 10 and 11. These have already happened from our perspective today, but in Daniel's time they were yet future.

The Context of Daniel 12

Beginning in 11 verse 36 the messenger jumps forward to that last week, the 70th week revealed in 9:27. He predicts the coming of the so-called Antichrist, and gives many details about him, his activities and others with whom he contends. The end result is that this willful king will come to his end, and will be without help.

Daniel 12 shifts focus of this same end time from the Roman prince to the people of Israel. Specifically, the angelic messenger presents the great doctrine of the resurrection of Israel. And in so doing he also presents many details concerning the end of the 70th week of chapter nine, and the short period beyond.

It is this shift in focus that is the climax of the angelic messenger's visit. It was for the purpose of comforting Daniel that all this information was given, and the culmination of that message was to

encourage Daniel. Although Daniel was never to see his homeland again in this life, all was not lost. A resurrection would take place according to a specific time table that was revealed to him in this last chapter of the book.

The Time Period under Consideration

Daniel 12:1a

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.

The phrase “at that time” refers to the same period of time as discussed in Daniel 11, which deals with the tribulation period, or the time of “Jacob’s trouble.” This is the “end time” mentioned in Daniel 11:40:

And at the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen, and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them, and pass through.

Since Michael (his name means “who is like God?”) is described as “the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people” his activity during the 2nd half of the week also includes making sure that Israel is not completely destroyed.

The word “prince” is the Hebrew word *sar*, which usually refers to an officer or military captain. The word “stand” is used twice. The first is the *qal* imperfect of *amad*. The second is the *qal* masculine participle of the verb *amad*, meaning “to take a stand.” It is used as a descriptive of Michael “who stands.” The idea of “standing guard” is close to the idea of the Hebrew verb. Michael is then viewed in his military capacity as being ready to go to war in behalf of Israel. This war begins in heaven, and is continued on earth.

Military and geopolitical terms (prince, chief prince, king, thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, etc.) were applied to spirit beings continuously through Scripture. Note the following passages: Ezekiel 28:12-18; Daniel 10:13, 20; Romans 8:38; Ephesians 3:10; Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 1:16; 2:15; Titus 3:1; 2 Peter 2:10; Jude 9. Dr. Chafer makes the following significant comment:

Since the Bible does not indulge in useless tautology, it may be believed that there is a specific meaning to each of these denominations, which meaning no doubt corresponds to earthly realities which bear these appellations.... Though there is seeming similarity in these denominations, it may be assumed that representation is made by these titles to incomprehensible dignity and varying degrees of rank. Heavenly spheres or rule exceed human empires as the universe exceeds the earth.¹⁸

It appears that in his military capacity Michael is the leader, the commander, of other angels who specifically have a relationship to Israel. This is confirmed by the statements of Revelation 12:7-9 (see below).

“The sons of your people” must refer to Israel. Who else could be described as the sons of Daniel’s people? The only people under consideration in this context are the people of Israel, because they are at the heart of Daniel’s problem. He desires to know about the deliverance of his people, Israel.

So, we see the archangel Michael (Jude 9) and his angels going to war in Revelation 12:7-9. They defeat Satan and his angels, who are consequently cast to the earth. This must take place at the middle

18 Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2. Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, pgs. 16, 17.

of the 70th week of Daniel, as the terminology admits of no other understanding. For three and one half years Satan wars on earth, and it is during this time that “there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time” (Daniel 12:1a).

As previously stated, the specific event of Daniel 12:1 is best understood as the same event as Revelation 12:7-9.

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

It is this act of war against Satan and his angels that is apparently the act of Michael’s standing of Daniel 12:1. The consequence of this war is that Satan and his angels will be cast to earth.

According to Revelation 12:13-14, this event takes place at the beginning of the last three and one half years of the 70th week of Daniel.

Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

The Lord Jesus Christ also describes this period of time in terms very similar to what Daniel says. See Matthew 24:16-21. The events of Daniel 12:1 therefore refer to the second half of Daniel’s 70th week, which is confirmed later in Daniel 12.

The Delivery of Israel

Daniel 12:1b

And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

This statement refers to the national salvation of Israel, not to the salvation of mankind in general. Again, “your people” refers to Daniel’s people, that is, to Israel. The group under discussion is thus twice limited in verse 1 to the Israelites. Many have attempted to broaden the resurrection here to include other Old Testament believers who are not Israelites. While this larger group of Old Testament believers is undoubtedly included in the statement of the resurrection in Revelation 20:4-15, they are not included here, as this passage is clearly to give comfort to those Israelites who had been taken captive by the Babylonians. Thus, only Israelites are considered in the context of Daniel 12.

The national deliverance of Israel requires the individual justification of believing Jews. Justification by faith is the prerequisite of national salvation (Romans 10:9-21).

Only those Israelites whose names are written in the book will be delivered. (See Joel 2:32. Only a remnant will be saved.) Lehman Strauss makes the point,

But we must not fall into the evil that has ensnared those who teach that that every Jew living on the earth at that time shall be saved. The prophecy in Daniel limits the deliverance to ‘every one that shall be found written in the book....’ These are the godly Jews, the believing remnant on the earth at that time. Certainly the apostate Jews in that day are not included, but only the redeemed Israelites.¹⁹

19 Lehman Strauss. *Daniel*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, page 355.

God keeps books! But He does not keep them to jog His own memory. Rather, He keeps them as a revelatory device to emphasize that He keeps track of those who believe. This is a statement of God's omniscience, of the fact that God will ultimately deliver every Israelite who believes. Are there actual, physical books in heaven? It's possible, though not required. God is certainly capable of keeping His books in His head. He is truly an omniscient accountant.

The Two-Fold Resurrection

Daniel 12:2

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

That this is a physical resurrection cannot be denied. The phrase "sleep in the dust of the ground" can only refer to the physical body, not to the person. The phrase "dust of the ground" is used as a metaphor for the grave.

The phrase, "these to everlasting life" refers only to the righteous dead of Israel. Contextually, this reference does not include other righteous dead. That is not to say that other dead cannot be resurrected at this time. Evidently they are, according to the statement of the first resurrection in Revelation 20. But here only righteous Israelites are included because this passage is dealing with that nation and no other peoples.

Likewise, "the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt" can only refer to unrighteous Israelites who have died. That other unrighteous peoples will also be resurrected at a later time is true. But that resurrection is at least a thousand years after the first. In other words, two distinct resurrections are viewed in vs. 2, separated by one thousand years. Revelation 20:4-6 states,

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

The first resurrection is the resurrection of the righteous dead, and part of those righteous dead will be Old Testament believing Israelites, Daniel included. This resurrection will occur after the events of Daniel's 70th week are completed. But it includes all Old Testament believers, Jews and Gentiles alike. It is this posttribulation resurrection that is the subject of discussion of the rest of Daniel 12. It is important to realize that this posttribulation resurrection does not relate to the church. But to deny that a posttribulation resurrection occurs, as some pretribulationists have done, complicates rather than simplifies the issue. *The reason the church's resurrection is pretribulation is not because there is no posttribulation resurrection.* The reason is found in the correct distinguishing between Israel and the church. Both Old and New Testament Scriptures teach a posttribulation resurrection of Old Testament and tribulation saints. Dr. Bernard Northrup makes the following statement:

We must sadly admit that many staunch, pretribulation, premillennial commentators have fearfully turned here to a nonliteral interpretation to try to annul the errant argument of the posttribulation rapturist.

Not only does Daniel 12 reveal a posttribulation resurrection of Israel, it also reveals the precise time elements involved in each of the three chronological details

given above.²⁰ This should not be surprising after a consideration of the explicit chronological details revealed in Daniel 9 about the time of the coming of Israel's Savior to be cut off for sin. Daniel 12 gives the chronological details in the same order as the events listed in verses 1 and 2."²¹

The second resurrection occurs after the thousand years, and includes all the unrighteous dead. It is clear from both Daniel and Revelation that unbelievers are to be resurrected. The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ places a thousand years between the resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous. This passage eliminates the possibility of a "general resurrection" taught by so many non-distinctive theologians.

The Results of the First Resurrection

Daniel 12:3-4

Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever. But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.

The picture is one of physical glory of resurrected Jews. Notice the two-fold simile to describe their glorious condition: 1) like the brightness of the firmament, and 2) like the stars for ever and ever. This seems to describe the permanent glory of the resurrected Israelite starting in the millennial state, and continuing beyond to the new heaven and new earth.

The angel again addresses Daniel by name. This is a reminder that we should always interpret any passage as its original recipient would have understood it. Keep in mind that Daniel is concerned only with his people. He realized that among Israelites there were both righteous and unrighteous. But he also realized that God's program for His people would be brought to fruition, the covenants fulfilled, and the program for Israel brought to a successful conclusion. Daniel knew that eventually Israel would be brought back to God. But he just didn't know when, or the sequence of events. He will receive some information in the next part of this chapter, but he is given instructions in verse 4 concerning the "book."

The statement "shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end" perhaps refers to the inability of *unbelieving Jews* to understand the prophecy of Daniel even until today. It is shut up until the end, perhaps a supernatural act guaranteeing that only that last generation of believing Jews will understand the fulness of the message.

"The book" probably does not refer to the entire book of Daniel, but to this last prophecy spoken by the angel. This statement should not be taken to mean that believers today cannot understand the truth being presented. Rather it refers to the majority of Jews who are unbelievers. Only when there is a large return of Israelites to God, in acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus Christ, will the conditions stated here be fulfilled. Believers at any time can understand the truth of this passage concerning the future resurrection of Israel.

20 In his presentation, Dr. Northrup previously mentioned 1) "a time of trouble such as never was" (12:1), 2) "at that time thy people (i.e. Israel) shall be delivered" (12:1) and 3) "many (not all) of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" (i.e. resurrection, 12:2).

21 Bernard Northrup, "The Posttribulation Rapture Error." A paper presented in the class in Old Testament at San Francisco Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, 1971.

“Running to and fro” perhaps indicates the great activity of Israelites during the 70th week. “Knowledge shall increase undoubtedly refers to the fact that that last generation of Israelites will have a knowledge of prophetic truth that will be applicable to them at the time of the end.

The Chronology of the Old Testament Resurrection in Daniel 12:5-13

In this section of Daniel, two questions are asked and answered. In answering these questions, God gives specific details dealing with the order of events associated with the resurrection of Old Testament believers.

The First Question

Daniel 12:5-6

Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?

Who are the “two others” on the two sides of the river who speak to the man clothed in linen? They are probably angels who are provided to dramatize this final revelation as a conversation between themselves and the first angel.

This first angel seems to hover over the river, while the spirit beings are on either bank. Much speculation has arisen as to the purpose of this sight which Daniel beheld. The best answer is simply that Daniel sees the angel in control of the river, undoubtedly the Tigris, which was the river which flowed through the land of Persia, and sustained its existence. Thus Daniel has indication that God’s program for Israel will eventually include domination of the land of Persia.

The wonders mentioned in verses 5-6 refer to the entire set of contextual events going back into the 11th chapter of Daniel. It is clear from the later context that the question is not limited to the resurrections mentioned, but goes back to the beginning of the time of trouble mentioned in Daniel 12:1.


The First Answer

Daniel 12:7

Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered,²² all these things shall be finished.

By raising both hands, the spirit being indicates the strength of his statement, as though it were an oath. Normally a person raised only the right hand when promising or swearing.

“This solemn form of swearing shows that the question and answer must refer not to the duration of the period of the persecution under Antiochus, but to that under the last enemy, the Antichrist.”²³

22 Perhaps “scattered” rather than “shattered,” as signified by the Hebrew root. The root can mean both. During the second three and one half years of Daniel’s 70th week Israel is scattered, having been driven from the land or taken captive. Therefore, the power (lit. hand, , but used metaphorically of power or ability) of the people is rendered ineffective, shattered.

23 Keil & Delitzch, *Daniel*.

The term “time, times and half a time” is universally understood by pretribulational scholars (and even some liberals) to refer to the second three and one half years of the 70th week of Daniel. Dr. Walvoord states,

What is the meaning of the phrase *a time, times, and an half*. This expression, also occurring in Daniel 7:25, apparently refers to the last period preceding the second coming of Christ which brings conclusion to the time of the end. Montgomery, although a liberal scholar, correctly stated the meaning when he wrote, ‘Here, v. 7, it is in the terms of 7:25, with the Hebrews equivalent of the Aram. there; i.e., three and a half years.’ In other words, it is the last half of the seven-year period of Daniel 9:27 which culminates in the second advent. The expression *time*, is considered a single unit; *times*, as equivalent to two units, and *an half*, a half unit. Adding these units amounts to three and one half.²⁴

See also Daniel 7:25 and Daniel 12:7, where this phrase occurs.

The actual number of days is 1260, which corresponds to the 3 ½ years of the 2nd half of Daniel’s 70th week as referenced in Revelation 12:6. This is the same time period mentioned in Revelation 12:14.

The holy people refer to Israel during the second half of the tribulation week. Israel will be scattered during that time. At that time “the wonders will be finished.” In other words, the entirety of the second half of the week, the final three and one half years, plus the resurrection of the righteous will find culmination.

The Second Question

Daniel 12:8

Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, My lord, what shall be the end of these things?

The one asking this question is none other than Daniel himself because of his lack of understanding. Daniel knew only of the 70th week divided into two parts, but did not have any details of the second half of the week and the 75 day period afterward. So Daniel was somewhat confused about the previous interchange between the spirit beings. He desired more details so he could fully understand the chronology.

The answer to Daniel’s question is given in verses 9-13, and is presented in a four-fold set of statements.

The Second Answer is presented in Daniel 12:9-13

The Timeframe

Daniel 12:9

And he said, Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

This part of angel’s answer is only understandable if one realizes that it is Daniel who is asking the question. Daniel did not comprehend fully the events being discussed. Because of the nature of the response, it seems evident that Daniel wanted more details. But only a limited amount of detail would be forthcoming. Much information (words) are closed up and sealed. This probably means that only a limited amount of information will be revealed to Daniel.

24 John Walvoord, *Daniel, the Key to Prophetic Revelation*. Chicago: Moody Press, page 293.

The time of the end is best understood as a reference to the last part of the tribulation period extending, as we shall see, into the 75 day gap beyond.

The Two Groups

Daniel 12:10

Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

The two groups of verse 10 are to be identified with the two groups found in the parables of Matthew 24 and 25. They consist of two groups of Israelites who survive the actual time of trouble, but are not yet in the kingdom. Like the unfaithful slave, unwise virgins, etc., “none of the wicked shall understand.” Like the faithful slave, the wise virgins, etc. “the wise shall understand.”

“Purified, made white, and refined” are a metaphorical statement as to the condition and therefore the practice of the believer at that time. The unbeliever shall do wickedly, and will not understand. The understanding which the wise have is undoubtedly in reference to the spiritual situation of that final time when the wise will be looking forward to the coming of Messiah.

The First Duration

Daniel 12:11

And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.

The time period begins at the time the daily sacrifice is taken away. This corresponds to the event mentioned in Daniel 9:27 when the sacrifice and offering will cease. From that event there will be 1,260 days until the end of the 70th week.

Therefore, the period before us of 1,290 days extends 30 days after the end of the 70th week during which faithful Israelites will be expecting the coming of Messiah and the unfaithful will be continuing acting in their unbelief. Undoubtedly during this period of time Messiah returns to earth to deliver faithful Israel and to bring the various aspects of judgment that will culminate this period. Dr. Northrup says:

The answer now continues, revealing that from the middle of the seven year period (and the abomination) until the purification of living Israel (and the separation of the obstinately wicked in Israel) in Israel’s judgment would be accomplished in 1290 days, i.e. within the month after the end of the period of trials.²⁵

Remnant Israel returns from captivity virtually instantaneously after the 70th week is over. Circumstances quickly return to the culture that was true during the days of Noah when people were marrying and giving in marriage. The three parables of the Olivet Discourse fit into this thirty-day period.

The Second Duration

Daniel 12:12-13

Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.

25 Ibid.

The 1,335 days is also to be counted from the middle of the 70th week. The total period of time then is 1,260 days until the end of the 70th week, plus 30 days waiting for the coming of Messiah, plus 45 days until the establishment of blessing.

The second period that consists of 1,335 days relates to the statements of Daniel 12:2, “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Those who are alive at the time of this resurrection are said to be “blessed.” This is consistent with the OT concept that the final generation who enter into the Kingdom of God in natural bodies will enjoy a blessing that other generations of believing Israelites, that is, those who are resurrected, will not enjoy.

Several events occur at the end of this 75 day period:

- 1) for those believing Israelites who are alive, great blessing will attain;
- 2) this is undoubtedly due to the establishment of the Kingdom of God in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy;
- 3) the resurrection of Daniel who will rise and stand in his allotted portion of land upon the culmination of this period, along with OT believing Israelites;
- 4) the resurrection of all other *believers* (not unbelievers) with the exception of the church, which will have already been resurrected;
- 5) the judgment of the gentile nations discussed in Matthew 25:31-46 will take place, probably right at the end of the period, or immediately after the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Thus we understand that the Kingdom of God and the first resurrection of Revelation 20 take place 1,335 days after the abomination of desolation. Other events of judgment, including the various campaigns that Messiah undertakes to bring physical judgment on unbelieving nations will undoubtedly take place during this period as well. It may well be that the scene of Matthew 25:31-46 is the final resultant event of the military campaigns of Messiah during the gap.

Concerning this issue, Dr. Northrup states,

Thirdly, a period of 75 days beyond the end of the tribulation (i.e. 1335 days) is the conclusion of the question, “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?” Here Daniel is told exactly when he would be resurrected. He was to “REST” (cf Rev. 6:11 concerning tribulation saints) until the end of the days (i.e. 75 days after the tribulation) and then stand “IN THY LOT.” What was Daniel’s lot? It was the promise of resurrection and entry into the earthly Messianic Kingdom:

1. With the pre-Israelite saints when the redeemer would stand on the earth (Job 19:25-27)
2. With tribulation saints after the little season when their brethren were yet being killed (cf. Rev. 6:11)
3. And with the rest of the Old Testament saints when earth casts forth its (saved) dead (Isaiah 26:19) to worship with the returned outcasts at Jerusalem (Isaiah 27:13)..²⁶

26 Ibid.

Chapter Seven

The Judgment of Israel

The Nature of the Judgment found in Ezekiel 20:33-40

The outline of this passage is as follows:

I. The Declaration of the Judgment

Ezekiel 20:33

As I live, says the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you.

The theme of this passage is expressed by, “with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you.” This vivid expression shows that the establishment of the king/subject relationship is accomplished by an outpouring of wrath. (The Hebrew word for “wrath” or “fury” is related to the idea of heat.)

The statement “I will be king over you” identifies this as an event designed to establish the final relationship of Israel with the Lord. The purpose for the judgment is to relate Israel to their King. The king is none other than “Adonai Yahweh” Who makes the declaration.

II. The Regathering for the Judgment

Ezekiel 20:34-35

I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face.

This regathering occurs after the tribulation period in preparation for entering the kingdom. At the middle of the 70th week of Daniel, Israel is again scattered and driven from the land of promise. Besides the remnant secured by God (Revelation 12) and the 144 thousand, other Israelites living in the land will be taken captive. Undoubtedly the same event is in view here as those spoken of by the Lord Jesus Christ in His Olivet parables. This regathering will take place during the first thirty days after the end of the 70th week of Daniel.

Charles Dyer makes the cogent statement, “words,” “mighty hand” and “outstretched arm” would call to mind God’s strength in delivering His people from Egypt.... However, His hand and arm would now bring wrath, not deliverance.” (Charles Dyer, “Ezekiel.” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*). Undoubtedly this refers to the actual event represented in the Matthew 24 and 25 parables where unbelieving Israel is finally separated from believing Israel.

The statement of vs. 35 “and I shall bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I shall enter into judgment with you face to face” indicates the location of this judgmental regathering. This is not a return to the land to enter the millennial state. Nor is it a gathering for participation in the tribulation period. Rather it is an gathering to the wilderness where a face-to-face meeting with Adonai Yahweh will take place.

Which wilderness is in view? Some (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, for instance) reject this as a literal place, speaking rather of a spiritual wilderness. However, there seems no compelling reason to do so.

The Hebrew word translated wilderness can mean simply a field for the pasturing of animals. This passage probably means that the inhabitants of Jerusalem will meet with the Lord at His return outside the city proper, and there be judged by Him.

The Hebrew word translated “plead” is derived from a root meaning to judge. Keil & Delitzsch translate it “contend.” If it means “plead” it probably means to plead as a prosecutor pleads his case. God will not plead with Israel to accept Him. Indeed, the NKJV translates the word “plead My case” though the original KJV translated it simply “plead.” At any rate, the idea is one of judgment and condemnation, not deliverance.

III. The Nature of the Judgment

Ezekiel 20:36-38

Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you, says the Lord GOD. I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

Twice again, Ezekiel uses the verb “plead” (*shaphat*) in the judicial sense of a prosecutor pleading his case before the bench. Judgment is in view and is expressed metaphorically in vs. 37.

The comparison of this judgment is with that when Israel was brought out of the land of Egypt, when Israel was condemned to spend years wandering. This statement makes this future judgment incomparable with any other events in the history of Israel, as it is specifically related to the nation as a whole.

God causes Israel to “pass under the rod.” Many fanciful interpretations have been given to this statement. Israelites in Ezekiel’s day would surely have associated passing under a rod as the act of a shepherd in culling his sheep allowing those who belonged to him to enter the fold. The “bond of the covenant here” is not the violated Mosaic code, but the everlasting New Covenant mentioned in Ezekiel 16:60. Concerning passing under the rod, Dyer says,

This pictures a shepherd holding out his rod and forcing the sheep to pass under it single file for counting (cf. Jeremiah 33:13). The shepherd would let those sheep that were actually his enter the fold, a place of protection. In this instance the fold was “the bond of the covenant.” The “covenant” could refer to the Mosaic Covenant, which Israel had broken (cf. Ezekiel 16:59), but this does not seem likely since Israel invalidated the Mosaic Covenant by her unbelief. Therefore God will make a New Covenant with her when He restores her to Himself (Jeremiah 31:31-33). Ezekiel seemed to make the same distinction (Ezekiel 16:60) between the Old Covenant of Israel’s “youth” and the “everlasting covenant” which will be enacted at the time of her restoration. God will again bring Israel into a covenant relationship with Him—but this covenant will be permanent.

So the rod does not refer to beating or inflicting physical pain, but as a metaphor for dividing Israel into two camps, those who belong to the shepherd and those who do not. This must again refer to the personal judgment of Messiah that will take place during the seventy-five day gap between the tribulation period and the beginning of the millennial state. Clearly Israel is being divided into believers and unbelievers. This passage teaches a similar truth to the parables of Matthew 24 and 25.

IV. The Result of the Judgment

Ezekiel 20:39-40

As for you, O house of Israel, thus says the Lord GOD: Go, serve every one of you his idols -- and hereafter -- if you will not obey me; but profane My holy name no more with your gifts and your idols. For on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel, says the Lord GOD, there all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there I will accept them, and there I will require your offerings and the firstfruits of your sacrifices, together with all your holy things.

The statements of verses 39 and 40 compare the condition of Israel in the time of Ezekiel with their future state in the land. As a result of the judgment in the wilderness, Israel will enter into a governmental relationship with God, because all of the culled (believing) Israelites will serve Him.

Verse 39 specifically indicates God's hatred for a "mixed" religion as it had become just prior to the dispersion of 586 B.C. At the time that they were being idolatrous, Israel was still giving gifts to God. The statement in verse 40 clearly shows that the "rod judgment" precedes the events of the millennial period. Israel will serve God "on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel," while the rod judgment takes place in the wilderness, before the actual establishment of Israel in the land. Some have attempted to make this judgment the entire tribulation period, but it is rather related to the second half the week.

This passage is not referring to Jews today who are dispersed, but to that final generation who will again serve God. Note that all of Israel will be in the land, a condition that has not applied since the original Babylonian captivity, and will not apply until God's kingdom is established.

The Results of the Process – Zechariah 12:10-13:1

The above Scripture divides naturally into three sections. See the following outline:

I. The Application of Grace

Zechariah 12:10

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.

The Subject of the Outpouring

The pronoun "I" refers back to the one speaking in 12:1, none other than Yahweh Himself.

The Object of the Outpouring

The one being poured out is the "Spirit of grace and supplication."

This is most probably a reference to the Holy Spirit, so called because He will minister graciously to Israel in her sinful condition and will lead her to supplication and repentance. (F. Duane Lindsey, "Zechariah" in the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*.)

Others, such as Keil and Delitzsch, indicate that the word Spirit may be used here in the sense of attitude. Such a view does not seem to be consistent with the objective idea of grace, however, though it may be associated with the concept of supplication (an attitude of supplication). All in all, it seems better to view the Spirit here as the same Spirit who is poured out in Joel 3, that is, the Holy Spirit.

Contextually, the specific application of grace seems to be related to the preparation of Israel for cleansing, as indicated by the fact that they will mourn the pierced Messiah (see below “The Person of the Outpouring”).

The Recipients of the Outpouring

This outpouring is limited to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This refers to the people who will be at the location of the actual second coming of the Lord. It is likely that Jerusalem will be a magnet for Jews returning from the scattering caused by the 70th week of Daniel. The remnant will easily find enough living space in Jerusalem.

The Person of the Outpouring

The “Me” is Yahweh whom Israel has pierced. This is a prophetic reference to the crucifixion of Christ at the hands of the Jewish leadership as portrayed in the Gospel accounts.

Elect Israel will be brought, to understand who the Lord Jesus Christ is, and the nature of His first coming. The phrase “look upon Me” should be understood as a metaphor for understanding the significance of those gospel events concerning the rejected Messiah.

The Result of the Outpouring

Vs. 10 introduces the concept of mourning that is expanded in verses 11-14. Israel’s mourning is likened to the mourning of a family who has lost their first-born. Such intensity of mourning in the Jewish culture was based on the idea of the preservation of the family line. An intense mourning is the only possible result as Israel realizes what it has lost as a result of their historical rejection of Christ as Messiah. This attitude of Mourning is further developed in the next set of verses.

II. The Attitude of Mourning

The Intensity of the Mourning

Zechariah 12:11

In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

Great mourning is indicated, and the comparison shows the intensity of that mourning. Hadadrimmon means “Hadad of the pomegranates.” The reference is to a place in the valley of Megiddo where a national lamentation was held at the place of the death of King Josiah at the hand of Pharaoh Necho II (2 Chronicles 35:20-27). This is traditionally identified as a spot near Jezreel in the plain of Megiddo.

The Isolation of the Mourning

Zechariah 12:12-14

And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; 14 all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.

The family of the Shimeites were a Levitical family descended through Gershon. If “Nathan” refers to the prophet, rather than to the son of David, as seems likely, then we have mourning from the various offices of king, David’s family, prophet, Nathan’s family, and priest’s, Levi’s family. The significance of mentioning the Shimeites is probably to show that the mourning will extend downward through the

individual families and not just be a mourning of leaders. The emphasis is then on the authenticity of the mourning, as every member of every family will be involved.

III. The Allocation of Cleansing

Zechariah 13:1

In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

The phrase “in that day” takes us back to the time when remnant Israel will look upon the pierced Messiah. The amillennial view that this is speaking of the time of the first coming of Christ cannot stand. This is the ultimate act of cleansing of the nation which is necessary for it to enter the blessing of the millennial state.

From a legal point of view, this cleansing is seen as a final act which allows Israel to have an on-going relationship with God. The nature of this cleansing is delineated in 13:2-6. Justification is not viewed in this passage, as some present. Rather the preparation for entering the kingdom is necessary so that the taint of sin can be eradicated.

Uncleanness is a term that is regularly used in the Bible for the ceremonial uncleanness of the law. But here it is beyond the ceremonial idea. Israel is actually being cleansed, and not ceremonially, but actually.

Chapter Eight

The Kingdom of God and The Millennium

The Nature of the Millennium

The Millennium is not Identical to the Kingdom of God on earth

The Kingdom of God on earth has a beginning but no end, while the Millennium lasts but 1,000 years

As we shall see, the term millennium refers to the first thousand years of the Kingdom of God on earth, but the Kingdom does not last only a thousand years, but forever, without end.

Daniel 2:44

And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

The context of Daniel 2 deals with the relationship of the Gentile governments to God's people Israel. The statue which Nebuchadnezzar had seen (Daniel 2:31-32) revealed a series of Gentile kingdoms which culminates in a stone uncut by hands (2:34) destroys the image. This stone is interpreted in Daniel 2:44. It represents the fact that the God of Heaven (Aramaic = אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיָא) will establish a kingdom.

"In the days of those kings" indicates the final days of the Roman Empire which will be divided into a 10 king confederacy of some sort.

The phrase "and that kingdom will not be left for another people" probably indicates that it is a Jewish theocracy, rather than a Gentile dominion, as Israel was even in Jesus' day. Clearly, God's kingdom puts an end to Gentile earthly rule and establishes God's kingdom on earth in its place.

The kingdom which the God of Heaven sets up endures, not for 1,000 years, but in perpetuity, which is one of the meaning of the word אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיָא, *olam*.

2 Samuel 7:16

And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.

The "you" of this passage is King David. Nathan the prophet is God's

This statement to David indicates that David's kingdom will endure forever, and the rule of David's dynasty will never end. That this will occur as the result of the birth of Jesus Christ as the heir of David there can be no doubt.

Psalms 89:35-37

Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. His descendants shall endure forever, And his throne as the sun before Me. It shall be established forever like the moon, And the witness in the sky is faithful.

The only way the original recipients of Psalm 89 could have understood this was literally. This is a promise that the “throne” of David will be established forever. The word “throne” must refer metaphorically to the kingdom government of Israel through the descendants of David.

Isaiah 9:6,7

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

In this clearly messianic passage, the throne of David is directly promised to the individual “son” upon whom the government of Israel will devolve.

The Kingdom of God on earth has two aspects, the Mediatorial Aspect and the Direct Rule Aspect.

The Mediatorial Aspect

The phrase “the mediatorial kingdom” is the favorite term of Dr. Alva J. McClain in his opus, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*. He traces the idea of God’s ruling through a human mediator beginning with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden through the final period of mediation performed by the Lord Jesus Christ in His fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies.

The mediatorial kingdom is thus seen to be the aspect of the Kingdom of God on the earth through which human rulers exercise authority under the theocratic rule of God. This “theocratic kingdom” is not to be confused with the universal rule of God over creation. See McClain, Chapter IV, “The Universal Kingdom of God.” Nor is it to be confused with the earthly Kingdom of God, which will continue beyond the thousand years.

The Millennium is the first thousand years of the earthly Kingdom of God, and as such is the final scene in the great drama of mediatorial rule. After numerous human failures, the **man** Jesus the Christ rules as Messiah for a thousand years in righteousness. The serious student is encouraged to study McClain’s *The Greatness of the Kingdom* for a thorough understanding of the concept of the mediatorial kingdom.

The fact that there is a thousand year aspect to the kingdom cannot be denied. It is best understood as the first thousand years of the perpetual kingdom predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures. Revelation 20:1-8 clearly states this thousand year aspect:

***A**ND I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.*

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed

and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.

Is the thousand years to be taken literally? The above passage uses the term “thousand years” six times. How are we to understand this phrase. Several objections have been raised to a literal understanding of the thousand years.

Some have confused the universal Kingdom of God with the Mediatorial Kingdom. In doing so, they conclude that since the universal kingdom has no time limits, it is absurd to take the thousand years literally. The refutation of this error is obvious.

In order to confuse the two aspects of God’s rule, one must interpret the Old Testament kingdom passages according to some abnormal set of hermeneutical principles. As we have seen, the Scriptures clearly distinguish an earthly kingdom, a kingdom in perpetuity, which is the culmination of God’s program of bringing mankind as a whole into a permanent relationship to Himself.

The absurdity of the willful confusion of the universal with the earthly kingdom is clearly seen when it is realized that those who do allegorize the earthly kingdom passages only do so in the prophetic passages dealing with the second advent. The same people recognize that the various prophecies which were fulfilled concerning the first coming of Christ were fulfilled literally.

Some have used the idea that the “thousand years” sounds suspiciously like a rounded number. If it is a rounded number, they say, it cannot be taken literally. Such an approach shows the abject bias of the anti-millennial view, and a willful disregard of what rounding means.

First, the sovereign God of creation could easily establish the millennial period for exactly one thousand years to the day with precision, if He so wills.

Second, assuming the “thousand years” is a rounded number, such a rounding must follow the principles concerning rounded numbers. The only reason to “round off” a number is because the precise number is not greatly important. However, the rounded number must approximate the correct number closely enough to be sufficient. In other words, the “thousand years,” if rounded, cannot be, say, nine hundred years, else the rounding would have been “nine hundred years.” Likewise the “thousand years” could not be significantly longer, say, “twelve hundred years” for the same reason. The idea of rounding cannot be made to mean “an indeterminate period,” which is what the non-millennialist is attempting to establish.

Those who use the rounding idea don’t really believe that the number is rounded. They want to eliminate the idea of a literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy ALTOGETHER. They don’t want to believe that God will establish an earthly kingdom for Israel as the Old Testament says He will do! They, in fact, desire to allegorize the Old Testament kingdom passages and apply them to the church and thereby blur the distinctions of normal interpretive procedure, and ultimately apply the legalism of Israel’s kingdom program to believers today.

In fact, there is no legitimate exegetical or interpretive reason for rejecting the thousand year aspect of a normal kingdom. While we cannot speak to the ultimate motivation of those who reject the obviously correct view of the kingdom, we can say that at best they are deluded and inconsistent.

The Direct Rule Aspect

1 Corinthians 15:24-26

Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

God the Father will begin His direct rule of the Kingdom of God on earth at the end of the millennial period. It is at this time that the mediatorial aspect of the kingdom comes to an end.

The Lord Jesus Christ ends His mediatorial reign, but not His personal reign, over the kingdom of God. This is done as the result of abolishing all human rule, authority, and power, and the abolishment of physical death.

See also **Revelation 20:4-6**. Physical death is not abolished until the final resurrection of the unrighteous dead at the end of the thousand years. It truly is “the last enemy that will be abolished.”

Revelation 22:1

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

This passage refers to the New Jerusalem. After the thousand years, New Jerusalem is let down and God rules from that wonderful city. Note that the throne, the place of ruling, belongs both to God and the lamb. God must refer to God the Father, so as not to be confused with the lamb. The lamb is a clear reference to the crucified and risen Christ. No longer does He rule as messiah. His ruling relationship is now theological rather than mediatorial.

The Restoration of Israel

Only a Remnant of Israel is Involved

Isaiah 10:21-22

The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, To the Mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, A remnant of them will return; The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

The actual return of Israel to occupy the land forever will involve only a remnant. A destruction of Israel is determined by God. “Overflowing with righteousness” indicates that both the purpose and the result of God’s judgment will be righteousness in the land.

Isaiah 65:8-9

Thus says the LORD: As the new wine is found in the cluster, And one says, Do not destroy it, For a blessing is in it, So will I do for My servants’ sake, That I may not destroy them all. I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, And from Judah an heir of My mountains; My elect shall inherit it, And My servants shall dwell there.

Here the final remnant is viewed as “new wine” found in the cluster. The cluster is not to be destroyed because of the benefit in it, that is, the new wine. God clearly indicates that not all Israel will be destroyed, which must have been a great comfort to the believing Israelite of Isaiah’s day.

See also Isaiah 19:25; 43:1.

God will reestablish a close personal relationship with Israel

Jeremiah 30:22

You shall be My people, And I will be your God.

Many of the restoration passages of the Old Testament indicate the close personal relationship that will exist between God and restored Israel. See also Jeremiah 32:38. and Ezekiel 34:24; 34:30-31; Micah 7:19-20; Zechariah 13:9; Malachi 3:16-18.

The City of Jerusalem will be Rebuilt

Jeremiah 30:18

Thus says the LORD: Behold, I will bring back the captivity of Jacob's tents, And have mercy on his dwelling places; The city shall be built upon its own mound, And the palace shall remain according to its own plan.

Is it necessary to explain that if one rejects the normal prophetic meanings of the following passages, they would have been unintelligible to the audiences of the various prophets? Clearly, the prophets had a specific set of ideas in mind that were consistent from the time of Isaiah onward. There is no legitimate reason to reinterpret these in order to apply them to the church. The only other alternative is to ignore them altogether. But God's promises will be fulfilled in precisely they way He revealed them.

The importance of the city of Jerusalem cannot be over emphasized. It is both the symbolical and actual seat of government during the Millennial period. In addition, it is a New Jerusalem, and no other city, that is the seat of God's authority during the post-millennial state. Many passages indicate both the governmental and prophetic importance of the Capital city of Israel.

While some have argued that the statement of Jeremiah 30:18 has already come to pass, one needs only look at the broader context to be convinced that this is not so.

Jeremiah 31:38-40

Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that the city shall be built for the LORD from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. The surveyor's line shall again extend straight forward over the hill Gareb; then it shall turn toward Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes, and all the fields as far as the Brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be holy to the LORD. It shall not be plucked up or thrown down anymore forever.

The Tower of Hananel stood at the northeast corner of the city (See. Nehemiah 3:1; 12:39; Zechariah 14:10) The Corner Gate was most likely located on the northwest corner of the city. Therefore, these two locations indicate that the northern perimeter wall will be rebuilt.

The locations of the hill of Gareb and Goah are unknown. Most believe that these locations are points describing the western perimeter of the future city, which is reasonable given the know values of the other geographical references. Some believe Gareb referred to the hill west of the Tyropeon Valley that is today called Mount Zion. This seems likely, though it could refer to the Mount of Olives.

The southwestern and southern boundary will be the valley in which dead bodies and ashes are thrown. This is the Valley of Hinnom. The eastern boundary consists of the sloped terraces down to the Kidron Valley. This boundary would extend to the corner of the Horse Gate on the southeast tip of the city, where the Kidron Valley and Hinnom Valley meet.

The boundaries, while interesting, are not the most important theological statements in this passage. It is the permanence of the city that is of greatest significance. While the city has been destroyed and rebuilt many times, it has not yet been established permanently so that it “shall not be plucked up, or overthrown anymore forever.”

Ezekiel 48:15-22

The five thousand cubits in width that remain, along the edge of the twenty-five thousand, shall be for general use by the city, for dwellings and common-land; and the city shall be in the center. These shall be its measurements: the north side four thousand five hundred cubits, the south side four thousand five hundred, the east side four thousand five hundred, and the west side four thousand five hundred. The common-land of the city shall be: to the north two hundred and fifty cubits, to the south two hundred and fifty, to the east two hundred and fifty, and to the west two hundred and fifty. The rest of the length, alongside the district of the holy section, shall be ten thousand cubits to the east and ten thousand to the west. It shall be adjacent to the district of the holy section, and its produce shall be food for the workers of the city. The workers of the city, from all the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it. The entire district shall be twenty-five thousand cubits by twenty-five thousand cubits, foursquare. You shall set apart the holy district with the property of the city. The rest shall belong to the prince, on one side and on the other of the holy district and of the city's property, next to the twenty-five thousand cubits of the holy district as far as the eastern border, and westward next to the twenty-five thousand as far as the western border, adjacent to the tribal portions; it shall belong to the prince. It shall be the holy district, and the sanctuary of the temple shall be in the center. Moreover, apart from the possession of the Levites and the possession of the city which are in the midst of what belongs to the prince, the area between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin shall belong to the prince.

Note the great detail given by Ezekiel in his description of the future city. This does not appear to be the New Jerusalem that is post-millennial, but the city of Jerusalem as it will exist during the millennial period.

Ezekiel 48:15-22 indicates the specific boundaries of the city and its environs.²⁷ The previous section of Ezekiel, beginning with 47:13 and continuing to 48:14, are general descriptions of the location of the northern tribes in the millennial period. The section immediately following the boundaries of the city, from Ezekiel 48:23, the locations of the southern tribes are described (see below).

Several different cubits were in use in OT times. In Israel two cubit measurements were in common use. According to ISBE,

In Israel, too, there were differences in cubits, that of Dt. 3:11 being the ‘common’ cubit (about 18 inches, GS), whereas in Ezk. 40:5 the ‘long’ cubit, which added a handbreadth to the forearm measurement, was implied (cf. Ezk. 43:12). Perhaps Ezekiel’s cubit was the long Egyptian measure of 20.5 in (52 cm.).

In recent times it has been common to round the “long cubit” up to about 21 inches. The cubits provided by Ezekiel in these notes are assumed to be about 21 inches.

See Isaiah 60, where the entire chapter appears to be addressed to the city of Jerusalem, perhaps as representative of the nation during the millennial reign. See also Psalm 46:4; Lamentations 2:15; Jeremiah 3:17; Nehemiah 11:1, 18.

²⁷ The Berkeley Version gives these measurements in modern terms.

The Palestinian Covenant is Fulfilled

The student will recall that the “Palestinian Covenant” is that body of material in Deuteronomy 28ff which guarantees that if Israel is cast out of the land because of violating the Mosaic code, God will supernaturally return her to the land.

Isaiah 11:11-12

It shall come to pass in that day That the LORD shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. 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.

Significantly Isaiah mentions both the northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Judah) as being assembled. Isaiah prophesied to the southern kingdom during the reigns of the kings Jothan, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh. During his tenure both Micah in the south and Hosea in the north were prophesying.

Interestingly, all four major directions from Israel are represented by the locations mentioned: Hamath is north, Egypt and Cush (Ethiopia) are south, Assyria, Elman and Shinar (Babylon) are east, and the islands of the sea are west. Therefore Israel will be gathered “from the four corners of the earth.”

Micah 2:12

I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, Like a flock in the midst of their pasture; They shall make a loud noise because of so many people.

Micah was actually a prophet to the southern kingdom, a contemporary of Isaiah. However, here he predicts the return of the northern kingdom. The terms “Jacob” and “Israel” in Micah’s day referred to the 10 northern tribes.

Hosea 1:10-2:1

Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, You are not My people, There it shall be said to them, You are sons of the living God. Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel Shall be gathered together, And appoint for themselves one head; And they shall come up out of the land, For great will be the day of Jezreel! Say to your brethren, My people, And to your sisters, Mercy is shown.

Hosea was the “Jeremiah” of the north. He was the final prophet to minister to the northern kingdom before the deportation by Assyria. Like Jeremiah, he went unheeded for most of his long prophetic ministry.

Despite the fact that Israel has been decimated numerically, the nation again will be populous.

Note the juxtaposition of statements from, “You are not My people,” to “You are the sons of the living God.”

Again both the southern kingdom (Judah) and the northern kingdom (Israel) will be gathered.

The “One leader” which they appoint for themselves will undoubtedly be David. Much as been assumed by the idea that Israel “appoints for themselves.” This does not indicate a turn to democracy or republican form of government. The verb translated “appoint” (📄📄❖) in no way indicates some kind

of vote. It means simply, “to put,” or “to place.” Nor is this verb in the Hebrew a reflexive, but rather an active voice with the prepositional phrase “to them,” rather than “for themselves.” The emphasis is on the singularity of leadership rather than the means by which the leader is selected. The significance of the “one ruler” prophecy is seen in the fact that Hosea was the last prophet of the northern kingdom to minister before the Assyrian deportation. At that time, the split kingdom regularly had two kings, one for Israel and the other for Judah. Hosea clearly is indicating a re-united Israel under one head.

“Ammi” means “my people.” “ruhamah” means, literally, “she is loved.” (Pual perfect 3rd feminine singular from $\text{C} \times$.)

See also Isaiah 65:9, Ezekiel 16:60-63, Ezekiel 39:28, Zechariah 10:6, Jeremiah 25:7,8

Ezekiel 36:28-29

Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you.

Ezekiel, who was a contemporary of Daniel, was an exilic prophet, and was prophesying from Babylon. It is not insignificant that he presents the fullest picture of the return to the land of any prophet of the Old Testament.

Associated with living in the land given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Israel will be cleansed, undoubtedly from moral and spiritual uncleanness. In addition, prosperity of food is promised.

The Land is Divided Among the Tribes

Ezekiel 47:13-48:35 (q.v.)

I did not include the passage above in the notes because of its great length. See either the NKJV or the NASB for this section

The northern border is at Hamath, about 160 miles north of Jerusalem (47:15-17).

The southern border is “from Tamar unto the waters of strife in Kadesh, and to the river toward the great sea” (48:28).

The western border is the great (Mediterranean) sea (47:20).

The eastern border runs along a line from Damascus in the north to the Sea of Galilee, along the Jordan River to the Dead Sea (47:18) which will support life according to Ezekiel 47:1-12 (q.v.).

The order of the twelve tribes from the north to the south is as presented in the map in this notebook.

A portion is set aside for the priests, Levites, temple and Jerusalem (A reed is approximately 6 cubits. A royal (Egyptian) cubit was about 18 inches, which makes a reed about 9 feet. *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*.)

The Davidic Covenant is Fulfilled.

Isaiah 11:1-2

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

The “Rod from the stem of Jesse” is, of course, the Messiah. Jesse was David’s father, and this prophecy clearly narrows the messianic line to the tribe of Judah, and further, to the family of Jesse.

The ultimate fulfillment of the Davidic covenant must be found in the Kingship of Jesus Christ. For several reasons, then, it is to Him that this prophecy in Isaiah points.

1. Isaiah 11 is applied to Messiah in the New Testament (Romans 15:12).
2. This is the way that the original readers would have interpreted the passage. Indeed, it seems that they, in fact, did so.
3. While some have attempted to apply this passage to the king of Judah during Isaiah's ministry, Hezekiah, the description in the chapter is not applicable to any other personage than the Messiah. Some have referred it to Zerubbabel. "But none of the things here related apply to either, except the fact that they had a descent from the family of Jesse; for neither of those families had fallen into the decay which the prophet here describes (see the discussion of rod and stem below)." (Albert Barnes)
4. This is one of the great kingdom passages of the Old Testament. The peace and prosperity referred to in the chapter, do not describe of any portion of the reign of Hezekiah.
5. The descriptions here are similar to other portions of the Scriptures which are applicable to the Messiah. Jeremiah 23:5 and 33:15 describe the Messiah under the similitude of a branch, a germ or shoot (using a different Hebrew word, but retaining the same idea). Cf Zechariah 3:8. SA Isaiah 4:2.
6. Virtually all conservative Christian commentators have referred this to the Messiah, a somewhat unusual situation itself, especially among such a theologically divergent group.

The word translated "rod" more properly means a twig growing from branch. The word translated "stem" refers to a stump of a tree that has been cut. JFB is undoubtedly correct when it says concerning the word "stem:"

...literally, "the stump" of a tree cut close by the roots: happily expressing the depressed state of the royal house of David, owing to the hostile storm, when Messiah should arise from it, to raise it to more than its pristine glory.

With this approach Keil and Delitzch agree, as does Albert Barnes when he says,

In the previous chapter, the prophet had represented the Assyrian monarch and his army under the image of a dense and flourishing forest, with all its glory and grandeur. In opposition to this, he describes the illustrious personage who is the subject of this chapter, under the image of a slender twig or shoot, sprouting up from the root of a decayed and fallen tree. Between the Assyrian, therefore, and the person who is the subject of this chapter, there is a most striking and beautiful contrast. The one was at first magnificent - like a vast spreading forest - yet should soon fall and decay; the other was the little sprout of a decayed tree, which should yet rise, expand and flourish.

Does the phrase "spirit of Yahweh" in verse 2 refer to the Holy Spirit, or does it refer to the concept of endowment from Yahweh, as it is alleged that it sometimes does? There can be little doubt that the Holy Spirit is in view here, given the nature of the qualities associated with Him. However, the silly attempts to require that there are seven spirits here, so as to imply perfection (JFB) or associate this statement with that of Revelation 1:4, and to refer to the Holy Spirit in His fulness, are out of bounds, as the interpretive principles used to teach such things are abnormal. It is to be recalled that Isaiah was

communicating to a particular people at a particular time, and they would not have understood such over-wrought “Christian” symbolism.

The Messianic association with the Spirit of Yahweh can only be understood from the human perspective. While the Old Testament Scriptures clearly teach the deity of Messiah, they likewise teach His human descent through the Davidic line, as here. It is with reference to the humanity of Messiah that the ministry of the Spirit is applied.

Isaiah 55:3, 11

Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you -- The sure mercies of David.

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Isaiah, who died many years before Jeremiah began to prophesy, mentions the New Covenant as associated with the “faithful mercies shown to David. That Isaiah is referring to the New Covenant, as discussed in Jeremiah 31:31ff, there can be little doubt. He refers to it as “an everlasting covenant.” It appears that in some sense the New Covenant is associated with the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

Verse 11 is included because of its oft misquotation concerning God’s word, particularly the phrase, “it shall not return unto me void” (KJV). In fact, while the doctrine is true that says that God’s word will be effective for that which He determines, that is not the specific meaning of this passage. It refers to Isaiah’s predictive word to Israel concerning the return of Israel to the land. Note the following verse, 55:12, “12 “For you will go out with joy, And be led forth with peace; The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, And all the trees of the field will clap *their* .”

Jeremiah 23:5-6

Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Jeremiah, the last prophet to the southern kingdom before the Babylonian captivity, spends most of his prophecy remonstrating with Israel and predicting judgment. He is, therefore, often referred to as the “prophet of doom.” However, periodically, Jeremiah looks past the coming judgment, and sees the coming of Christ as the “righteous Branch.”

In Christ’s days of justice and righteousness, “Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely.” The northern kingdom was already dispersed, and the southern kingdom was near destruction, yet Jeremiah sees the day when the united tribes will refer to their king, “The Lord our righteousness.”

See also Jeremiah 33:20-26, Ezekiel 34:23-25, Ezekiel 37:23-24, Hosea 3:5, Micah 4:7-8.

Temple is Worship is Reinstated – Ezekiel 40-46

Three views have been espoused by conservatives of this passage. First, some believe that it refers to the rebuilding of Solomon’s Temple after the 70 year captivity. Second, some hold that this prophecy refers to the church, and

Those who hold this view are inconsistent for they interpret Ezekiel’s earlier, now-fulfilled prophecies literally, yet interpret his yet-unfulfilled prophecies symbolically.
--

no literal temple is in view. Third, during the Millennial period a literal temple will be built on the site of the Temple Mount.

This passage cannot refer to a rebuilding of Solomon's Temple for the following reasons: 1) No such temple was ever built. This temple in no way resembles the efforts of the returnees from Babylonian captivity. 2) Since this temple was not rebuilt, the only conclusion possible is that Ezekiel was mistaken, and that this portion is therefore in error. This we vehemently deny.

The second view, held by amillennial and postmillennial interpreters, must be rejected. It violates the normal rules of interpretation for a view that fits into an unsatisfactory over-all view of biblical predictive prophecy. Those who hold this view are terribly inconsistent. Charles Dyer accurately states the following:

Only the third view is consistent with the truth that Ezekiel obviously would have had his readers understand. The future earthly temple is to be understood as referring to a literal Israel returning to a literal land during a literal Kingdom of God. No other view does justice to the overall intention of the Old Testament prophets.

The following outline of Ezekiel 40-46 may help the student in the study of this important passage. Many commentaries have extended discussions of the details of the temple, and can be consulted for the more difficult and technical matters presented.

- I. The Measuring Rod for the Millennial Temple – 40:1-4
 - A. The Date of the Event - Ezekiel 40:1
 - B. The Place of the Event - Ezekiel 40:2
 - C. The Appearance of the Man - Ezekiel 40:3
 - D. The Commandment by the Man - Ezekiel 40:4
- II. The Measurements of the Millennial Temple – 40:5-42:20
 - A. The Length of the Measuring Rod - Ezekiel 40:5
 - B. Measurements of the East Gate - Ezekiel 40:6-16
 - C. The Outer Court - Ezekiel 40:17-49
 - D. The Inner Temple - Ezekiel 41:1-26
 - E. Chambers of the Temple - Ezekiel 42:1-20
- III. The Vision of God’s Glory Filling the Millennial Temple – 43:1-12
 - A. The Restoration of the Glory - Ezekiel 43:1-5
 - B. The Results of the Restoration - Ezekiel 43:6-9
 - C. The Reason for the Revelation - Ezekiel 43:10-12
- IV. The Altar of Sacrifice of the Millennial Temple – 43:13-17
- V. The Initial Offerings of Consecration of the Millennial Temple – 43:18-27
 - A. The Family of the Priesthood (Seed of Zadok) - Ezekiel 43:18-19a
 - B. The First Day Sin Offering - Ezekiel 43:19b-21
 - D. The Second Day Sin Offering - Ezekiel 43:22-24
 - E. The Third through Seventh Day Sin Offering - Ezekiel 43:25-26
 - F. The Eighth Day and Onward Burnt Offerings and Peace Offerings – Ezekiel 43:27
- VI. The Gate for the Prince in the Millennial Temple – 44:1-3
- VII. The Significance of the Vision of the Millennial Temple– 44:4-8
- VIII. The Servants in the Millennial Temple – 44:9-14
- IX. The Requirements for the Priesthood in the Millennial Temple – 44:15-31
 - A. The Family of Zadok - Ezekiel 44:15-16
 - B. The Clothing of the Priesthood - Ezekiel 44:17-19
 - C. The Deportment of the Priesthood - Ezekiel 44:20-23
 - D. The Judgment by the Priesthood - Ezekiel 44:24
 - E. The Ceremonial Cleanness of the Priesthood - Ezekiel 44:25-27
 - F. The Inheritance of the Priesthood - Ezekiel 44:28
 - G. The Sustenance of the Priesthood - Ezekiel 44:29-31
- X. The Land of the Priesthood for the Millennial Temple – 45:1-12
- XI. The Offerings in the Millennial Temple – 45:13-46:24

The Earth will be a Paradise

The Curse is Lifted

Genesis 3:17-19

Then to Adam He said, Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it: Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.

As a direct result of Adam's act of sin God cursed the very soil itself. No longer was it to give of its abundance without toil. The very fact that man must work to survive shows his status before God. The "work ethic" which we extol is only necessary because of the sin of Adam

The Curse on the Ground is Lifted

Isaiah 35:1-2, 6-7

The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, The excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, The excellency of our God.

"Of all the prophetic books of the OT Isaiah is the most messianic; even more so than the book of Zechariah. Only the Psalms contain a larger number of messianic predictions." Merrill Unger

Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool, And the thirsty land springs of water; In the habitation of jackals, where each lay, There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

This passage is clearly a reference to the land of Canaan. It describes the restoration of that land after the events of the time of Jacob's trouble, when great armies will destroy the "beautiful land." See Isaiah 34 for a description of this terrible event in Israel.

Chapter 35 of Isaiah is one of the most joyful sections of the book. It follows immediately upon one of the darkest and most horrifying passages in all of OT prophecy, Isaiah 34. It is typical of OT apocalyptic literature that passages of judgment and destruction are followed by passages of glory and light.

Will the removal of the curse be world-wide? Undoubtedly, but it is not the intention of

Isaiah to say so here. Clearly the curse of Genesis encompasses the entire earth and universe. In Romans 8 we read that the entire creation is awaiting deliverance from the curse. This will begin during the millennial period, and will finally culminate with the new heavens and earth.

The Curse on Vegetation is Lifted

Isaiah 55:13

Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; And it shall be to the LORD for a name, For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

A direct result of the curse of Genesis three was the establishment of weeds, thorns, thistles, etc, to impede the growth cycle of beautiful and helpful plants. This will be reversed during the millennial

period and this reversal will continue perpetually, “for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” The earth will return to the pre-fall state and the existence of impedance plants will be eliminated. See also Ezekiel 34:27 and Amos 9:13-14.

The Curse on Animals is Lifted

Isaiah 11:6-9

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11 is one of the great messianic passages of the Bible. It predicts in great detail His reign as a descendent of the house of David. Verses 6-9 describe the peaceful conditions of the messianic reign. “Edenic conditions will be at least partly restored, predatory beasts and noxious serpents no longer preying upon one another or upon man.” (Unger)

Those who reject normal literal interpretation sometimes try to spiritualize this passage and apply it to the church today. But the passage is self-explanatory and needs no spiritualizing if taken in the context of the future restoration of Israel's blessing. The detail of this passage, like many other millennial scenes, is beyond spiritualizing. It refers to a time during which fear of wild beasts will be eliminated, when carnivores will become herbivores, when poisonous reptiles will lose their sting.

Isaiah 65:25

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD.

These parallel passages in Isaiah, 11:9-6 and 65:25, are a conundrum to the amillennialist. Sometimes the Isaiah 11 passage is actually given as a proof text for child evangelism! While giving the gospel to children is certainly an important part of the ministry of believers, this passage is clearly not intended to teach such.

Government will be Righteous

Christ will rule the entire earth

Micah 5:2-5

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting. Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel. And He shall stand and feed His flock In the strength of the LORD, In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God; And they shall abide, For now He shall be great To the ends of the earth; And this One shall be peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land, And when he treads in our palaces, Then we will raise against him Seven shepherds and eight princely men.

This is the passage that Herod's scribes presented as proof to the Magi that the Messiah of Israel would be born in Bethlehem. It is a prime example of the effect of telescoping the two comings of Christ into one presentation. The prophets of the Old Testament did not conceive of the idea that Messiah would offer rather than impose the kingdom of God. They saw the suffering servant, but they were unable to

reconcile that concept with the clear teaching of the Messiah coming in majesty. Thus in this passage we see the coming of Messiah associated directly with His regal establishment and rule.

Zechariah 9:9-10

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.

The events predicted in vs. 9 took place, of course, during the earthly ministry of Christ in the gospels. The people of Israel, represented as “Daughter of Zion” and “Daughter of Jerusalem,” are encouraged to rejoice at the coming of the king. He is described as “just,” a reference to the character of Messiah. This was fulfilled in the “triumphal entry” (Matthew 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-40).

The events of verse 10 are yet to take place. Three specific statements are made in vs. 10:

1. Israel will no longer need implements of war, which Messiah will remove (the chariot, the horse, and the bow).
2. The Gentiles will be brought into peace. From other passages we know that these will be the Gentiles who support Israel during the tribulation.
3. Messiah’s dominion (*moshel*, kingly rule) will be universal on the earth.

David will be Regent

Jeremiah 30:9

But they shall serve the LORD their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them.

David, in his resurrected body, will rule directly over Israel.

“Many scholars view this as a reference to Christ who is from the line of David. However, there is no compelling reason not to take Jeremiah’s reference in a literal.... David is referred to by name elsewhere in passages that look to the future restoration of a united Israel (cf. Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hosea 3:5).” – *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Charles Dyer.

Ezekiel 37:24-25

David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given

Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah, and spoke to some of the same themes. However, unlike Isaiah who was undoubtedly part of the royal family, Micah was a obscure villager. Where Isaiah spoke to kings and rulers, Micah spoke to the common man. Micah does not relate himself and the people to the great political events of the day, but deals entirely with personal and social relationships in the daily life of individual Israelites.

This does not mean, however, that Micah was uninformed. This great passage dealing with the coming of Messiah out of Bethlehem Ephrathah is in view of the coming Assyrian invasion.

Jeremiah chapters 2-45 deal with prophecies concerning the southern kingdom of Judah. Chapters 30-33 are specifically written to comfort besieged Judah by looking forward to the restoration of the recombined nation. Jeremiah 30:3 reads,

‘For, behold, days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will restore the fortunes of My people Israel and Judah.’ The LORD says, ‘I will also bring them back to the land that I gave to their forefathers, and they shall possess it.’

to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever.

The statements of Ezekiel 37:24-25 are clear. David will reign in perpetuity over the nation Israel on the very land given to Jacob. The “one shepherd” metaphorically refers to the fact that David will lead the recombined nation as a single leader.

The word “forever” is the translation of 2 Hebrew prepositional phrases (*ad olam* and *l'olam*). The meaning of the word *olam* is difficult to nail down, as it appears to refer to an indefinite period of time that may be “forever” in one case, but in another refer to a past period. The Septuagint regularly translates it by *aion*, normally translated into English as *age*. It also carries with it the idea of “perpetual” or “in perpetuity.” Sometimes the context indicates the meaning as perpetually, with out end, which would naturally be translated *forever*. On a few occasions it refers to God in the sense of “eternal (Genesis 21:33, “the eternal God).”

The 12 Apostles will have Judgmental Authority over the 12 Tribes

Matthew 19:28

So Jesus said to them, Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

This kingdom reward cannot be expanded beyond the disciples who followed Christ while on earth. A allegorizing of this in an attempt to apply it to the church is unacceptable as it clearly is not the intention of Christ to do so at the time.

Note the specific nature of the wording:

1. The time frame is explicitly stated as “in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne.” In normal hermeneutical understanding, this can only refer to a future reign of Christ when the kingdom of God has been established.
2. The phrase “you who have followed Me” can only refer to the specific disciples present at the time. In support of this note that the word twelve is used twice to limit the objects of this particular reward blessing.

It is not revealed whether each apostle will judge one tribe, or whether the twelve will sit as a kind of “supreme court” over the entire twelve tribes as a unit. Both views have been presented, but with no biblical support.

Christ will administer perfect justice

Isaiah 32:1

Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, And princes will rule with justice.

Do the “princes” who rule justly refer to the twelve disciples who judge Israel? Some think so. However, earlier in the final verse of the previous chapter the term “princes” (Hebrews *sar*) refers to gentile princes who rule over Assyria. This reference, then, probably refers to righteous gentile princes.

Isaiah 32:1 appears, then, to refer to the righteous rule of Messiah over the Gentiles. See immediately below.

Christ will rule the Gentile nations with a rod of iron

Psalm 2:6-9

Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.

Messiah, as adult son, will receive the nations (Heb. *goyim*) as His inheritance from God the Father. The plural word nations refers to the non-Jewish nations, the Gentiles.

While Messiah rules through a regent, David, in Israel, His rule is evidently direct when dealing with the nations. The statements of verse 9, while seemingly harsh, reflect the need for strict control as the nations gradually move from an “all believer” situation, to the situation of new unbelievers becoming dominant later in the millennial period, so that by the end of the thousand years, a general rebellion will be headed up by the release of Satan from his prison.

Satan will be bound

Revelation 20:1-3

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

The amillennial idea that this binding of Satan has already occurred is clearly not acceptable. First, the author of this passage certainly did not have that in mind. These events take place after the time of great trouble which has not yet happened. Secondly, the thousand years, as previously shown, can mean nothing other than a period of a thousand years. The current age is much older than that. Third, if Satan is bound today, why do the New Testament writers make it clear that he is an enemy of the believer during the present age? Satan is viewed as active, and afflicting the planet earth, primarily through his demonic agents.

The statement “after these things he must be released for a short time” has the ring of a detail that does not fit itself into anything other than normal interpretation of this passage. If these were allegorical events, no need for such detail can be seen.

Peace will reign

Isaiah 19:23-25

In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria -- a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.

These amazing statements in Isaiah 19 evoke a sense of awe when taken literally. Egypt and Assyria were the two great enemies of Israel in Isaiah's day.

Isaiah 19 is in a section of the prophet's writings that deal with God's judgments on gentile nations. It is not insignificant that the ultimate dealings with these nations are introduced. Like God's dealing with the rebellious Israelites, God's dealings with the gentile nations will eventually bring them to a place of faith in the very God of Israel whom they had previously despised.

A highway from Egypt to Assyria would pass right through Israel. Such a road is not possible today, nor has it been possible during any time of Israel's history. Some have questioned the literalness of this road. However, only a literal road carries with it the strength of statement needed to understand the peacefulness of the millennial state. The Gentiles mentioned will pass through Israel to worship with one another.

Israel will be a "third" with Egypt and Assyria in that she will have alliances with both. The term "in the midst" is literally "in the inward part" (*qereb*, bowels). It most likely indicates the position of Israel between the nations of Egypt and Assyria.

Finally, God claims that both Egypt and Assyria will have a relationship to Him that they were certainly lacking in Isaiah's day. In the midst of the heat and hatred of the time of Isaiah's writing, this future acceptance of the Gentiles must have come as a shock and surprise to the Israelites whom they were tormenting.

Prosperity and Health will Abound

Isaiah 35:1-7

The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, Even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, The excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, The excellency of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool, And the thirsty land springs of water; In the habitation of jackals, where each lay, There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

The "wilderness and the wasteland" in this context probably refers to those parts of the land of Canaan where water is in small supply, and therefore where the population is sparse.

The word translated "desert" (Heb. *arabah*) was applied in part or wholly to the depression of the Jordan Valley, extending from Mt. Hermon, a 9100-ft elevation in the Anti-Lebanon Range, due south beyond the Sea of Galilee, including both sides of the river Jordan, the Dead Sea, and the region slightly to the southwest as far as the head of the Gulf of Aqabah.

The first verse, then, personifies the entire land of Israel as being glad and rejoicing. Indeed, the entire land will "blossom like the rose" (the identification of this flower is uncertain; some think it is a saffron, others a narcissus).

In Isaiah's day evidently Carmel and Sharon were undergoing drought conditions and were becoming barren (see Isaiah 33:9). Carmel is a range (a ridge, really) of low mountains in the north. Sharon is the coastal plain that runs from Carmel in the north as far south as Gaza. It runs from the sea coast east to the foothills of the Samaritan range.

The description of vs. 5-7 is in stark contrast to the land during times of war and famine. Such a time will be the second half of Daniel's 70th week.

Harvests will be plentiful

Amos 9:14

I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.

Associated with the prosperity envisioned by Isaiah, the crops will also bring plenty. Amos deals with judgment on both Israel and the Gentiles. Amos 9:11-14 deals with restoration.

The Confusion of Tongues will be Removed

Zephaniah 3:9

For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, That they all may call on the name of the LORD, To serve Him with one accord.

Zephaniah 3:9,10 deal specifically with the Gentiles, referred to here as “the peoples” (Heb. *amim*). See the reference to Ethiopia in vs. 10. See also Malachi 1:11.

Chapter Nine

The Kingdom of God in the Gospels

The Terms “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven”

The older dispensational view that these two phrases refer to distinct kingdoms has caused untold confusion in the church. Some have held that the Kingdom of God (KOG) passages refer to the kingdom in the limited sense of that to which only believers are related, and the Kingdom of Heaven (KOH) passages refer to the kingdom in the larger sense as containing both believers and unbelievers (See Walvoord’s view in the box at the right).

This is the result, I believe, of not understanding that even in the Old Testament the kingdom is shown to consist of both believers and unbelievers. Dallas Theological Seminary followed the old dispensationalist line because they see passages in the Gospels that clearly teach that only believers get to *enter* the KOG. They further see passages such as the parables of Matthew 13 indicating that unbelievers (“tares” etc.) will be *in* the kingdom. How can both be true of they are the same kingdom?

What they seem to have overlooked is the simple fact that those believers who enter the kingdom will do so in their natural state, will continue to have children, and will, therefore, be the ancestors of those who do not believe. This is anticipated by such Old Testament passages as Psalm 2, which indicate that it will be necessary for Messiah to “rule with a rod of iron,” a certainly unnecessary procedure if everyone in the kingdom is a believer.

The Kingdom of God

Mark 1:14

Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God....

The KOG is the object of the Christ’s gospel message. Clearly He was using terminology understood by His hearers, the Jews, at the time of His proclamation. There was no mystery concerning this term, as it had been in common use before Christ’s coming. The Jews took it to refer to the messianic kingdom predicted in the Old Testament.²⁸

The “Dallas View” of these two terms can be seen in John Walvoord’s statement,

“Although scholars will continue to differ on this point, a careful exegesis of the passages on the kingdom of heaven seems to confirm the thought that it is a sphere of profession in contrast to the kingdom of God as the sphere of the actual rule of God.” *Biblioteca Sacra*, Vol. 124, #495, page 205.

Dr. Walvoord’s defenses for this position are somewhat complicated, and reflect, in the opinion of this author, a lack of practicing inductive study using the normal hermeneutical tools for which use Dr. Walvoord is justly well known.

²⁸ This is not to say that the Jewish writers of the time of Christ were not able to mis-interpret or misapply kingdom passages. They were and did. However, the normal interpretive understanding was that the messianic passages would be fulfilled literally in the establishment of God’s kindom on the earth with Israel as the primary benefits of God’s blessings. As the Lord did not reinterpret the phrase, there is no compelling reason to assume that He had changed or added a meaning to it.

result of being born of the family of Abraham, and no other requirements needed to be met. Jesus is teaching Nicodemus that this is not true, and that a spiritual birth is required, as well as a physical one, being born of blood.

Clearly the “birth from above” mentioned in these passages does not refer to precisely the same thing as the regeneration spoken of by both Peter (1 Peter 1:3) and Paul (Titus 3:5).

The Kingdom of Heaven

Matthew 3:1, 2; 4:12, 17

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!

Matthew 4:12, 17

Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee.

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Comparing the two passages above we discover that the phrase “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” adequately summarizes both the message of John and of Jesus. The phrase “at hand” (Gk. ἐγγίκεν [engniken] from ἐγγίζω [engidzo] has drawn near) can in no way indicate the presence of the kingdom in some metaphorical way. The kingdom was expressed by both John and Jesus as a near future event, but not present at the time of their ministries.

The phrase “the kingdom of heaven is near” obviously summarizes the content of the kingdom message of John and Jesus. As we read the gospel accounts of Jesus’ kingdom teaching, we should have this phrase in the back of our minds. The subject of Christ’s earthly ministry was the nearness of the kingdom of heaven, not the salvation of mankind in general, nor of the daily life program for the church.

Matthew 5:3,10,19,20

Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your

“That the kingdom announced by our Lord as “at hand” was identical with the kingdom of Old Testament prophecy is very evident. The name “kingdom of heaven,” so often upon the lips of Christ, seems to have been derived from Daniel 2:44 and 7:13, 14 . In support of his proclamation of the kingdom, our Lord constantly appealed to the Old Testament prophets; and he characterizes two hesitant disciples as “fools” because they have failed to believe “all that the prophets have spoken” (Luke 24:25; cf. 4:18–19 ; 7:27 ; 20:41–44). The closest search of the gospel records will discover no passage in which Christ ever intimated that his conception of the kingdom was different from that of the prophets. If the prophets were wrong in any respect, how simple to say so. But there is nothing. On the contrary, from the beginning of his ministry on earth to the end of it, his evaluation of the prophetic Scriptures remains the same: ‘All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me’ (Luke 24:44; cf. Matt 5:17–18).” Alva J. McClain, in *Biblioteca Sacra*, Vol. 112, #447, page 211.

righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

The above quotes from the “Sermon on the Mount” reflect the significance of the KOH to that discourse. When one views the “beatitudes” as a whole one must be convinced that the Kingdom was viewed as yet future. Matthew 5:19, 20 directly reflect the future aspect from Christ’s viewpoint. Verses 19 and 20 clearly present a future fulfillment view of the kingdom program. In the future kingdom believers will have various kingdom rewards and positions that are not to be applied to the church today.

Matthew 8:11

And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

This statement reflects the fact that the resurrection of Old Testament saints precedes the establishment of the Kingdom. Unless one allegorizes the term “sit down,” one must come to the conclusion that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be present in physical bodies in the future fulfillment of this statement.

The Terms Refer to the Same Kingdom

Matthew 19:23,24

Then Jesus said to His disciples, Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

The interchange of the terms KOG and KOH in Matthew 19 indicates one passage where the phrases clearly refer to the same kingdom.

As seen in the quote from ISBE above, there are those who hold that the two terms are essentially interchangeable. While Walvoord and others attribute such a view to amillennialists and non-dispensationalists, many dispensational scholars do in fact hold that these are interchangeable terms.

To what do the two terms refer? While the Old Testament specifically discusses the universal kingdom of God, that is, God’s rule over the entire creation, such is clearly not the meaning of the phrases in the Gospels. The earthly, messianic kingdom is in view in virtually every use of either phrase. Dr. Alva J. McClain refers to this as the “mediatorial kingdom” which may be defined as “rule of God through a divinely chosen representative who not only speaks and acts for God but also represents the people before God; a rule which has especial reference to the human race (although it finally embraces the universe); and its mediatorial ruler is always a member of the human race.”

The fact that John and Christ began their preaching of the good news of the kingdom with no formal explanation of its character indicates an assumption that their audiences would understand what kingdom was being announced. Why this assumption? The answer should be obvious: Israel had the prophets, read and taught in every synagogue. If the conception of our Lord had differed from the prophets, then a formal definition was essential at the very beginning. But there is nothing of this kind. This lack of more definite explanation has caused speculation and disagreement, when it should have sent us to the Old Testament. Alva J. McClain, in *Biblioteca Sacra*, Vol. 112, #447, page 214.

The Messiahship of Jesus Christ

John the Baptist's Message

Matthew 3:1-2

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

Why did not John clearly define the term KOG or KOH in his messages? The answer is simple enough. People already knew the meaning. It was not necessary to define the fact that the KOG was in fulfillment of the Old Testament, as that was inherent in the preaching itself. See Dr. McClain's statement in the box to the right.

John Understood Christ's Messiahship

Matthew 3:7-12

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our father. For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

John immediately puts his message in an eschatological context. His warning to the Pharisees and Sadducees makes clear that the issue is "the wrath to come." While John's message could be summarized in "Behold the Kingdom of God is near," his message began with a clear warning about the major event immediately preceding it, the coming wrath. Historically John is in line with the great OT prophets who looked forward to the great day of God's wrath. We recognize the reference at once to be the 70th week of Daniel, later referred to by the Lord Jesus Christ as a time of "great tribulation."

John was no theological dilettante. His message was both pointed and to the point. Wrath was coming and the "spiritual leaders" of Israel hadn't a clue as to how to avoid it. They had need to change their minds (repent), as they believed that simply being related to Abraham as their father was sufficient to guarantee their physical safety in the future wrath against Israel.

Verse 10 speaks metaphorically of the danger facing Israelites. "Trees" in this context indicate individual Israelites, and being cut down and thrown into the fire refers to physical death as the result God's coming wrath. However, John indicates that not he, but one coming after, will be the agent of that wrath. Verses 11 and 12 are clear references to that fact, and the "wheat/chaff" illustration indicates that two classes of Israelites will be identified in that future time.

It is best to think of those "baptized into the Holy Spirit"³⁰ as the "wheat," that is those who have changed their minds and who will be identified with God's Spirit. The ones "baptized into fire" will be those for whom a fiery physical death awaits. Fire is probably best thought of as a metaphorical

³⁰ This baptism is not to be confused with the baptism by the Holy Spirit presented by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:13. In Matthew 3 it is Jesus who is doing the baptizing, the Jews receiving the baptism, and the Holy Spirit the person with whom the Jews are being identified. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, it is the Holy Spirit who is baptizing, Christians (both Israelites and Gentiles) being baptized, and the body of Christ into which they are being baptized, or identified.

reference to a violent death. These Jews, for the most part, will not die in their sleep. They will be cut down through violence and war.

Passages such as this indicate the reality of the kingdom program as presented by both John and Jesus. When presenting Christ as messiah, John also presents Him as Israel's judge. The application of this passage is yet future from our viewpoint. But its message was nonetheless real to the original hearers, the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were in their own ways misleading the people of Israel.

John Understood Christ's Redemptive Work

John 1:29-31

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me. I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.

It was undoubtedly revealed to John that the one who "should be made manifest to Israel" is also the one who acts as the "Lamb of God." This is consistent with the "suffering messiah" of Isaiah 53, but *not* dependent on it. Here the statement is truly redemptive. "Who takes away the sin of the world" would not have been understood by Isaiah's original Israelite audience.

Christ's Message

Matthew 4:17,23

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Jesus' message is summarized by the same words as John's (see Matthew 3:1,2). Matthew intends for the reader to understand that there was no general difference in their message. While the specifics may have varied, all dealt with the message of the kingdom to Israel and its nearness in the fact that the messiah was there.

The healing of Jesus is directly associated with the kingdom message. The people who Jesus healed would have understood their healing as an example of the power of the king. The king expresses God's power which, in turn, is seen as kingdom power. The phrase "gospel of the kingdom" then, should be taken as the positive presentation of the nearness of the kingdom.

The Sending of the 12 Disciples

Matthew 10:5-8

These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

The Lord commanded the twelve to preach the same message of the kingdom only to Israel. They were given the power to heal undoubtedly to authenticate that message. This passage, and others like it, present an insurmountable barrier to the a- or post-millennial position. No amount of spiritualizing or allegorizing will comfort those who read this passage. Jesus in speaking to the twelve tells them to go only to Israelites. The message is not universal. It is specifically not for Samaritans or Gentiles.

The Sending of the 70 Disciples

Luke 10:8-9

Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick there, and say to them, The kingdom of God has come near to you.

Finally, when the Lord sent out seventy, two by two, into the cities that He was about to visit, He charged them to proclaim the same kingdom message as the twelve. They were also given the ability to heal the sick and cast out demons as a demonstration of kingdom power.

The Jews were Confused about the Physical Requirements to Enter the Kingdom

Luke 3:7-8

Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our father. For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

Luke also records the fact that Israelites of John's day did not understand the requirements for entering the kingdom. Not only was the leadership in serious error, the Jews who followed them were also. They held to the idea that because they physically descended from Abraham they were certain to be delivered from the coming wrath. In their minds, then, they believed that they would survive alive and enter the kingdom if it came upon them. Rather than understanding that their relationship to Abraham made them *eligible* to enter the kingdom for Israel, they believed it made *certain* their entrance.

The Jews Were Confused about the Spiritual Requirements to Enter the Kingdom

Matthew 6:31-33

Therefore do not worry, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or What shall we wear? For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

The comparison to the Gentiles would have been startling to Israelites. This section of Matthew contains "pre-kingdom" instructions for His disciples. If they are to have a right relationship to the coming kingdom they must give up concern for physical things, even those which sustain life. Faith in God's program precluded acting like Gentiles. They were to "seek first" the Father's kingdom. If and when the other things were needed, they would be supplied. Spiritual dedication is the requirement. Physical sustenance follows.

Of what does seeking first the kingdom consist? For the faithful Israelite of Jesus' day, the phrase undoubtedly evoked the idea of maintaining the correct spiritual/political idea of the kingdom against the odds of daily survival. For these disciples, the program of God is counter intuitive. They were to give up the struggle for daily survival and concentrate on being accurately related to God's kingdom program. Seeking God's righteousness refers to a very practical aim. God's righteousness will be displayed on earth ultimately in the KOG.

Matthew 19:23-30

Then Jesus said to His disciples, Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus looked at them and said to them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. Then Peter answered and said to Him, See, we have left

all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have? So Jesus said to them, Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

This event, recorded in all three synoptics, is designed to change the idea that was currently running rampant among even believing Jews in Jesus' day. Contrary to the accepted teaching of the day, an Israelite who is rich in physical things is not necessarily being blessed by God because of his superior righteousness. Riches hinder rather than help the individual to enter the kingdom. One must ask, "Why?" The answer is simple if understood eschatologically. In the time of trouble preceding the kingdom, that is, during Daniel's 70th week, riches cause an individual to view himself incorrectly. The Lord repeatedly tells His disciples that they must give up physical relationships rather than hold on to them. Throughout the gospels, He encourages the disciples to leave their physical possessions, including family, behind.

This was not simply the "vow of poverty" concept which says that riches hinder spirituality. Rather it is to prepare disciples for a time of terrible trial and tribulation. A time is coming for the believing Israelite when being tied to one's earthly possessions will make it difficult to sustain his physical life. Even today this is not easy to understand. But during the 70th week of Daniel, the Israelite who does not willingly renounce physical wealth will not be able to flee to the wilderness when the time comes. He will not be able to abandon his livelihood, his property, and his unbelieving family.

See also Mark 10:23-31; Luke 18:24-30.

Chapter Ten

The Course of the Gentile Nations (Daniel 2, 7)

The two passages under consideration each present the progress of Gentile dominion in world affairs until interrupted by the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth. Historically the various kingdoms that arose are easy to identify, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's Neo-Babylonian Empire.

The significance of the language change in Daniel 2:4 must not be lost. From there until the end of Chapter 7 we have the language of Babylon, commonly called Chaldean or Aramaic. The audience for these chapters was not limited to the Israelites, but included the Gentiles of the period. Aramaic continued to be spoken locally past the time of Christ. The rest of Daniel is in the Hebrew, which indicates that its specific audience was limited to Israelites.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Nebuchadnezzar had had a dream in which he beheld a figure shaped like a man, made of various kinds of valuable metals, gold, silver, bronze, and iron. In addition, the feet of the statue contained clay that had been fired, so as to make it like a pot. The following section is Daniel's interpretation of that dream.

Daniel 2:31-35

You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay,

and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel's Vision

Daniel had a vision that corresponded to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. It is necessary for the student to compare these two supernatural revelations to understand the basic outline of the prophetic history of the Gentile nations.

Daniel 7:2-14

Daniel spoke, saying, I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words. I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened. I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. 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. 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.

Both revelations deal with the course of the Gentile nations. This was of great interest to Daniel, as he had been taken captive by the Babylonians. The explanation of the dream in chapter two of his book is presented by Daniel in clear terms (see below). The second vision should be viewed in its light, as well as the light of the large number of prophetic statements of Scripture.

Why two visions. Nebuchadnezzar's vision was from the perspective of the great man, himself. It was to provide information that would "set up" the king for acceptance of Daniel as a man of God, and to preserve him from further trial. Daniel's vision, on the other hand, was from a Jewish perspective. No longer are the Gentile nations viewed as parts of a man, a benevolent picture, but of beast that rend and tear. These beast will not be friendly to Israel, nor to the program of God. Nevertheless, they will fulfill it.

The General Significance of the Two Visions

The stirring up of the "great sea" in Daniel 7 indicates that these four empires are related to the Mediterranean area. They were certainly not "global" in their historical fulfillment. The statement concerning the ten horns is related to the fourth empire in its original form (the ten toes of the dream in

Daniel 2). The fact that the fulfillment of those events is held in abeyance does not alter the fact that the geological location is Mediterranean.

In both revelations we see a deterioration of the representative elements relating to each kingdom. Gold is more precious than silver, which is more precious than bronze which is more precious than iron. Likewise the lion is more regal than the bear, which is stronger than the leopard, etc. This deterioration is understood in relationship the purity of the totalitarianism involved. From the absolute monarchy of Nebuchadnezzar through the semi-democratic rule of the Roman Empire, a general change in governmental philosophy is seen. Each succeeding empire is somewhat less totalitarian than the previous, though no less vicious or arbitrary. The statement in vs. 39 that the subsequent kingdoms will be inferior to Nebuchadnezzar confirms this fact.

The Neo-Babylonian Empire

The Neo-Babylonian Empire is represented by the head of Gold in Daniel 2 and by the lion-like creature with eagle's wings in Daniel 7. Unlike previous Mesopotamian kingdoms, the Neo-Babylonian Empire was expansive in its philosophy. Under the absolute monarchy of Nebuchadnezzar, it reached its zenith. While other empires have been bigger, none has been as totally dominated by one man as has Neo-Babylon.

The Medo-Persian Empire

The Medo-Persian Empire is represented by the arms and chest of silver in Daniel 2 and the bear-like creature in Daniel 7.

The Greek Empire

The Greek Empire is represented by the mid-section and thighs of bronze in Daniel 2 and the leopard-like creature in Daniel 7.

The Roman Empire

The Roman Empire is represented by the legs of iron and the feet of iron and clay in Daniel 2 and the "diverse beast" in Daniel 7.

The Kingdom of God

In Daniel 2 the Kingdom of God is represented by the "stone cut out without hands." In Daniel 7 the Kingdom of God is presented as part of the vision of the judgment of the "Ancient of Days" in 7:9-14. See below, "The Judgment of the Little Horn and the Establishment of the Kingdom of God."

Daniel's Interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's Vision

Daniel 2:36-45

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

will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold -- the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.

The history of the world unfolded just as predicted by the visions of Daniel 2 and 7. The gentile dominion described in these visions still exists. The events at the end of the Roman Empire have not yet taken place. Therefore a *further form* of that Empire is yet future from the present perspective.

The division of the Roman Empire into East and West is thought by many to be represented by the two legs of the statue. If this is true, the future Roman Empire will still exhibit that divided characteristic. This is the view of Walvoord and many others.

Nebuchadnezzar is specifically identified as the “head of gold.” Under his reign, Babylon came to its height in power and territorial expansion.

Nebuchadnezzar’s empire did not fill the entire earth. The hyperbole of verses 37 and 38 is intended to show the relative size and power of Babylon. Even during the days of Nebuchadnezzar it was realized that other civilizations existed which were not under his control. In fact, a much larger, though weaker, empire existed immediately to the north east of Babylon, the Median Empire.

The direct statement of verse 39 is that the subsequent kingdom is inferior to Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon. As stated above, this is best understood as referring to the absolute totalitarianism of Nebuchadnezzar compared to the inferior totalitarianism of the rulers of the Medes and Persians. Indeed, it is with the Medo-Persian empire that we begin to see the rule of law established. The law of the Medes and Persians is carefully illustrated in the story of Daniel and the den of lions, where the king could not take back his command to have Daniel killed. Nebuchadnezzar was under no such constraint.

Rome’s strength mixed with weakness is represented by the legs of iron extending to feet of iron and potter’s clay, an incompatible mixture. Potter’s clay was that which was hardened in fire, similar to our modern day ceramics. The making of fired bricks was a major industry in the Babylonian Empire at the time. It was of this clay that the feet of the image consisted.

Verse 44 introduces “those kings.” In their day “God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed.” Who are these kings? The best answer is that they are 10 kings represented by the toes of the statue. For further discussion see the section below, “The First Stage - The 10 King Confederacy.”

The appearance of the stone which quickly and suddenly destroys the statue represents the KOG which destroys gentile dominion. It is not simply the final kingdom that is destroyed, but the entire structure of gentile dominion represented by the entire statue. This is no gradual bringing in of the kingdom through the proclamation of the gospel, per postmillennialism. Rather it is the sudden replacing of one system of government by another. Throughout Scripture this replacement is viewed as military conquest, not gradual assimilation.

The mountain out of which the stone comes represents God’s governmental authority. In describing the vision originally, Daniel indicates that the stone itself grows to be a mountain that fills the whole earth (2:35). The symbol of the mountain represents a global government which God will establish over the earth.

The Revived Roman Empire

Different views are presented by scholars as to the extent of the “revived Roman Empire.” That such a revival is necessary no serious premillennial scholar disputes. Some, such as Walvoord believe that the empire will extend throughout the entire globe.

“As far as it is possible to understand the prophetic foreview of this revived empire, it appears that geographically it will go through three stages. First, there will appear a confederacy of ten kingdoms within the ancient Roman Empire which will constitute the first phase of its revival. Second, there will appear a strong man who will consolidate these ten nations into a united kingdom and probably extend its borders in various directions. Third, there is the final stage of the Roman Empire when its power extends to the entire earth. The final or third stage may be in a state of partial disintegration at the time of the second coming of Christ as indicated by the very fact that there is warfare and rebellion against the Roman ruler.” (John Walvoord, *The Nations in Prophecy*, page 89.)

However, Daniel 2:35 indicates that the “stone kingdom” is the one that grows to fill the whole earth. No such statement is made that the revived Roman Empire will so do. In fact, what makes it truly the Roman Empire seems to be that it will occupy essentially the same land area as the original.

The First Element - The 10 King Confederacy

The Toes

Daniel 2:41-44

See above.

While it is true that the number 10 is not used of the toes (some have made much of this) we presume that this figure was not grotesque, and that a regular number of toes are involved. The statement in vs. 44 “And in the days of these kings” can only refer back to the toes of the vision. Nothing else makes sense. That fact that there are 10 toes in the normal human anatomy causes us to correspond the 10 toes with the 10 horns of Daniel 7.

The 10 horns of the diverse beast

Daniel 7:23-24

Thus he said: The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings.

The diverse beast is a fourth kingdom which follows in succession after Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. It is the Roman Empire. But this view of the Empire is of its future condition, when it will have ten kings over it. The 10 horns are explicitly stated to be the 10 kings.

The revived Roman Empire will consist initially of a 10 part confederacy. One-third of the confederacy will be subdued by the “little horn,” the man of sin. The man of sin takes over the power and authority of 10 kings, leaving 7 of the original left. Rev. 17:13 tells us that the 10 kings have one purpose with the antichrist, and they give their power to the man of sin.

The 10 Crowns of the First Beast of Revelation 13

Revelation 13:1-2

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

The first beast of Revelation 13 undoubtedly represents not simply the revived Roman Empire, but also the sinful individual who will be its most powerful ruler.

John sees the beast arising out of the sea, reminiscent of Daniel 7:2, where Daniel saw the stirring of “the great sea.” Again this gives the reader a geographical fix.

The 10 horns reminds us of the “diverse beast” of Daniel 7. Here each horn has a diadem, a crown of royalty, of power and authority. Like the 10 toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s vision, and the 10 horns of the diverse beast, this is to be understood as a reference to the 10 kings of the revived Roman Empire.

What of the 7 heads? Various ideas have been presented, but the best seems to be that the 7 heads represent the remaining 7 kings after the “man of sin” destroys three (Walvoord, Pentecost, et. al.) “And on his heads *were* blasphemous names” to indicate that these 7 rulers are, in some sense, attempting to assert not only royal prerogatives, but god-like ones.

The description of the beast itself takes us back to Daniel 7, where each of the three beasts representing Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece are presented. In a real sense, the Roman empire encompassed that which was characteristic of the lion, bear, and leopard-like previous empires. The 1st beast of Revelation 13 is certainly “diverse,” as is the 4th beast of Daniel 7, in that it is unlike any other, yet encompasses the characteristics of the other beasts or nations.

Finally, this beast receives Satan’s throne. He is given the power and authority to rule over the kingdom directly from the one who established the kingdoms of the world himself.

The 10 Horns of the Woman sitting on a Scarlet Beast

Revelation 17:3, 7, 12-16

So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

But the angel said to me, Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful. Then he said to me, The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.

The vision of Revelation 17 shows the relationship between the pseudo-Christian religion of the revived Roman Empire and the 1st beast of Revelation 13, the man of sin. The 7 heads and 10 horns are evidently the same as that beast.

The 10 horns are explicitly stated to be 10 kings. In the progress of this vision, the 10 kings have not yet been given kingly authority. When they do receive power, they “give their power and authority to

the beast,” indicating their subservience to him. The “one hour” probably is metaphorical of a short period of time, which we know to be no more than 7 years.

Originally the pseudo-christian harlot will be supported by the beast and the 10 kings, but at some point they turn against her. This is consistent with the fact that the man of sin will be promoted to deification by the 2nd beast of Revelation 13, the false prophet. A new religion, one centering on the man of sin, will not allow even a pseudo-christian religious system to detract from his worship.

At the second coming, the Lord Jesus Christ will defeat the aggression of this final phase of the revived Roman Empire which will come against Him. The kings are defeated by the Lamb and those with Him, probably a reference to the heavenly church.

The Second Element - The Rise of the Roman Prince

Various names and designations are used in Scripture of the Roman prince who eventually attempts to destroy Israel.

The Roman Prince, the Desolator

Daniel 9:26-27

And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.

The “antichrist,” “the man of sin,” is to be identified with “the prince who is to come” of Daniel 9:26. This prince, then, is Roman in his relationship to Israel. The fact that he is associated with Rome tells us that his power and authority will extend over the revived Roman Empire. It is he who will establish the covenant with Israel for 7 years. It is he who will violate the covenant in “the middle of the week,” that is, after 42 months, or 3 ½ years. It is he who causes the sacrifice to cease and will bring about desolation in Israel. “One who makes desolate” is a *pi`el* participle which might be translated “desolator.”

“The wing of abominations” appears to be a metaphorical expression of the anti-God attitude of this desolator. First he will perform “abominations” which may be in attacking the worship of God in the temple, then he desolates Israel by attacking the people of God.

The making of a covenant, or agreement, with “the many” (a clear reference to Israel) will cause this one to appear to be “pro-Israel” at the beginning. This will be a political stance, rather than a characteristic policy, as he will violate this covenant in the middle of the 70th week.

The legitimacy of the sacrifices and offerings being made during the 70th week is debated. Some believe this is not a legitimate re-establishment of the Mosaic program. While there are clearly unbelieving Jews living at this time (one of the major arguments against this being a legitimate re-establishment), the re-institution of the household program for Israel is to be affirmed. The 70 weeks deals with the household of Israel in relation to the gentile nations. The church will have been raptured. The Kingdom of God will not yet have begun. Israel will find itself in essentially the same socio-political situation that was true during Christ’s earthly ministry, that is, under the domination of the Roman Empire. Christ indicates in Matthew 24:20 that the Sabbath day will be in force. It seems clear that the dispensation of law will be re-instituted.

The Little Horn

Daniel 7:8, 23-25

I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

Thus he said: The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

While many have speculated as to the reason that the man of sin is pictured as “little” (vs. 8), no biblical statement is made that explains this reference. Some have suggested that “little” indicates “insignificant.” The idea has been promoted that because of his insignificance, the man of sin is not taken seriously until he has already taken over the territory of three of the 10 kings. The statement in verse 24 that he will be “different from the previous” is associated with his subduing of the three kings. While this difference is not stated, it is probably in the areas of ruthlessness and competence. He will also appear as a friend of Israel, at least initially. This may also distinguish him from his fellows.

The “little horn” will be anti-God and anti-Israel (the saints). Vs. 25 seems to refer to the conditions at the middle of the 70th week. At the beginning of the 7 year period, this one appears to be pro-Israel, at least to a point. This will undoubtedly be political posturing, but will produce a situation where he will be able to establish the 7 year covenant with Israel. That Israel is referred to as “the saints” indicates that many in the nation have turned to Christ as Messiah. This may appear to pose a threat to the man of sin, as he will come to desire all worship himself.

The little horn will alter times and laws. “Times” and “laws” probably refer to the re-established Mosaic institutions. “Times” likely refers to the special observances such as feasts and Sabbaths that take place under the Mosaic code. “Laws” would refer to the Mosaic moral and civil requirements that will be re-instituted when Israel begins to turn to God. It is probable that this man will see himself as a substitute for the biblical messiah, and will institute his own feast and worship days.

The Willful King

Daniel 11:36

3Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.

Daniel 11:36 begins a discussion of the military career of the man of sin. The statement that he will “do as he pleases” indicates a willful and self-sufficient ruler. His arrogance in exalting and magnifying himself above every god indicates the attitude that results in his causing the “sacrifice and oblation to cease” in the midst of the 70th week.

This willful king specifically speaks out against the “God of gods,” perhaps realizing the importance of specifically eliminating the worship of the God Israel.

Prosperity will follow him. He will be successful in his endeavors until “the indignation is finished,” probably referring to Israel’s subjugation.

The certainty of these events must not be overlooked. "...For that which is decreed will be done." Here is a individual not elected to salvation, but chosen to bring about the final persecution of God's people.

The lawless one

2 Thessalonians 2:4,8

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.

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

The man of sin claims to be God and takes his seat in God's temple, a reference to the Holy of Holies and the seat over the ark of the covenant. This results in his being slain directly by the Lord at the second coming.

He is "lawless" from God's perspective. He sets up his own spiritual laws, consistent with his claim to deity.

The man of sin; the son of destruction (perdition, KJV)

2 Thessalonians 2:3

Let 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,

The term "lawlessness one" of verse 8 is evocative of the term "man of sin" in verse 3. Both terms indicate a basic characteristic of this individual whereby he views himself as totally independent from God. He is, in fact, a god unto himself.

The meaning of "the apostasy" is a matter of much debate. The term is only used 2 times in the NT, (here, and in Acts 21:21, where it refers to an accusation that Paul taught Jews to *forsake* (or *depart*, from *apostasia*) the Mosaic code). Does the term refer here to a spiritual departure, or to a physical one, the departure of the church? If it is a spiritual departure of the church, what is its distinct nature that causes it to be referred to as "the apostasy?" After all, spiritual departure from the faith has characterized the "church" from the beginning. If this is "the" spiritual apostasy of the church, does it take place before the physical departure? If it does, is it then a "sign" of the end times? Such a position seems doctrinally untenable.

Some have attempted to overcome this problem by saying that this is a reference to an apostasy that takes place during the first half of the tribulation and that the church in view is the "post-rapture church" of that time. Even Thomas Constable quotes this view with approval in his commentary on 2 Thessalonians in the *Bible Knowledge Commentary*. For a pretribulationist, this position seems highly dangerous. The subject in view as stated in 2:1 is whether the day of the Christ is at hand. Most take this to be the day of the Lord, and the argument of the context is that this day is not near. Most pretribulationists hold that the day of the Lord begins with Daniel's 70th week. The "beseeching" of this verse is supported by "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him," that is, by the rapture of the church. Clearly the rapture of the church is inherent in the argument being placed before the Thessalonians.

The association of the rapture with the coming of the day of Christ is significant. Pretribulationists hold that the rapture occurs first. If the apostasy is to precede the day of Christ, and if "the apostasy" is during the first half of Daniel's 70th week, then the day of Christ does not begin at the inauguration of

Daniel's 70th week. Therefore, the rapture of the church is no longer prior to Daniel's 70th week, but within the week, perhaps at the middle or near the end of the Tribulation period. The view that this is a spiritual apostasy that takes place during the first half of Daniel's 70th week is untenable.

The better view, though held by few, is that "the apostasy" is the departure of the church from this earth. This view avoids all the pitfalls of there being a "spiritual apostasy" that is recognizably different from those which have gone before. It avoids the problem of associating a spiritual condition of the church with a person and events that are exclusively related to Israel. Finally, it avoids the ultimate conclusion that a future apostasy is necessary before the rapture can take place. Such a view eliminates the doctrine of immanency.

The Third Element - Rebellion against Roman Rule

"As each of the four successive powers had enemies who contested their right to rule, so, at the time of the end of Gentile world power, there will be kingdoms and federations of nations who contest the authority of the Roman Empire." (Pentecost, *Things to Come*, pg. 326)

The King of the North

The Identity of the King of the North

Ezekiel 38:2-6

Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops -- many people are with you.

The terms "Gog" and "Magog" are used in two prophetic passages of Scripture. The first is in Ezekiel 38 and 39. The second is found in Revelation 20:7-9, which describes an event at the end of the millennial age. Some believe that these events are the same, but sound reasons exist for considering them to be distinct. Charles Dyer makes the following points:

(1) The results of Ezekiel's battle do not coincide with the events that follow the battle in Revelation 20. Why bury the dead for seven months after the battle (Ezekiel 39:12-13) when the next prophetic event is the resurrection of the unsaved dead? (Rev. 20:11-13) Why would the people remain on earth after the battle to burn the weapons of war for seven years (Ezekiel 39:9-10) instead of entering immediately into eternity? (Rev. 21:1-4) The events after each battle are so different that two separate battles must be assumed. (2) The effect on the people is different. In Ezekiel the battle is the catalyst God will use to draw Israel to Himself (cf. Ezekiel 39:7, 22-29) and to end her captivity. But the battle in Revelation 20 will occur after Israel has been faithful to her God and has enjoyed His blessings for 1,000 years.

If the battle of Ezekiel 38-39 is not at the end of the Millennium, could it be at the beginning of the Millennium? This also seems extremely doubtful. Everyone who enters the Millennium will be a believer (John 3:3), and will have demonstrated his faith by protecting God's Chosen People. At the beginning of the Millennium all weapons of war will be destroyed (Micah 4:1-4). Thus it seems difficult to see a war

occurring when the unsaved warriors have been eliminated and their weapons destroyed.

It seems best to place Ezekiel's battle of Gog and Magog in the Tribulation period.

(Charles Dyer, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, "Ezekiel.")

Dyer's comments seem reasonable and conclusive. There are two different battles dealing with Gog and Magog. The reference in the Revelation is certainly metaphorical, and associates the battle in the Millennium with that of Ezekiel. But the relationship is certainly not one of identity. The Revelation "Gog and Magog" is likely used to indicate both the ferocity and grandiose nature of the battle by way of comparison with the tribulational battle presented in Ezekiel.

The King of the North is of the land of Magog in the far north

Ezekiel 38:15

Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army.

See Genesis 10:2. Magog was the second son of Japheth. Gomer, Tubal and Meshech were also sons of Japheth. Togarmah was a son of Gomer, and therefore a grandson of Japheth. Magog and his descendents apparently inhabited the land in the north, called today the Caucasus, from where they spread to the plains beyond.

The King of the North is the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal

An interesting approach is taken by Louis Bauman:

Gesenius, whose Hebrew Lexicon has never been superseded, says that 'Gog' is 'undoubtedly the Russians.' He declared that 'Rosh' was a designation for the tribes then north of the Taurus mountains, dwelling in the neighborhood of the Volga, and he held that in this name and tribe we have the first trace in history of the 'Russ' or Russian nation. Gesenius also identified 'Meshech' as Moscow, the capital of modern Russia in Europe. 'Tubal' he identified as Tobolsk, the earliest province of Asiatic Russia to be colonized, and also, the name of the city wherein Peter the Great built the old fortress after the pattern of the Kremlin in Moscow.... (Louis Bauman, *Russian Events in the Light of Bible Prophecy*, pg. 22)

Perhaps Gesenius and Bauman are correct, but it is difficult to prove how the original recipients of Ezekiel's prophecy would have understood this. It certainly cannot refer to the old Soviet Union, as it was often made to do. It could refer to the mass of peoples who inhabit the steppes north of the Caucasus, but to make this passage refer to a political entity after Ezekiel's time seems impossible using normal interpretation.

The King of the North is allied with Persia, Cush, Put, Gomer and Togarmah

Persia is modern Iran.

Cush, traditionally identified with Ethiopia, may instead represent a people associated with Babylonia, or northern Arabia.

Put, traditionally identified with Libya in Africa, is identified by many as referring to a people associated with Cush, that is from the north rather than from Africa.

Gomer is identified in the *Talmud* as the Germans. The northern teutonic tribes were known in Ezekiel's day, though it is impossible to know if the *Talmud* is correct.

“(Togarmah) is generally identified as Turkey or Armenia, although it is extended by some to include central Asia” (Pentecost, *Things to Come*, pg. 330).

It seems conclusive that Gog is the initiator of a confederacy of northern peoples.

Is He The King of the North of Daniel 11:40?

Daniel 11:40

At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.

The events of Daniel 11:1-35 are historical. Beginning with Daniel 11:36 the prophet jumps into the far future. Based on comparing Ezekiel 38 and 39 with Daniel 11, it seems clear that the king of the north is none other than Gog, together with his allies.

So we see a great northern confederacy which will take up much of the land area of what was once the Soviet Union, and is now viewed as Russia and her satellites. He comes against the man of sin, the son of perdition, and along with the king of the South, will attempt to envelop the one who has taken over the throne of God in Jerusalem in a great pincer-like movement.

Israel is dwelling in her own land in peace

Ezekiel 38:8, 11

After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely.

You will say, I will go up against a land of unwallied villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates....

This appears to be the false security caused by the signing of the covenant with the Roman prince. If this is so, then the events dealing with Gog and its allies come against Israel at the middle of Daniel's 70th week.

This event provides the political and military background for the events that take place in the middle of Daniel's 70th week.

The Man of Sin Responds to this Invasion by occupying the land of Palestine, the Glorious Land

Daniel 11:40-41

At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through. He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.

The first “him” of this passage is the man of sin (see context). However, the “he” and “his” after the phrase “with many ships” refers to the King of the North (Gog of Magog.)

The man of sin must be in the land for the abomination of desolation to take place. This places the invasion of the King of the North at the middle or second half of Daniel’s 70th week. The King of the North passes through the land and many “countries” are conquered. It appears that only the geographical area that was once Edom, Moab and the Ammonites is not conquered by him.

This is the first event in what is actually the campaign of Armageddon

Revelation 16:13-16

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame. And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

The so-called “battle of Armageddon” (mentioned only here in Scripture) seems to be a series of military campaigns. The valley associated with the mountain of Megiddo appears to be a staging area where the armies of the world are gathered together. This section of Revelation has to do with the pouring out of the sixth bowl or vial, which begins with the invasion of the army of the east. Yet the whole world is involved by the time the gathering together takes place. See the full discussion of Armageddon below.

Egypt and the King of the South

Several Different Kings of the South are Mentioned in Daniel 11

“Instead of referring to Egypt by name reference is made instead to ‘the king of the south,’ an expression which occurs in Daniel 11:5, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 25, 29, 40, a total of ten references including the double reference in 11:25. Instead of referring to only one ruler, however, the expression in all probability concerns seven different kings of Egypt, six of them in the past and one still to come.” (John Walvoord, *The Nations in Prophecy*, page 129.)

Daniel 11:40

At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.

The future king of the south is an ally of the king of the north. The “him” of this verse refers to the Roman prince.

The Roman prince has signed a treaty with Israel for 7 years. Somewhere in the middle of the period the kings of the North and South combine to invade Palestine. In response to this invasion the “willful king” (Daniel 11:36) will occupy Palestine and defeat the invasion of the two armies. However, Egypt seems to be totally destroyed at this time, while the northern confederacy may continue until the end of the 7-year period.

The Kings of the East

The First Mention of the East

Daniel 11:44

But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many.

During the “clean-up” of the defeat of the King of the South in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week, the “little Horn” hears of tidings from the north and east. This is probably a reference to the events that culminate in the invasion from the east as described in the Book of Revelation.

The second of the “woes” of Revelation 9:12-21 refers to the invasion from the East

Revelation 9:12-21

One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things. Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates. So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed -- by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm. But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

This is the second of three “woes” which consist of terrible judgment, particularly centered in Palestine.

The great river Euphrates (vs. 14) is directly to the east of Palestine.

The great army (vs. 16) numbers 200 million. This is not impossible given the great numbers of people living in the eastern part of the continent of Asia. Concerning the number 200 million, Dr. Walvoord comments,³¹

Most interpreters do not take the number literally, though there is good evidence that all other numbers in Revelation are literal.... Years ago Red China claimed to have an army of 200 million....

In the same place, Dr. Walvoord goes on to say,

Some interpreters say these millions are demons, but demons are not normally marshaled as a military force. The fact that John heard the number, as he obviously could not visually count 200 million men, seems to lend credence to the this is literal and predicts that an army will come from the East crossing the dried-up Euphrates River.

³¹ *Bible Knowledge Commentary, Revelation*, page 953.

This is the same event as mentioned in Revelation 16:12-16

Revelation 16:12-16

Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame. And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

The Euphrates River is dried up so that the Kings of the East might find easy access to the land of Palestine. The Kings of the East refer to an eastern confederacy that will consist of those nations on the eastern part of the Asian continent. This would include all the countries from Southeast Asia as well as China, Japan, and Mongolia. Dr. Walvoord points out,

There has been endless speculation about “the kings from the East,” with many expositors trying to relate them to some contemporary leaders of their generation. A survey of 100 commentaries of the Book of Revelation reveals at least 50 interpretations of the identity of the kings of the East. The simplest and best explanation, however, is that this refers to kings or rulers from the Orient or East who will participate in the final world war. In the light of the context of this passage indicating the near approach of the second coming of Christ and the contemporary world situation in which the Orient today contains a large portion of the world’s population with tremendous military potential, any interpretation other than a literal one does not make sense. Alford states it concisely: “This is the only understanding of these words which will suit the context, or the requirement of this series of prophecies” (Alford, *The Greek Testament*, 4:700). John Walvoord, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, “Revelation.”

The drying up of the Euphrates could be either supernatural or providential. The modern system of dams across the great river has already reduced its flow so it is virtually dry at some points. Nevertheless, even if these irrigation systems are sabotaged, God will see to it that the Euphrates does not flow during the period when the kings of the East will need to cross it.

In the imagery of the Apocalypse three demons are sent out by Satan, the man of sin, and the false prophet. Since this war is a rebellion of sorts against the man of sin, why would this act be reasonable? It is important to remember the following facts: 1) Satan is completely controlling both the man of sin and the false prophet; 2) Satan’s goal is not to keep the Revived Roman Empire under the control of the man of sin, but to defeat God in the cosmic battle that includes spirit beings in heavenly places (Rev. 12); and 3) Satan realizes that Christ’s 2nd coming is near and that he must resist Christ’s entrance into the affairs of men. He may believe that by bringing these armies together at this time, he is preparing for the final battle. At the time under consideration, Satan will have already been defeated in the heavenly arena; now the showdown is being prepared in the earthly arena.

The “Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty” is not actually a single battle, but a war with various campaigns. (The Greek word for “battle” is actually *polemos*, meaning *war*.) This appears to be the final campaign near the end of the 70th week of Daniel. It will decimate the gentile armies to such an extent that the fighting will come to an end.

The association of the coming of the Lord in vs. 15 relates to the end of the conflict, not to the beginning or middle. It is reminiscent of the parables of the Lord in Matthew 24 and 25. While the majority of the human fighting seems to have reached a lull, when the Lord returns He destroys the combatants in a great final conflict. See also 1 Thessalonians 5:4.

Armageddon

Megiddo is the gathering place for the final campaign in the war that fills the 2nd half of the 70th week of Daniel (Revelation 16:16).

The hill of Megiddo, located west of the Jordan River in north central Palestine, some ten miles south of Nazareth and fifteen miles inland from the Mediterranean seacoast, was an extended plain on which many of Israel's battles had been fought. There Deborah and Barak defeated the Canaanites (Judges 4 and 5). There Gideon triumphed over the Midianites (Judges 7). There Saul was slain in the battle with the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:8). There Ahaziah was slain by Jehu (2 Kings 9:27). And there Josiah was slain in the invasion by the Egyptians (2 Kings 23:29-30; 2 Chronicles 35:22. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, pg. 341, 342)

The majority text reads Megiddo, rather than Armageddon in Revelation 16:16. Armageddon is actually the Hebrew word for Mount Megiddo.

The kings of *the whole world* gather together in one place (Revelation 16:13). Does this include the New World, including the United States? Perhaps. Nothing was known at the time John wrote of anything beyond the Mediterranean. To them, the whole world was the Roman Empire, and that which was beyond to the north, south, and east. Note also that the "kings" will be gathered. In John's day this was a specific political reference. Doctrinally, it must refer to totalitarian rulers of the last day. If the New World is included, it does so indirectly, perhaps by treaty. Then again, the nations of North and South America may "opt out" of the conflict at this time.

The statement in Revelation 16:13 may be a reference to the three different federations coming against the man of sin at the middle of the 70th week. Not only the Kings of the east, but of the north and south as well, would then be gathered at Megiddo. It would only affect the rest of the globe insofar as other nations were supportive or allied with these confederations. The extent of such cooperation is, of course, unknown.

Other Locations are mentioned regarding this Campaign

The Valley of Jehoshaphat (an extended area east of Jerusalem)

Joel 3:2

I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land.

Some believe this is a reference to a small valley outside Jerusalem (see the quote from Dr. Pentecost below) where the final destruction of the gentile nations take place.

The valley of those who pass by east of the sea

Ezekiel 39:11

On that day I will give Gog a burial ground there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea, and it will block off those who would pass by. So they will bury Gog there with all his horde, and they will call it the valley of Hamon-gog. (NASB)

Some take this to be a reference to the Mediterranean sea coast between the sea and the Palestinian highlands. This area has been a place where armies have passed going north and south for several thousand years.

However, there is a translation problem in verse 11. The above reference is taken from the NASB, which is typical of how this passage is normally translated. Another, perhaps more accurate translation follows:

And it will be on that day I will give to Gog a place there, a grave in Israel, the valley of Abarim, east of the sea, and it will block the passerby. And they will bury Gog there and all his multitude, and they will call it the valley of The Multitude of Gog (lit. Hamongog, perhaps a proper name).

The valley of Abarim, which is immediately east of the Dead Sea rather than the Mediterranean, is the way Israel passed into the promised land (see Numbers 33:48). At the time of Joshua, Abarim was in Moab, but it will become part of Israel during the millennial period. This place is more consistent with the historical context, since this valley is actually a somewhat steep-sided gorge which could more easily be blocked than the coastal road, which is on a huge plain.

This interpretation would explain why Edom, Moab, and Ammon are spared invasion by Gog. He is defeated on his way to the entrance to those lands at Abarim. People who pass through Israel will mark the bones they see, which will be transported to this place. It will take 7 months to cleanse the land (Ezekiel 39:12-16). The name of the place is shortened to simply “Hammon” (vs. 16) meaning *horde* or *multitude*. Some have suggested that the gathering of bones will be indiscriminate, and that all the armies of the world will have Hammon as their final burial place.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem is the focal point of much prophecy. Many great events of the tribulation period will be centered there.

Zechariah 12:2-9

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. In that day, says the LORD, I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, ‘The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.’ In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place -- Jerusalem. The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Several interesting elements are found in this passage:

1. It is a not general description of the second half of Daniel's 70th week. The time is specific to the actual final siege of Jerusalem. One possible time for the fulfillment of this passage is very near the end of the 70th week. However, it is possible that the fulfillment reflects conditions after the 70th week is over and Israel is in a position of strength having been preserved through the last three and one half years of the tribulation (Rev. 12).
2. The nations who attack Jerusalem suffer as those attempting to lift a heavy stone. Nevertheless the people of Judah will be supernaturally protected. The time of tribulation for Israel is over, but God is still judging the nations.
3. The "clans of Judah" will participate in the war at the point that Jerusalem is under siege, and they will be successful. They will dwell again in their own land in Jerusalem.
4. During this part of the war, even the weakest of Judah will be like David, and the Davidic line (house of David) will be so strong as to compare it to God Himself.
5. God sets out to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. Which specific nations participate in this activity is not included. Its possible that the word "nations" might be a simple descriptive use meaning "Gentiles."

What about Edom (Idumea) (Isaiah 34:1-17 and 63:1-6)?

Most pre-tribulational commentators identify the Isaiah 34 and 63 event as being part of the overall campaign of Armageddon.

Thus the campaign is pictured as extending from the plains of Esdraelon on the north (the plain of Megiddo), down through Jerusalem, extending out to the valley of Jehoshaphat on the east and to Edom on the south. This wide area would cover the entire land of Palestine and this campaign, with all its parts, would confirm what Ezekiel pictures when he says the invaders will 'cover the land' (Ezekiel 38:9, 16) (Pentecost, *Things to Come*, pg. 341)

However, Daniel 11:41 says that Edom, along with Ammon and Moab are spared at the time of the invasion of Gog, the king of the North. Yet in two important passages, we read of great destruction coming on Edom. How can this be?

The answer seems to lie in the time distinction between the two events. Gog seems to come against Israel near the middle of the 70th week, or perhaps shortly after. The events of both Isaiah passages seem to be associated with the 2nd coming of Christ, three and a half years later. Therefore, they are not technically "tribulation passages," but refer to the final destruction when Christ returns in the short gap between the end of the 70th week and the actual beginning of the Kingdom of God on earth. If this is true, the Lord's coming against Edom will be part of the final judgment on the Gentile nations which culminates in the final division of believing and unbelieving Gentiles in Matthew 25.

The Judgment of the Little Horn and the Establishment of the Kingdom of God

Daniel 7:9-14

I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened. I

watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. 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. 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.

In this passage, the Ancient of Days refers to the Father, not the Son, who is introduced in vs. 13. God is presented in His guise as righteous judge, thus the statements dealing with His throne, His vesture and hair being white, and the flames and wheels burning with fire. The river of fire should also be seen in this connection. It is not to be associated with either Hades or the lake of fire, in that the symbolism has to do with the destruction of the empire, not the person of the man of sin, who is undoubtedly judged as well.

The “thousands upon thousands” who attend God are undoubtedly spirit beings, perhaps cherubim or seraphim. The “myriads upon myriads” probably also refers to spirit beings, but not of the “attending” variety; perhaps they are angels as distinct from the servant spirit beings.

The “horn” of vs. 11 is clearly the man of sin, called “antichrist”. The beast, on the other hand, must refer to the Revived Roman Empire itself, as it is contrasted with the other beasts.

While “the beast” and “the little horn” are closely associated, they are not identical. The beast refers to the Revived Roman Empire, while the little horn refers to the dictatorial ruler of that political structure. The boastful words of the little horn produce the destruction of the empire, rather than his personal destruction.

The Revived Roman Empire is consigned to the fire at this point rather than the little horn. He appears to escape immediate judgment, as do the other beasts, or national entities.

As for the statement in vs. 12, “As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time” various interpretations have been given. The other beasts of the vision are usually associated with the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Greek empires that preceded the Roman Empire. They are identified as being the same first three empires of the image of Daniel 2. In what sense are we to understand their dominion to be removed but their life prolonged for a time? Many answers have been given. Dr. Pentecost, for example makes the following statement:

This may mean that the cultures of each of the first three conquered empires were assimilated into the conquering nations.

Vs. 13 sees the coming of “one like the Son of Man”, clearly a reference to the Messiah. The “coming” here is not the second coming to earth, as has been regularly understood. Rather it is the coming of the Christ in His humanity to receive the authority directly from the Father to rule over the Kingdom. This is clear, in that Daniel is seeing a heavenly scene, not an earthly one. Also, “He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him.” This is the picture of a potentate receiving an important visitor. The Ancient of Days is seated on His throne in heaven.

Vs. 14 indicates the purpose of the presentation. The Ancient of Days, the Father undoubtedly, gives to the Son the “dominion, glory and a kingdom.” This formal presentation brings to mind the transference of authority from one ruler to another. Up until this event, the Father is ruling over the earth in His

capacity as universal king. Now He presents to the Son earthly authority. The application of this transfer will take place at the time the Son returns to earth after the tribulation period.

The extent of the “dominion, glory and kingdom” is presented in the words “That all the peoples, nations, and *men of every* language might serve Him.” Clearly, this is an earthly kingdom according to any normal consideration of the words employed.

The duration of the kingdom is expressed by the statement, “His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away.”

Associated with the duration of the kingdom is its indestructibility: “And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.” This brings to an ultimate end all other possible legitimate rulers and authorities, and invests in the Son, and only the Son, the right to rule over mankind. His accession to the throne on earth after the tribulation is therefore seen as a righteous act based on the very program of God.

The Nations in the Millennium and Beyond

The Nations in the Millennium

The Gentile Nations will Participate in Peace in the Millennium

Isaiah 2:4

He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

This passage is in a context dealing with the future blessings of the earthly kingdom. The obvious meaning is that universal peace will reign. This verse, and others like it, cannot be rightly applied to the church, or to the current age, in some allegorical way. It is intended to bring comfort to Israel who, in Isaiah’s message, will both be judged by the nations, and freed from their domination. Note that the immediate paragraph includes vss. 1-3, where Jerusalem and Zion are exalted.

Note that the imagery is exactly the opposite of Joel 3:10, where the nations are to prepare for war. Here those same nations “will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks”.

Jeremiah 3:16, 17

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.

In contrast to Jeremiah’s day, the “ark of the covenant of the Lord” will not be in the temple in Jerusalem in the future kingdom. Instead, the Lord Himself will sit on the throne in the temple with result that Jerusalem will be called “The Throne of the Lord.” The nations will be gathered to Jerusalem evidently to worship, as they are pictured in submission to Him.

All Gentiles who Enter the Millennium will be believers

Matthew 25:32-34

All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

The separation of Gentiles into two groups indicates that only believers will enter the kingdom. Twice in this context, the Gentiles on Christ's right are designated as "righteous," a term that contextually is used to distinguish them from the "unrighteous" Gentiles who are condemned.

Isaiah 56:6-8

Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants -- Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant -- Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations. The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, Yet I will gather to him Others besides those who are gathered to him.

Several elements indicate that the "sons of the foreigner," which we take to be Gentiles, will be believers: 1) they join themselves to the Lord, 2) they minister to Him, 3) they love the name of the Lord, 4) they are His servants, 5) they do not profane the sabbath, 6) they hold fast His covenant, 6) they are brought to His holy mountain (Zion, where the temple will be) 7) they are joyful in God's house of prayer, 8) their temple sacrifices and offerings will be accepted by God, 9) they are gathered by the Lord God in a similar way that He gathers Israel.

Isaiah 19:18-25

In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear by the LORD of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction. In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform it. And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them. In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria -- a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.

This extended passage shows that both Egypt and Assyria will be populated by believers. Egypt is singled out, perhaps because of her continued antagonism toward Israel over the centuries. Assyria, of course, is the nation that brought the ten northern tribes into captivity. However, the Assyria of the future may refer to the area that the Assyrian empire held, rather than to a specific nation.

The "five cities" probably are representative of the entire nation. This is not to say that there will not be five actual cities, however, who actually speak the language of Israel, etc.

According to John A. Martin:

The meaning of **the City of Destruction** (*heres*) has caused much debate. It seems preferable to follow the reading preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Vulgate, namely, "the City of the Sun" (*heres*), meaning Heliopolis (cf. NIV marg. and Ezekiel 30:17). Heliopolis, one of the major cities in the south end of Egypt's Delta, was dedicated to worship of the sun god. Such a significant change (i.e., worshipping the

Lord instead of the sun god) will prove to the world and to Israel that Egypt will be serious in its new worship. (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, “Isaiah”)

The mention of a highway from Egypt to Assyria can only refer to an open road that goes through the land of Israel. Historically, these two land areas “sandwich” Israel between them.

The Gentiles will Serve Israel During the Millennium

Isaiah 14:1-2

For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. Then people will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD; they will take them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors.

The contrast of the position of Israel among the nations is startling. Here, Israel is prominent, and the nations are their captives. Israel rules over Gentiles who have come into the land. This is not a reference to those nations outside the land, who will worship God, but to those Gentiles brought into the land to serve Israel.

Isaiah 49:22, 23

Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, And set up My standard for the peoples; They shall bring your sons in their arms, And your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders; Kings shall be your foster fathers, And their queens your nursing mothers; They shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth, And lick up the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD, For they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.

This statement is addressed to Israel. It is Israel’s sons who will be brought to the nations’ bosoms. It is Israel’s daughters who will be carried on the gentile’s shoulders, a reference to serving by carrying on a chair. Here the leaders of the gentile nations subordinate themselves (lick the dust of your feet) to Israel, acting as Israel’s guardians and nurses, positions of protection. The ultimate goal of this practices is to bring knowledge to Israel that God is the Lord. Israel is encouraged to “hopefully wait” for God. Those who do so during times of distress will “not be put to shame” when the Lord finally rescues His people.

Isaiah 60:14

Also the sons of those who afflicted you Shall come bowing to you, And all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet; And they shall call you The City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

The “you” in this passage refers to the Israelites. This summary statement indicates the overall view we are to take of the relationship between Israel and the Gentiles during the millennial period.

The Nations after the Millennium

Dr. Walvoord is correct when he says:

It is an error...to assume that national identity will be lost in eternity. Just as there will be individual identity, so also there will be racial identity, and individuals will inevitably carry throughout eternity an identification related to some extent to their place in the history of the world. Hence, Israelites will be Israelites throughout eternity and Gentiles will be Gentiles as well. . . .

According to the revelation given to John, the New Jerusalem will include the angels (Revelation 21:12), the children of Israel (Revelation 21:12), the church as represented in the twelve apostles (Revelation 21:14) and the Gentiles (Revelation 21:24). (John Walvoord, *The Nations in Prophecy*, pgs. 169, 170.)

Dr. Walvoord's view is consistent with the need for a new earth as well as a new heaven. The kingdom of God on the earth extends beyond the thousand years. It is a perpetual earthly kingdom that will never end. It is certainly best to consider the basic spiritual distinctions between the church and other households with this in mind. If the church is truly a heavenly body, and if Israel and the Gentiles are truly earthly entities, the need for both a new heaven and a new earth are evident. Otherwise it is difficult to account for the need of the new earth. The fact that the church will also participate with the Israelites and Gentiles in the New Jerusalem (the twenty-four elders are there) is not sufficient reason to think that the church will be limited to an earthly residence.