

# **WHO IS THIS BABYLON?**

# WHO IS THIS BABYLON

Babylon:

Rome?

The Roman Catholic Church?

Literal Babylon In Iraq?

Or None of the Above?

by Don K. Preston D. Div.

© Copyright 2006, 2011 Don K. Preston D. Div.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy or otherwise, without the prior written permission of Don K. Preston, except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles.

Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural citations are from the New King James Translations 1990, 1985, 1983, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, Tn.

ISBN 978-1-937501-02-0

Produced by:

JaDon Management Inc.

1405 4th Ave. N. W. #109

Ardmore, Ok. 73401

Cover Design by

Kim Lester

P. O. Box 33741

Amarillo, Tx. 79120

# 1 FOREWORD

The book of Revelation is like no other. It is the cause of fear, consternation or excitement in those who consider it. Many choose to ignore it; we wish some had. The phantasmagoric speculation spawned by the Apocalypse has been a source of embarrassment for the church throughout the centuries. The End is supposedly here, again. The phenomenal success of the Left Behind books and then the series The Last Disciple taking a counter position, demonstrates the incredible enduring fascination of man with the Apocalypse.

If you are looking for a commentary full of excited predictions about what is about to take place, this is not the book for you. If you are looking for a book that will exegete Revelation from the Daily News this book will disappoint.

If, however, you are looking for concrete Biblical answers to the difficult questions about Revelation, you have come to the right place. We make no claims to having all of the answers. However, you will find within these pages some solid Biblical evidence that will be of great value in your study of the book of Revelation. The acceptance of the initial printing of this book is gratifying, and indicative of the fact that many Bible students are indeed looking for solid, Bible based answers about Revelation.

The dating of the Revelation is of vital importance to understanding the book. Much of the religious world today takes it for granted that Revelation was written about AD 95. However, the dominant view in the 19th century, when, we might add, the world of scholarship had a higher view of the inspiration of scripture than today, was that Revelation was written prior to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. This is our view, and acceptance of the early date is making a “come back” among students today.

Since this book was first published it has received favorable reviews. For this we are thankful. I have added a good deal of new material to this edition that I hope will help the reader even more to understand the purpose of the Apocalypse, and when it was written. The Special Study on the Millennium is some very distinctive and

important information not to be found anywhere else.

In addition, I have interacted with some of the “anti-preterist” books that have appeared since this work was originally published. This interaction will help expose the weakness of those who oppose Covenant Eschatology.

In this work, we examine the internal evidence from the Revelation and the rest of the Bible to establish our case. We have not been able to examine everything that could be examined. For instance, we have not included a complete study of the condition of the seven churches of Asia. Some believe the condition of the churches indicates a late date. For an examination of this material, see Kenneth Gentry’s work cited herein. He does a marvelous job of showing that the late date in regard to the churches is untenable.

Revelation uses the language of God’s covenant with Israel. Yet, to read most commentaries, one would never know the book is thoroughly Hebraic in thought. This language is vitally important in the interpretation of the Revelation. I have tried to emphasize this fundamentally important issue in this revision. For the moment, I will say only that until modern students come to realize that the proper interpretation of Revelation lies in a proper understanding of the “Hope of Israel” and the O. T. prophetic scriptures, that there is virtually no hope of properly interpreting the Apocalypse.

This work contains five unique studies. The first shows that the mission of John the Immerser has a direct bearing on the interpretation of Revelation. Our special study on Paul and the Apocalypse—to my knowledge an unprecedented study-- reveals that Paul’s ministry is vital to properly dating and interpreting the Apocalypse. The third unique study is a comparison of the Apocalypse with the book of Lamentations. Like the study of Paul and the Apocalypse, this study is, to my knowledge, unprecedented in the literature. I have added an expanded special study on the millennium and whether it began or ended in AD 70. This is an exciting study and very important.

Have you pondered the problem of time in Revelation? The Apocalypse says repeatedly that fulfillment was “at hand.” Yet, most

commentators insist the book is still not fulfilled two thousand years later? Does that bother you? It should. We have a special study devoted to the time statements of the book.

Revelation is not about our future. It is not about Historical Eschatology, i.e., the end of history. It is a book about the end of God's dealings with Old Covenant Israel, thus, Covenant Eschatology. Revelation depicts the consummation of God's Scheme of Redemption at the demise of Old Covenant Jerusalem, the Mother of Harlots.

So, this book will not stir the blood with wild speculation about the future. Hopefully, however, it will move your heart with its sanity and careful presentation of Truth.

Don K. Preston D. Div.  
May, 2011

### 3 WHO IS THIS BABYLON?

The book of Revelation is about the fall of the great city Babylon. Needless to say, there is little consensus about Babylon's identity. An Internet search reveals a bewildering array of sites dedicated to the study of the Great Harlot city. Speculation about Babylon runs rampant.

Some premillennial writers believe Babylon refers to literal restored Babylon. Others say it is "the great apostate religious system," i.e., "The union of the three major branches of the church that exist in the world today" (Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, DKP). Among amillennialists and postmillennialists, "The harlot city is Rome," or the Roman Catholic church, although there are many who believe Babylon must be identified as Jerusalem.

I believe Babylon was Jerusalem of the first century, and Revelation predicted the end of the Old Covenant world of Judaism. If this is true, it means the eschatology (i.e., doctrine of the "last things") of Revelation is "Covenant Eschatology," and not "Historical Eschatology," since it deals, not with the end of time, but with the end of the Old Covenant world. This is true because the resurrection, judgment and parousia (coming, presence, Strong's #3952) of Christ are associated with the judgment on Babylon.

The importance of properly identifying Babylon of Revelation cannot be overemphasized. We are living in times when prophecy "experts" are telling us that the end is near, we are in the last days. Just before the Iraqi war broke out, the dispensational books were full of references to Saddam Hussein as the "re-incarnation" of Nebuchadnezzar, ancient Babylonian king, and it was claimed that the literal city of Babylon was being resurrected under his rule. Those claims have been falsified, yet, the centrality of Babylon in the studies of the "end times" cannot be diminished. To wrongly identify Babylon of Revelation is to have a wrong eschatology.

Our purpose therefore is to present a significant amount of evidence to convince you that Babylon of Revelation was none other than Old Covenant, first century Jerusalem. It is not modern

Jerusalem. It is not the literal city in Iraq, destined to be rebuilt. Babylon is not the Roman Catholic church, or any other modern entity. Babylon was first century, Old Covenant Jerusalem, and that means that Babylon is fallen.

## **BABYLON AND MATTHEW 24**

Very few deny that Matthew 24 predicts the fall of Jerusalem. However, many have failed to realize that Revelation recreates the Olivet Discourse in form and outline. R. H. Charles was one of the first to recognize that the seals of Revelation 6 follow exactly the pattern predicted by Jesus in Matthew 24.

The pattern of judgment in Matthew—as well as Mark 13 and Luke 21 is:

- 1.) War (Matthew 24:6; compare Revelation 6:1-2).
- 2.) International strife (Mat. 24:7a; Rev.6:3-4).
- 3.) Famine (Mat. 24:7b; Rev. 6:5-6).
- 4.) Earthquakes (Mat. 24:7c; Rev. 6:12;16:18).
- 5.) Persecutions (Mat. 24:9-13; Rev. 6:9-11).
- 6.) De-creation (Mat. 24:15-31; Rev. 6:12-17) (de-creation).

Chilton says, “While all readily admit that the Little Apocalypse is a prophecy against Israel, few seem to make the obvious connection: The Big Apocalypse is a prophecy against Israel as well.” (emphasis his)

In addition to the above, there are other parallels between Revelation and the Olivet Discourse.

- 1.) Both speak of the judgment of a sinful city following the completion of the world mission (Mat. 24:14; Rev. 14:6f).
- 2.) Both speak of the Great Tribulation (Mat. 24:21; Rev. 14).
- 3.) Both speak of the Abomination of Desolation (Mat. 24:15; Rev. 13).
- 4.) Both urge the faithful to flee from the city (Mat. 24:15f; Rev. 18:4).
- 5.) Both speak of false prophets and the workers of false miracles

(Mat. 24:24; Rev. 13:12-15).

6.) Both speak of the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds (Mat. 24:30; Rev. 14:14f).

7.) Both speak of the sounding of the Trumpet at the time of the end (Mat. 24:31; Rev. 11:15f).

8.) Both speak of the salvation of the elect (Mat. 24:31; Rev. 14:15-16).

9.) Both speak of the gathering of the birds of the air to feast on the carcass of the dead (Mat. 24:28; Rev. 19:17f). Compare this with Deuteronomy 28:25-26; Psalms 79; Jeremiah 34, etc.. This is a common theme associated with punishment on Israel.

10.) Both predictions were to be fulfilled soon (Mat. 24:34; Rev. 1:1-3; 22:6, 10, 12, 20).

These, and other similarities, show that the Olivet Discourse and Revelation are parallel. The significant thing about these parallels, for the amillennialist and postmillennialist, is that every one of them is taken from the section of Matthew 24 that is almost universally agreed to be speaking about the fall of Jerusalem. If Revelation is parallel to Matthew 24, and Matthew 24 speaks of the impending judgment on Jerusalem, then Revelation must speak of the fall of Jerusalem.

In Revelation, judgment is against Babylon. The judgments on Babylon are the judgments Jesus proclaimed against Jerusalem. Unless one can show that Revelation and the Olivet Discourse speak of two identical judgments, to come on two different cities, then Babylon must be Jerusalem.

#### **4 THESE THINGS MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS REVELATION 1:1-3**

One of the most significant, yet, overlooked keys to understanding Revelation and the identity of Babylon is that John is emphatic about when the book was to be fulfilled. In the words of Gentry, “One of



the most helpful interpretive clues in Revelation is at the same time both one of the most generally overlooked among lay students of scripture and one of the most radically reinterpreted by evangelical scholars. This clue is the contemporary expectation of the author regarding the fulfillment of the prophecies. John clearly expects the soon fulfillment of his prophecy.”

John was told by the Father, through Christ, that “the time is at hand,” and, “these things must shortly come to pass” (Revelation 1:1-3). It would seem *prima facie* evident therefore, that any proper exegesis of Revelation, any attempt to properly identify Babylon, would demand that the student look to John’s day for that identity. John’s words are important. Although his exegesis of the book abandoned his own comments, Hendricksen’s thoughts are accurate, “Never shall we be able to understand the book of Revelation unless we interpret it in the light of contemporaneous events. We should always ask: how did the first readers understand the book?... This book is an answer to the crying need of that particular day and we must permit contemporaneous circumstances to shed their light upon its symbols and predictions.” He even proceeds to show how honoring the temporal statements of imminence, “deals the death blow to any futuristic view” (P. 263, n. 3). Strangely, however, Hendricksen held that the Revelation spanned the entirety of human history.

John was told that the fulfillment of his vision “must shortly come to pass” (v. 1). The Greek term is *en taxei*, and is used only a few times in the N.T. Contrary to what some claim, the term never indicates rapidity of action, to the exclusion of when an event was to occur. This Greek term means that the predicted events were in fact to come to fulfillment very soon. Beale notes that John is deliberately deriving his statement from Daniel 2:28-29 and the prophecy of the last days. However, whereas Daniel’s prediction was for the last days, John’s use of *en taxei*, instead of using Daniel’s wording, “connotes neither the speedy manner in which the prophecy of Daniel was to be fulfilled nor the mere possibility that it could be fulfilled at any time, but the definite, imminent time of fulfillment, which likely

has already begun in the present...John's substitution of *en taxei* implies his expectation that the final tribulation, defeat of evil, and establishment of the kingdom, which Daniel expected to occur distantly 'in the latter days,' would begin in his own generation, and, indeed, that it had already begun to happen." Lamentably, Beale quickly abandons his own excellent comments, and seeks to mitigate the time element of the Apocalypse. We suggest that Beale is correct, the time of fulfillment was truly imminent, and that this should guide our search for the identity of Babylon.

John was also told, "the time is near." It is important to note that the word time is *kairos*. As Beagley says, "In the New Testament *kairos* normally refers to one, critical and divinely ordained moment in the line of history." In other words, *kairos* is the appointed, designated time. What does this mean? It means that the appointed time for the fulfillment of the Apocalypse had come.

Commenting on the words of Jesus, "the time (*kairos*), is fulfilled," Bruce noted, "These words express, among other things, the assurance that an ardently desired new order, long since foretold and awaited, was now on the point of realization." He continues, "The general implication of the announcement was plain: the time had come when the God of heaven was to inaugurate the indestructible kingdom" (Time, 20). What Bruce is pointing out is that the appointed time (*kairos*) for the kingdom, i.e. the fulfillment of all eschatological prophecies, had arrived. The same is true in Revelation 1:1-3. What had been foretold long ago, what was once not near, was now present. The time designated by the prophets had arrived. Compare 1 Peter 1:10-12.

The combination of all of these words of imminence would, seemingly, compel the student of Revelation to seek for the identify of Babylon within the temporal confines of John's world, of his generation, for, at hand, quickly, shortly, and the other words utilized by the Spirit in Revelation assuredly convey the urgency of the soon coming consummation.

However, while John's language expressly indicates that the

fulfillment of the Apocalypse was near, most commentators either go out of their way to mitigate that *naherwartung* (urgent expectation), or ignore it altogether. We are told that although a normal reading of the time words would indicate that the fulfillment of Revelation was indeed near, that we must remember that God does not see time as man does, so, all those words of nearness are subjective at best, and meaningless at most. We will address this in-depth in our special study below.

Commentators often rely on Matthew 24:36 and Jesus' affirmation that "no man knows the day or the hour" of Christ's parousia, in order to nullify the near expectation of the end in Revelation. Beale (unwittingly) effectively negates such an appeal however, in his comments on Revelation 14, "The Angel tells Christ to thrust in the sickle for the time has come," and Beale says; "Christ must be informed by God about the time for the judgment to begin, since, 'of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father'" (NIGTC, 772). What this means is that what Jesus did not know in Matthew, the Father was now revealing to him, i.e. that his parousia was indeed now near. This effectively destroys any attempt to nullify the imminence of Revelation.

The bottom line is that if we take the multitudinous time statements of imminence in Revelation in their normal, prosaic definition, then this demands that we seek for the identity of Babylon, not in the Eastern European Common Market, not in modern Iraq, not in the Roman Catholic church, not in New York City. We must not even look to ancient Rome, for the fall of Rome was not near, and coming quickly when John wrote, even if one takes the late date for the penning of Revelation.

However, if one posits the Apocalypse in the time period before the fall of Old Covenant Jerusalem in AD 70, and understands that Revelation is focused on the fall of the city guilty of killing the prophets, the Lord, and his apostles and prophets, then all of those time statements can be taken at face value. John's and his audience's eager expectation of the soon coming fulfillment was vindicated.

We have an in-depth special study of the time statements later in the book, so we will allow this to suffice for the moment. Suffice it to say that any proposed identity of Babylon that violates the express, unambiguous, repeated statements of the Revelation, “These things must shortly come to pass...the time is at hand,” cannot be a proper approach to, or explanation of, the Revelation. Any city identified as Babylon must fall within that divinely restricted framework, and only Old Covenant Jerusalem fits.

**5 EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM:  
EVEN THOSE WHO PIERCED HIM  
REVELATION 1:7.**

“Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.”

It is fascinating, yet lamentable, that a key to setting the proper foundation for understanding the Apocalypse is virtually ignored by many commentators. The text says that those who pierced Jesus would see him coming on the clouds. Yet, this definite temporal limitation is virtually ignored. Caird, who is normally careful in his observations of the actual words of the text, says that the text only predicts, “That men will see the pierced but triumphant Christ.” Aune likewise makes no mention of the significance of the fact that those who pierced Jesus would witness his parousia, except to say, “The imminence of the Parousia and the end of the world is a central emphasis of Revelation.” Beale universalizes the text, insisting that this is a referent to a final “end of the world” coming of Christ. Thus, “Those who mourn are not those who literally crucified Jesus, but those guilty of rejecting him.”

There are several things that militate against such moralizing of the text. When we pay close attention to the wording and the context, it is apparent that John has the impending judgment of Israel in mind.

As Beale notes, Revelation 1:7, “is composed of two O.T. citations” (1999, 196) and those verses are Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10. What is so significant about both of these passages is that they are both temporally defined.

The first passage, Daniel 7:13, is a vision of the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven, and the reception of the kingdom. However, there is something else present that is the theme of Revelation, and that is the theme of vindication. In Daniel 7:25, the “little horn” arises out from among the fourth beast, and, “shall persecute the saints of the Most High.” However, at the coming of the Son of Man, the judgment is set (compare Daniel 7:10 with Revelation 20:10f), and the saints are vindicated, by the reception of the everlasting kingdom. There are several things to note.

First, Daniel’s vision does not extend beyond the days of the Roman empire. The vision of Daniel 7 envisioned four beasts, representative of four world empires, and like Daniel 2, begins with the Babylonian empire. Thus, one thing is certain, the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds, of Revelation 1:7, cannot be extended beyond the days of the Roman empire.

Second, the motif of vindication is a crux interpretum, for it is not only one of the keys to Jesus’ message, but the theme of the Apocalypse as well. Both in his parabolic and prosaic teaching, Jesus constantly spoke of the time, coming in his generation, in which the martyrs of God would be vindicated at the coming of the Master. See for instance the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (Matthew 21), the parable of the Wedding (Matthew 22), the parable of the Importunate Widow (Luke 18), etc. As we will show extensively below, Matthew 23 serves as the normative text for the discussion of the vindication of the martyrs. In no uncertain terms, Jesus said that all of the martyrs of God would be vindicated in his generation, in the judgment of Jerusalem.

Simply stated the argument is this: Daniel 7:13 predicted the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven in vindication of his suffering and the suffering of his servants. Revelation 1:7,

citing Daniel 7, predicted the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven in vindication of his suffering, and the suffering of his servants. Jesus said that the vindication of his suffering, and the suffering of his martyrs, would be in the judgment of Israel in his generation (Matthew 23). Therefore, the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven, in vindication of his suffering, and the suffering of his servants (Revelation 1:7) would occur in the judgment of Israel in Jesus' generation. This means that Revelation 1:7 sets the stage for understanding Revelation as a prediction of the impending catastrophe of AD 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed.

This application of Revelation 1:7, with its citation of Daniel, is verified in Jesus' use of Daniel 7 on other occasions as well. When Jesus stood before Caiaphas (Matthew 26:64) he told that scoundrel, "You will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven." As France says, "His judges may accuse and condemn him, but they will soon see that the one they condemn has become their lord and king... those sitting in judgment of Jesus will in fact witness the 'coming,' i.e. that it will occur within their lifetime. Jesus is not referring to an event in the indefinite future, but to a situation which is to obtain immediately."

This being true, notice the exact correlation between what Jesus said in Matthew (par. Mark 14:62) and Revelation. In both passages Daniel 7 is cited. In both passages the promise is made that those responsible for killing Jesus were to be judged at his coming. It is difficult to see how it is possible to accept Jesus' application of Daniel in Matthew, and then so radically alter its meaning and application in Revelation 1:7.

The second OT prophecy cited in Revelation 1:7 is Zechariah 12:10, and like Daniel, the context is vindication of the Suffering Servant, "Then they will look on me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn." As in Daniel, the vindication of the Suffering Servant is paramount. The One that had been pierced would now be mourned. When would this be?

When one traces the “in that day” references throughout Zechariah 12-14, there can be no doubt. It would be when, “It shall come to pass in all the land, says the Lord, that two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one third shall be left in it” (Zechariah 13:8). And as chapter 14 shows, “The Day of the Lord is coming, for I will gather all nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled and the women ravished” (Zechariah 14:1-2). The time of mourning for the one whom they had pierced would be the time of judgment on Jerusalem.

In fact, Zechariah 12-14 posits a panoramic vista that is then played out in the 1st century. Notice the constituent elements foretold in Zechariah:

1.) They would look on him whom they had pierced.

2.) God would pour out the spirit of grace on the house of Israel (12:10). He would open a fountain for the cleansing of sin and uncleanness. (13:1)

3.) Israel would mourn. There seems to be two “mournings” in the text. There seems to be the mourning due to looking on the pierced One, and then there seems to be a mourning throughout the land of Israel (v. 11).

4.) At the time of the great mourning, Jehovah causes two thirds of the people to perish from the land, while a remnant is saved (13:8f).

5.) It would be the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (14:1f).

6.) It would also be the time of the deliverance of Jerusalem.

Notice now the New Testament’s application of Zechariah.

John 19:37 quotes Zechariah 12 and applies it to Jesus’ crucifixion. There can be no doubt about this. John applied Zechariah to the crucifixion of Jesus.

In Acts 2, those who had looked on the pierced Lord are convicted of their sin, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” What was their response, “When they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren what shall we do?’” (Acts 2:37).

It is important to realize that according to the Old Law, there was no appeal for these people. The Law of Blood Atonement (Numbers 35), demanded blood for blood, with no possibility of escape. So, what could they do? In their mourning for what they had done, they could only appeal for mercy, for grace and for cleansing from the One whom they had killed. That is precisely what they did, and God graciously extended forgiveness, “Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sin” (Acts 2:38). Here, God was marvelously extending His grace and His mercy, by opening the fountain of the blood of Jesus to the house of Israel, just as Zechariah had foretold. Zechariah 12 was being fulfilled.

Zechariah not only foretold the mourning of repentance, fulfilled on Pentecost, he also foretold a mourning throughout the entire land of Israel, and this mourning is associated with the time when 2/3rds of the people would perish in the destruction of Jerusalem (13:8f; 14:1). “All the tribes of the earth” would now mourn, and they did.

But what of the “deliverance of Jerusalem?” We will defer that discussion to later in the book, and our study of The Tale of Two Jerusalems. For now, suffice it to say that both in the OT and the New, there is the doctrine of two Jerusalems. The old earthly Jerusalem would be destroyed, but the new Jerusalem, of which the old was a mere shadow, would triumph. That is what we find in Zechariah.

The panoramic view of Zechariah 12-14, played out in the New Testament, is a wonderment of harmony and unity. John said that Zechariah 12:10 was fulfilled at the Cross, and it is the height of arrogance to say it wasn't. God did pour out on the house of Israel the spirit of grace, and He did open the fountain for cleansing to the house of David. Furthermore, there was great lamentation throughout the land when Jerusalem was destroyed, and those who had looked on him at the Cross saw him coming in judgment, just as Revelation 1:7 predicted. There is no justification to apply Revelation 1:7 to any other time and event than those in scripture. Those were the first century events surrounding the passion of Jesus and his coming in vindication of his deity and judgment on his persecutors.



So what we have is this, John chose two major OT passages to set the tone and theme for his Apocalypse, and both of those OT passages had as their key theme the vindication of the Suffering Servant at the judgment of his oppressor, and in Zechariah that persecutor is none other than Jerusalem. Jesus undeniably identified the time of his vindication as the judgment of Israel in the first century. Thus, at the very outset, Revelation 1:7 informs us that the book is “the Coming of Christ in judgment upon Israel.”(1987, 64)

## **6 YOU HAVE TRIED THOSE WHO SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES, AND HAVE FOUND THEM TO BE LIARS REVELATION 2:1**

It is often argued that the book of Revelation could not have been written before the fall of Jerusalem, and applicable to that event, due to the circumstances of the seven churches. It is argued that the church at Ephesus had left her first love, and this demands a span of decades at the very least, and that therefore, this demands a later date. However, the churches in Galatia, as early as AD 50, were already apostatizing (Galatians 1:6f), and that hardly took even a full decade.

The situation in the church at Ephesus, however, points to an early date for the book, because the church had tested men who were claiming to be apostles of Jesus Christ.

The qualifications for being an apostle of Jesus were that they had to have been chosen as a disciple, to have been with him since the baptism of John, and to have been witness to his resurrection (Acts 1). There were only a select few who met those qualifications.

If Revelation was written in AD 95, this means that, according to most traditions, all of the apostles, save John, were already dead. Now, if John was the only remaining apostle, how hard would it have been to try those who claimed to be apostles? Also, if it was known that John was the last remaining apostle, how foolish would it have been to have claimed to be an apostle? The claim to be an apostle, to have any chance of being believed and accepted, would have to be

made at a time when the apostolic office was fully functional.

Consider Paul's ministry at Corinth for example. The false apostles were living and "ministering" at a time when claiming to be an apostle (during the late 50s) was a fully credible claim. In writing to that congregation Paul spoke of "false apostles" just as John does to Ephesus (2 Corinthians 11). The geographical proximity between Corinth and Ephesus, coupled with the fact that these false apostles often followed Paul in his missionary journeys lends itself to an early date very well. Remember that Paul went from Athens to Corinth to Ephesus (Acts 17-19). What precludes the idea that the false apostles that troubled Corinth then followed Paul to Ephesus?

By the way, the claim to be an apostle must be the claim to be an apostle of Jesus, and not simply men sent on a mission (to use the primary sense of *apostolos*). If these false apostles were simply claiming to be sent from someone, that could scarcely have been grounds for testing them in the rigorous manner demanded by the language. They were making a claim to be someone beyond just being a messenger boy. Thus, it is virtually certain that they were claiming to be apostles of the Lord. This being the case, a late date for Revelation is precluded since only one apostle was alive, and that fact alone would deny the claims of any would be apostles. Only an early date for the book would allow someone to make any kind of a credible claim to being an apostle.

## **7 DID SMYRNA EXIST AT AN EARLY DATE? REVELATION 2:9**

One of the seemingly strongest objections to an early date of Revelation is the claim that the church at Smyrna did not even exist during Paul's ministry, i.e. during the early 60s. Hitchcock cites Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, that "the Smyrneans did not know the Lord during the time Paul was ministering." Now, this sounds impressive. However, what does the Bible have to say?

Acts 19 recounts Paul's ministry in Corinth, where he ministered

for 2 years. Luke says, “all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” There are two things to consider here.

First, it is well known that Paul always emphasized evangelism in the major metropolitan centers. His philosophy seemed to be that if the gospel was planted in these major centers, that it would naturally spread to the outlying regions. It should go without saying that Smyrna was a major city in Asia, and would have been the focus of this kind of directed, if not personal, evangelism.

Second, the emphatic declaration that “all of Asia” had heard the gospel cannot be discounted, nor can one argue from silence, saying that since Smyrna is not mentioned that it is not included. One could exclude all of the cities in Asia based on that logic. Given Paul’s modus operandi, and the comprehensive nature of the language, it is far preferable to accept the testimony of Scripture over that of Polycarp.

What is troubling, for those who accept inspiration, is the willingness of Hitchcock and others, to accept the testimony of uninspired men over statements of the Bible. Hitchcock argues like this: Polycarp says the church at Smyrna did not exist in Paul’s day. Acts 19 says that all of Asia heard the gospel, but it does not mention Smyrna specifically, therefore, this silence means, “In the face of scriptural silence and the specific statement of Polycarp, it seems best to let Polycarp’s statement stand” (Hitchcock, 148). The trouble is, that the scriptures are not silent. Luke does say that all of Asia, and that most definitely includes Smyrna, did hear the gospel. Thus, we have Hitchcock saying it is better to accept the uninspired testimony of Polycarp over the inspired testimony of Luke. Personally, I find it, “best to let Luke’s statement stand.”

We cannot leave this section without noting that just like in Philadelphia, the problem for the saints in Smyrna was “the synagogue of Satan.” It was those, “who say they are Jews, but are a synagogue of Satan.” As we shall see below, this indicates an early period in which the debate over the identity of “the Sons of God” was raging at its

hottest, and that fits the pre-70 scenario the best. The problem is not Roman persecution. It is a conflict between the old synagogue and the new synagogue of the Messiah. The old synagogue refused to be gathered into Messiah (Matthew 23:37), and consequently faced imminent judgment. This historical situation fits the pre-70 world far better than the post.

As Vanderwaal says, “Revelation, like the rest of the New Testament, contains a running polemic against the Jews and their rejection of Christ. It shares this theme with many of the early Christian passion homilies, which were testimonies against the Jews. The thesis that Revelation is directed against Rome is indefensible on scholarly grounds.”

## **8 THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD REVELATION 3:9-10**

“Indeed I will make (those) of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.”

The most hotly debated theological question of the first century was the question of the identity of the Sons of God. This was not a question of Christians versus pagans so much as it was an issue between Jews and Christians. Gregg correctly states that prior to AD 70, “The principal systematic persecution of Christians came from the Sanhedrin and synagogues of the Jews.” Why were the Jews so adamantly opposed to Christianity? It was because for every distinctive feature historically related to Israel, this nascent group of “heretics” claimed that Christ was its fulfillment and spiritual counterpart.

Israel claimed to be a distinctive people belonging to God (Exodus 19:6). They were the seed of Abraham, the recipients of the Covenant promises (Romans 9:6f). They zealously practiced the Covenant

seal of circumcision. The Law, written on tablets of stone, had been delivered to Moses by Jehovah Himself. God had blessed them with the holy city, Jerusalem, where His temple sat as a reminder of His abiding presence among them. The Jews were proud to “rest in the Law, and make your boast toward God” (Romans 2:17).

In response, Christians claimed that the Abrahamic promises were being received by both Jew and Gentile alike—in Christ by faith—not just those of the physical lineage of Abraham. They declared that God was fulfilling His promise of a New Covenant by the power of the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 7:22; 8; 10:9f). He was in the process of removing the old imperfect Covenant (2 Corinthians 3; Hebrews 8:13).

Christians declared that while the Jews were circumcised in the flesh, they, in fulfillment of prophesy, had been circumcised in the heart (Colossians 2:11-12). The Jews boasted of their temple in Jerusalem. The Christians said God no longer dwelt in temples made with hands, but in the church of the Lord (Acts 7:48f). This was the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man (Hebrews 8:1-3). While the Jews boasted in Sinai, the Christians had come to Zion, the focus of prophetic anticipation (Hebrews 12:18f). The Jews had “always” been the Sons of God. The Christians claimed, “The Sons of the Kingdom will be cast out,” and, “The kingdom will be given to another nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matthew 8:11f; Matthew 21:43).

The battle was joined. The Jews had history, tradition and (ostensibly) scripture on their side, the Christians had a risen Lord. The battle raged in synagogue after synagogue, in home after home. The Christians said Jesus had predicted a final sign that would vindicate their claims to being the true Sons of God. Jesus said he was coming in judgment, and Jerusalem would be totally desecrated (Matthew 24:3f).

The sense of urgency and impending judgment permeates the epistles. Jesus’ disciples went into all the world proclaiming, “Babylon the Great is fallen, the hour of her judgment has come.”

To those in Rome, experiencing, “the sufferings of this present time,” Paul wrote of, “the glory about to be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18f, NRSV), and promised, “The God of Peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly” (Romans 16:20). He said, “The night is far spent, the Day is at hand” (Romans 13:11f).

Paul told the Corinthians, “The time has been shortened” (1 Corinthians 7:29-31), the end of the age had come upon them, (1:10:11), not all of them would die before they witnessed the change (15:50-51).

Paul wrote to those being pressured (thlipsis, Strong’s #2347), and promised relief (anesis, Strong’s #425) from that persecution, as well as vindication, at the parousia of the Lord (2 Thessalonians 1:4-12).

James warned the rich, who were blaspheming the name of Christ and oppressing the disciples, that they had foolishly assumed that the goods they had hoarded “in the last days” would benefit them. He assured the oppressed that, “the parousia has drawn near” (James 5:8), and, “the judge is standing right at the door” (James 5:9).

Peter wrote to those, in the same geographic area as those to whom John wrote, who were being persecuted. He promised them relief at the parousia, “after you have suffered a little while” (1 Peter 1:5-7). Compare Revelation 6:9-11. He also said, “the end of all things is at hand” (1 Peter 4:7). The scoffers claimed, “all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world” (2 Peter 3:3f). The scoffers denied what Peter affirmed. Now, if Peter was affirming the end of time the passing of two thousand years has confirmed the scoffers, and proven Peter to be a false prophet. If, however, Peter was proclaiming the imminent demise of the old world of Israel in the fall of Jerusalem, these texts harmonize beautifully. The fall of Jerusalem would identify Christians as the Sons of God, and the scoffers as false Sons.

The idea of vindication is very much present in these passages. The persecutors would become the persecuted. The tables would be turned, Jerusalem would become a waste, and the Jews who had denied the Christian’s claims would now discover that those claims

were true.

In Revelation 3, Jesus promised the church at Philadelphia, “the hour of trial that is about to come (mellousees, about to, from mello, Strong’s #3195, erchesthai, come, from Strong’s #2064), on the whole earth,” would not come on them. However, the judgment would have the effect of causing the Jews who were persecuting the church at Philadelphia to know that the Christians were now the “true Jews.”

This judgment on the “whole world” is the judgment against Babylon in Revelation 14, when the harvest of the earth would come. It is the same judgment proclaimed on the earth in chapter 16. The book of Revelation does not posit several different judgments upon “the whole world.” Thus, to identify the imminent judgment of chapter 3 is to identify that of the later chapters.

The question is, What hour of trial was coming on the face of “the whole earth” that could possibly result in the Jews acknowledging the supremacy of Christ? It was the time leading up to and consummating in the fall of Jerusalem. Jesus said that during the awful time leading up to and consummating in the fall of Jerusalem, there would be, “distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, (oikoumene) for the powers of the heaven will be shaken” (Luke 21:25-26).

The view that the fall of Jerusalem was a strictly “local” event with little significance is shown to be folly by these words. Further, history records that the period of 66-70 AD was a time of “universal” distress. One has but to read of the awful pogroms against the Jews in Alexandria and other locations throughout the Roman empire to know that the judgment came on “the whole world.”

Jesus said the distress associated with the Abomination of Desolation, just prior to the actual destruction of Jerusalem, would result in, “great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). Thus, the judgment on Israel “fits the bill” in regard to: 1.) The controversy of “Sonship,” 2.) It was “about to come,” 3.) It was to

come on the “whole world.” In fact, the fall of Jerusalem was the only imminent, world wide trial that had anything to do with the question of Sonship.

How would the fall of Rome settle the issue of Sonship? (The fall of Rome was not “about to happen” when John wrote either.) Was it Rome that claimed to be “Jews”? Were the Romans “the synagogue of Satan?” By the way, note how the promises to Pergamos and Philadelphia match the promise of Revelation 1:7. As we saw at the outset, the Apocalypse is about the vindication of Christ and his suffering saints. In both of these situations, the Jews were the persecutors of Christ’s body. Yet, in both texts, he promised to come quickly and vindicate his saints (Revelation 2:16; 9f). So, the vindication of Christ’s saints, suffering at the hands of the Jews, is carried out in the letters to the Seven Churches. This identifies the persecutor of Revelation as Israel, and the coming of Christ in judgment as the time of the judgment of Israel in AD 70.

It is of interest that Beale sees that, “Christ’s ‘coming’ in the letters of chapter 2 and 3 appears to be his conditional visitation of the churches” (1999, 198). He does think that a “final” coming may possibly be in view, although he seems to prefer the “in time” concept. Well, if the coming of Christ in chapters 2-3 can be the in time coming of Christ, since the parousia of these chapters is patently in judgment of the Jews, and since this is the theme of Revelation 1:7, why is it not possible that Revelation 1:7 is speaking of the judgment of Israel? Instead of dichotomizing between “comings” and creating a disjunction between the nature of Christ’s parousia against the persecutors, and a proposed “end of time” parousia, why not accept that the theme of Christ’s coming, vindication, throughout Revelation identifies the parousia of Revelation as his coming against Israel for persecuting God’s elect?

Let’s return to our topic of the manifestation of the Sons of God. Would the judgment of Roman Catholicism solve that question? Hardly. How would a yet future judgment on “apostate Christianity,” or the World Council of Churches, settle the issue between, “those



who say they are Jews, and are not”? To divorce the question of the identity of Babylon from the issue of Sonship is to do a great disservice to the historical context in which the book was written.

In light of the ongoing contest about the identity of the true Sons of God, the fall of Jerusalem was a definitive issue. The Christians proclaimed it as a sign of Jesus’ deity and of their identity.

As late as the fourth century the fall of Jerusalem was being utilized by Christians as such an effective “evangelism tool” that the emperor Julian the Apostate determined to rebuild the city to remove that polemic argument from Christians. Wilken says Julian believed that the, “Restoration of the Temple would not only cast doubt on the Christian claims to be the true Israel as well as strengthen Julian’s program of religious reform; it would also provide additional proof that Jesus was not divine.” Julian could never complete his project.

Jesus said the judgment on Jerusalem would be a time of distress of the nations. In Revelation, the time of judgment would come on all the earth. Jesus said the fall of Jerusalem would vindicate His claim to being the Son of God, and His followers as the true Sons of God. In Revelation, the fall of Babylon would vindicate the Son as “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” The “hour of trial” that was coming would cause “the synagogue of Satan” to confess that the church now comprised the true Synagogue, the true temple. This was not true of any other event or any other city than first century Jerusalem. Camp says, “God had one final argument in answer to those false teachers. (The Jews, DKP) When Jerusalem fell, that was God’s way of saying ‘I will show you once and for all who the sons of God are.’” Babylon was Jerusalem.

## **9 THE FIERY TRIAL THAT IS ABOUT TO COME REVELATION 3:10**

“I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole earth.”

Jesus promises the church at Philadelphia that if they remain faithful, “I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world.” The word that is translated shall come is *mello*, and as Gentry notes, “When used with the aorist infinitive—as in Revelation 1:19—the word’s preponderate usage and preferred meaning is: ‘to be on the point of, to be about to.’ The same is true when the word is used with the present infinitive, as in Revelation 3:10.” The Greek Grammar of Blass and Debrunner concurs saying, “*mellein* with the infinitive expresses imminence (like the future).” Thus, while the saints in Philadelphia, and all the churches of Asia, were already experiencing persecution, Jesus warned that things were about to get worse. One can hardly keep from being reminded of Peter’s first epistle.

Like John, Peter wrote to the churches in Asia (1 Peter 1:1). John wrote about Babylon, Peter wrote from Babylon (1 Peter 5:13). John wrote amidst suffering (Revelation 1:9), promising more suffering (trial, Revelation 3:10, from *peirasmos*, Strong’s #3986). Peter wrote to those already embroiled in suffering (1 Peter 4:12)—“do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial (*peirasmos*) that is among you,” and more suffering was to follow (1 Peter 1:5-7; 5:10). John wrote saying that the fiery trial was about to come, Peter said the fiery trial was present. Peter told his audience that they were partakers of the suffering of Christ (4:13), an allusion to filling the measure of suffering (see p.110f; 119f; 234f). In Revelation, the saints had to suffer to fill the measure of suffering (Revelation 6:11). John said his vision, “must shortly come to pass.” Peter said, “the time has come for the judgment to begin” (1 Peter 4:17).

Peter told his readers, “Do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial that is among you” (1 Peter 4:12). Why did he say this? The most logical answer is that they had been informed that they would suffer for their faith. Could it be because they had read John’s prediction of the fiery trial that was about to come? John and Peter wrote to the same audience. Peter was saying that John’s prediction was being fulfilled.

It might be rejoined that the prediction of suffering was common. Jesus and Paul had predicted trials before the end (1 Thessalonians 3:1-3). But to say that Peter (1 Peter 1:5f; 4:12f) and John's (Revelation 3:10) discussion of tribulation is in harmony with Jesus' prediction is to demand that Revelation was written before the fall of Jerusalem.

Jesus promised his disciples that before the fall of Jerusalem, "They will deliver you to the councils (sanhedrins, indicative of Jewish persecution, DKP), you will be beaten in the synagogues" (Mark 13:9). Is it mere coincidence that Jesus, in Revelation 3:10f, blames the "synagogue of Satan" as the source of the persecution? We suggest then, that in harmony with Jesus and Paul, Peter and John were writing about and enduring the suffering that Jesus said would occur prior to AD 70.

It is widely agreed that 1 Peter was written around AD 65. If John said the fiery trial was coming, and Peter said it was present, does this not demand that John wrote before Peter? When two writers write about the identical subject, in the context of the same city (Babylon), and give the identical time indicators, what is the hermeneutical principle for saying that Peter wrote of one persecution while John wrote of another one removed in time and circumstance? John said the trial was about to come, Peter said the trial was present. John said the appointed time for the judgment parousia (kairos, Rev. 1:1-3; 22:10) was at hand; Peter said the appointed time (kairos, 1 Peter 4:17), had come for "the judgment." Peter wrote before the fall of Jerusalem. Are we to believe that John wrote a quarter of a century after Peter? To sustain such a view one would have to prove with strong evidence—not simply assertion or presupposition—that although Peter and John wrote to the same audience about the identical subject, and gave the identical time parameters for fulfillment, they were in fact writing of totally different circumstances.

## **10 THE SEALED BOOK OPENED**

### **REVELATION 5:1-4**

“And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.”

John’s vision of the glory of heaven takes a turn toward sadness. His vision will reveal things to come. Yet, the one on the throne holds the book containing those things, and the contents are under seven seals, secreted from view. No one could be found worthy to open the seals.

Chilton comments on the imagery of the scroll, “The imagery of the document inscribed on both sides is used in the prophecy of Ezekiel, on which St. John has modeled his prophecy. Ezekiel tells of receiving a scroll containing a list of the judgments against Israel (Ezekiel 2:3-10)” (Vengeance, 168). The scroll Ezekiel was given was written front and back. As we will see, the parallels between Revelation and Ezekiel are impressive, and point us in the direction of the identity of Revelation as a book dealing with the judgment of Israel.

The imagery of the sealed book also brings to mind the predictions of Daniel. Most commentators agree that John’s vision is dependent on Daniel’s prophecy. In chapters 10-12, the exilic prophet envisioned the time of the end. He was told that fulfillment of his vision was not for his day, but was far away (Daniel 10:14; 12: 4, 10-13). Daniel was told to seal his vision because of the protracted time destined for the fulfillment. The book was to remain sealed until the time for its fulfillment, the time of the end.

It is significant that in Matthew 24:15f, Jesus cites Daniel 12 (and chapter 9) in his prediction of the fall of Jerusalem, “When you see the Abomination of Desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, whoso reads let him understand, then let those in Judea flee.” Jesus was saying that what Daniel foretold for the time of the end would be fulfilled in His generation (Matthew 24:34).

In an e-mail post, Chris Humphreys posed the following question about the sealed book of Revelation 5, and its relation to Daniel, “Could it be that the scroll that is being unsealed in Revelation

5 is none other than the sealed scroll in Daniel 12?” A pertinent question indeed. In Revelation, when John sees the sealed book, and its opening, he is seeing the time for the fulfillment of Daniel’s sealed book. The time of fulfillment was “at hand,” and the events, “must shortly come to pass” (Revelation 1:1-3).

We will show in our study of Daniel 12 that Daniel’s prediction consummates in the final dissolution of the Old Covenant world of Israel. Daniel’s vision would be fulfilled “when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered” (Daniel 12:7).

A third Old Testament reference to a sealed book may also have been in John’s mind. Zechariah, Ezekiel and Daniel are the fountain from whence Revelation flows. In Zechariah 5:1-4, the prophet saw a scroll flying through the heavens, and traversing the entire earth (land). The dimensions of the scroll are those of the Most Holy Place of the temple (1 Kings 6:3). The scroll contains covenant curses on the land.

Thus, as Humphreys notes, “In all three Old Testament books, the scrolls have the same type message—judgment that is coming on the house of Israel. So extensive is God’s judgment that the scrolls are written on both sides. We can rightfully expect that the scroll in Revelation, which bears remarkable similarities to the previous scrolls in Scripture, contains impending irreversible curses upon the nation of Israel. This fits perfectly into the time frame of Revelation and its overall theme—written prior to 70 A.D.. Revelation gives us a picture of a coming judgment of God upon apostate Israel, which within the past generation had crucified its Messiah. As the scroll is unsealed, and the nature of the judgments is revealed, we get an idea of the events orchestrated by God leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D.”

Thus, at the outset of John’s Apocalypse, the opening of the sealed book should key the observant reader into the fact that the Revelation relates to the fate of Israel. The Biblical history of the sealed scrolls refers to judgments on Israel. The opening of the sealed scroll in Revelation indicates that it is the revelation of Daniel’s sealed book.

If this is true, there can be little doubt that Babylon was Jerusalem, for Daniel's sealed scroll anticipated the complete destruction of the "holy people." Revelation is a book about Covenant judgments on Jerusalem- not about Historical Eschatology.

**11 DO NOT WEEP. BEHOLD, THE LION  
OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, THE ROOT OF DAVID,  
HAS PREVAILED TO OPEN THE SCROLL.  
REVELATION 5:5**

Scripture often references themes, motifs and concepts that seem almost incidental to the casual reader. However, I am convinced that nothing in scripture is coincidental. The Spirit had a reason for every nuance, every allusion, every citation, every reference. And in Revelation 5:5 we find a significant allusion to the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

As Jacob gave the final, prophetic blessing to his sons, he said of Judah, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the people" (Genesis 49:10). The prophecy was that Judah's divine authority would not cease to exist until the time Messiah came into his kingdom, and that is the theme of Revelation.

In chapter 11, Revelation depicts judgment on the city, "Where the Lord was slain" (more on this later of course). When that city is judged, the cry goes out, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, and He shall reign forever" (Revelation 11:15). Thus, we have in one chapter the transference of authority from Judah, the city where the Lord was slain, to Shiloh, the Messiah.

It is significant to know that virtually all commentators agree that the scepter passed from Judah in A.D. 70. An internet search on Yahoo, of "Genesis 49:10" found over 1500 sites. Now, I did not read every one of them. However, I did search many of them and

discovered a broad consensus among Christians, Jews and Moslems, that the scepter passed from Judah in A.D. 70.

In 2002 I had a radio debate with dispensationalist Thomas Ice. I introduced Genesis 49:10, and associated it with Matthew 21, the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. Ice admitted that the scepter departed from Judah in A.D. 70, but insisted that the kingdom has not yet come. This is untenable, for Genesis 49:10 says that the scepter would not depart until Messiah came in to his kingdom. If the scepter departed from Judah in AD 70 this means, unequivocally, that the kingdom came in A.D. 70, and that the catastrophe of Judah's demise was the external proof of his reign.

The fact that Revelation 5 presents the Lion of the Tribe of Judah taking the scroll and unsealing it, revealing the coming of the kingdom and his triumph over his enemies sets the stage for understanding the Apocalypse. It is about the time when the scepter would pass from Judah, and Messiah would reign. This means that Revelation is about the end of the Old Covenant world of Israel in A.D. 70.

## **12 JOHN THE IMMERSER AND THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD REVELATION 6:12-17**

The importance of John the Immerser to the interpretation of Revelation is almost universally overlooked. There is much we would like to say about this, but space forbids. We will limit our comments to showing that John, as Elijah, was eschatologically significant, and that his ministry lends powerful credence to the identity of Babylon as Jerusalem.

Malachi 4:5-6 predicted the coming of Elijah before the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord, at the close of the Last Days. In no uncertain terms, Jesus identified John the Immerser as Elijah (Matthew 11:13-14; 17:10-13). Clearly, therefore, John was an eschatological figure heralding the coming Day of the Lord. John was a sign that the last

days had come. This is powerfully confirmed by his message.

John was a Covenant Messenger. Malachi says Elijah's message would be, "remember the Law of Moses my servant," and John's task would be to, "turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children" (4:5-6). According to Malachi 3:1, he was to be the messenger to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord in judgment, the time when no one could stand before that awesome presence (3:2).

This distinctly covenantal framework for the ministry of John as Elijah is important, because it gives a direct hint for identifying the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord. John was not a messenger to the nations proclaiming the end of time. He was a messenger to Israel, proclaiming God's coming to His temple in judgment (3:1). This cannot be construed to have no significance for "all nations," for in scripture the judgment of the nations is inextricably linked with the time of Israel's judgment (Isaiah 65-66; Joel 2-3 etc.). This said, however, we must emphasize again that to ignore the Old Covenant framework of John's ministry is to totally misconstrue his message, and the impending judgment he proclaimed. John was declaring Israel's judgment for disobedience to her Covenant, not the end of the Christian age (cf. Isaiah 24; Malachi 4:6).

Note the singular nature of John's message. John did not declare two Great Days of the Lord, one imminent, the other protracted. He did not proclaim the Great Day of the Lord, and then the Greater Day of the Lord. He did not speak of a "wrath about to come," and then a "greater wrath—the really big one—that will eventually come one of these days by and by." His message was "the wrath about to come." It is, therefore, "eisegesis" of the worst sort to ignore the imminence of John's preaching, and extract from it a still future judgment.

How imminent did John foresee this kingdom/judgment to be? Robertson's comments are appropriate, "It was a startling word that John thundered over the hills and it re-echoed throughout the land. The Old Testament prophets had said it would come some day in God's own time. John proclaims as the herald of the new day that it



has come, has drawn near. How near he does not say, but he evidently means very near, so near that one could see the signs and the proof.”

When John said, “the kingdom is at hand,” he literally said, “the kingdom has drawn near.” What had once been far off had now come near (cf. 1 Peter 1:5-12). Notice James 5:8 where the inspired writer said, “The coming of the Lord (parousia) has drawn near.” James uses the identical Greek word rendered “at hand,” in the same tense as the Immerser. Just as John proclaimed the true imminence of the kingdom, the epistles declared the true imminence of the coming of the Lord in judgment. The reason is simple, judgment and kingdom are Siamese twins linked at the heart. They cannot be separated.

Interestingly, many commentators insist that we honor John’s statements about the imminence of the kingdom, yet they ignore the imminence of the judgment John announced. Since, however, the kingdom and judgment are inseparably linked, this is indefensible. John’s message was of the soon coming of the kingdom and attendant judgment.

When the Pharisees and Sadducees came out to be baptized, John, knowing their hearts, castigated them, “Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” The word “come” is from *mello* (*tes mellouses orges*). The primary definition of this word means to be “about to, to be on the point of.” Hagner says, “John’s apocalyptic message involves imminent judgment of the unrighteous in *tes mellouses orges*, ‘the coming wrath.’” John was Elijah with the task of warning people of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord. He told his audience that the Day was “about to come.”

The imminence factor is enhanced further in the text. John was to prepare the way for the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord. Jesus’ incarnation, the time of His hiddenness and humility as the Suffering Servant, (Isaiah 42; 53) is not in view here. It is the time of Jesus’ parousia as the judge bringing vengeance (Isaiah 59:16-21).

John said of Jesus’ judgment, “His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn” (v. 12). Notice that John presents Jesus as

already holding the instruments of harvest and judgment. Compare this image of imminent harvest with our comments later about Matthew 13, and harvest at the end of the age. This graphic imagery shows that John certainly did not perceive of any gap of thousands of years between his ministry, and Jesus' coming in judgment. His own presence as Elijah belies this idea. Elijah was to come before—not centuries or millennia before—the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

John's words were spoken before Jesus officially entered into his public ministry. Yet, John saw Jesus' coming in judgment as so imminent that he said the instruments of harvest were already in His hands. It simply will not do to say that John was being given a panoramic view of history from Jesus' personal ministry until the end of time. John as Elijah was a sign of the Day of the Lord. As a sign and herald of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord, his words exude imminence from every syllable. The kingdom/judgment "has drawn near." He challenged his audience, "Who has warned you to flee from the wrath about to come?" He declared, "the axe is already at the root," "His winnowing fork is already in His hand." To discount or ignore these statements of imminence is to do a gross disservice to Biblical interpretation.

### **THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD**

The Baptist was the herald and sign of the Great Day of the Lord. In Revelation 6:9f, John beheld the:

"souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. They cried with a loud voice saying: 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge us on those who are on the earth?' And a white robe was given to each of them: and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who should be killed as they were, was completed."

God's response to their prayer is in verses 12-17—the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord. Thus, the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord

would be the time when the martyrs of God would be vindicated.

This “little while,” at the end of which the martyrs of God would be vindicated, is positively identified by Jesus himself. In Matthew 23:29f, Jesus accused the Jews of being the slayers of the prophets, “which of the prophets have you not slain?” To those gathered around him with blood in their eyes, and hatred in their heart, he said, “fill up then the measure of your fathers’ guilt” by slaying the “prophets, wise men and scribes” that he would send to them.

In some of the more challenging words from the Master’s lips, he then said, “Upon you will come all the blood of all the righteous from Abel to Zacharias, whom you slew between the Temple and the altar.” Please take note that this judgment is universal, it extends all the way back to creation, and encompasses vindication of all the righteous. Can Jesus be speaking of anything other than the judgment of the “living and the dead”? He said, “upon you”—that is the living, will “come all the blood of all the righteous”—that is the dead.

Did Jesus say when this judgment would occur? His words are emphatic, “Verily I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.” This is the time of the end, it is the Day of the Lord.

The martyrs of God would be vindicated/judged at the Great Day of the Lord (Revelation 6). Jesus said the martyrs of God would be vindicated in “this generation” (Matthew 23:36). Matthew 23:36 speaks of Jesus’ contemporary generation. Therefore, the martyrs of God would be vindicated/judged in Jesus’ contemporary generation.

The interrelationship of Matthew 23 and Revelation 6 to the Great Day of God’s Wrath all but irrefutably confirms the identity of Babylon as Jerusalem, because John the Immerser was the sign and herald of the Great Day of the Lord, the Day of God’s Wrath, and he said it was imminent (Matthew 3). Unless one wishes to delineate between the judgment of Matthew 23 and Matthew 24:29f, then this definition would seem to be beyond controversy, but such a delineation is untenable.

In Matthew 24:29f, Jesus is citing Joel 2:28f—“The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, before the Great and

Terrible Day of the Lord.” Thus, in Matthew 24:34, when Jesus said, “This generation will not pass till all these things are fulfilled,” he was saying that the Great Day of the Lord was for his generation.

In Matthew 23:36, he said the vindication of all the martyrs would be in His generation, at the Great Day of the Lord (Revelation 6). Thus, Matthew 23 and Matthew 24 both predicted the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord, and both texts deal with the judgment of Jerusalem.

A line of continuity runs from Matthew 3? Matthew 23?Matthew 24?Revelation 6. The statements of imminence are in each text. The subject matter is the same. The locale is the same.

John was Elijah heralding the Great Day of the Lord against Israel. In Revelation, the Great Day of the Lord was imminent upon Babylon, the persecutor of God’s new People. Unless one can demonstrate beyond doubt that John was the herald of a different Great Day of God from that foretold by the Apocalypse, then Babylon must be Jerusalem.

## **DEFINING THE DAY OF THE LORD**

A basic assumption of modern Christendom is that the Day of the Lord is a time ending, cosmos destroying event. Without doubt, when passages such as 2 Peter 3 describe the destruction of “the earth, and the elements therein,” it sounds like the end of time. However, just because it sounds that way does not make it so. One must honor the nature of apocalyptic language, and the Old Testament source for that kind of language.

In the Old Testament, the Day of the Lord had come many times. When the Lord used the Assyrians to destroy Israel, it was the Day of the Lord (Amos 5:18f). In his prediction of that event, Micah the prophet said, “Behold the Lord is coming out of His place; He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth. The mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys will split like wax before the fire” (Micah 1:3-4). Now, none of this literally happened when Assyria invaded Israel. This is the nature of apocalyptic language. It

is hyperbolic and metaphoric.

Anytime the Lord used another nation or army to accomplish His purposes, He was said to come. He came on the clouds, with a shout, with fire and a trumpet, and “heaven and earth” passed away. Notice just a few of the other occurrences of the Day of the Lord in the Old Testament.

1.) Isaiah 13—When the Lord used the Medes to destroy Babylon, it is called the Day of the Lord. Jehovah came with His mighty ones (v. 3). Heaven and earth were destroyed (v.9-13). The Lord did not visibly come, He came via the Medes. Daniel 5 records the fulfillment of the prophecy.

2.) Isaiah 19-20—When He would punish Egypt, the Lord would “ride a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt” (19:1). The nation would be destroyed. Yet, chapter 20 tells us it would be Sargon of Assyria that would accomplish this destruction.

3.) Isaiah 34—The prediction of Edom’s demise sounds like the end of time. Taken literally it would have to be true also. The universe would be annihilated (v. 4), and the nations would be destroyed (v. 2). The earth would melt in the fire (v. 9f), yet the prophecy is against Edom (v. 5). The Babylonians destroyed Edom in BC 583 (see Obadiah where the Day of the Lord on Edom had drawn near. In Isaiah, the Day was not near.). In Malachi 1:2-4, the prophet looks back on the destruction as an accomplished fact.

4.) Jeremiah 4:23-26—Babylon was about to destroy Jerusalem. Jeremiah envisioned this catastrophe as the destruction of heaven and earth at the presence of the Lord. In Zephaniah, Jeremiah’s contemporary, it says the Day of the Lord was at hand on Jerusalem. The Lord would come with a shout and with utter destruction (Zephaniah 1:2-3, 12-18). Jerusalem was destroyed in BC 586, yet the language was not literally fulfilled. Israel’s world did come to an end. The literal heaven and earth did not perish, and the Lord did not bodily leave heaven on a cloud. The language is metaphoric.

5.) Jeremiah 46—When Nebuchadnezzar invaded the land of Israel, he would also campaign against Egypt. The Pharaoh was Necho,

and Nebuchadnezzar defeated him in the battle of Carchemish in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah (v. 1-2). Jeremiah described the judgment of Necho, “This is the day of the Lord God of Hosts, a day of vengeance, That He may avenge Himself on His adversaries” (v. 10).

It was the Day of the Lord. He came in judgment. Yet, not visibly in the manner described by the language. The language was not intended to be taken literally. It is expressive of the majestic actions of God to accomplish His purposes in history . . . not to end history.

Many other examples could be given of the Day of the Lord. Anytime Jehovah manifested His sovereignty, He came. He even came and destroyed “heaven and earth” when He rescued David from Saul’s attempts on his life (Psalms 18).

The Day of the Lord concept was well known to the Immerser. That language had never been literally fulfilled. Is that not self-evident? Jehovah had come and judged Israel before, now the Immerser was predicting the last days parousia of the Lord’s majesty. However, there was something different.

We have seen that as Elijah, and “the messenger of the Covenant,” John was to prepare the way for the Lord. However, the “Lord” of this “Day of the Lord” was not to be the Father, but the Son into whose hands all judgment had been given (John 5:22). The implications of this are incredibly important for the deity of Jesus, and the nature of His coming.

Repeatedly, Jesus predicted His coming “in the glory of the Father” (Matthew 16:27-28; 24:29f; 25:31f; 26:64, etc.). His prediction to Caiaphas that he would come on the clouds enraged the High Priest. Caiaphas well understood that Jesus’ claim to come on the clouds was a claim that he was going to come in judgment in the identical manner of the Day of the Lord in the Old Testament. Only Jehovah rode on the clouds (Psalms 104), Jesus was claiming the prerogative of deity.

Witherington has well grasped the significance, at least in regard to deity, of Jesus’ claim to come in the Day of the Lord. Commenting

on Paul's usage of the Day of the Lord language to describe Jesus' parousia Witherington says:

“Whether Paul is the first to make this transfer of the Yom Yahweh (Day of the Lord, DKP) language is uncertain. However, this usage is perfectly logical in view of the early confession ‘Jesus is Lord,’ which Paul takes up and uses. It is simply a matter of applying the logic of the confession to its end. The Christological importance of this transfer of the titles of Yahweh to Christ should not be minimized as it means that, for Paul, Christ is to be confessed and worshiped as in some sense God. In the use of the Yom Yahweh language, however, the focus is on Christ taking over the function of Yahweh, bringing in the final judgment and redemption that are predicated of Yahweh in the Old Testament.”

Witherington fails to make another obvious application of the transfer of the Yom Yahweh (Day of the Lord) language to Jesus. Not only is the transfer of the Yom Yahweh language significant Christologically, it is significant eschatologically. If Jesus' parousia is to be viewed as the Day of the Lord, upon what basis does one expect a literal destruction of creation, and a visible, bodily appearance of Jesus?

The entire unbroken history of the Day of the Lord language is metaphoric and nonliteral. When Jesus and the New Testament writers use that language, they openly inform us that they are anticipating what the prophets foretold (2 Peter 3:1-2, 13). When Jesus predicted His coming on the clouds, He quoted from Daniel, Joel, and Isaiah (Matthew 24:29-31). When the New Testament writers quote Old Testament metaphoric language to describe Jesus' coming in judgment, what right do we have to change the historically validated metaphoric use of that language? This clearly has profound implications for the interpretation of Revelation.

Whoever Babylon was, she was to bear the brunt of the Day of the Lord (Revelation 6:12f; 16-19). This is the time of the destruction of “heaven and earth” (chapter 21). Please remember that John

emphatically tells us that he was anticipating the fulfillment of the prophetic promises. He repeatedly quotes, cites and alludes to the metaphoric language of the prophets. What evidence suggests that we should change the figurative language of the prophets to a literal application? None.

Given the metaphoric nature of the Day of the Lord language, we must identify the Day of the Lord language in Revelation to a time of judgment of some nation, whoever it might be. Given the covenantal nature of the Immerser's mission to Israel, we identify that nation as Israel. Babylon was Jerusalem.

### **13 THE SEALS AND GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL**

#### **REVELATION 6**

“I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals.”

As the Lion of Judah begins to open the seals we are introduced to the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.” On the first horse, a white one, rode a warrior holding a bow, the next horse, a red one, was ridden by one that was given the authority to take peace from the earth. A black horse followed, and its rider held scales. A heavenly voice announced that there was about to be a scarcity of food, famine was coming. Finally, the fourth, a pale horse, was ridden by Death itself.

Needless to say, these images have provoked endless speculation. What seems to have escaped the notice of many commentators is that the horses and their riders betokened the coming of the Wrath provisions of God's Covenant with Israel.

Beagley calls our attention to a comparison between Jeremiah 5 and Revelation 6. In Jeremiah 5, the prophet threatened Judah with pestilence, famine, the sword and the arrow. In Revelation 6 we find the sword, famine, pestilence, and one holding a bow, as a weapon



of war. Given the OT background and source of Revelation, these parallels should not be lightly dismissed.

The same issues are to be found in a comparison between Ezekiel 5-7 and Revelation 6. Ezekiel threatened Judah and Jerusalem “sword, famine, evil beasts, and plague, the same four sore judgments as found in Revelation 6” (Beagley, 42).

What is so significant about the parallels between Jeremiah and Ezekiel is that each of those prophets was threatening Judah and Jerusalem with Wrath provisions of God’s covenant with Israel. These were not random threats, or threats especially revealed just for the occasion. These threats are to be found in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28-30, the Law of Blessings and Cursings.

In Leviticus 26 the Lord threatened Israel with the sword of their enemies (v. 25), disease (v. 16), pestilence (v. 25), famine (v. 26), and death (v. 38). These curses are what the prophets threatened Israel and Judah with when they apostatized in later years. See for instance Amos 4-5, where the prophet lists 7 of the Curses and plagues found in Deuteronomy 28, and says those Curses were about to fall on Israel.

The prophets couched their warnings in the terminology of the Covenant, because Israel disobeyed the Covenant and suffered destruction in BC 721, and then, later, Judah broke the Covenant and God brought the Wrath provisions of the Covenant on her as she was taken into Babylonian captivity.

Significantly, in Deuteronomy 32, the Song of Moses, Jehovah foretold the last days of Israel (v. 20, 29), and said that He was going to bring His arrows on them (v. 23), the sword would destroy them (v. 25), and pestilence and famine would overwhelm them (v. 24).

Now, in Revelation 6, we find the Lion of Judah opening the Seals and revealing that the Wrath provisions of the Covenant were about to be poured out on Judah, ultimately, definitively, finally. The New Testament writers affirm, repeatedly, that they were living in the last days foretold by the OT prophets (Acts 2:15f; Acts 3:24; 1 Peter 1:10, Hebrews 1:1, etc.). The time had come for Jehovah to fulfill the

provisions of Covenant Wrath. The scepter was about to pass from the Old Covenant form of Judah, and Shiloh was about to take the scepter to himself and rule “forever and forever” (Revelation 11:15f).

The point is that when we read of the opening of the Seals in Revelation, we need not, nor should we, look beyond the fulfillment of God’s covenant with Israel. We shall see this more when we discuss the opening of the fifth and sixth seal, which deals with the martyrs. In Deuteronomy 32, we find that God promised that in Israel’s last days, He would avenge the blood of the martyrs.

If in fact the seals of Revelation 6 are predicting the outpouring of Covenant Wrath, in fulfillment of the OT Law of Blessings and Cursings, then the conclusion is inescapable that Revelation has nothing to do with the end of human history, or the end of time. It is concerned with the last days of Old Covenant Judah, the destruction of the city that has “violated the everlasting Covenant” (cf. Isaiah 24:4-12), and was about to be swept away so that the Heavenly Jerusalem could be revealed.

## **14 THE GREAT TRIBULATION REVELATION 7**

“These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

We will have more to say on this as we proceed, but we need to take quick note of just a few things.

First, the prediction of the Great Tribulation belongs to the time of the end, the end of Israel’s Old Covenant age, according to Daniel 12:1f. Furthermore, as we will see repeatedly in this work, Daniel was told that all of his eschatological vision would be fulfilled “when the power of the holy people is completely shattered” (Daniel 12:7).

Second, if this reference to the Great Tribulation hearkens back to Revelation 3:10, and the “time of trial coming on the whole earth,” then we are definitely within the context of the struggles between

the “synagogue of Satan” and the church, the body of Christ.

Third, Jesus, citing Daniel’s prophecy, unequivocally stated that it would occur in his generation, and would come on Israel, in the land of Israel (cf. Matthew 24:15-21, v. 34). What is often missed in Matthew 24 is the progression of Jesus’ message. He tells his disciples that they would be persecuted, by the Jews (Mark 13:9), but that then the Great Tribulation would come.

Contra Beale, who says that the Great Tribulation, “consists of pressures to compromise the faith, these pressures coming from within the church community through seductive teaching and from without through covert oppression,” we should see that there is a direct connection between the persecution of the saints, by Judah, and the coming tribulation. In other words, the Great Tribulation was not directed at the church. It is judgment on Judah for persecuting the saints.

Jesus told his followers to flee from Judea because the coming of the Abomination of Desolation would bring in the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:15-21). These two events are inseparably linked. Christ wanted the church to escape from Judea, where the Great Tribulation would be focused. Now, just seen, this does not mean that Christians would not be caught up in the pogroms against the Jews outside of Judea, but it does suggest that the focus of the Great Tribulation was Judah and the Jews.

Amillennialism misses this critical point, and says that the Great Tribulation is focused on the church, at the end of the millennium, instead of realizing that the Great Tribulation, while definitely bringing great suffering on Christians, was not directed at the church. Christians were “collateral damage” as the Romans wreaked havoc on Judah.

Jesus affirmed this in Matthew 23:29f, and it is this theme that is continued in Matthew 24. He warned his disciples that the Jews would chase them from city to city, stone and crucify them, but he assured them that those persecutors would be judged in that generation. Thus, we should see the Great Tribulation as judgment

on Judah for killing the saints.

Naturally, this posit presents a major problem for the millennial view. If the Great Tribulation would be a judgment on Judah for persecuting the followers of Jesus, this means that if the millennial scheme of things is true, then during their proposed seven year tribulation period, Israel becomes, once again, the persecutor of the church, and God brings the Great Tribulation on her. This is patently not what the millennial view teaches.

Fourth, as we shall see below, the identity of the 144,000 and their relationship to the Great Tribulation demands a first century fulfillment, because the 144,000 were the first fruits of those redeemed unto God. They were the first generation of Christians.

Beale attempts to negate this evidence by saying, “Some preterists believe that the great tribulation was to take place before and during the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. But, they do not adequately explain how the churches of Asia Minor would be affected by a future tribulation limited to Jerusalem or even to Palestine” (Revelation, 435). There are several problems with this objection.

The first problem is that Beale sees the Great Tribulation as being direct against the church, and not focused on the Jews, for persecuting Christians. This is a major failing in the modern views of the Tribulation.

The next problem is that Beale fails to acknowledge the “universal” nature of the judgment of Judah. Notice Jesus’ prediction in Luke 21:25f, “There will be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, and the sea and the waves roaring, men’s hearts failing them from fear and expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” It would be hard to find more “universal” language than this, and yet, Jesus indisputably posited these events in the context of the judgment of Jerusalem in that generation (Luke 21:31f). Thus, Beale’s claim that the tribulation was “limited to Jerusalem or even to Palestine” is unwarranted.

Finally, not only does Beale’s objection fail on scriptural grounds,

it fails on historical grounds as well. Beale is surely aware of the horrible pogroms against the Jews throughout the Roman empire. In Alexandria, Egypt for instance, an outbreak of violence between the Greeks and the Jews in that city led to the massacre of over 50,000 Jews in one day. (Josephus, Wars Bk. II, XIX, 4). This occurred in AD 66 and other similar massacres (e.g. in Syria, Josephus, Wars, Bk II, XVIII, 5), demonstrate that the judgment on the Jews was not confined as Beale suggests.

Now, given the fact that the Great Tribulation is related to the last days of Judah, and is focused on her judgment for persecuting the followers of Jesus, and given the fact that Jesus unequivocally said that these things would occur in his generation, this amounts to strong evidence that we must posit Revelation as a prediction of the judgment of Jerusalem in AD 70.

## **15 AND THE SECOND EXODUS MOTIF**

### **REVELATION 7**

We will have opportunity to return to this theme as we continue, but we want to present at this time the idea that Revelation posits the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel that in the last days there would be a "Second Exodus" and Jehovah would lead His people to the "True Sabbath" rest of salvation. We must keep our comments brief, but suffice it to say that the Second Exodus motif is one that permeates the N.T. in ways that, lamentably, most modern Bible readers never discern, and never discover the beauty of this theme.

Beale succinctly shows how the Exodus theme is presented in Revelation 7. (NIGTC, 439). He shows that in Revelation 7, John presents the Second Exodus motif in the following ways:

- 1.) There is a great multitude coming out of tribulation (cf. Exodus 4:31, LXX / Revelation 7:14).
- 2.) They wash their garments (Exodus 19:10 / Revelation 7:14).
- 3.) They are sprinkled by the blood (Exodus 24:8 / 7:14) in preparation for God to tabernacle among them.
- 4.) God's dwelling with them provides food, water, protection

and comfort (Cf. Leviticus 23:40 / Revelation 7:9f). Notice the Feast of the Tabernacles motif in chapter 7 and its inseparable link with Israel's exodus.

Now, was John merely adopting the language of Israel's covenant promises, of her last days hopes, but was in fact divorcing that language from its roots to apply to the church coming out of bondage from the world, at the end of time? Where would we find justification for that kind of application? John is concerned about the fulfillment of what the prophets foretold (10:7; 22:6). He is not manipulating, allegorizing, or otherwise mishandling the prophetic word. He is conveying in apocalyptic, symbolic manner the fulfillment of those hopes and prophecies. And if that is true, then this can mean only one thing: Revelation is about the last days of Israel. It is about the fulfillment of the Old Testament. It is about God's faithfulness to His promises to Judah and Israel.

Now, if Revelation is about the fulfillment of God's last days promises to Israel, and the Second Exodus, then who was being delivered from bondage, and who is the enslaving power?

The answer to the first question is that it was the remnant of Israel, and the "great multitude" of others, that was involved in the Exodus. In Isaiah 11, the prophet foretold the restoration of the twelve tribes. (Isaiah 11:10-16 / Cf. Revelation 7:4f). The prophet said, "the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left." This shows us that the 144,000 of Revelation 7 and 14 comprise the righteous remnant, and do not represent some kind of "universal salvation." This exodus would occur when Jehovah would raise the "banner to the people" and the Gentiles would seek God, along with the twelve tribes (Isaiah 11:10-13). Paul, citing these very verses, said that Christ, the Root of Jesse, had been raised, and the Gentiles were seeking the Lord. This can only mean that the Second Exodus was underway when Paul wrote.

It should be clear that while Paul saw his ministry and the early church as the fulfillment of these Second Exodus prophecies, that there is no way to perceive the fulfillment that Paul presented as a

nationalistic and geographical restoration. And while the salvation / exodus of the righteous definitely involved the Abrahamic blood line, (see for instance Acts 2; Hebrews especially), to ensure the faithfulness of God, one cannot miss that the ultimate goal and aim of those promises was that Abraham's seed would come to be known, not by race, but by grace (Romans 2:28f; 4; 9:4f; Galatians 3-6, etc.).

If then the promised Second Exodus was underway, what was the enslaving power? Who was "Egypt?" Before we get John's answer, let's take a look at Paul, since we will have a great deal to say later about the relationship between Paul's message, mission and ministry, and the Apocalypse.

For Paul, bondage to the Law was of paramount concern. He speaks of this bondage in Romans 5-7 particularly. In Galatians 5 he addresses the issue, and what cannot be missed is that Galatians contains many Second Exodus themes and ideas. Thus, in his discussion of the bondage of the Law, Paul incorporates the Second Exodus motif. This means that Old Covenant Judaism was "Egypt."

This is verified when we examine Galatians 4. As we will see later, Paul discusses two women, Sarah and Hagar, and their sons, Isaac and Ishmael. These two sons represent the New Covenant people and the old. The Old Covenant people were persecuting the New Covenant people (Galatians 4:29). So what did Paul say was to happen? "Cast out the bondswoman and her son" (Galatians 4:31). The question is, who was Hagar and her son?

She was Egypt. Hagar was an Egyptian (Genesis 16:1; 21:9). So, Paul presents Hagar, the Egyptian, as representative of Old Covenant Judah, persecuting the seed of Abraham, and holding them in bondage. And he presents the true Seed of Abraham as those who, whether of race or grace, as those who had to be delivered from the bondage of the Law. This is excellent Midrash.

Does John agree with these motifs and ideas? Indeed. He presents the exodus motif as we have seen. And, in Revelation 11:8 we find the following, "Their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also

our Lord was slain.”

Beagley says, “The Christian community is depicted as the counterpart of the Israelites who were preserved from judgment, while the Egyptians themselves suffered fearful torments. Jesus Christ is presented as the Passover Lamb. But who or what is the new Pharaoh, the new oppressor of the people of God? The author himself provides his readers with a clue: there is one explicit mention of the name of ‘Egypt’ and it is applied to ‘the great city...where their Lord was crucified’ (11:8). This final phrase seems to leave no room for doubt that the author has in mind the city of Jerusalem. We thus have prima facie evidence that the plagues of Revelation are to fall on Jerusalem” (Apocalypse, 27+).

So, John says that Babylon, spiritual Babylon, is also spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. See our discussion of Sodom below. For now, notice that just like Paul, John presents the story of two women. One is Babylon, and is the enslaving, persecuting power. The other is the new Jerusalem. Babylon, i.e. Egypt is to be destroyed, and the people of God will be led to the new Jerusalem, where, “The tabernacle of God is with men” (Revelation 21:3).

John does not leave us hanging in doubt about who “Egypt” is, it is Old Covenant Jerusalem and her children. It is the city “Where also our Lord was slain” (Revelation 11:8).

So:

Babylon is the great city, “Where our Lord was slain.”

Babylon is spiritually called Egypt, and Paul identifies that as Old Covenant Jerusalem and her seed.

Babylon is Sodom, and only one city in all the Bible ever wears the spiritual name of Sodom, and that is Old Covenant Jerusalem and her sons.

John’s use of the Second Exodus motif in chapter 7 therefore lays the groundwork for our understanding of Revelation and the identity of Babylon. The enslaving power was the Law, the Seed of the Law was persecuting the seed of Abraham. But the righteous remnant was being delivered from that bondage, and was on its way to the



heavenly city and country foreseen by Abraham himself (Hebrews 11:13f).

This means that Babylon was Old Covenant Jerusalem, and the promised land was near. God was delivering His New Covenant people.

## **16 THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS**

### **REVELATION 8**

Revelation 8 impressively describes the sounding of the seven trumpets of judgment on Babylon. The trumpets signal the answer to the prayer of the martyred saints under the altar (6:9f). Thus, trumpets signal the judgment against the persecutors of God's faithful. To fail to see the connection with Israel's liturgy is to miss the entire point of this scene.

Under the Old Covenant temple, trumpets were an integral part of the liturgy. Chilton says the temple worship used seven trumpets. (Vengeance, 35). Edersheim says the scene of Revelation 8 is drawn directly from the daily offering of the incense.

Chilton astutely notes, "When a city was to be destroyed, the priest would take fire from God's altar, and use it to ignite the entire heap of booty which served as the kindling, so offering up the entire city as a sacrifice. It is the practice of putting a city 'under the ban' so that nothing survives the conflagration (Deuteronomy 13:12-18) that the book of Revelation uses to describe God's judgment against Jerusalem" (Vengeance, 232).

The fact that the trumpets apply to the judgment on Jerusalem/Israel is verified by examining the nature of the plagues under each trumpet with the words of Jesus in Luke 21. The Lord said that in the days leading up to His parousia judgment against the Holy City, "There will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars, and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them from the fear and expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the

heaven will be shaken.” John’s graphic description of the first four trumpet blasts describes in detail the imminent fulfillment of Jesus’ portentous words.

The fact that Revelation is so Jewish in content should give us a direct hint as to the identity of Babylon. The imagery is Jewish, the language is covenantal and the judgments are historically associated with God’s judgments (primarily) against Israel.

The correlation of the first four trumpets with Jesus’ prediction of the awful events to transpire before the fall of Jerusalem identifies the object of the Trumpet judgments as first century Jerusalem, but there is more to this imagery.

In Revelation chapters 8-11, John foresaw the sounding of the seven trumpets of God. The final trumpet blows in Revelation 11:15. At this trumpet, God’s kingdom is established, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.” The dead are gathered and rewarded (v. 18).

The blaring of the trumpet of God at the coming of the kingdom and gathering of the elect is a common Biblical theme. It is also inseparably linked with the end of the Old Covenant age.

In his prediction of the fall of Jerusalem, Jesus, using common Old Testament apocalyptic language, said, “He will send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:31). Bray astutely notes that Matthew 24:31 is “reminiscent of ‘the great trumpet’ of Isaiah 27:12-13.”

Significantly, Isaiah related this gathering to the raising of the dead (Isaiah 27:13). It was not, however, physical death that he saw being overcome. It was “sin death,” the result of sin. Space forbids a development of this, for our purposes it is enough to see that in Matthew 24, Jesus was predicting the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prediction of the sounding of the great trumpet for the gathering of the (“dead”) elect scattered abroad.

Kik suggests that the trumpet was a symbol of the announcement

of Jubilee, “With the sound of the trumpet, redemption and freedom to all the nations were to be inaugurated. That is the reason Jesus spoke of the angels gathering together the elect from the four winds, from one end of the earth to the other. While the year of Jubilee for the whole earth actually saw its inception with the ministry of Christ, it formally started with the destruction of Jerusalem when the Old Dispensation gave way to the new. It was at this point that the Jubilee trumpet truly sounded.”

There is merit to the “Jubilee” idea of the sounding of the trumpet. What Kik fails to see, is that Jubilee and resurrection are bound together. To divorce these concepts to maintain a distinction between the (nonliteral) trumpet of Matthew 24:31, and the resurrection texts of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 is untenable. The sounding of the trump to gather the elect in Matthew 24 is the same sounding of the trump at raising of the dead in Corinthians, Thessalonians, and Revelation. The chart will show this correspondence.

Olivet Discourse	Revelation 11	The time of the end (Matthew 24:3)	Sounding of the 7th Trumpet (v. 15)	Time of the parousia (Matthew 24:29-31)	Resurrection/parousia	Coming of the kingdom (Luke 21:31)	Coming of the kingdom (v. 15)	Gathering of the elect (dead, Isaiah 27:13)	Raising of the dead (v. 18)	At the judgment of Jerusalem (Matthew 23:34-39/ 24:29-31)	At the judgment of the city where the Lord was crucified (v. 8)	To be fulfilled in Jesus’ generation (Matthew 24:34)	“Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me” (Revelation 22:12)
------------------	---------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	---	-----------------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------------	---	-----------------------------	---	---	--	---

This comparison warrants the following conclusion: In Matthew 24:31 the “trumpet” sounds for the gathering of the elect (the “dead”) at the time of the judgment of Jerusalem. Revelation 11:15f is the sounding of the “trumpet” for the gathering of the elect (the “dead”) at the time of the judgment of Babylon. Therefore, Babylon was Jerusalem

It is fascinating that both amillennial and postmillennial commentators unite in saying that the trumpet and the gathering of

Matthew 24:31 were nonliteral. Yet, most seem to be unaware of the resurrection motif (from Isaiah 27) underlying this text.

Gentry and others, believe all seven trumpets of the Apocalypse sounded in the events leading up to and consummating in the catastrophe of AD 70. This demands that the resurrection of Revelation has been fulfilled. (Would anyone argue that the resurrection of Revelation 11 is different from that of chapter 20? Both “resurrections” occur with the judgment of “the great city.”) Yet, Gentry holds that the “last trump” of 1 Corinthians 15 will, “signal the end of history.” One wonders how these exegetes can justify having so many “last trumpets,” and resurrections.

Question: would the seventh trumpet not be the “last trump?” It certainly is in Revelation. In both Corinthians and Revelation, the resurrection occurs at the last trump. What hermeneutical principle forces us to see two last trumpets, one nonliteral, the other literal, two resurrections, one spiritual, the other literal, and two different times of the end, one Covenantal, the other Historical?

Do preconceived ideas about the nature of the resurrection force many exegetes to abandon the clearly metaphoric language of the blowing of the trumpet? Why can interpreters plainly see the apocalyptic, nonliteral language predicting Jesus’ coming, and the gathering of the elect in Matthew 24:29-31, yet they cannot see that Thessalonians and Corinthians are drawing their language from Matthew?

The continuous historical view of Revelation has a serious problem with the trumpets. This school insists that Revelation is a panorama of history, and the trumpets, “speak of a series of invasions against the Roman Empire (Vandals, Huns, Saracens, Turks). The sixth trumpet brings the fall of Constantinople to the Turks (1453)” (Gregg, Revelation, 143). Historicists generally believe that the seventh trump will only sound at the “end of the world.”

This paradigm means that there is a great chronological gap between the sounding of the sixth trump, and the yet future seventh. This is not justified, because John was told that the sounding of each

of the trumpets always followed “quickly” upon the other (Revelation 8:6,13; 10:14). Specifically, the final trumpet was “coming quickly” after the sixth (Revelation 11:14). From the 15th century to the present hardly lies within the proper definition of “quickly.”

Further, those who hold this view also insist that the last trump at the supposed end of time will be a literal, audible event. But wait, they believe the first six trumpets have already sounded. If the first six trumpets sounded in the days of Rome, or in the 11th-15th centuries, who heard them? If the last trump is to be literal and audible, who made the first six spiritual and inaudible?

Any view of Revelation that says the first six trumpets have sounded (inaudibly), but that the last trumpet will be a literal (audible) blast at the end of time, is self contradictory.

The sounding of the seven trumpets is a thoroughly Jewish liturgical concept. For instance, “There were seven trumpets in the Levitical orchestra.” Edersheim notes that even on “ordinary days the priest blew seven times” (Temple, 76). Among other things, “The year of Jubilee was proclaimed by the sound of a trumpet on the Day of Atonement.”

As Chilton observes, “In terms of the Biblical calendar, the ‘seventh trumpet’ was sounded on Tishri 1, the first day of the seventh month in the liturgical year, and the first month in the civil year: Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Trumpets” (Vengeance, 288).

In Jewish thought, Rosh Hashanah has eschatological import, including the ultimate reign of God (Zechariah 14:9), judgment, and the gathering of the elect.

The book of Revelation is about the fulfillment of Israel’s promises (Revelation 10:6-8; 22:6). The New Testament tells us that Israel’s “sacraments” were merely shadows of the coming reality (Colossians 2:14-16; Hebrews 10:1). In other words, Israel’s liturgical and sacrificial system was prophetic. Thus, the sounding of the trumpets in Revelation symbolizes the fulfillment of the things anticipated by Israel’s Old Covenant system.

Would the sounding of the seventh trumpet at the fall of Rome

fulfill the covenantal and typological significance of Israel's liturgy? Does not the use of Israel's festal and liturgical imagery suggest that it is the fulfillment of her history that is in view in Revelation? To identify Babylon as any city other than Jerusalem does violence to the covenantal imagery intimated by the sounding of the trumpets. For more information about the sounding of the trumpets see my article in the Living Presence.

## **17 THEN OUT OF THE SMOKE LOCUSTS CAME UPON THE EARTH REVELATION 9:3**

John envisioned a horrible scene of suffering brought about by a "locust" invasion out of the bottomless pit. These horrible creatures call to mind several concepts related to the history of Israel.

It is true that a locust plague was one of the punishments inflicted on Egypt by Jehovah (Exodus 10:4-15). However, the threat of locust invasion is tied directly to God's covenantal curses against Israel.

In Deuteronomy 28:38f, Jehovah threatened Israel that if they apostatized, He would bring locusts, like the plagues of Egypt on them as punishment (Deuteronomy 28:60). When Solomon dedicated the temple, he specifically mentioned this threat (1 Kings 8:37).

In Joel 1-2, the prophet graphically describes the invasion of Israel under the imagery of a locust invasion. The plague is described as the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:1f). Joel says, "The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble, the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish in their brightness" (Joel 2:10). Joel's language is remarkably similar to Revelation, "Their appearance is like the appearance of horses, and like swift steeds, so they run, with the noise like chariots over the mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, like a strong people set in battle array" (Joel 2:4f).

Wallace noted the similarity between Joel and Revelation 9, "The locust vision of Joel and Revelation are parallel—the former

describing the Old Testament war of Nebuchadnezzar on the Jews, the latter the Neroan war of AD 70 on Judea and Jerusalem” (Revelation, 183).

Locust invasion was a part of Israel’s law of Blessings and Cursings. This supports the view that in Revelation, John is speaking of Israel’s judgment, because he threatens Babylon with the Israel’s covenant wrath.

The locusts were allowed to hurt man for five months. More than a few commentators have seen in this a reference to the actual five-month siege of Jerusalem.

John, faithful Jew trained in the Law and the Prophets, sees in highly symbolic and hyperbolic vision, the ultimate fulfillment of God’s curses against Old Covenant Israel. The covenantal nature of the locust reference is a strong reason for believing that Babylon was Jerusalem.

## **18 THEY WILL SEEK DEATH AND WILL NOT FIND IT REVELATION 9:6**

In the sounding of the 5th Trumpet, the Lord appointed awful scorpions/locusts to torment His opponents. John tells us the enemies would be tormented for five months (v. 5). The suffering would be such that, “In those days, men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.” One is immediately reminded of the words of Jesus.

As Jesus was led to His death, the women wept for Him. He turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will . . . begin to say to the mountains ‘Fall on us.’ and to the hills ‘cover us.’” (Luke 23:28-31). Jesus declared that the inhabitants of Jerusalem would desire to die.

As seen earlier, in Luke, Jesus applied Isaiah 2 to the last days fall of Jerusalem. In Revelation 6, the identical text from Isaiah is

quoted by John to describe Jehovah's judgment on the persecutors of His elect. Chapter 9 is simply another description of that judgment.

Josephus confirms that the suffering of the inhabitants was such that they did desire to die. His description of the atrocities committed by the three factions is heart rending to say the least. (Wars, Bk. 4:9:7). Gregg says the words of Revelation 9 refer to, "The horrendous crimes perpetrated by the inhabitants caused many to wish the Romans to break through the wall and destroy the city to put them out of their misery" (Gregg, Revelation, 178).

How can we totally ignore the words of Jesus? He said that in the judgment against the holy city men would wish to die. John is anticipating the imminent fulfillment of his master's prediction.

## **19 THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DELAY**

### **REVELATION 10:6**

"He swore by Him who lives forever and ever...that there should be no more delay."

John was told that the fulfillment of his vision was at hand (Revelation 1:1-3). He was not told that part of it was imminent, but "all of the things" he saw, "must shortly come to pass. The imminent things can only be the things future to him, because some of the things he saw were already past, and some were already present (Revelation 1:19). Therefore, the "things which must shortly come to pass" were all of the things future to John.

The apostle's vision was, by all agreement, a vision of the fulfillment of the Old Covenant promises. Specifically, the book of Revelation is a reiteration in large part of the prophecies of Daniel. This is very significant.

Daniel, writing some five hundred years before John, was told 1.) That his vision involved the time of the end (Daniel 12:4), 2.) That it would not be fulfilled for a long time (Daniel 10:1, 14; 12:4), 3.) That it was not for his time. It would be fulfilled after Daniel's death.



John, on the other hand, sees Jesus as worthy to open the sealed book (Revelation 5). This means that the time of the end had arrived.

John was told that the fulfillment of his vision—involving the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecies—was at hand (Revelation 1:1-3). John was told, “do not seal the book” (Revelation 22:10), because the time was so near. John was told, “there shall be no more delay,” in the fulfillment of what the prophets, including Daniel, foretold (Revelation 10:6).

It was about 500 years from Daniel to John, and Daniel was told that his vision was to be sealed, because it was a long time away. John wrote about the time of the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecies, and was told not to seal his book, because there would be no more delay in the fulfillment. It has now been nearly 2000 years since John wrote the Apocalypse, yet almost all commentators insist that Revelation has not yet been fulfilled. This means it has now been four times longer from John to the present, than it was from Daniel to John. Yet, Daniel was told fulfillment was far off, and John was told it was near. Is there not something very wrong with the modern view that Revelation is not yet fulfilled?

Many commentators (e.g., McGuigan), believe that much of Revelation—in fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecies—foretold the fall of Rome, (circa AD 476), as Babylon. Yet, on the traditional dating of Revelation (circa AD 98), this means that it was approximately 400 years from John to the fall of Rome.

It was 500 years from Daniel to John, and Daniel was told to seal his book because it would not be fulfilled for a long time. It was 400 years from John to the fall of Rome. Are we to believe that 500 years is a long time, but 400 years indicates, “there will be no more delay?”

Daniel was told to seal his vision, because it was not for his lifetime. John was told not to seal the book, because the time was at hand. This shows that the fulfillment of the Apocalypse was to occur in John’s generation. See John 21:20-23.

Any suggestion that Revelation (Babylon) applied to events beyond the first century violates the emphatic declaration that there

would be no more delay in fulfillment.

The fall of Rome, modern apostate Christianity, and any other suggestion for a yet future fulfillment of Revelation, falls outside the parameters set by the Holy Spirit. Only Jerusalem, identified as Babylon, agrees with the divine decree to John that, “there shall be no more delay.”

## **20 THE COMPLETION OF THE MYSTERY REVELATION 10:7**

“In the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished as He declared to His servants the prophets.”

We will not comment on this at length here, because we have a special study concerning Paul and the Mystery below. Suffice it to say that the completion of the mystery of God had to be in the first century, it involved the personal responsibility of the apostle Paul, and demanded the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. It also means that Babylon of Revelation was Jerusalem.

Simply stated, our argument is this, “the mystery of God foretold by the prophets” was Jew and Gentile equality in the body of Christ (Ephesians 3:3f). Paul said that mystery was being proclaimed by him, through the prophetic scriptures (Romans 16:25-26), just as John speaks of the mystery of God foretold by the prophets (Revelation 10:7). Now, here is the critical part. Paul said that he, distinctively and personally he, had been especially chosen and commissioned by God to bring the mystery of God to its completion. Read what he says in Colossians 1:24f:

“I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of his body which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been revealed to His saints.”

Note that God had given him personally the stewardship (oikonomian) of bringing the mystery to its fulfillment (from pleroma). Furthermore, the apostles said that he had completed his missionary task when he appeared before Nero (2 Timothy 4:16f). So what does this mean?

If the mystery of Revelation 10 is the same mystery proclaimed by Paul, then the mystery of Revelation 10 would be fulfilled in the ministry of Paul. (The burden of proof would lie on those who claim that these are two different mysteries. We know however, that Paul said he and John preached the same gospel message, Galatians 2:4f). If the mystery proclaimed by Paul and that of Revelation 10 are the same mystery, and if the mystery was to be fulfilled by Paul's ministry, it follows irresistibly that Revelation had to be fulfilled within the context of Paul's ministry.

Consider the sounding of the trumpets and the mystery. The mystery of God foretold by the prophets would be fulfilled at the sounding of the 7th Trumpet (Revelation 10:7). The mystery of God foretold by the prophets was Jew and Gentile equality in Christ, to be realized by the completion of Paul's personal ministry (Colossians 1:24-25). Therefore, the mystery foretold by the prophets would be realized, fulfilled by the completion of Paul's personal ministry. This demands that the 7th Trumpet would sound in the completion of Paul's ministry.

The bottom line is that unless one can prove beyond doubt that the "mystery foretold by the prophets" (Revelation 10:7), is a different mystery from that proclaimed by Paul, then the fact that Paul's ministry was to bring that mystery to its fulfillment demands an early date for Revelation.

## **21 BABYLON AND THE TREADING DOWN OF THE CITY REVELATION 11:2**

When John envisioned the measuring of the temple of God, he

also was told, “Leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.”

What John was told to do is a recreation of the drama in the time of Ezekiel. As Gregg says, “In Ezekiel 40-47, a man measures the temple with a measuring rod. In Revelation, John is also given a rod for the same purpose. In both cases, the action depicts the defining of the true spiritual temple in view of the impending destruction of the physical structure in Jerusalem (by Babylonians in Ezekiel’s day, by Romans in John’s” (Revelation, 220). Jay Adams, commenting on the measuring of the temple and its significance concludes, “One thing is definite, verse 2 strikes the same note as Luke 21:24. The temple will be trodden down of the Gentiles. This speaks, without reasonable doubt, of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, though all aspects of the imagery may not be clear.”

It is important that we are told that “the holy city” will be trodden down “of the Gentiles.” This is a “Jew versus Gentile” contrast. To the Jewish readers of the Apocalypse, the term “the holy city” would undoubtedly still refer to Jerusalem. As Mounce has noted, “The designation of Jerusalem as the holy city is common in Jewish writing (Nehemiah 11:1; Isaiah 48:2; Matthew 4:5).” (Interestingly, Mounce believes that the “holy city” of our text is the church, destined to be persecuted prior to the end of time).

Correlating with this, is that fact that the holy city would be given “to the Gentiles.” This language is typical of descriptions of Jerusalem versus the nations. The word *ethnos* is the word that most commonly designated Gentiles as opposed to Jews, see the Lexicons. Russell asserts that the term Gentiles, “generally refers to the immediate neighbors of the Jews” such as the Samaritans, Tyrians, Idumeans, and Sidonians, etc.. Historically, these nations joined with the Romans to destroy Jerusalem. It would be incongruous if John was using the designation differently from Jesus.

John was told that the outer court would be given to the Gentiles to tread under foot for 42 months. Several commentators (Russell, 429f)

have noted that the Jewish War did, in fact, last for approximately 42 months. The correspondence between Luke 21:24 is too close to ignore. The chart will help visualize the parallels.

Luke 21  
Revelation 11  
Indictment of Jerusalem  
Indictment of Babylon  
Persecutor of the saints  
Persecutor of the saints  
Doomed to destruction at the hands of the Gentiles  
Doomed to destruction at the hands of the Gentiles  
Judgment after world mission (Mark 13:10)  
Judgment after world mission (14:6f)  
Trodden down until the times of the Gentiles fulfilled  
Trodden down for 42 months  
Revelation 11:2 is almost a direct quotation of Luke 21:24. There is no question that in Luke, Jesus predicted the fall of Jerusalem. It is a marvel that we are expected to believe that John, who seems to be quoting Jesus, spoke of a different city.

## **22 THE TIME, TIMES AND HALF TIME THE TREADING OF THE CITY FOR 1260 DAYS; THE TWO WITNESSES TESTIFY FOR 42 MONTHS REVELATION 11:2-3**

John was told that the holy city would be downtrodden by the Gentiles for “forty-two months, and that the two witnesses would testify for 1260 days, i.e. the time when the city was to be downtrodden. These enigmatic time references have been the source of a tremendous amount of speculation.

Unmistakably the source for these time statements is Daniel’s referent to “the time, times, and half time” in (Daniel 7:25). This is confirmed when we remember, as noted above, that the sealed book that John has seen, that only the Lamb is worthy to open, is the sealed book of Daniel’s prophecy of the time of the end (Daniel 8:25-26; 12:4).

Space forbids an exhaustive analysis of each of the texts in which these synonymous terms, i.e. forty-two months, time, times and half

times, 1260 days, etc. are used. However, note that there is a common thread in them that ties them all together:

- 1.) The persecution of the saints (Daniel 7:25).
- 2.) The time of the Great Tribulation and the time of the end (Daniel 12:7).
- 3.) The treading down of the holy city (Revelation 11:2).
- 4.) The ministry of the two witnesses (Revelation 11:3).
- 5.) The protection of the woman during the persecution (Revelation 12:6).
- 6.) The blasphemy and persecution by the beast (13:5).

What emerges from these references is that there would be a period of intense persecution of God's people, during which time Jehovah would providentially—and even miraculously (Revelation 11:5f)—prevent the church from being overwhelmed and defeated, although for all appearances sake, the outlook was bleak. Nonetheless, at the end of the foreordained time, the persecutor would be judged and God's saints would be identified, vindicated, avenged, and glorified.

We have already established that Old Covenant Israel is identified as the persecutor of God's saints. What we want to do now is to establish that this enigmatic time referent helps us definitively place these events within the context of Israel's last days.

Notice that in Daniel 12, the prophet was given a vision of the Great Tribulation, the resurrection, the righteous shining forth in the kingdom (Daniel 12:1-3), and is told that all of these things belong to the time of the end. That vision was to be sealed however, until the time came for its fulfillment. Of course, the fact that the Lamb opens the seal and reveals the book signifies that the time for the fulfillment has arrived. As Bauckham says, "Whereas Daniel wrote for an eschatological future which was far distant from him, that same eschatological future now impinged directly on John and his readers." In other words, what had once been far off was now near, the time of the end had arrived.

Now notice what Daniel witnesses. The prophet sees and hears one angel ask another angel, "How long shall the fulfillment of these

wonders be?” (Daniel 12:6). Will heaven answer that question, or will the reader be left to wonder about the framework and time for the fulfillment of Biblical eschatology? Will we be given more enigma, more revelation that was like seeing “through a mirror darkly,” or will we be given clear insight?

Heaven gives a vague answer and a clear answer. The responding angel, “held up his right hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives for ever and ever, that it shall be a time, times and half a time” (Daniel 12:7).

Now, unless there are two different “time, times and half a time” periods for the consummation of Biblical eschatology, then this means that Daniel 12 ties in directly with the little horn prophecy of Daniel 7, the persecution of the saints by the beast in Revelation, the testimony of the two witnesses and the fate of the two cities in Revelation, i.e. the holy city and the harlot city. Since it is agreed by virtually all commentators that all of these referents are to the same time, i.e. the time of the end, then this much should be clear:

First, we are dealing with the same time period as Daniel 9, i.e. the fulfillment of the Seventy Weeks, since Daniel 9 and Daniel 12 both deal with the fate of Daniel’s people (Daniel 9:24; Daniel 12:1). Thus, all of these referents must be viewed within the confines of God’s dealings with Israel. If in fact Daniel 9 and Daniel 12 are dealing with the same time subject, then there is simply no way to posit either text into a far distant future and “end of time” application.

Second, if Daniel 9 and Daniel 12 are parallel texts, then since the seventy weeks of Daniel 9 consummate in the “overwhelming flood” of the time of the end against “your people and your holy city” (Daniel 9:24), then this means that Daniel 12 must consummate at that same time. More on this momentarily.

Third, if Daniel 9 and Daniel 12 are parallel, then since the “time, times and half a time” of Daniel 12 are also the ground for Revelation 11-13, then this means that the “time, times and half a time” of Revelation is inextricably bound up with the fulfillment of the seventy weeks and the fate of “your people and your holy city.”

Of course, our millennial friends gladly agree that Daniel 9 and Revelation deal with the fate of Israel. The unfortunate thing is that they posit that fulfillment into the future, after an imagined rapture, and fail to see that the New Testament writers were anticipating the fulfillment of Daniel and even Revelation in their lifetime.

Wuest revealed this mentality in an article, “The Rapture–Precisely When?” Commenting on Revelation 1:19, and the fact that John was told to write of things, “that shall be hereafter,” Wuest notes the use of the Greek word *mello* with the infinitive, “The Greek of ‘shall be’ is not the verb of being in the future tense, but the verb *mello* is used with an infinitive. It is a device the Greek writer uses when he wishes to indicate that a thing predicted will come to pass very soon, an idea that the simple future does not carry.” So, John uses *mello* with the infinitive to “indicate that a thing predicted will come to pass very soon,” and yet, Wuest, and all millennialists, believes that it has now been 2000 years since John wrote of the things that must come to pass very soon. There can be no doubt that John anticipated the fulfillment of Daniel and of his Apocalypse, “very soon.” And he was not disappointed.

Fourth, to answer the question posed above, “Will heaven answer that question, or will the reader be left to wonder about the framework and time for the fulfillment of Biblical eschatology?” Daniel not only heard that the end time events would be fulfilled at the end of “the time, times and half a time,” but heaven then answered the question so definitively that there can be no escape. The time, times and half a time would be consummated, “when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all of these things will be fulfilled” (Daniel 12:7b).

So, Daniel’s seventy weeks would be fulfilled, “when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered,” and this agrees perfectly with his prediction that “the end thereof shall be with a flood” when “the holy city” would suffer desolation (Daniel 9:27).

Further, “the time, times and half a time” would be fulfilled when the city that killed the two witnesses, and was, “where the Lord was



slain,” was destroyed (Revelation 11:6-8). This agrees perfectly with Daniel’s prediction that the time of the end would be, “when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all of these things will be fulfilled.”

Such perfect correspondence should not be ignored or denied by Bible students. While we may ponder whether the “time, times and half a time” is a literal 42 months, the one thing that is indisputable is that the critical eschatological time reference has to do with the fate of Israel, and the city of Jerusalem. What is also indisputable is that this time reference would be fulfilled “when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered.” And clearly this is undeniably the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.

What this means is that Revelation 11 predicted, not a judgment of the Roman Catholic church, the Eastern European Common Market, or even some yet future judgment of Israel after a proposed rapture. It proves that Revelation was about the impending, imminent destruction of Jerusalem that occurred in the first century. The “time, times and half a time” were fulfilled when the temple, the priesthood, the altar, the Torah, the city, and in fact, the people of Israel as a covenant people, was completely shattered and destroyed. As Stevenson says, “The destruction of the temple could be seen as tantamount to the destruction of the nation” (Power, 168).

So, in Revelation 11 the appeal to and use of the significant term “time, times and half a time” proves that the book is about the consummation of Israel’s history, and that was unequivocally, undeniably, in AD 70.

## **23 BABYLON: THAT GREAT CITY**

### **REVELATION 11:8**

Babylon is called “that great city,” or “the great city” (Revelation 14:8; 18:10). Many commentators insist this must be Rome, because Roman, and some Jewish, writings so referred to her. This is far from conclusive, and overlooks equally significant historical references to

Jerusalem. The Sibylline Oracles, Jewish writings that describe the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, specifically call it “the great city.” Paher says, “Jews throughout the empire knew of no city that compared with their own Jerusalem.” Gentry documents that even the Romans called Jerusalem the great city, “Pliny the Elder said Jerusalem was ‘by far the most famous city of the ancient Orient.’” Further, it is significant that as Balyeat says, “No other cities besides Babylon and Jerusalem were ever called “the great city” in the Bible. (Babylon, 52). See Jeremiah 22:8.

In Revelation 11:8, we find the city that is guilty of slaying the two witnesses of God. Thus, we have the same persecuting city as in 16-18, and it is called “the great city.” Not only is it called “the great city,” but it is also, “spiritually called Sodom and Egypt.” In other words, whoever the “great city” was, to the readers of the Apocalypse, she was to be identified with the traits of Sodom and Egypt. Does the Bible ever call any city, other than the historical cities themselves, by the name of Sodom and Egypt?

Only one city, other than historical Sodom, was ever called Sodom. In Isaiah 1:10, Jeremiah 23:13f and Ezekiel 16:44f, it is none other than Jerusalem. It was Jerusalem’s sin that caused her to earn the epithet Sodom. Given the apostate condition of Jerusalem in Jesus’ day, is it difficult to see that she had once again earned that badge of distinction?

In Deuteronomy 32, known as The Song of Moses, Jehovah contemplated Israel’s last days. In describing the reasons for the judgment to fall on her in the last days, the Lord declared, “Their vine is the vine of Sodom and of the fields of Gomorrah” (Deuteronomy 32:32). Thus, in contemplation of the last days, and the judgment of Israel, the Lord spiritually designated Israel as Sodom.

Paher acknowledges that Deuteronomy foretold Israel’s demise in Jesus’ generation. Yet, he has the temerity to claim, “The city of Jerusalem itself, the political entity, is never called Sodom or Egypt anywhere in scripture.” Would you take the time, right now, to read Isaiah 1:9-10, Jeremiah 23:14 and Ezekiel 16:35-49? To claim that

Jerusalem is never called Sodom in scripture, is to deny the words of the text. To delineate between Jerusalem as “a political entity,” and any other kind of “entity,” is mere sophistry.

John’s Apocalypse is about the fulfillment of the Old Covenant prophets (Revelation 11; 22:6f). The Old Covenant prophets, e.g., Deuteronomy 32, foretold the destruction of Israel—as Sodom. To identify Rome as Sodom in Revelation, one has to show that the Old Testament predicted the fall of Rome as Sodom as well. This cannot be done.

Deuteronomy 32 deals with Israel—identified as “Sodom”— and her last days, terminating in the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. John was living in the last days (Acts 2:15; 1 John 2:18), and wrote of the impending destruction of a city called “Sodom.” Yet, we are supposed to ignore this prophetic, scriptural, and historical connection, and think of another city— that had never been called Sodom—as the object of John’s Revelation.

For whom was the term “Egypt” significant? Surely it was the Jewish Christian. It should never be forgotten how distinctly “Jewish” is the book of Revelation. What did Egypt signify? Bondage.

In Galatians 4, Paul discusses two mountains, two Jerusalems, two covenants. He says, “The Jerusalem that now is, is in bondage with her children” (4:25). Here is Jerusalem, “where their Lord was crucified,” pointedly referred to as the capitol of bondage. Did Rome typify spiritual bondage to the Christian?

Paul discusses at length the problem of those who would bring Gentile Christians into bondage of the Old Law (Galatians 5.) In the conflict over the identity of the true children of God (Revelation 2:9; 3:9), the controversy is with the Jews, not Rome.

Paher says Rome was “Egypt” because she was the, “aggravator of the faithful.” But it was Jerusalem that instigated Rome’s antagonism. Harnack says, “The hostility of the Jews appears on every page of Acts from chapter 12 onwards, and can be traced with the aid even of the evangelic narratives, whose sources go back to the period preceding AD 65.”

Walk through Acts and see for yourself. Persecution against the church in Ephesus, in Thessalonica, in Corinth, in Lystra, in Antioch, everywhere Paul preached, or the church was established, the Jews stirred up the Gentiles. Jerusalem was the center of worldwide persecution against the Body, as evidenced by Paul himself (Acts 22:3-5; 23:10-11).

Thankfully, Revelation 11:8 gives the inspired interpretation of Sodom and Egypt, it is the city, “where their Lord was crucified.” John was given both the spiritual identification of the city, and the divine interpretation of the spiritual language. If one admits for one moment that, “where their Lord was crucified” is interpretative, the identification of “the great city” is settled.

Please note, John is told that the great city is, “spiritually called Sodom and Egypt.” Then he was told it was, “where also the Lord was slain.” The city was called something spiritually, but it was not spiritually where the Lord was slain. The spiritual designation is Sodom and Egypt. The geographical identification is, “where the Lord was slain.”

Observe that the city is called Sodom. It is also where the Lord was slain. This is significant. The Revealer is informing the reader that he is changing from the spiritual designation to the interpretation of the spiritual language. The text does not say the city is spiritually called Sodom, and spiritually called where the Lord was crucified. The spiritual designation ends at

the geographical identification. This positively identifies the great city as first century Jerusalem.

John was told the city was, “Where also their Lord was crucified.” Paher makes this mean, “It was Rome that issued the death sentence against Jesus, for Pilate and other kings of the earth had gathered against the Lord (Acts 4:25, Psalms 2:2)” (Babylon, 69). McGuiggan does the same claiming that Rome is called Jerusalem because she was, “an empire of vile and perverted religion” (Revelation, 154f). Paher and McGuiggan have turned “where” into “by whom.”

We are asked to believe that Rome was, “spiritually called

Jerusalem.” We are asked to ignore the city where the Lord was actually slain, and think of the Romans who did not even want to kill the Lord, and only did so because of the Jewish pressure. We are asked to ignore the Jewish culpability, yea, even their plea to be held accountable for that death (Matthew 27:25), and think instead of a city thousands of miles away from where the Lord was actually slain.

Would the Jewish Christian reader of Revelation think of Rome as, “where the Lord was slain?” Consider 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16:

“For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us, and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins, but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. (NKJ)

Paul identified the Jews as the ones guilty of crucifying the Lord. (It goes without saying that He was actually slain in Jerusalem, does it not?) Would the readers of Revelation think differently about this matter? While Pilate certainly passed the sentence against Jesus, it is a fact that the Jews instigated Jesus’ trial, and the persecution of the church. Pilate washed his hands of the affair.

The cry of the Jews on the occasion of Jesus’ trial is answered in Revelation. They cried, “Let his blood be on us and on our children,” and the book of Revelation is about the judgment of the city that killed the Lord. Did Jehovah require the blood of Jesus on a different city from the one that acknowledged its guilt for slaying Him?

Commentators seek to change, “where the Lord was slain,” to, “by whom” the Lord was crucified. Yet, the Bible settles even the “by whom” question, and it is not Rome.

The Bible identifies both by whom and where the Lord was crucified. The Jews were the ones guilty of crucifying the Lord. It is hardly justifiable, therefore, to make the phrase, “where the Lord was crucified,” apply to Rome.

Finally, consider the attempts to identify two cities in Revelation that are both called, “that great city.” In a two day public debate with Thomas Ice and Mark Hitchcock, Hitchcock argued that in Revelation 16:19 it speaks of the “great city” that was divided into three parts,” and then another city, Babylon. Now, of course, it must be admitted that it is possible, theoretically, that the Apocalypse speaks of two different cities under that description. However, the similarities, and direct parallels between the descriptions of “that great city” in Revelation precludes the possibility of two separate cities. Notice the chart below that lists the characteristics of “that great city” as described by John.

The Great City The Great City Where the lord was slain

(Jerusalem) Babylon Killed the prophets (11:7-10) Killed the prophets (16:7f; 18:20f) Cup of sin full through persecution (6:11; 11:8f) Cup of sin full through persecution (17:6; 18:20, 24) Destroyed in a great earthquake (11:13) Destroyed in a great earthquake (16:18) Destruction at the resurrection and vindication of martyrs (11:15f) Destruction at the resurrection and vindication of martyrs (18:20, 24) Kingdom comes at time of destruction (11:15f) Kingdom comes at time of destruction (19:16f) No deliverance of the city, only judgment No deliverance of the city, only judgment Jewish city Not a gentile city (16:19, contrasted with the cities of the gentiles) Called “that great city” (11:8) Called “that great city” (14:8; 16:19; 18:10)

These parallels prove that “that great city” is one city, and it is not Rome.

There is a major difficulty for the millennial view of delineating between Jerusalem in Revelation 11 and 16:1-18, and Babylon of Revelation 16:19. The millennialists believe the visions of Revelation are consecutive, and not concurrent. That is, they believe that the 7 Seals are fulfilled, and in the 7th Seal the 7 Trumpets are revealed and begin to be fulfilled. Likewise, the 7 Trumpets sound, and in the sounding of the 7th Trumpet, the 7 Vials are revealed. Here is the problem.

The “great city,” Jerusalem, of Revelation is destroyed in Revelation

11:9f under the 7th Trumpet. However, per the millennialists, in Revelation 16 we are dealing with the time of the 7 Vials, and at that time, “that great city” (i.e. Jerusalem) is destroyed, again (Revelation 16:19a). Thus, per the millennial paradigm, there must be two yet future destructions of Jerusalem during the seven year tribulation period. This encounters severe difficulties in regard to the avenging of the martyrs.

Revelation 6, the time of the 7 Seals, records the prayer of the martyred saints longing for vindication and the judgment on their persecutors. That vindication would come at the Day of the Lord (6:12-17). However, chapter 11, the time of the 7 Trumpets, is also about the vindication of the martyrs since the two martyred witnesses are resurrected, and we have the time of their vindication and reward when the city that killed them is judged (11:8-17). Likewise, chapter 16, the time of the Vials, is the time of the judgment of the city guilty of killing the prophets and saints (16:6f). Thus, if the visions of Revelation are consecutive, and if that “great city” of Revelation 6, 11, and 16:1-18 is Jerusalem as posited by Hitchcock, then there are in fact three destructions of Jerusalem during the Tribulation period of 7 years. That means that there are not only three destructions of Jerusalem, but three different vindications of the martyrs during that same 7 year time period. Are we to believe that Jerusalem will fill up the measure of her sin, by persecuting the saints, three times during the Tribulation period, and be destroyed, three times, and rebuilt, during that proposed 7 year period? I know of no one that suggests this, and it is untenable to say the least.

There is a final piece of evidence, to be expanded in our examination of Revelation 16, and that is that the great city is divided into three parts. The background for this imagery is Ezekiel 5, where the son of man prophet foretold the fall of Jerusalem for her sin. Thus, in Revelation 11 the identification of “that great city” is clearly Jerusalem, and in Revelation 16, Babylon and her judgment is described by calling to mind the judgment of Jerusalem. It is difficult to imagine that this is mere coincidence, or even that John is so radically altering

the prophetic background of Ezekiel.

Unless one can prove indisputably that “the great city” of Revelation 11 is different from chapters 16-18, Babylon was Jerusalem. Unless one can prove that two different cities, other than historical Sodom, are “spiritually called Sodom,” Babylon was Jerusalem. Unless one can show that Jesus was slain in two different cities, Babylon was Jerusalem. Unless one is willing to ignore or deny the united testimony of the Lord, and the apostle Paul, as to the identity of the slayer of Jesus, Babylon was Jerusalem.

## **24 BABYLON AND THE RESURRECTION**

### **REVELATION 11 AND DANIEL 12**

Revelation chapter 11 depicts the fall of the city where the Lord was crucified, followed immediately by the resurrection (v. 15f). This is in harmony with Daniel 12.

Daniel 12:1 predicted the Great Tribulation. Jesus cites Daniel in Matthew 24:21 in His prediction of Jerusalem’s fall.

In Daniel 12:2, the prophet predicted the resurrection, “Many of those in the dust of the earth shall arise, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

The vision was not to be fulfilled in Daniel’s time, but “the time of the end” (v. 4). The vision also included a prediction of the coming Abomination of Desolation (v. 11). Jesus also cites this verse in His prediction of Jerusalem’s demise (Matthew 24:15).

Daniel heard one angel ask another when all these things would be fulfilled, the answer was, “When the power of the Holy People has been completely shattered, all these things will be fulfilled” (12:7).

The Holy People can be no other than Israel. Daniel was told that the resurrection would be when Israel was destroyed. Likewise, in Revelation, we find judgment pronounced on the city “where the Lord was crucified,” and the resurrection followed immediately.

Some commentators believe the resurrection of Daniel 12 refers to the events of AD 70—“The redemption of the nation from national



slavery,” —but that the resurrection of Revelation 11 and 20 refers to the vindication of the martyrs at the fall of Rome. These same commentators then dramatically change definitions of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 to a literal, physical resurrection. Yet, Daniel 12, with Isaiah 25 and Hosea 13, lie at the core of that prediction.

How can we delineate between the resurrection of Revelation 20, where death is destroyed, and 1 Corinthians 15, where the destruction of death is predicted. Logically, it would seem that if Revelation 20 equals the fall of Rome, then death was destroyed at the fall of Rome.

In Revelation, Babylon’s destruction is directly associated with the resurrection. In Daniel 12, the resurrection is linked with the destruction of Old Testament Israel.

Unless one can demonstrate a Biblical doctrine of two resurrections, at two “last times,” when the prophets are rewarded (Daniel 12:13; Revelation 11:15-18), at the destruction of two different holy people or great cities, then it is more consistent to see that Daniel 12 and Revelation speak of the same time and event—the fall of the Jewish Theocracy in AD 70. Babylon was Jerusalem.

## **25 THE WOMAN AND HER SON**

### **REVELATION 12**

“A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.”

“She bore a male Child who was to rule the nations with a rod of iron.”

Revelation 12 is a commentary on the story of the Garden. We have a woman, a “dragon,” the Devil, the conflict between the Seed of the Woman, and the victory of the woman’s seed over the Devil. But, this woman is not a single woman, it is not Mary the mother of Jesus. The woman here is depicted in imagery as the righteous remnant

of Israel. John's imagery of the sun, the moon and the twelve stars almost certainly takes us back to Genesis 37:9 and Joseph's dream. His father was seen in a dream as the sun. His mother as the moon, and his brothers as the twelve stars.

In the Garden, God promised that the time was coming when the Seed of woman would crush the Devil, although Satan would initially inflict a wound on that Seed. This is precisely what we find in Revelation 12, where the Devil seeks to destroy the woman's Seed but he is protected. We cannot miss the fact that John says that the Devil was angry after being cast down from heaven, "because he knows that he has but a short time" before his final defeat. In other words, what Genesis 3:15 foretold was now about to come to fulfillment.

Paul echoes this in Romans 16:20, "And now the God of peace shall crush Satan under your feet shortly." Paul uses a Greek term *en taxei*, and as we shall see below, this term is never used to speak of rapidity of action as opposed to when an action would occur. Moo acknowledges that Paul was referring, "to the final eschatological victory of God's people when Satan is thrown into the 'lake of fire,'" but recognizes the problem of admitting that Paul anticipated this victory very soon. He insists that Biblical imminence simply meant that the, "the coming is always imminent—its coming certain, its timing incalculable" (1996, 822). These claims will not stand examination, however. Paul was unambiguously affirming that the defeat of Satan was near, as we will demonstrate in our special study on the time statements of Revelation. This means that Paul—and John in Revelation 12-- was anticipating the crushing of Satan very soon.

In Revelation 7 and 14 we were introduced to the righteous remnant of Israel. They had to endure the time of persecution for their faith. Just so, in Revelation 12 we find the seed of the woman, not only the Man child, but his seed as well persecuted by the Dragon.

The remnant are followers of the Lamb as chapters 7 and 14 tell us, and it is because they are his followers that they are identified as the 12 tribes of Israel. Those of Old Israel that refuse to follow the

Lamb are the synagogue of Satan, those who say they are Jews, but are not, for they are liars” (Revelation 2:9; 39). Moses foretold, and Peter reiterated (Acts 3:24f), that a prophet like him would come, and that those who refused to follow Him, would be “cut off from the people.” They would no longer be “the people.” Those who followed the Lamb therefore, the righteous remnant, are in fact “the people.”

It is important to see that the righteous remnant is the True Israel. But, we must not lose sight of the fact that they are still Israel, and therefore, what Revelation is depicting is the fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel. To divorce Revelation from the last days of Israel therefore, and the fulfillment and consummation of her promises is misguided. What that means is that Revelation is not about the end of human history, nor about the end of the Christian age. It is about the consummation of the age of Israel and the ushering in of the everlasting age of Messiah.

The encapsulated story of Revelation 12, as an echo and reminder of God’s promises to Israel, hearkens us back to Isaiah. There, Israel is depicted as a woman travailing in child-birth (26:17f). She has been unable to bring forth, but Jehovah comes and “delivers” salvation. Leviathan, the Dragon if you will, is defeated (27:1f). It is the time when the blood shed on the earth is avenged by Jehovah (26:20f).

As we will see in detail in this work, the time of the vindication of the martyrs is unmistakably identified by both the Old and New Covenants as the time when Old Covenant Israel was judged in her last days (Deuteronomy 32:43; Isaiah 4:4; Matthew 23:33f). Thus, the conflation of all the elements of Isaiah with the elements in Revelation 12 leads us inexorably to the conclusion that it is dealing with the last days of Israel and the time of when the Old Covenant form of the nation was judged and destroyed for turning into the enemy of God by persecuting the righteous remnant. It is also the time of the vindication and avenging of the blood of the saints. And to repeat, that posits the fulfillment of Revelation firmly in the first century in the AD 70 cataclysm.

## 26 THE LAMB ON ZION

### REVELATION 14:1

“I looked and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion.”

To say that John’s allusion to Zion is theologically loaded is a huge understatement. Space will not allow a full discussion of the meaning of Zion in Messianic prophecy. We have somewhat to say later in this work, so we will keep this brief.

Zion is associated the salvation of the remnant (Joel 2:28-32), the establishment of the kingdom and the New Covenant (Isaiah 2:2f), the destruction of the old “heaven and earth” (Isaiah 24), the time of the resurrection (Isaiah 24:19-25:8), the coming of the Lord for the ultimate judgment/salvation of Israel (Isaiah 59; 61), and virtually every Messianic and eschatological motif one could imagine.

John’s Apocalypse envisioned the ultimate victory of the Lamb and the 144,000, representative of the salvation of “all Israel.” This is the vision of the consummation of Israel’s promises. And, that victory would be completed in the judgment of “Babylon.” At this juncture, a comparison with Hebrews 12 is in order to see the proper historical context of what John is saying in Revelation.

As we note later, Russell (Parousia, 469+), has seen the perfect correspondence between Hebrews 12 and Revelation. This is especially true when we examine Hebrews 12 with Revelation 7 and 14. The chart will illustrate the points of comparison.

Hebrews 12:22fRevelation 7, 14You have come to Zion144,000 on ZionChurch of the first bornThe first fruits unto GodThe spirits of just men made perfectThey are virgins (undefiled)Firstborn “registered in heaven”144,000 have the seal of GodThe heavenly JerusalemThe heavenly Jerusalem (21-22)The sacrifice of the LambThe sacrifice of the LambJudgment of old Jerusalem “we have here no abiding city” (13:14)Judgment on “Babylon” (14:6f)Time was near (Hebrews 10:36-37)Time was near (22:6, 10-12)

The significant thing to observe is that the writer of Hebrews says

emphatically, “You have come to Mount Zion.” There could hardly have been a more theologically loaded assertion. To tell his readers that they stood at Mount Zion was to tell them that they stood on the cusp of receiving all of the promises made to Israel. It was to say the time had come to receive the kingdom, and in fact, he tells them they were in the process of receiving the anticipated kingdom that could never be shaken (12:28). To say they had come to Zion was to say that the time of the resurrection had arrived. It was to say that the time of their salvation had come. In a word, to say that they now stood at Zion was to say that everything that Israel had ever longed for was now ready to be fulfilled.

There is no hint of a postponed, delayed kingdom, or a church substituted for the kingdom here. There is only fulfillment and consummation. Furthermore, unless one can demonstrate beyond doubt that Hebrews was anticipating something totally unrelated to what John was writing about, then since Hebrews was undoubtedly written before AD 70, and anticipating that climactic event, this is strong evidence indeed that Revelation was also written before AD 70 and had that event in sight.

Can it be imagined, with the parallels between Hebrews and Revelation listed above, that Hebrews and Revelation speak of two different Zions, two different companies of first born saints, two different heavenly cities contrasted with earthly cities, two different sets of contrasting mountains?

The choices in regard to the obvious parallels between Hebrews and Revelation are limited.

1.) Hebrews and Revelation speak of the same issues. But if that is so, since Hebrews was undeniably written before the fall of Jerusalem, and anticipated that event, then this means that Revelation was also about that time and event.

2.) Hebrews and Revelation do not speak of the same themes or issues. However, if one takes this position, they must prove that Zion in Hebrews has a totally different application in Revelation. He must prove that the concept of the first fruit in Revelation is being

seen differently from in Hebrews. He must show that the heavenly Jerusalem in Hebrews and Revelation were experiencing different persecutions, at the hands of different persecutors, at different times. The burden of proof lies upon those who would divorce the themes and motifs in Revelation from those in Hebrews. That is a daunting task.

If John was writing after Hebrews was written, and knew of Hebrews, and yet was not writing of the same promises, the same people, the same Zion, the same salvation, the same cities in contrast, then should he not have informed us? Take a good look at those parallels again. Where is the delineation between Hebrews and Revelation? Where does John indicate in any way whatsoever that he has something different in mind than Hebrews? There is no contrast, there is no distinction. They are the same.

Furthermore, if it be granted that Revelation may have been written before Hebrews, then since Hebrews leaves no doubt that the focus of its content is the contrast between Old Covenant Jerusalem and the New, then this would suggest, as Russell strongly affirms, that Hebrews was actually citing Revelation. And, of course, in this scenario, there could be no dispute that Revelation was indeed written before the AD 70 cataclysm, and was predicting that event.

Unless one can demonstrate a distinction between Hebrews and Revelation, beyond doubt, the assertion by the Hebrew author, “You have come to Mount Zion,” serves as a powerful proof for the early dating of Revelation, and its application to AD 70.

## **27 THE 144,000 REVELATION 14**

“I looked and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty four thousand.”

Twice in the Apocalypse, the 144,000, are mentioned. They represent the righteous remnant of Israel, or the salvation of “all

Israel” (cf. Romans 11:26). The significance of the 144,000 for the dating and application of the Revelation seems to be lost on all but a handful of commentators. This is somewhat strange however, for what is written about them definitely has dramatic implications for the dating and interpretation of the book.

The referent to 144,000 is symbolic of the righteous remnant. The number 12 multiplied by hundreds is symbolic of perfection. One thing that confuses a lot of people is the idea that “all Israel will be saved” was a promise that the totality of national Israel, or at least a majority, will one day be saved. This is misguided. The Biblical idea is that only the remnant, but all of the remnant, would be saved.

It seems to have escaped the notice of commentators that God had never, at any point of time in His dealings with Israel, saved a majority. There had always only been a righteous remnant. This is Paul’s point, partially, in Romans 9-11. The apostle draws on Jehovah’s past dealings with the remnant—as well as the prophecies of the salvation of the remnant in the last days -- to make his point that, “At this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace” (Romans 9:5). Paul’s “this present time” was his generation.

What is so significant about this is that for Paul, the righteous remnant was being saved, as witnessed by his own conversion (Romans 11). The last days salvation of the remnant was being fulfilled. Furthermore, that last days work of Jehovah would not drag on for centuries and millennia, “For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth” (Romans 9.28).

So here is what we are saying: Revelation 7 and 14 is concerned with the salvation of the righteous remnant of Israel. The salvation of the remnant was foretold by the Old Testament prophets and would occur in the last days. According to Paul, that last days work of the salvation of the remnant was present in his day, and even in his person. Not only was the salvation of the righteous remnant present in his day and in his person, the consummation of that last days work would be consummated shortly, “He will finish the work, and

cut it short in righteousness.” Thus, unless John was writing about the consummation of a different salvation of the remnant than Paul, we must confine John’s discussion to the first century.

Paul was concerned with the salvation of the righteous remnant of Israel. John was concerned with the salvation of the righteous remnant of Israel. Paul said that God’s work of bringing that salvation to consummation would be fulfilled shortly. John was told that the fulfillment of his vision was “at hand” and “must shortly come to pass.”

As we shall see below, Paul confined the salvation of “all Israel” i.e. all of the righteous remnant, to the time of the completion of his personal ministry. This means that unless Paul and John were writing of two totally different salvations of Israel, at two totally different times, at two different comings of the Lord, in two different last days, then the events of Revelation 7 and 14 must be confined to the first century generation. Paul’s discussion of the salvation of the remnant has a strong influence on our understanding of the dating of Revelation and its application to first century events, therefore.

If there is, as seems evident, a delineation between the 144,000 and the “great multitude” of Revelation 7:9, this raises a serious question: If the destruction of Jerusalem was in the past, implying that God had terminated His relationship with Israel then, why is the book of Revelation concerned about the fate of Israel, represented so unmistakably by the referent to the 12 tribes? The Apocalypse is concerned about the consummation of God’s promises to the people represented by the 144,000. But, again, if Israel’s history had been so dramatically terminated almost a quarter century beforehand, why is the book so focused on the future, yet imminent, salvation of Israel?

Notice what is said of the 144,000 in Revelation 14:4, “These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being first fruits to God and to the Lamb.” Did you catch the power of what is said? The 144,000



were the first fruits of those redeemed by Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. The text does not say that the 144,000 were the first fruit of the nations. That was said of Old Covenant Israel in Jeremiah 3:2. The text emphasizes that the 144,000 were followers of the Lamb (Interesting irony, is it not? The Lamb is known as the animal that follows, but here, the Lamb is the one that leads.) These were Christians.

But, these are not just Christians, they are Christian “Jews.” They are out of the 12 tribes of Israel, and they are followers of the Messiah. Further, these are not just Jewish Christians, they are the first generation of Jewish Christians. As Stuart says, “”The writer doubtless refers to the 144,000 as being among the earliest Christians.” Russell concurs, “They are the first fruits unto God and the Lamb; the first converts to the faith in Christ in the land of Judea”(Parousia, 470). Notice that they “were redeemed from among men, being first fruits (aparche) to God and to the Lamb.” The significance of the first fruits must not be missed, or dismissed, for it places the book of Revelation in an early context.

You and I are living 50 generations beyond the time of the first fruit of Christians. Furthermore, the longer time marches on, the farther removed we are from the generation of the first fruits redeemed from among men.

James wrote early in the first century generation, and wrote, “To the twelve tribes scattered abroad” (James 1:1). What did he have to say about the first fruit concept? Hear him, “Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of His mouth, that we might be a kind of first fruit (aparche) of His creatures” (James 1:18). Likewise, the writer of Hebrews said, “You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an unnumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven” (Hebrews 12:22). Chilton is certainly correct to note, “The New Testament uses the term first fruits to describe the church of the Last Days, the ‘first generation’ Church” (Vengeance, 357).

There can be no doubt as to the meaning of “first fruits.” When

Paul wrote to the saints in Rome, he gave greetings to Epaenetus, “who was the first (aparche) convert to Christ in the province of Asia” (Romans 16:5 NIV). Likewise, in 1 Corinthians 16:15, the same apostle sent greetings to the household of Stephanas that was “the first (aparche) converts in Achaia.” Paul was referring to the very first converts.

John did not say that the 144,000 were the first fruit of some far distant time. He did not say that they were to be the first fruit of a different preaching of a different gospel message. Nor did he, as Beale seems to suggest, say that the 144,000 were representative of the entirety of all the redeemed, of all the ages, being referred to as the first fruit. (Revelation, 7:14f). The idea of the term “first fruit” has a temporal significance that cannot be mitigated. The 144,000 were simply the very first Christians, and this has profound implications for not only the dating of the Apocalypse, but for many of today’s eschatological paradigms.

John saw that the 144,000 were to come out of the Great Tribulation (7:14). If the 144,000 were the first Christians, and if they were to endure the Great Tribulation, then it follows undeniably, that the Great Tribulation was to occur in the first century generation. Of course, this is precisely what Jesus predicted in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:15-34) in spite of the dispensational objections. You cannot divorce the 144,000 from the Great Tribulation. No other generation can ever be “the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb” (Revelation 14:4), than that first century generation. Patently, the Great Tribulation was in the first century.

Now, since James and Hebrews, writing to the first generation of Jewish Christians, called them the first fruits and the first born, there is no justification for positing Revelation outside of that first century context. Further, since both James and Hebrews were written in the context of persecution, and were both written before the fall of Jerusalem, what is the justification for placing Revelation outside of that historical context? Unless one could prove that Revelation was speaking of a different first fruits, (but there can never be two

different first fruit Christian generations.), at a different time, under a different persecution being instigated by different forces, then since Hebrews and James are undeniably written prior to the fall of Jerusalem, in the midst of Jewish persecution, it seems eminently logical, and logically compelling, to place Revelation within that identical context.

A final thought for this section. Bauckham observes that the 144,000 are a “holy army” to fight in the battle of Jehovah. However, their triumph is not in military conquest, but “by following his path to death.” He then comments that this motif of victory through martyrdom, “Shows the whole vision of chapter 7, with its play on the idea of numbering (7:4, 9), to be the fulfillment of the promise of the martyrs in 6:11” (Climax, 229, n. 55). This is clearly correct but it has implications for the dating of Revelation that Bauckham and others seem not to have seen.

We will develop this concept extensively later in the book, but for now, we need to see that the promise of Revelation 6:11 is that the Day of the Lord would come when the number of the martyrs was filled up. The connection of this promise to the promise of Jesus and the ministry of Paul is direct, yet, generally ignored or unseen.

Jesus accused Israel of killing the prophets, of seeking to kill him, and said that he would send his own apostles and prophets to that nation (Matthew 23:29-39). They too would be killed and in that persecution Israel would fill up the measure of her blood guilt. This implies and demands of course that the eschatological measure of suffering, the number of the martyrs, would be filled up as promised in Revelation 6.

Paul, repeating the message of his Master, said that Israel had killed the prophets, had killed the Lord, and were now killing the apostles and prophets of Jesus. In doing so, they were filling the measure of their sin, and of course, filling the number of the martyrs (1 Thessalonians 2:15-17). What is more, Paul emphatically said that his personal ministry, and that of the apostolate, was the final act in filling up the suffering of the martyrs.

In Colossians 1:24f (see our discussion below), the apostle said that he, emphatically he, had been chosen to fill up what was lacking in the afflictions of Jesus. In addition, he said the apostles had been set forth “last of all” as men designated by Jehovah for martyrdom (1 Corinthians 4:9).

Revelation promised the judgment on “Babylon” for killing the apostles and prophets (18:20, 24), the final act of filling up the measure of those appointed to die (Revelation 6:11). Yet, Paul said, emphatically, that he personally and the apostolate, were the ones designated to fill up that measure of martyrdom. Now, since the martyrs of Revelation 6 were promised that the Day of the Lord against their persecutors would come when the number of the martyrs was completed, and since Paul said that the number of foreordained martyrs was to be completed with his own suffering, this amounts to prima facie evidence of an early date for the Apocalypse. Paul undeniably was martyred before the fall of Jerusalem. He was martyred, and Jerusalem fell almost immediately. The correspondence is amazing. The only way to counter this bit of evidence is to be able to prove that the 144,000 and what they signified, the filling of the number of martyrs, was totally unrelated to what Jesus and Paul had to say.

## **28 BABYLON AND THE WORLD MISSION**

### **REVELATION 14:6**

“I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe and tongue.”

In Revelation 14:6f, the writer saw an angel with the everlasting Gospel to preach, “to every nation, tribe, and tongue and people.” The message was “Babylon is fallen,” the proleptic declaration of the fall of the persecutor of the saints. Thus, Revelation depicts the fall of Babylon at the consummation of the world mission.

In Matthew 24, Jesus predicted the fall of Jerusalem (v. 2). The disciples equated this to His coming at the end of the age (v. 3). They inquired for a sign of when that event would transpire. In verses 14-15, Jesus gave two signs indicating the imminence of the end of the age.

In verse 14, the Lord said, “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world for a witness to the nations, then comes the end.” The disciples were to go into all the world proclaiming the impending judgment on Jerusalem. When they had finished their mission judgment would fall.

The New Testament declares that the World Mission was completed in the first century (Romans 10:18; Colossians. 1:5-7, 23; Titus 2:11f; Jude 3), before the fall of Jerusalem, just as Jesus predicted. The New Testament is equally clear that the message being preached into all the world was, “The end of all things is at hand” (1 Peter 4:7), “The time has come for the judgment to begin at the house of God” (4:17).

The connection between the World Mission and “the end” is shown in Romans 16:20-26. Paul affirmed the imminence of the end, “The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.” He could assert this, because the gospel had been proclaimed to all the nations (v. 25-26). Christ’s parousia to destroy Satan was near, because the gospel mission had been completed.

In Titus 2:11-14, Paul states, “The grace that brings salvation has appeared to all men.” He then says they were, “waiting for the appearing” of Christ. The word waiting is from *prosdekomai* (Strong’s #4327), and better means “expecting.” It has a strong sense of urgency and expectation.

The World Mission can also be found in the work of the two witnesses who were given miraculous power for the “forty-two months,” until their mission was fulfilled (Revelation 11). This correlates to the miraculously endowed work of the early church in proclaiming the Gospel to all the world ( Mark 13:9f).

In Mark 13:9f, Jesus told His disciples that as they went preaching the gospel into all the world to fulfill the mission they would be

persecuted, yet he promised them that as they were brought before kings and councils (sanhedrins, indicating the Jewish nature of the persecution), they would be given the miraculous power of the Spirit to inspire them, and ensure the completion of the World Mission. The completion of the Mission was to be a sign of imminent parousia. He said the Mission would be completed in His generation before judgment fell on Jerusalem.

Revelation 11 depicts the disciples manifesting the miraculous power of the Spirit in order to complete their mission. When their mission was completed, judgment fell on the city, “where the Lord was crucified” (Revelation 11:8).

Unless it can be shown that the church was to be miraculously empowered to complete the World Mission as a sign of the fall of Rome, or the Catholic church, or any other ancient or modern entity, then the fact that the World Mission was completed in the first century before the fall of Jerusalem is powerful evidence that Babylon was first century Jerusalem.

Unless one can demonstrate that there were to be two miraculously empowered World Missions, with the message of imminent judgment, to come on two different cities, both of whom were guilty of shedding the blood of the prophets and saints, then the correlation between Matthew 24 and Revelation 14 positively identifies Babylon of Revelation as first century Jerusalem.

In Revelation 11, the work of the two witnesses would finally result in the fall of the Great City, “where our Lord was crucified” (v. 8). This can be no other city than Jerusalem of the first century. Thus, the World Mission, and judgment on Jerusalem, is established in Revelation.

In chapter 14 the universal proclamation of the everlasting gospel preceded judgment on Babylon. The completion of the World Mission was thus vitally linked with God’s eschatological action. The next chart, taken from our work *Into All the World, Then Comes the End*, illustrates the parallels between the Olivet Discourse and the Apocalypse.

Olivet Discourse Revelation 11, 14 World Mission (Mark 13:10)  
World Mission (14:6f) Persecution for preaching (Mark 13:9-10)  
Persecution, two witnesses slain (11:7-8) Miraculous power for  
World Mission (Mark 13:11) Miraculous power for World Mission  
(11:5-6) Son of Man coming on the clouds (Mark 13:26) Son of Man  
coming on the clouds (11:5; 14:14f) This Generation (13:30) The  
hour of His judgment has come (14:7) Judgment against Jerusalem  
(13:1-4) Against the city “Where the Lord was slain” (11:8)

As you can see, the parallels are direct. And since Jesus undeniably  
posited the fulfillment of the mission for the first century, and since  
the apostles unequivocally said the commission had been fulfilled in  
the first century, this demands that Babylon of Revelation was Old  
Covenant Jerusalem.

Be sure to read the special study Paul and the Apocalypse below  
for further examination of the significance of the World Mission to  
the identity of Babylon.

There is a final thought here. Notice that the Angel announces,  
“Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is  
come” (Revelation 14:7). It is literally, “came the hour of the judgment  
of Him.” We cannot help but be reminded of Peter’s words, “The  
time has come for the judgment to begin” (1 Peter 4:17). Lamentably,  
many commentators seek to mitigate the overwhelming imminence  
of the text by simply claiming, “John’s eschatology is such that the  
day of the Lord and the final judgment are always pressing in; for  
him, the kingdom of God is always at hand.” This generalizing and  
“moralizing” of the imminence of the Apocalypse is untenable,  
however. The persecution being experienced by John and his followers  
was not “always at hand,” it was there, in their very real world. They  
were to receive relief from that very real suffering, “When the Lord  
Jesus is revealed from heaven” (2 Thessalonians 1:4f), not in some  
distant irrelevant time.

We have already seen that whereas John spoke of the time of trial  
that was about to come on the whole world (3:10), that Peter spoke

of the fiery trial that had already begun, and both Peter and John wrote to the same churches. Now, the Angel announces that the time, for the judgment has arrived. Since Peter was clearly written before the fall of Jerusalem, then unless John was writing about an entirely unrelated “the judgment” than Peter, the consistency of thought and temporal parameters strongly suggest that both Peter and John were writing about the same impending judgment, the end of the Old Covenant world of Judah.

## **29 BABYLON AND THE TIME OF THE HARVEST REVELATION 14:14-20**

According to John, the “harvest of the earth” would be at the judgment on Babylon. It is the sin of Babylon that has caused the time of harvest to come. The city and the earth (land) are inseparable. This is a good indication that the word “earth” does not actually mean the globe here.

The word translated earth is *ge* (Strong’s #1093), and in the context better means “the land.” It is the “land” surrounding the city that is the focus of judgment because of the fullness of sin. See the discussion below about the filling the measure of sin.

The concept of the harvest is one that is aptly applied to the end of the Jewish age, in the fall of Jerusalem, and not any supposed “end of time,” or the judgment of Rome.

John the Immerser anticipated the time of harvest/judgment. The wheat was about to be gathered, and the tares destroyed at the harvest. John’s apocalyptic message, “Involves an imminent judgment of the unrighteous in tees mellouses orges, `the coming wrath.’ This eschatological wrath, associated with fulfillment, is further alluded to in Matthew 3:10-12. What frightened John’s listeners was the insistence that the judgment was about to occur (mellousees).”

In harmony with John’s imminent expectation of the harvest, Jesus told His disciples, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few” (Matthew 9:37). He told them, “Do you not say



‘There are four months and then comes the harvest?’ Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look to the fields, for they are already white for the harvest” (John 4:35). Clearly, for John and for Jesus, the time for the harvest had come, and we do not have to ponder long about the proper framework for the harvest, it would occur at the end of the Mosaic age.

The Hebrew writer tells us, “now once at the end of the ages, (sunteleia, end, consummation, Strong’s #4930, ton aionon, age, Strong’s #165) He has appeared to put away sin.” It should be obvious that Jesus did not appear at the end of time. He appeared at the end of the Old Covenant Aeon of Israel. Paul affirms this in Galatians 4:4, “In the fullness (pleroma, Strong’s #3128) of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, made under the Law.” Jesus’ appeared under the Old Law.

The end of the age did not occur with Jesus’ incarnation or at the Cross. In Matthew 23:29-39, Jesus foretold the imminent “this generation” judgment of Jerusalem. Upon hearing this imprecation, the disciples began to point out to Jesus the magnificent stones of the temple. In response to their comments, Jesus said, “Not one stone shall be left here upon another” (Matthew 24:2)

Hearing the repeated prediction of the Temple’s demise the disciples queried, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (sunteleias tou aionos).

Sproul notes Calvin’s view that the disciples mistakenly associated the fall of Jerusalem with the end of the age, “Calvin regarded as erroneous the disciple’s assumption that the destruction of Jerusalem would coincide with the coming of Christ and the end of the age.” Deaver is emphatic that the disciples associated the fall of Jerusalem with the end of the age but says, “It does not follow necessarily that they were correct in their assumption.” Johnson says, “It is true that the Parousia or return of Christ was expected at the time of the Jewish War. But this had been a mistake.”

Were the disciples wrong to associate the fall of Jerusalem with

the “end of the age”? Were they confused and ignorant to associate the demise of Jerusalem with the end of the age? Ask yourself this question: what age did that temple represent? Did it represent the Christian age? Patently not. That temple represented one age, and one age only, and that was the Old Covenant age of Moses and the Law. It was therefore, perfectly logical for the disciples to think of the end of the age, the end of the age of Moses and the Law, when Jesus foretold the destruction of that marvelous edifice. There is no justification whatsoever to claim that the disciples were thinking of the end of time, or the end of the Christian age.

One thing is certain, although commonly overlooked, is that the disciples emphatically claimed not to be confused about Jesus’ “end of the age” teaching.

We will examine Matthew 13 more below, but for the moment we wish only to take note of the fact that in that chapter, Jesus told three parables about the end of the age and the kingdom. The first parable is about the wheat, tares, harvest and the “end of the age” (*sunteleia ton aionon*, Matthew 13:39-40). In Matthew 24:3, the disciples asked Jesus about the “end of the age” (*sunteleia ton aionon*). Thus, in Matthew 24, the disciples were asking about the very thing they had heard Jesus expound on in Matthew 13. The only difference is that in Matthew 24, they ask for the signs of what had been predicted. What is of significance in this discussion, is the nature of the disciples understanding. In Matthew 13:51, Jesus asked the disciples, “Do you understand all of these things?” The disciples answered plainly, “Yes, Lord.” Jesus taught them about the end of the age, and asked them if they understood. They said, “Yes.” Are we supposed to believe that they did not understand, therefore, in Matthew 24? Had something slipped their mind from Matthew 13 to Matthew 24? Did they lie when they said they understood about the end of the age? Is it not arrogant to maintain that they did not understand, when they said they did?

Equally important for this investigation is the fact, examined further below, that in Matthew 13:43, Jesus directly quotes from

Daniel 12:3. Daniel 12:4 predicted the “time of the end” (heos kairou sunteleias, LXX). The time of the end, of Daniel’s vision is identified as the time when, “the power of the holy people has been completely shattered” (Daniel 12:7). It is clear that Daniel foretold the time of the end in direct relationship to the destruction of Israel. Thus, when Jesus cited Daniel 12 in Matthew 13, and asked the disciples if they understood, we are logically compelled to assert that the disciples linked the end of the age with the demise of Israel. When Jesus predicted the fall of Jerusalem in Matthew 24, and the disciples inquired about the end of the age, it is rather presumptuous to maintain that the disciples were confused or mistaken.

Most commentators assume the disciples believed in the “end of time,” and that since that clearly did not occur with the fall of Jerusalem, then they were either wrong to associate the two events, or, as Johnson and others have concluded, they, and thus scripture, were simply not inspired. There are thus three key issues at stake:

1.) Did the disciples believe in the end of the time-space continuum?

The answer to this is that they did not. France says, “The unwary reader (of the Old Testament apocalyptic language describing “the end,” DKP) is in danger of assuming a note of finality in the future hope of Israel which is in fact foreign to it. The ‘eschatology’ of the Old Testament prophets is not concerned with the end of the world, but with the decisive act of God, which will bring to an end the existing order of things in the world, and inaugurate a new era of blessing, of a totally different order.” Nanos concurs, and cites Wright, who says, “There is virtually no evidence (his emphasis) that the Jews were expecting the end of the space-time universe. What then, did they believe was going to happen? They believed that the present world order would come to an end.”

Now, to be sure, the Old Testament predicted the “last days,” and “the time of the end,” but never the end of time.

2.) Could the disciples conceive of the fall of Jerusalem separate and apart from the end of time?

Kik says, “The disciples thought that the Temple would stand until the end of time” (Victory, 86). Thus, the disciples were mistaken. Dubois says the disciples certainly did associate the fall of Jerusalem and the end of time, yet when they asked the Lord about these events, “The disciples did not even understand what they were asking.”

The disciples claimed to understand what Jesus taught about the end of the age, is it not at least a little bit arrogant for the modern student to so easily accuse them of being so woefully ignorant? Could it be that it is the modern exegete that is a little less knowledgeable than hoped?

While some claim that the disciples could not imagine Jerusalem’s fall without thinking about the end of time, this is plainly illogical. Did they not know that Jerusalem was completely destroyed in 586 B.C.(2 Chronicles 36:13f)? Surely. The disciples well knew that Jerusalem had fallen before, yet time had continued. Why could they not believe the same about the destruction at the coming of Jesus?

3.) Does scripture associate the end of the age with the judgment of Jerusalem? If so, then the disciples, conversant with prophecy, would not have been in error or confused to associate the events.

The answer to this question will have a major impact on how one defines “the end of the age.” In turn, this will determine the time of the harvest. This will have a profound impact on the identity of Babylon.

Without doubt the prophets associated the time of the end with the judgment of Jerusalem. Many texts prove this, but we will list just a few.

A.) Isaiah 2-4 – This prophecy foretold the “last days” climaxed by the “Day of the Lord” (2:2; 10, 19-21). In that Day, men would flee to the mountains to escape the Wrath of Jehovah. This Day would be a time of war against Israel, when the Lord would judge the people (3:13f). In Luke 23:28-31, Jesus cites this text in His prediction of the fall of Jerusalem.

In Isaiah 4:4f, the Lord predicted the salvation of Israel. Yet, that salvation would be accomplished in a strange way, “By the spirit of

fire, and the spirit of judgment.” Thus, Isaiah foretold the last days and the time of judgment against Israel at the Day of the Lord. In Matthew, Jesus was predicting the end of the age, and the time of judgment of Jerusalem.

B.) Isaiah 24-29 -- In The Little Apocalypse, Isaiah foretold the destruction of “the city of confusion” (Jerusalem) because of her violation of “the everlasting covenant” (24:5). This would be occur in the day the Lord destroyed death, and spread the Messianic Banquet (25:5f). The Lord would save Israel, yet this salvation would be, “when He makes all the stones of the altar like chalk stones that are beaten to dust” (27:8-9).

C.) Isaiah 65 --The prophet foretold the coming of the wonderful new creation, the new Jerusalem. Yet, before that could come, the Lord spoke of Israel’s fate, “The Lord God will slay you, and call His servants by another name” (65:15).

D.) Daniel 9:24-27 -- In His Olivet prediction of the fate of Jerusalem, the Lord cites Daniel 9 (Matthew 24:15). Daniel was told, “70 weeks are determined on your people and on your city” (Daniel 9:24). Patently, the fate of Jerusalem is contained in this great prediction, and, “On the wing of abominations shall be one that makes desolate, even until the consummation” (9:27). Jerusalem was to be utterly destroyed at the end of the seventy weeks.

In His prediction of the fall of Jerusalem, Jesus quotes from Daniel. The disciples were well aware of Daniel’s prediction, and the determined time for the prediction. Upon what basis can it be affirmed that the disciples were mistaken to associate the end of the age with the fall of Jerusalem? On the contrary, the end of the age and the fall of Jerusalem are companions that cannot be separated.

E.) Daniel 12 – See our discussion below. For the time, suffice it to say that Daniel 12 foretold the “time of the end” (v. 3), and said this would be when “the power of the holy people has been completely shattered” (v. 7). There is no other event after the writing of Daniel 12 that even comes close to qualifying as the time when the power of the holy people was completely shattered. Not even the time of the

Maccabees. Only the cataclysmic events of AD 70 meet the demands of the prophecy.

Jesus alludes to Daniel 12 no less than three times in Matthew 24. He predicted the coming great tribulation (Daniel 12:1/ Matthew 24:21f). He foretold the time of the end (Daniel 12:4/ Matthew 24:2). He spoke of the Abomination of Desolation (Daniel 12:11/ Matthew 24:15f).

The disciples were, of course, familiar with Daniel 12. They could not have been ignorant that the prophecy foretold the destruction of the people, and here was Jesus, predicting the destruction of the temple and city. Could the disciples have failed to associate the fall of Jerusalem with the end of the age?

E.) Zechariah 12-14 – Zechariah foretold the time of Israel's salvation through judgment. The themes of salvation and judgment run throughout the text. One of the key terms is “in that day.”

Zechariah said in that day, the Lord would pour out a spirit of grace and supplication (12:10f). However, in that day, Israel would mourn when they looked on him whom they had pierced, a text quoted by Jesus in Matthew 24:30. This is truly a good news/bad news situation.

In that day of mourning, Jehovah would open a fountain to cleanse the filth of Israel. The cleansing of Israel, remember, was to occur in the “last days” (Isaiah 2-4). However, in that Day two-thirds of the people would perish (13:1, 8f), the Lord would gather the nations against Jerusalem, and come in judgment (14:1-5). As a result of His coming, the kingdom would be established, and the river of Life would flow from Zion (14:8).

Clearly, the judgment of Jerusalem is prominent in Messianic prophecies of the last days. The disciples of Jesus were not confused, therefore, when in Matthew 24:3 they connected the end of the age with the fate of Jerusalem.

Because of the overwhelming evidence that Jerusalem was to be destroyed at the end of the age, it is lamentable to read commentators such as Mounce proclaim, “If Jesus held that these two events (the fall

of Jerusalem and the end of the age, DKP) were contemporaneous, then history has proven him wrong.” In light of the indisputable fact that the Old Covenant Israel did come to an end with the dissolution of the temple and its cultus, these comments hardly seem apropos. It is, in fact, the modern commentators who ignore this connection who are confused. The failure to acknowledge the relationship between the end of the age, and the fate of Jerusalem, is the cause of much eschatological confusion.

In Matthew 13:36-43, Jesus explained his parable of the wheat and tares. Concerning the time of the harvest he said, “harvest is at the end of this age” (*sunteleia tou aionos*).

Longenecker does an excellent job in demonstrating that the Jews had a belief in two ages, “this age” and “the age to come.” What is so important is that in the New Testament, the writers, especially Paul, show us that their concept of the two ages is focused on covenant change, not the end of time. Commenting on Paul’s concept of the new creation, which of course is the determinative goal of the Apocalypse, Longenecker says, “This eschatological perspective has to do first and foremost with the triumph of God that is taking effect in the establishment of a new world. It is a world where matters of circumcision and uncircumcision are irrelevant.” In other words, for Paul, and thus for John, the new creation that was being anticipated had to do with the covenant change between the Old Covenant world of Israel, and the New Covenant world of Christ.

In Matthew 13, Jesus did not say, “harvest is at the end of the age to come.” This is significant. As Kik rightly says, “According to the Jews there were to be two ages: ‘this age’ and ‘the age to come’—the pre-Messianic age and the Messianic age” (Victory, 89). Kik believes that when Jesus predicted the end of the age in Matthew 13, “This could only be the Messianic age.” This presents many problems.

Jesus was living in the Mosaic age (Galatians 4:4), which did not end until the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. (Kik, 37) In fact, the Mosaic age is the only age that was predicted to end. The Christian age is the “age without end” (Ephesians 3:20-21). Thus, Kik and those who

espouse the literal “end of the world” view, believe that Jesus was living in the last days of the Mosaic age, and that it would end in approximately 40 years. Yet, Jesus completely ignored that impending catastrophe, and foretold the termination of “the age to come,” even though the “age to come” has no end. If this view is correct, why did Jesus not say, “harvest is at the end of the age to come”? Instead, He said, “harvest is at the end of this age.”

In Matthew 13:43, Jesus quotes Daniel 12:3, and says it would be fulfilled at the end of the age. Thankfully, Daniel 12 tells us when his prediction would be fulfilled. Daniel foretold the “time of the end” (v. 4) when, among other things, the righteous would shine. In verse 7, one angel asked another when all of the things Daniel had foreseen would be fulfilled. The response was, “When the power of the Holy People has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished” (v. 7).

Jesus said harvest—when the righteous would shine—would be at the end of the age (Matthew 13:39-43). Daniel said the righteous would shine at the time of the end, when the power of Israel was completely shattered, (Daniel 12:3, 4, 7). Therefore, the harvest would be when the power of the holy people, Israel, was completely shattered.

John says the harvest would be when Babylon was judged (Revelation 14:8-20). Harvest would be when Israel was judged (Daniel 12/Matthew 13). Therefore, Babylon was Israel/Jerusalem.

This relationship between Daniel’s prediction of the end of Israel’s age, Matthew 13, and Revelation 14, is powerful. The chart will show the parallels between the passages. Remember that Daniel 12 places the fulfillment of his prediction at the time of the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Matthew 13 is, therefore, AD 70, but since Matthew 13 is AD 70, Revelation 14 must refer to the same thing. Babylon is Jerusalem.

Matthew 13  
Revelation 14  
Proclamation of the Word (v. 37-38)  
Proclamation of the Word (v.6)  
Coming of the Son of Man (v.41)  
Coming of the Son of Man (v.14)  
Sending forth of the Angels (v. 41)  
Sending forth of the Angels (v.14)  
Time of the Harvest, (v.39-43)



40)Time of the Harvest, (v.16-19)Righteous shine (v.43)Righteous rewarded (v.13)Harvest is at the end of “this age” (v.39-40)The time of His judgment has come (v.7)

What we have, therefore, is this, Jesus appeared in the end of the Old Covenant age (*sunteleia ton aionon*, Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 9:26). He said the harvest would be at the end of the age (Matthew 13:39-40). Daniel identified the time of the end as the time when Israel would be destroyed (Daniel 12:4-7).

Jesus foretold the fall of Jerusalem, and the disciples naturally and properly associated this prediction with the end of the age (*sunteleias tou aionos*) represented by that temple. In response to the disciple’s question about the end of the age, Jesus said, “This generation will by no means pass away till all of these things are fulfilled” (Matthew 24:34).

The consistent evidence is that the end of the age is associated with the fall of Jerusalem. Harvest would be at the end of the age. Therefore, the harvest would occur with the fall of Jerusalem. In Revelation, John was told that the harvest would come at the time of the judgment of Babylon. The direct parallels between Matthew 13 and Revelation compel us to identify the time of the harvest against Babylon as the time of the judgment of Jerusalem.

A final note on the harvest. In Revelation 14, the time for the harvest of the “vine of the earth” had come. Ogden poses an appropriate question, “What is the vine of the earth? Think. There is only one vine of the earth of significance in scriptures. We follow the lineage of Christ through it. The vine of the earth is the nation of Israel, God’s choice vine (Psalms 80:8-19; Isaiah 5; Jeremiah 2:20f; Ezekiel 17:1-10). ‘Her grapes are fully ripe,’ i.e. her iniquity is complete. It is time to gather her grapes for the harvest, (Joel. 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:16)” (Avenging, 299). Edersheim points out that in the entrance into the Holy Place of the temple there hung, “That symbol of Israel, a gigantic vine of pure gold, and made of votive offerings—each cluster the height of man” (Temple, 58.) Could the Jewish Christian reader of John’s language not be reminded of Israel and her precious

temple and city?

Smalley observes that Joel 3 lies behind Revelation 14 and the harvest imagery. He says that Joel 3: “Is the only text in the Old Testament where the images of harvesting with a sickle and treading the winepress occur together; and both, it is suggested, are figures of judgment” (2005, 373). What Smalley ignores is that Joel 2:28-chapter 3 is a prophecy of the last days of Israel, consummating in the Day of the Lord. Peter was emphatic that the last days foretold by Joel had arrived (Acts 2:15f: “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel”). Joel had said that when the last days arrived, the Day of the Lord would be near (Joel 3:14). Jesus appeared in the last days (Hebrews 1:1) and said the kingdom had now drawn near (Mark 1:15). As seen just above, he spoke of the harvest being near as well. Thus, to remove Revelation 14 from its OT moorings and prediction of the consummation of Israel’s eschatological hopes is a disservice.

John is saying that the days foretold by Joel were now about to be consummated. The Day truly was near. In fact, as Beale argues, in noting that the Angel speaks to the Son, telling him that the time of the harvest has come, “Christ must be informed by God about the time for the judgment to begin, since, ‘of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.’” Of course, this admission is problematic for Beale who like Smalley, Aune and other commentators believe that the imminence of Revelation is “timeless.” If the Father was revealing to the Son what the Son did not know in his Incarnation i.e. the day and the hour of his parousia, as Revelation 1:1-3 clearly shows to be the case, then that imminence must be seen as very real and objective. If the Father was revealing “the day and hour” of the Son’s coming, then the “day and hour” cannot be redefined as God’s time and not man’s time. It cannot be redefined into meaninglessness.

There is one final thought here. The time of the harvest of the “vine” had arrived for “the time of the harvest of the earth is ripe” (14:15). This imagery suggests, like other images in the book, that the time of consummation has come. The harvest of v. 14f, which

actually suggests two harvests, one positive and one negative, must be seen within the context of the “first fruits” already mentioned in Revelation 14:4. As Bauckham suggests, “The connection between the first fruits of 14:4 and the reaping of the whole harvest in 14:14-16 would be obvious to any Jew, who was unlikely to be able to use the image of the first fruits without implying a full harvest of which the first fruits are the token and pledge.” (Climax, 291+). There are two thoughts here that force us to see a first century fulfillment, and fulfillment in the judgment of Old Covenant Jerusalem.

The first fruits are depicted as martyrs, anticipating the Day of the Lord in vindication of their suffering (cf. 7:14f). The vindication of all the martyrs is undeniably posited by Jesus at the judgment of Jerusalem in his generation (Matthew 23:29f).

The ripeness of the harvest suggests that the time anticipated in Revelation 6:11, the time when “their fellow servants who should be slain as they were is fulfilled.” It is suggestive that Babylon’s cup of abominations and the blood of the saints was now full (Revelation 17:4f). The ripeness of the harvest therefore, suggests that the time for the judgment of the persecutor of God’s people, i.e. the nation represented by the “vine,” has come. She has filled up the measure of her sin. Judgment is about to fall. And there is only one city that fits that description best, and it is Old Covenant Jerusalem. There is only one city associated with harvest at the end of the age, and that city is Jerusalem of the first century. Revelation 14, based on the OT promises of the consummation of the hopes of Israel in her last days, definitively defines Babylon as Old Covenant Jerusalem.

### **30 BABYLON AND THE FLOWING OF THE BLOOD REVELATION 14:20**

In chapter 14:20, John says the blood flowing from Babylon’s judgment, “came out of the winepress, up to the horses bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.” Premillennialists say this

refers to a yet future time when blood will actually flow this high at Armageddon. Allphin correctly notes, though, that 1600 furlongs indicates “the theater of war” (Visions, 173). Ogden notes that the measurement of 1600 furlongs, “filled the entire land of Palestine from north to south” (Avenging, 300). Russell says, “There is probably an illusion to the geographical extent of Palestine in the ‘thousand and six hundred furlongs’ so that we may regard the symbolical description as equivalent to the statement that from one end to the other the land was deluged with blood” (Parousia, 475).

It is difficult for the modern mind to imagine the horrific nature, and total devastation, that occurred in the war between Rome and Israel. Farrar describes the scenes present from one end of Israel to the other, “The expression of the seer would hardly seem an hyperbole to one who had seen the foul red stains which had polluted the silver Lake of Gennesareth; the Jordan choked with putrefying corpses; even the waves of the Dead Sea rendered loathier than their wont with the carcasses of the countless slain.” He then cites the Talmud in which the Rabbis claimed, “For seven years did the nations of the world cultivate their vineyards with no other manure than the blood of Israel.”

Would it not be strange if the writer of Revelation used so many symbols that historically were applied to Israel, yet he was applying them to Rome? This is equally valid in consideration of the concept that the winepress was trodden without the city (Revelation 14:20).

The term, “without the city,” is almost a technical New Testament term to refer Jerusalem. Jesus was slain without the gate (Hebrews 13:12-13). One cannot help but wonder if the inspired writer was writing an ironic bit of literature here. Just as Israel had slain her Messiah outside the city, and cried for His blood to be laid upon them, God’s wrath is now being poured out in the same place as they killed the prince of peace.

“Outside the camp,” or “outside the city,” is a significant concept in the Old Testament—it is a term especially related to covenantal action. Was Rome ever in such a relationship with God? What would

be the basis for John using language, that historically was descriptive of the Lord's actions in regard to Israel, and of a sudden apply them to pagan Rome or some other entity that had never stood in covenantal relationship to Him? The language of the text is most apropos in a discussion of the fate of Israel.

### **31 MORE ON BABYLON AND THE EXODUS MOTIF REVELATION 15:1-5**

In the vision of chapter 15:1-5, the Exodus motif of Revelation is continued and emphasized. We have already seen that the opening of the seals hearkens back to the Law of Blessings and Cursings. Chapter 7 presented the Exodus motif and the 144,000 on their way to the "promised land." Chilton observes, "John pictures the saints rejoicing at the water's edge like Moses and the Israelites after the original Red Sea crossing." (Vengeance, 384) Swete says the vision shows, "Their exodus from the spiritual Egypt (11:8) has led them through the Red Sea of Martyrdom which is now exchanged for the Crystal Sea of Heaven." The Exodus motif of Israel's history permeates the Revelation. We have already posed and answered the question: who is the enslaving "Egypt" from which the church is envisioned as being delivered in the second Exodus.

Isaiah predicted that in the last days, Jehovah would lead His people out of bondage a second time (Isaiah 11). Only this exodus would include the salvation of the Gentiles (Isaiah 11:10f). The exodus would lead to a "world" of peace and righteousness, wherein the wolf and the lamb would lie down together (Isaiah 11:6), the conditions of the new creation of Isaiah 65. In that chapter, however, the new order would follow the judgment on Israel (Isaiah 65:13-19).

Thus, when John draws upon the "Second Exodus" motif, the context of that imagery is the judgment on Old Covenant Israel.

We have shown earlier that the constant New Testament references to bondage refer to the bondage of Israel's Old Covenant world. The old Jerusalem "is in bondage with her children" (Galatians 4). Paul constantly refers to the bondage of the Law (Romans 7).

Chilton notes that in the New Testament, "Israel herself has taken the place of the heathen nations in the prophecies" (Vengeance, 386). This means that Israel has become Egypt, the enslaving nation from which the true Israel must be redeemed. France notes that, Jesus identified he and his disciples as the true Israel, and old Israel as the "pagan" persecuting power, "In rejecting Jesus, the Jews no less than the pagan empires, were the opponents of the kingdom of God."

No Biblical writer ever identifies Rome as the enslaving power. When bondage is discussed, it is the bondage of the Old Covenant world. Thus, in Revelation, when John depicts the "second exodus," it would demand strong evidence to identify Rome, or some other entity, as the nation of captivity. In scripture, historical Egypt and Babylon were the nations that had enslaved God's chosen. In Revelation, Israel has become Egypt and Babylon. God was in the process of bringing the plagues on "Egypt" and Babylon to deliver His New Covenant people from bondage.

John sees this new people, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, standing on the "Red Sea" singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Just as Israel had been delivered from Egypt, but not into the land, when they sang the song of Moses, John sees this new people as being redeemed. Yet, they have not yet entered the promised land, the Most Holy Place, and cannot do so until the Wrath of God is completed (Revelation 15:8). It is difficult to see how John could apply the second exodus motif and imagery to any nation other than Old Covenant Israel.

There is something else here. The fact that the saints sing "the Song of Moses" positively identifies the time and framework for fulfillment of this vision. It is sometimes argued that the "song of Moses" is that sung by Miriam and Israel after the Red Sea crossing (Exodus 12-15). However, the Song of Moses is Deuteronomy 32,

and this is incredibly significant.

The real Song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32, is a prediction of what would befall Israel “in the last days,” and is concerned with “her latter end” (Deuteronomy 32:20, 29). The Song has nothing to do with the end of time, or the end of the Christian Era. And in Israel’s last days, “the Lord will judge His people, and have compassion on His servants, when He sees that their power is gone...For He will avenge His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries” (Deuteronomy 32:36-43).

So, in Israel’s last days, God would judge her, and avenge the martyrs. And in Revelation 14-15 we find the martyrs, and God’s promise to avenge them in the judgment of Babylon the great. When that judgment falls, the martyrs, “sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb” (Revelation 15:3). Israel’s last days are at their climax. The Lamb is the judge, and he is the Savior. He is judging the Whore for shedding the blood of the saints.

The fact that Revelation 15 posits the singing of the Song of Moses in the context of the avenging of the martyrs means that Revelation is the consummation of Israel’s last days, and that occurred with the demise of Jerusalem in AD 70. The Song of Moses has nothing to do with a yet future judgment, a yet future Babylon, a yet future restoration of Israel.

## **32 BABYLON, CONSUMMATION OF VENGEANCE, AND ENTRANCE INTO THE MOST HOLY PLACE REVELATION 15:8**

In the prelude to the seven last plagues, John, “looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened” (15:5). The significance of this vision cannot be over-emphasized for a Jewish reader—especially one with priestly connections such as John.

The Most Holy Place of the temple was, well, the Most Holy Place

in the world to the Jew. It represented the presence of God. Only the High Priest could enter that sanctified place once a year (Hebrews 9:7). The veil that stood between the Holy Place, and the Most Holy, was a constant reminder of the barrier that stood between man and his God. As long as that Old Covenant system stood there would be no access for man to the presence of God (Hebrews 9:6-10).

In Revelation 15, John sees the veil gone, and the Most Holy Place is open. This signified that man could now approach God—but there was a problem. No man could actually enter the Most Holy Place until, “the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed” (15:8). God’s wrath would be completed when judgment fell on Babylon (Revelation 16:17f). Therefore, access to God would be opened when God’s vengeance was completed against Babylon.

In Luke 21, Jesus predicted the fall of Jerusalem (v.7f). He tells the disciples that when they see Jerusalem surrounded they are to know that her desolation is nigh (v. 20-24). He describes the fall of Jerusalem, “These be the days of vengeance, in which all things that are written must be fulfilled” (v. 22). Jerusalem’s fall would be the consummation of God’s vengeance. The chart helps visualize the comparison of Luke 21, Hebrews and Revelation.

Luke 21	Hebrews 9-10	Revelation 15-19	Fall of Jerusalem (v. 20f)
	End of Old Covenant system (9:26)	Judgment on Babylon (16:7f)	
	Days of Vengeance fulfilled (v.22)	Time of Vengeance (10:26-37)	
	Completion of God’s Wrath (15:2)	Coming of Redemption, Kingdom (v. 28, 32)	
	Entrance into Most Holy Place (9:6f)	Entrance into Most Holy Place (15:1, 8)	
	At Coming of the Lord (v.26f)	At Coming of the Lord (10:37)	
	At Coming of the Lord (19)	In Jesus’ generation (v.32)	
	In a very, very little while (10:37)	“Behold I come quickly” (22:12, 20)	

In Luke, the judgment against Jerusalem would fulfill God’s vengeance and bring redemption. Hebrews (10:26-37) depicts the removal of the Old Covenant system, (at the time of Christ’s coming in judgment) as opening the way to the Most Holy Place. In Revelation, God’s wrath is consummated in the judgment against Babylon, resulting in access to the Most Holy Place. The parallels



positively identify Babylon as Jerusalem.

In Revelation, “Babylon” stood as a barrier between man and the Most Holy Place. Biblically only one city stood as the symbol both of the presence and the barrier to God. That city was old Covenant Jerusalem.

### **33 BABYLON: PERSECUTOR OF THE PROPHETS**

#### **REVELATION 16:6**

Babylon not only persecuted the saints and martyrs of Jesus, she had killed the prophets. This is significant.

When the New Testament uses the term “the prophets” without a qualifier, it is Old Testament prophets in view. The term “the prophets” is used 72 times in the New Testament. Only 12 times does the term refer to prophets of Jesus. In each of the 12 instances, the context demands that the prophets be identified as New Covenant prophets, (Acts 13:1f; 15:32; Ephesians 2:20; 3:8, etc.). In Revelation 16, there is no indication that New Testament prophets are in view. To avoid the force of this evidence, Paher ignores the normative definition, and appeals to these exceptional occurrences. This is inappropriate.

The term “the prophets” in Revelation refers to Old Testament prophets. Babylon, consequently, cannot be Rome, Roman Catholicism, apostate Christianity, a “one world church,” or anything else. None of these ever persecuted an Old Testament prophet.

That the “prophets” (Revelation 16) refers to Old Covenant prophets is substantiated by the fact that the book of Revelation is about the fulfillment of what the Old Covenant prophets foretold. Jenkins has noted, “The book of Revelation is the work of a Jew saturated with Old Testament prophecy.” He also says, “Westcott and Hort list over 400 quotations from the Old Testament in the Apocalypse. Swete says that of the 404 verses in Revelation 278 contain references to the Jewish scriptures” (ibid).

Revelation 10:6-7 says there was to be no more delay in the fulfillment of the mystery foretold by the prophets. The significant

thing about this is that Revelation 10 is a direct echo of Daniel 12. The book of Revelation quotes, cites, and alludes to the prophecies of Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Zechariah, and Malachi, etc.. Revelation is concerned about the time when the prophets would be vindicated and rewarded (11:15f).

Revelation is about the fulfillment of the prophets—the prophets who had suffered for their faith. The prophets that had foretold the things that Revelation was anticipating were Old Testament prophets. It follows, therefore, that the prophets that were to be vindicated by the fall of Babylon were Old Testament prophets. This fits the O. T. datum very well.

In 1 Kings 19:10, Elijah said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” He repeated the charge in verse 14. At a later period, Nehemiah recounted Israel’s history, “Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations. (Nehemiah 9:26).

As Jeremiah lamented the fall of Jerusalem, “The perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth,” one of the reasons he lists for her destruction was, “The iniquities of her priests, who have shed in her midst the blood of the just...They have defiled themselves with blood” (Lamentations 4:13-14). Significantly, the prophet also said, “The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, which was overthrown in a moment with no hand to help her” (Lamentations 4:6). We can hear the echo of this passage in the prediction of the destruction of the Babylon, “spiritually called Sodom, where also our Lord was slain” (11:8), and in the prediction that she was to be overthrown in “one hour” (Revelation 18:10). So, just as Old Covenant Jerusalem was destroyed because of her blood guilt, John anticipated the destruction of Babylon for her guilt of shedding the

blood of the innocent.

Jesus unmistakably identified the city guilty of killing the prophets, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to you” (Matthew 23:37) “It is not possible for a prophet to perish outside of Jerusalem” (Luke 13:33). Likewise, Steven castigated his Jewish audience, “Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you have now become the betrayers and murderers” (Acts 7:52).

Paher claims it is “inconclusive” to appeal to all of this testimony about who had historically killed the prophets for the identification of Babylon. (Babylon, 120) In other words, Jesus’ identification of who had been and who would be the persecutor of the prophets means nothing. In his attempts to negate Jesus’ identification of the persecutor of the prophets, Paher attempts to draw a sharp line of distinction between the Old Testament prophets and the New. This will not do.

In Luke 11:49-51, (par. Matthew 23:29f), Jesus’ words establish Israel’s continuous history of persecution, and the resultant judgment:

“Woe to you. For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers, for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. Therefore, the wisdom of God also said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute, that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation” (Luke 11:47-51, NKJ).

Jesus laid the blame for the slaying of the prophets squarely on Israel. Thus, in regard to the identity of the persecutor of the prophets, Jesus drew no distinction between the persecution of His prophets and the prophets of old. Notice again Matthew 23:29f. He spoke of Israel’s past persecution of the prophets and said, “Behold,

I send to you, prophets” (v. 34). The prophets were sent by Jesus in the proclamation of the New Covenant. This organic continuity between the Old Testament prophets, and the prophets of Jesus, with the singular persecuting power of Israel is devastating to those who would identify Babylon as anyone other than Jerusalem.

In Revelation 18:24, John alludes directly to Jesus’ words. Jesus said Jerusalem had shed all the blood on the earth. John said Babylon was guilty of shedding all the blood of the earth. Jesus said Jerusalem had killed the prophets. John said Babylon had slain the prophets.

If Jerusalem had been destroyed almost thirty years before the writing of Revelation, as late date advocates suggest, the language of Revelation 18 concerning the scope of those slain by Babylon is not appropriately applied to Rome. She simply did not compare to Jerusalem when it came to the magnitude of persecution

Are we to believe that the blood of all the prophets, all the way back to creation, was vindicated in the fall of Jerusalem as foretold by Jesus, but after one four year persecution of the church by Rome, all that blood needed to be vindicated again—against a different city—one that had never killed a prophet?

Rome’s brief, although savage, persecution of the faithful simply does not compare in scale, or continuity, with the long and sanguine history of Israel as the persecutor of the prophets of God. Only a presuppositional approach about the dating and application of the book will ignore such an powerful connection.

Babylon was the city that had rejected and killed the prophets. Were the prophets all the way back to creation sent to Rome? Clearly, this cannot be literally true of Jerusalem either, but the point is that the prophets had been sent to God’s people. It was highly exceptional for a prophet of Jehovah to go to a Gentile city, cf. Jonah as an exception. The prophets were sent to Israel, and it was Israel that killed them. To inject Rome into the mix as the city to whom the prophets had been sent is to go outside the pattern of Biblical history.

How is it possible to approach Revelation, with its obvious theme of the vindication of the prophets, and ignore Jesus’ teaching? Are we

supposed to deny what Jesus said about the continuity of persecution manifested by Israel?

What is true of “the prophets” is also true of “the apostles.” Babylon was the persecutor of the apostles (Revelation 18:20).

Paul and Peter died in Rome, yet it should never be forgotten that they died at the instigation of the Jews. However, the Roman Catholic church, the World Council of Churches and all other entities that came into existence later than the first century, are disqualified as candidates for Babylon. There can be no apostles today (see Acts 1:21f). Therefore, whoever or whatever Babylon was, she had to exist in the days of the apostles. This positively excludes the suggestion of Ice, that Babylon in Revelation is the ancient city restored (Prophecy, 7). Ancient Babylon never killed an apostle of Jesus and there will be no apostles of Jesus, as defined in Acts 1 for instance, in the future.

Babylon of Revelation killed the prophets and apostles. The prophets included the Old Testament prophets, and the Biblical testimony is united in identifying Old Covenant Israel as the one guilty of that blood. The apostles were the apostles of Jesus. Ancient Rome never killed Old Testament prophets, a proposed restored Rome could not kill them. Rome, ancient or restored, therefore, cannot be Babylon of Revelation. Babylon killed the apostles of Jesus. Ancient Babylon did not, and restored Babylon could not, kill the apostles of Jesus who have been dead for two millennia.

Whoever Babylon was she killed Old Testament prophets and the apostles of Jesus. This excludes every city except one, first century Jerusalem.

## **HE WILL AVENGE THEM SPEEDILY.**

### **LUKE 17-18**

It is apropos to briefly examine Luke 17-18, because of its correlation to the vindication of the martyrs at the coming of the Lord.

In Luke 17:22, Jesus warned His disciples that the time was coming when they would desire to see, “one of the days of the Son of Man,”

i.e., one of the days of peace and popularity associated with the early days of Jesus' ministry, but He tells them they would not see that peaceful time. This was a terrible foreshadowing of the persecution to follow. He then told them of the time when the Son of Man would come.

In chapter 18, Jesus taught them to pray amidst the coming persecution. The parabolic widow, "Is a metaphor for the eschatological community, which according to God's plan will pass through a time of tribulation before the end but will become the bride of the Son of Man when He comes in the near future for the eschatological marriage."

In the parable, Jesus posed the question, "Will not God avenge His elect who cry day and night to him?" As Mattill notes, "Luke 18:1-8 unavoidably reminds us of Revelation 6:9-11" (Luke, 94). The connection cannot be doubted. The question is, when would the Lord avenge His elect?

In Luke 18:8, Jesus answered His own rhetorical question, "I tell you He will avenge them speedily." The Greek term *en taxei* is translated as speedily. Linguistically, "There is no real justification for translating *en taxei* as 'suddenly'" instead of soon" (Mattill, Luke, 93). Marshall admits, "The context and normal use of the phrase suggests that 'soon' is the meaning. For the parable is concerned with two points: 1.) Will God vindicate his people? Answer: Yes, even more certainly than the unjust judge who eventually acted contrary to his character. 2.) Will they have to wait a long time? Answer: God is not like the judge who had to be pestered before he gave into the widow. He will answer soon." A comparison of several translations fails to find the translation "suddenly." Thus, Jesus promised to return soon in vindication of His suffering servants and martyrs. Can "soon" be stretched into 2000 years? There is evidence from the context to indicate when that vindication would occur.

In Luke 17:30-37, the Lord said the Son of Man would come when two would be in the field, on the housetops, etc.. He warned, "In that day, he who is on the housetop and his goods are in the house, let

him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife." Jesus said in the day of His coming to vindicate the saints there would be opportunity to escape. As Robinson stated, "Injunctions to hasty evacuation, however, swift, are obviously futile in connection with a Parousia which is to come over the entire world like a flash of lightning." In other words, why tell His disciples to flee if the world was going to end "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"? The answer lies close, the Lord was not predicting such an event. He was anticipating His coming in the fall of Jerusalem.

In Matthew 24:17f, Jesus foretold the events associated with the fall of Jerusalem. He spoke of the Abomination of Desolation, and the subsequent Great Tribulation. All of this is to be associated with a time of intense persecution against the Lord's elect (24:9-13).

In verse 17f, Jesus told His disciples, "Let him who is on the housetops not come down." These events are undeniably associated the fall of Jerusalem. Verses 29-31 describe His coming—in that generation (v. 34). Thus, in Luke 17 and Matthew 24, we find persecution, and the coming of the Lord in vindication, at the fall of Jerusalem. Matthew 24:17f is parallel to Luke 17-18. Luke 18 is parallel to Revelation 6. Luke 18 speaks of the coming of the Lord in the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Therefore, Revelation must be speaking of the same thing. Revelation is a prediction of the judgment of Jerusalem, i.e., Babylon, the persecutor of the saints.

To put it another way, the Lord would avenge His martyrs at the judgment of Babylon (Revelation 16:4-7, 17-21). The Lord would avenge His martyrs at a time when those on the rooftops could escape (Luke 17-18). The time when those on the rooftops could escape was the time of the war ending in the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Matthew 24:17f). Therefore, the Lord would avenge His martyrs at the time of the war ending in the judgment of Jerusalem.

Consider also the correlation between Revelation 6 and Revelation 16 as it relates to the vindication of the martyrs. Remember that in chapter 6:9-11, the martyrs cried out for vindication. They were

given robes and told to rest for only a little while. Vindication was coming soon. What is too often missed is that Revelation 16 is about the fulfillment of that prayer.

Notice that in Revelation 16:7 the angel “from the altar” cried out in praise at the actions of God against those who “have shed the blood of the saints and prophets.” In chapter 16 we find the vengeance of God fully poured out in the judgment of Babylon (16:17). In other words, the angel from the altar is praising God for answering the martyr’s prayer. The martyrs were praying for vindication and judgment against their persecutors. That promised vindication was coming soon. There is no dichotomy between the scene of Revelation 6 and 16. It is the same scene repeated, in fuller form in the later chapter. This means that there are not two different cities to be judged at two different times.

We have already seen that it is common practice among commentators to admit that Revelation 6-11 is referent to Jerusalem. Dispensationalists tend to believe that Revelation 11 refers to Jerusalem that will suffer during the Tribulation period, and Revelation 16f refers to literal Babylon in Iraq. Others are willing to admit that Revelation 6-11 refers to first century Jerusalem. However, if what occurs in Revelation 16 is the answer to the prayer of the saints in Revelation 6, it is hardly tenable to suggest that Revelation 16 is a different city from that in Revelation 6-11. Here is why.

In Revelation, the destruction and judgment of the persecuting power occurs at the same time. In other words, there is one judgment, described in various ways. There is no huge gap between the judgment of “the great city” of Revelation 11 and the “great city” of Revelation 16, not if chapter 16 is the answer to the prayer of Revelation 6. So, if the referent to the angel of the altar in chapter 16 ties the judgment there to the altar and prayer of the martyrs in chapter 6, there can be no distinction between the identity of the persecuting power, nor can there be no distinction between the times of judgment.

Since we have shown that the martyr’s prayer would be fulfilled when Isaiah 2-4 would be fulfilled, in AD 70 in the judgment of



Jerusalem, if then, Revelation 16 is the fuller description of that judgment, this means that the judgment of Babylon in Revelation 16 is the judgment of Jerusalem in AD 70.

We have already examined Matthew 23, but its correlation to this concept is direct. The martyrs of God would be vindicated and judged at Jesus' coming in judgment against Jerusalem in Jesus' generation (Matthew 23:29-39). The martyrs of God would be vindicated and judged at Jesus' coming in judgment against Babylon, "shortly" (Revelation 6:9-17; 16:4-6, 17-21; 22:6, 10, 12, 20). Jerusalem was Babylon.

### **34 THE COMING WAR**

#### **ARMAGEDDON, "THE WAR" OF THE GREAT DAY OF GOD**

##### **REVELATION 16:14**

Revelation 16 anticipated the arrival of "the war" (ton polemon) of the Great Day God. What is often overlooked by commentators is the prophetic significance of the angel's reference to "the war." This is not just any war, it is "the war." It is the "mother of all wars." The war was foretold in the OT scriptures as the chart shows and it can be definitely located in time and framework. That identity leads us inexorably to Jerusalem and AD 70.

ISAIAH 2-4 REVELATION The Last Days The Last Days Establishment of the kingdom (2:2f) Establishment of the kingdom (11:15f) Day of the Lord (2:9f, 19f) Day of the Lord (6:12f; 16:14f) Men run to the hills (2:20f) Men run to the hills (6:12f) Men fall in "the war" (3:25) Men fall in "the war" (16:14) Israel like Sodom (3:9f) The city "where the Lord was slain" spiritually called Sodom (11:8) The Lord shall stand to judge His people (3:13f) Israel Judgment of the city "where the Lord was slain" (11:8). Time of the glorification of "the Branch of the Lord" (4:1f) The glorification of Christ (19) Salvation of the remnant, those found in the Book of Life (4:3f) Salvation of the remnant, those in the Book (7, 14; 20:10f)

When Israel's blood guilt judged and purged through judgment (4:4f) When the bloodguilt of Israel purged through judgment (2:9; 3:9f;; 11:8; 18-19) We will examine Isaiah 2-4 in even more detail below, but as you can see, this prophecy contains virtually every motif found in the Apocalypse. Take a look at some of the pertinent points.

First, both prophecies are about the last days. This is universally admitted.

Second, the New Testament writers are clear that they were living in the last days foretold by the Old Testament prophets (Acts 2:15f; 3:24f; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 1:1, etc.). This means that it is *prima facie* untenable to extrapolate millennia into the future from the first century. The Old Testament prophets were often writing as much as 1400 years before the 1st century, and stated that the last days were not near to them. (Numbers 24:17f). They knew they were not in the last days.

The New Testament writers said they were in the last days foretold by the prophets. Since the New Testament writers tell us they were in the last days foretold by the Old Testament prophecies, and since the Day of the Lord was to be near when the last days finally arrived (Joel 3:14), this means that the consummation of the prophecy of Revelation, being an anticipation of the fulfillment of the last days prophecies of the Old Testament, was near.

Third, in Luke 23:28-31, Jesus cited Isaiah's prediction of the time when men would run to the hills from the presence of the Lord. It is widely admitted that he was applying Isaiah to the impending fall of Jerusalem. Thus, if Jesus applied Isaiah 2-4 to the events of AD 70, then we have no authority to apply Isaiah, when used by John, to any other event, because John cites from the identical verses cited by Jesus.

In Revelation 6:12f, John quotes Isaiah 2:9f; 19f about the Day of the Lord. These are the identical verses cited by Jesus in Luke 23. So, to reiterate, Jesus applied Isaiah's prophecy of the Day of the Lord to the impending judgment of Israel. John quoted the very verses from

Isaiah that Jesus applied to AD 70 (Revelation 6:12f). Therefore, Revelation 6:12f refers to the events of AD 70.

Fourth, Isaiah foretold the establishment of the kingdom at the Day of the Lord, and this would be the time when the blood guilt of Israel was purged in judgment. Likewise, John foretold the establishment of the Kingdom at the time of the judgment of the city “where the Lord was slain” (Revelation 11:15f).

Fifth, Isaiah spiritually calls Israel and Jerusalem “Sodom” in the last days that he is foretelling (Isaiah 3:9). In other words, in the last days, Israel would spiritually be called “Sodom.” John was living in the last days, and says the city that killed the Lord was spiritually called Sodom.

Sixth, the time of this judgment would be “the war” in both Isaiah and Revelation. Significantly, when predicting the time of the judgment of Israel, Jesus said “And they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations” (Luke 21:24). So, Jesus, who cited Isaiah 2 in his prediction of the Day of the Lord against Israel (Luke 23), is now all but quoting Isaiah 3:25 to predict that event once more. And, John, who also cites Isaiah 2-4 is anticipating “the war.” The correlation between Isaiah, Jesus and John points directly to the events surrounding the judgment of Israel in AD 70.

Seventh, Isaiah foretold the time when the blood shed by Israel would be judged and purged through judgment at the Day of the Lord in the last days. Jesus unequivocally posited the time for the avenging of the blood shed by Israel, at his coming against Israel (Matthew 23:29f). Likewise, John foretells the judgment of the city guilty of killing the Old Covenant prophets, Jesus and Jesus’ apostles and prophets.

Interestingly, Kistemaker actually offers John’s reference to “the war” as evidence for the late date, and futurist application. He says “the expression ‘the war’ occurs (in the Greek, but not necessarily in the translations), it refers to the final battle (16:14; 19:19; 20:8)” (When, 244+). His argument is presuppositional: Revelation speaks of “the war.” “The war” is at the “final coming” of Christ. The “final coming”

of Christ has not yet occurred. Therefore, references to “the war” must refer to a yet future event.

Kistemaker is right about only one thing. “The war” is referent to the “final battle.” Unfortunately he believes this means the end of time. However, as can be seen above, “the war” was a clear reference to “the war” to be waged by Jehovah’s Messiah against Israel.

## **ARMAGEDDON: THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD**

The “Battle of Armageddon” is described by John as “the battle of the Great Day of God Almighty” (16:14). Now, technically, Armageddon is not a battle at all. It is the gathering for the battle of the Great Day of the Lord. However, we use the term as it is commonly used. Of course, this is not the first time we have read of the Great Day of the Lord in the Apocalypse. We noted above that the Great Day of the Lord was to be heaven’s response to the martyrs’ prayer for vindication (Revelation 6:12f). For brevity, we offer the following argument.

The Great Day of the Lord is the “Battle of Armageddon.”

But, the Great Day of the Lord is the time when the martyrs of God would be vindicated.

Therefore, the “Battle of Armageddon” would be the time when the martyrs of God would be vindicated.

To follow up on this we would argue:

The “Battle of Armageddon” would be the time when the martyrs of God would be vindicated.

But the time when the martyrs of God would be vindicated would be in the judgment of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Matthew 23:34-36).

Therefore, the “Battle of Armageddon” would be in the judgment of Jerusalem in AD 70.

There is no evidence to suggest that John predicted a different time, a different occasion, and different martyrs from that foretold by Jesus in Matthew 23. John is reiterating Jesus, and Jesus posited fulfillment of his prophecy at the judgment of Israel in AD 70. This is therefore, *prima facie* proof that Babylon of Revelation was Old Covenant Jerusalem, and that Armageddon was God's judgment on her for killing His saints.

### **35 BABYLON AND THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE REVELATION 16:18**

Revelation 16:18-21 describes an earthquake at the time of the judgment on Babylon, an earthquake so great that every island fled away (v. 20) and the mountains of creation were destroyed. Earthquakes are symbolic of incredible political and social upheaval.

The shaking of Babylon would result in the coming of the new Jerusalem. In other New Testament prophecies, an earthquake denoted the removal of Old Covenant Israel so that the new creation of God might remain.

In Hebrews 12:18-28, the writer contrasts the two covenant systems, the one from Sinai, and the one then being delivered from "Zion." He says when Moses delivered the Law at Sinai the Lord shook the earth. The Hebrew writer says he was then saying, "Yet once more and I shake not only the earth but the heaven also." This shaking signified removal. The purpose of the removal, (then taking place, v. 27), would be so that the "unshakable" might remain. They were currently receiving the immovable (v. 28). Therefore, "heaven and earth" were being removed at that time.

The contrast is between systems. Literal "heaven and earth" is not in view. Clark says the writer was, "Probably referring to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and the total abolition of the political and ecclesiastical constitution of the Jews. The one being signified by the earth, the other by heaven; for the Jewish state and worship are frequently thus termed in the prophetic writings." The

great earthquake in view was the removal of the Old Covenant system that had stood for 1500 years, but was giving way to the new. So it is in Revelation with the earthquake associated with the judgment on Babylon. The shaking of Babylon would result in the full deliverance of the new Jerusalem and the new heavens and earth (Revelation 21:1f) the unshakable kingdom of God.

The Sibylline Oracles (see above) says, “all creation was shaken” when Jerusalem fell. This was not a reference to a literal earthquake—although Josephus does record an earthquake during the siege. In fact, he says, “The earth quaked with extraordinary rumbles. Such a collapse of the very framework of things plainly foreshadowed disaster to mankind, and it seemed likely that the omens portended a great calamity” (Josephus, Wars, Bk. IV, 4, 5).

Revelation 6 also speaks of the great earthquake. What is significant is that Revelation 6:12-17 is taken from Isaiah 2.

Isaiah 2-4 describes the Day of the Lord at the consummation of the Last Days (2:2f), when the wicked would run to the hills to flee from God’s wrath. Chapter 3:18f clearly defines that time as the occasion when God would arise to judge Israel. Significantly, in Luke 23:28-31, Jesus quotes from Isaiah 2:10, 19f, and applies it to the fall of Jerusalem.

Thus, Revelation 6 and 16 describe the fall of Babylon as an earthquake. Revelation 6 is a citation of Isaiah 2. Jesus applies Isaiah 2 to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Therefore, Revelation 6 and 16 applies to the fall of Jerusalem (Babylon) in AD 70. Babylon is Jerusalem.

## **36 BABYLON DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS REVELATION 16:19**

“Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell.”

When the seventh angel sounded the final trumpet (16:18), John  
118

saw, “The great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell.” This may be a predictive reference to the fact that Jerusalem truly was divided into three parts during the siege. Josephus records how infighting among the Jews resulted in three competing factions within the city, and if the Jews had not been so divided he questions whether Rome could have even taken the city. (Wars, Bk. 5, 1). As Carrington says, “While Titus was besieging it from without, the three leaders of rival factions were fighting fiercely within: but for this the city might have staved off defeat for a long time, even perhaps indefinitely, for no great army could support itself for long in those days in the neighborhood of Jerusalem.; there was no water and no supplies. This fighting within the city delivered it quickly into the hands of Titus; ‘the days were shortened.’” (Meaning, 266).

Of more significance, perhaps, is the prophetic background. In Ezekiel 5:1-17, Ezekiel was told to cut his hair into three parts as a sign of what was about to happen to Jerusalem in 586 B.C.. One third would die by pestilence (compare Rev. 6:5-8), one third would die by the sword (compare Rev. 6:4-8; 19:2), the other third would be scattered to the nations. Furthermore, Ezekiel contrasts Jerusalem with the “nations,” that is, the Gentile nations, and here in Revelation 16:19, John does the same. Thus, when John describes the great city being divided into three parts, he almost certainly has Jerusalem’s history in mind. The parallels between Ezekiel 5 and Revelation’s great city are remarkable.

Whether the historical incident of the actual dividing of Jerusalem by the feuding factions is in view, or Ezekiel’s prophecy of the tripartite description of the city’s fate, one fact remains, the city of Jerusalem lies behind the imagery.

### **37 BABYLON “REMEMBERED BEFORE GOD” REVELATION 16:19**

Revelation 16:19 says the great city Babylon was “remembered before God.” Unfortunately, this statement is commonly ignored as

being of any consequence, yet historically it is very meaningful.

The word “remembered” is associated with God’s covenant dealings with Israel. That “remembering” may involve blessings for obedience, or the curses of the covenant upon disobedience.

While the word “remember” sometimes refers to the simple mental recall of past events, in the Old Testament, “remember,” has a distinctively Covenantal context. See Genesis 9:15-16; Exodus 6:6; Leviticus 26:42; Deuteronomy 7-8; Psalms 105:8f; Jeremiah 3:14f, 14:19-21, etc..

After a concordance study, I have been unable to find a clear cut example in which God “remembered” the sins of any nation except Israel. There are many examples of God remembering His covenant with them, of them forgetting their covenant with Him, of Him remembering their sin, but there is no example of God “remembering” the sin of any nation except Israel—this is a distinctively covenantal concept.

The word “remembered” (Strong’s #2142), is used some 49 times in the OT. Of those occurrences, it is used to say that Jehovah remembered His covenant with Abraham, Israel, or even different individuals. In the other occurrences we find individuals remembering historical events (Genesis 42:9), or people (Esther 2:1), or other “mundane” examples of simple memory recall. However, when used of Jehovah’s “remembering,” the word is used in the preponderant number of cases to refer to a recalling of covenant promises.

This fact is significant when we consider that the author of the Apocalypse is writing in the context of the fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel, as we have seen. The language of Revelation is drawn from the Old Covenant, based on the Old Covenant, and concerned with the fulfillment of the Old Covenant. For Jehovah to remember Babylon is highly suggestive that there was a covenant relationship between Babylon and Jehovah that served as the basis for His judicial actions against her.

The question then is, what precisely is it that Jehovah was going to remember about Babylon? Revelation 18:5f gives us the definitive



answer, as if chapter 16 didn't. In chapter 18 we have the description of the fall of Babylon and the reason for it, "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities" (V. 5). So, God was destroying Babylon because she had reached the pinnacle of rebellion, her cup was "full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication," and she was, "drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (17:4-6). The Bible does not leave us to wonder about who fits that description. We are not left to wonder who it was that God was going to "remember" for her immorality and blood guilt.

As we have seen, Jesus identified Jerusalem as the city guilty of "adultery" (Matthew 16), and, "in her was found all the righteous blood of all the righteous, from Abel unto Zecharias" (Matthew 23:34f). It was Jerusalem that had not only killed the prophets of Old, but they were going to kill Jesus' apostles and prophets, just as Babylon in Revelation had now done (Matthew 23:34f/ Revelation 18:20, 24). Her bloody ways were now coming to a climax, however. Israel would fill the measure of her sin, and be judged in Jesus' generation. God would "remember" her, and bring Covenantal Wrath on her head.

It is difficult to see where John has shifted his focus from that of his Master, to some other entity, some other city. John had stood with Jesus in the temple and heard his condemnation of Israel and Jerusalem for the very things that John is now describing about Babylon. He heard Jesus emphasize that the judgment was to be the fulfillment of all that the prophets had spoken (Luke 21:22), and now he said that the fulfillment of Revelation would be the fulfillment of all that the prophets had foretold (10:7f). He knew that the judgment of Israel foretold by Jesus was coming because of her violation of the Covenant, and now he is using the language of Covenant to explain the impending judgment on Babylon. He had heard Jesus warn that the judgment was coming in that generation, and now John is reiterating the warning of imminent judgment.

Late date advocates are hard pressed to explain this covenantal

language. Kistemaker, seeking to discount the early date of Revelation and preterism, completely ignores the fact that Revelation uses covenantal language over and over. However, it is an injustice to ignore such a prominent aspect of the Apocalypse. How can we seriously think, or claim, that we have done justice to interpreting Revelation if we ignore the nature and source of the language used in the book?

Vanderwaal ponders:

“Could it be that the generally accepted exegesis is supported by a certain perspective on Scripture, a perspective that implicitly dismisses the Old Testament as ‘Jewish,’ as one possible realization of a universal religious idea? Isn’t this in fact a dominant approach to Scripture nowadays? If we accept this approach, it is natural to conclude that the book of Revelation, whose language echoes the threats of covenant wrath of Leviticus 26, points not to covenant judgment but to a catastrophe that will strike a world-city one day” (Lindsey, 113).

Vanderwaal’s call to honor the covenantal nature of the language, and the OT source of that language is indeed virtually ignored by most commentators. What he is saying is that to divorce the Apocalypse from its covenantal roots dooms the interpreter to a misguided application of the judgment language. Rome, a literal Babylon in Iraq, or some other entity, is seen as the focus of judgment. Yet, neither Babylon or Rome was ever in a covenant relationship with Jehovah. Never. Would it not be strange, therefore, for John, writing in a book so rich in covenant language, to apply that distinctive language to these cities that were foreign to the covenant? Why would John transfer that covenant language to a non-covenant city?

The “remembering” of Babylon’s sins, and especially the sin of adultery and bloodguilt, is just another example of the consistent usage of Biblical language and concepts. Are we to ignore the hundreds of Old Testament quotes, citations and allusions found in the book, or give them totally new meanings? Are we to believe that John’s readers knew, that even though the Old Testament was the

fountain from which the Apocalypse flowed, the meaning of all the language and symbols was now totally foreign to the Old Testament texts being cited?

The term “remembering” is covenantal. Unless it can be proven that Revelation 16 is an exception to the otherwise consistent application to God’s dealing with Israel/Jerusalem, then Babylon in Revelation 16:19 can be no other city than Jerusalem.

### **38 BABYLON AND THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT REVELATION 16:21**

Many scholars have noted that the book of Revelation draws heavily upon Israel’s deliverance from Egypt and that the plagues of Egypt are being brought against Babylon. The first plague of the bowls in Revelation 16 recalls the 6th plague of Egypt (Exodus 9:9-11). The second and third plagues recall the first plague (Exodus 7:17-21). The fifth bowl recalls the ninth (Exodus 10:21-23). The sixth bowl reflects to some degree the frog plague of Exodus 8.

What is the meaning of the replaying of the Egyptian plagues in the book of Revelation? In Deuteronomy 28:60, God threatened Israel that if they forgot their covenant with Him He would, “bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you.” God specifically threatened Israel with the plagues of Egypt if they forgot their covenant and rebelled against him. Revelation portrays the fulfillment of God’s threat.

For objectivity sake, we must note that in Deuteronomy 7:15 Jehovah promised that if Israel was faithful to Him that none of these plagues would come on them, but would come on their enemies. On the surface, it would seem that the presence of the plagues in Revelation might not apply exclusively to Israel. Are we to believe that Revelation depicts the coming of the plagues of Egypt on Rome for destroying Israel—when Rome was God’s instrument in that destruction? Are we to understand that God’s promise to bring the plagues of Egypt on Israel’s enemies was still applicable over 400

years after Jehovah removed that Old Covenant Law and Promise?

If the fall of Rome is the focus of Revelation, it must be explained how the fall of Rome in 476 falls under the heading of the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 28. If the Old Covenant and its Blessings and Cursings was not in effect in AD 476, how could Revelation depict the plagues as fulfillment of Israel's promises?

Significantly, the judgments on Babylon follow the pattern established by God in Leviticus 26. (Ford, Revelation, 266-267, 282). The judgments there are seven-fold, those in Revelation are seven-fold. Why would God use this language, so covenantal in nature, so exclusively belonging to Israel, to threaten Rome, apostate Christianity, the Roman Catholic church, the Eastern European Common Market, or any one but Israel?

Revelation recreates the exodus. This time, however, the plagues come on another "Egypt," the city where the Lord was slain. The fact that Revelation draws so heavily on the Law of Blessings and Cursings (Deuteronomy 28-30), and Leviticus 26, to pronounce judgment on Babylon strongly indicates that Babylon was Jerusalem.

### **39 BABYLON, AND EZEKIEL 16 REVELATION 17**

Ezekiel 16 serves as the source for Revelation 17. And the parallels are impressive.

In Ezekiel 16:12, the Lord adorned Jerusalem with precious stones and costly raiment, He placed a crown on her head, and "she succeeded to royalty." (cf. Isaiah 3; Jeremiah 4:30). In Revelation 17:4, Babylon wears precious stones and the colors of royalty.

In Ezekiel 16:14, Jerusalem's influence, "went out among the nations"; in Revelation 18:18, Babylon reigns over "the kings of the earth."

In Ezekiel 16:15, Jerusalem played the harlot with the nations. In Revelation 17:2, 5 Babylon is the harlot committing fornication with the "kings of the earth."

In Ezekiel 16:35-43, those with whom Jerusalem committed immorality turned on her and killed her. In Revelation 17:16, the beast that bore Babylon on his back turns on her, and burns her with fire. Incidentally, as Chilton and others have noted, the “burning with fire” was the Old Testament punishment for a priest’s daughter that had become a harlot (Leviticus 21:9). (Vengeance, 439)

In Ezekiel 16, Jerusalem’s former lovers strip her, and leave her naked. In Revelation, Babylon is stripped naked, and deserted by her lovers (17:16).

Since there is such a direct parallel between Ezekiel 16 and Revelation, why is it so common to identify Rome as the harlot in Revelation? Does this not ignore the Old Testament fountain from which Revelation flows? Upon what basis does one totally discount the consistent covenantal context of this language, and apply it to a city with whom God was never in covenantal relationship?

Finally, remember how commonly Jesus referred to the generation of the Jews living at that time as an “adulterous generation” (Matthew 12:39; 16:4; Mark. 8:38; Luke 11:29, etc). Thus, Jesus himself labeled His generation of the Jews as adulterous, and this fits Revelation very well.

## **40 BABYLON THE HARLOT REVELATION 17:1**

The fact that Babylon is designated a harlot is important for identifying the city as Jerusalem. No other city in the Bible is so clearly identified as a harlot as Jerusalem.

As Ford notes, “There are five principal (Old Testament, DKP) texts which refer to Jerusalem or Israel as a harlot and only two which refer to non-Israelite cities with the same image (Hosea 2:5; 3:3; 4:15; Isaiah 1:21; Jeremiah 2:20; 5:7; Micah 1:7; Ezekiel 16; 23)” (Revelation, 283).

Two cities, other than Jerusalem, are called harlot. Tyre (Isaiah 23) was the city that contributed Hiram to the building of the temple

at Jerusalem for Solomon. Tyre stood in a distinctive relationship with Israel (Amos 1:9). Nineveh, (cf. Nahum and Jonah), was the only Gentile city to whom a Jewish prophet was sent to call them to repentance. Even granting that these two non-Jewish cities were called harlot, these are exceptional circumstances.

Exceptions to the norm do not establish a new pattern of application. The normal application still stands. We should be cautious in Revelation, a book thoroughly saturated with Old Testament thought, before changing that application, because the consistent Old Testament application of harlot is to Jerusalem in apostasy.

Paher attempts to negate the identification of Jerusalem as the harlot by claiming that in the Old Testament “many” cities are called harlot. (Babylon, 89) This is simply untrue, and is a transparent attempt to counter the consistent pattern of calling Jerusalem the harlot city.

Had John quoted from one of the Old Testament texts referring to Tyre or Nineveh as a harlot, Paher might have a small point to claim that Rome was the harlot. However, when John appeals to covenant language in his diatribe against Babylon, and cites Ezekiel’s language against Jerusalem, we feel compelled to honor his references.

Aune demonstrates that, “In the OT, the term *zana*, fornicate, to be a prostitute,’ is frequently used in a figurative sense of Israel’s faithless behavior through frequent lapses into idolatry, a judgment based on the larger metaphor of the ‘marriage’ between Yahweh and Israel presupposed in so many OT texts (Lev. 17:7; 20:5-6; Num. 14:33; Deut. 31:16; Judg 2:17; 8:27...). Yet, while he admits that this language is normally, Biblically used of Jerusalem, he then says, “However, since Yahweh and Babylon have no such ‘marriage’ relationship, this language has nothing to do with the author’s condemnation of Babylon-Rome.” The fact however, that John so consistently uses covenantal language in Revelation should make us very hesitant before rejecting the covenantal context of the “harlot” terminology.

The application of the term harlot to Babylon is especially relevant when it is recognized that Ezekiel 16 and 23, more than any other Old Testament chapters, lie behind the language and thought of Revelation 17-18. Unless one can show conclusively that John changed the historically validated identification of Jerusalem as the harlot it seems safe to affirm that Babylon was Jerusalem.

## **41 BABYLON AND THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS REVELATION 17:4**

In chapter 17:4-6, and 18:5-6, 20, 24, Babylon is the city guilty of slaying the “saints and martyrs of Jesus” (17:6), and, “in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”

In Matthew 23:35, Jesus identified Jerusalem as the city guilty of, “all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel.” In Luke 13:31-33, the Lord hastened to go to Jerusalem “for it cannot be that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem.”

Paher strives to negate Jesus’ identification of Jerusalem as the city guilty of killing the saints. He claims, in essence, that Jesus’ identification of Jerusalem as the slayer of the prophets must refer exclusively to Old Covenant prophets. (Babylon, 120+) Babylon cannot be Jerusalem, however, because John depicts Babylon as the slayer of the saints of Jesus. This is the poorest kind of logic.

In Matthew 23:29f, Jesus recounted Israel’s long history of killing the prophets, and said He was going to send other prophets to them. The guilty nation would follow the footsteps of their fathers by killing Jesus’ saints. The chain of persecution would be unbroken. Thus, any attempt to divorce Old Testament persecution from New Testament persecution is futile.

Paher’s desperation is exemplified in his comments that in the New Testament, “The saints in connection with martyrdom and persecution are first century worthies (Acts 13:7; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24)” (Babylon, 122). Well, how could the New Testament record the

contemporary slaying of Old Testament prophets, anyway? Paher's argument is specious.

Three of the four texts that Paher cites to prove that the New Testament speaks of the persecution of N. T. saints do not even discuss persecution. More seriously, to divorce the persecution of Christians from the organic unity with the Old Covenant saints persecuted by Israel denies the words of Jesus.

McGuiggan (Revelation, 256), cites Talmadge saying 160 million people died in Rome's wars, as if this is in any way related to what John was seeing. John was not concerned with the death of just anyone, he was concerned with the city that had historically persecuted God's people. Did Rome have a history of such persecution when John wrote? Students of history know that is not the case. This brings us to a significant issue.

Advocates of the late date of Revelation insist that it speaks of the Domitianic persecution. There are several problems with this.

First, as just seen, in Revelation Babylon is a city with a long history of persecution, a city whose cup was full of the blood of the saints and prophets. If Revelation was written at the beginning of the Domitianic persecution this means that the only Roman persecution of the saints in the past was that of Nero. This means that in one four year persecution, Rome filled the cup of her sin. Yet, "The transgressions of Israel's leaders were allowed to accumulate over the centuries until the generation of Christ" (Paher, *Known*, 58). It took Jerusalem centuries to fill her cup before God brought "final" judgment on her. Yet, we are to believe it took Rome less than 20 years to fill the cup of her sin?

Paher exacerbates the problem in his attempt to deny the early dating of Revelation. He argues that the Neronic persecution was restricted to the city of Rome, limited in duration, and was, "political, not religious," in nature. The problem is, Revelation depicts Babylon with a long history of persecution. The martyrs under the altar had, "been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony that they held" (Revelation 6:9). This means the persecution was religious,



not political.

If one accepts the late date (circa 95 A. D.), identifies Rome as Babylon, and then postulates a brief and localized persecution by Nero, this means that Revelation was essentially condemning Rome for a persecution that had never even gotten off the ground, much less lasted for any substantive time at all.

If Paher divorces the Neronic persecution from Revelation because of its localized extent, limited duration, and political versus religious nature, the identical charges could be laid against the so-called Domitianic persecution. Paher himself admits, “Domitian never led a persecution against Christians solely because of their faith. Surely, there is no evidence that Domitian issued an edict against Christians” (Babylon, 79).

There is solid evidence that Domitian’s persecution, such as it was, was politically motivated. He was more concerned about political rivals than religious fanatics. There is a famous story of how some relatives of Jesus were brought before Domitian because of Jesus’ claim to be a king. However, they informed Domitian that Jesus’ kingdom, “was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but celestial and angelic.” When Domitian heard this he released them immediately, and, “by a decree ordered the persecution to cease.” The indication is obvious that the persecution, such as it was, was political, and not religious, in nature.

Paher argues that the book of Revelation condemns the city of Babylon/Rome because her cup of sin is full. She is the persecutor of the Lord’s people. However, Paher says Nero hardly persecuted the church, and the persecution was not really religious in nature anyway. But using his objections against Nero, the Domitianic persecution of the church is mitigated because the evidence is that Domitian’s persecution of the church, if there was such a persecution, was very localized, limited in duration, and political, not religious in nature. If, therefore, Nero’s persecution doesn’t “count” then surely Domitian’s doesn’t either.

How does one establish Rome as the persecuting power of

Revelation, i.e. Babylon, by reducing the role of the Roman emperor as the persecutor of the elect? It is a strange paradigm that identifies Rome as the persecutor of the saints and then minimizes the role of Rome as persecutor. Our point is not to establish Rome as the persecutor in Revelation. It is to show that the entire dilemma is avoided by recognizing that in Revelation the inveterate persecutor of the Lord's people was Jerusalem, not Rome.

There is, in fact, little historical evidence that Domitian actually persecuted the church at all. Donald Guthrie, late date advocate, says the evidence for a widespread Domitianic persecution is, "Not as conclusive as many suppose." Helmut Koester says Domitian, "Never ordered a worldwide persecution of the Christians." Historian Richard Niswonger says, "It cannot be proven without doubt that Domitian initiated a persecution against Christians. Roman records provide no clear evidence of even a small scale movement, let alone a concerted or large-scale persecution." Bruce noted Domitian's reputation as a persecutor of Christians but said, "Evidence to justify this reputation is scanty."

Hort commented on the historical setting of the Apocalypse, "The book breathes the atmosphere of a time of wild commotion. To Jews and Christians such a time might seem to have in part begun from the breaking out of the Jewish war in the summer of 66. . . . For nearly a century the empire had seemed to bestow on civilized mankind at least a settled peace, whatever else it might take away. The order of the empire was the strongest and stablest thing presented to the minds and imaginations of men. But now at last it had suddenly become broken up, and the earth seemed to reel beneath men's feet. Under Vespasian, however, the old stability seemed to return; it lasted practically for a century more. Nothing at all corresponding to the tumultuous days after Nero is known in Domitian's reign, or the time which followed it." The point is, the context of Revelation does not fit the time of Domitian.

To compound the problem, Paul said, "God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to die" (1 Corinthians 4:9).

He claimed emphatically that he was the pivotal last days martyr in God's eschatological schema (Colossians 1:24f). If Paul was the critical last days martyr as he claimed, it is patently wrong to postpone the filling of the number of the martyrs until the time of Domitian, Trajan, Decius or any other later Roman emperor. The filling up of the measure of suffering cannot be extended beyond Paul and the apostolic age. See our discussion of Paul as the last days martyr below.

Beale makes a powerful admission and yet seeks to mitigate its significance: "Apostate Israel of the first and following centuries also composes Babylon but does not exhaust it by itself. Nevertheless, unbelieving Israel's partial inclusion in Babylon also accounts for some of the allusions to the OT references to Israel as the harlot and its impending judgment. Furthermore, apostate Israel performed her share of persecution together with past and present pagan oppression of the faithful remnant (Matthew 21:33-42; 23:29-35; Acts 7:51-52)" (1999, 885). Here is the problem.

First, Beale seeks to make Old Covenant Israel only partially responsible for the persecution of the prophets and saints, while the Bible, from Deuteronomy to Revelation, identifies Old Covenant Israel and Judah as the one guilty of that shed blood. Throughout the OT, the prophets spoke of how in Israel's last days, God would avenge the blood of His saints (Deuteronomy 32:43; Joel 3:20f, etc.). And those prophecies are invariably posited within the context of Israel's last days, and the judgment of Israel for shedding that blood.

Second, Jesus emphatically posited the consummative "filling the measure of sin" through killing the saints, not only on the shoulders of Judah, but, he confined that consummation to his generation (Matthew 23:29f, cited by Beale). To suggest that Israel, in the generations after AD 70, is to be identified as Babylon is to implicitly demand a yet future judgment of Israel. Beale of course, would reject that, and yet, to identify Israel in the generations after the consummative judgment of AD 70 as Babylon demands that she be judged as Babylon.

Third, as already noted, Paul said that he and the other apostles had been appointed by God as men “last of all” appointed to die, in order to fill up that eschatological suffering. So, again, you cannot extrapolate Revelation beyond that first century generation and the filling up of the measure of sin and suffering so clearly confined to that generation by Jesus and Paul.

So, to suggest that Babylon is concerned primarily with a yet future judgment on a vague unknown persecutorial power is to ignore the Biblical datum. To suggest that the persecutor of the prophets, the Lord, and the apostles and prophets of the Lord was anyone other than OT Israel and Judah is a denial of the Lord’s testimony and that of Paul.

Jesus identified Jerusalem as the city full of the blood of the saints and all the blood shed on the earth. How is it possible to divorce Revelation from this context, and identify Rome as the long standing persecutor of the saints, when Rome, even with the late date postulate, had only persecuted the church for four years? This argument in no way mitigates the severity of the Neronic persecution. We are simply suggesting that the duration of that persecution hardly conforms to the context of Revelation.

## **42 BABYLON’S JUDGMENT WHEN HER CUP WAS FULL REVELATION 17:4**

“The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet...having in her hand a cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.”

In chapter 6:9-11; 14:8-20; 17:4-6; 18:5, Babylon would be judged because she had filled the measure of her sin by persecuting the saints.

In Isaiah 65:6f, the prophet foretold the time when Israel would fill the measure of her sin and be destroyed. That destruction would be followed by the new creation (v. 19f).

When standing in the temple (Matthew 23) Jesus spoke these words to the Jews in light of their past rejection of the prophets and impending rejection of His “prophets, wise men and scribes”, “Fill up then the measure of your fathers guilt” (v. 32). Jesus said Jerusalem had not yet filled up the measure of her sin but would do so in His generation (v. 34-36). Jesus’ prediction is a continuance of Isaiah’s prediction that Israel would fill the measure of her sin and ultimately perish.

The apostle Paul, (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16) said the Jews had killed the prophets, crucified Jesus, and were persecuting him. In doing so, he said “they fill up the measure of their sin always.” This was written about AD 50-51. The process of filling up the measure of sin was not completed some 17 years after the Cross. But that 17 years was full of persecution by the Jews (cf. Acts 8, 17, 18). Think again of our argument about the length of Roman persecution, and contrast it with the longstanding Jewish persecution.

From Isaiah to Jesus, to Paul, and to John, there is an unbroken thread about the filling up of the measure of sin, and the thread is all of one color. It deals with Israel, not Rome, not the Catholic church, not any other entity. There is not one New Testament reference to Rome filling the measure of her sin—unless Revelation is the exception. The unbroken testimony of the Lord and the epistles is that it was the Jews that were filling the measure of their sin.

Filling the cup of sin is synchronous with filling the cup of suffering (Revelation 6:9-11). The martyrs were told to rest for “a little while” during which the ordained number of brethren had to suffer. See the special study about Paul as the critical end time martyr.

In 1 Peter 1, the apostle told the brethren in Asia that they had to suffer a “little while” before judgment came (1 Peter 1:5f). Peter wrote from “Babylon” (1 Peter 5:13). Many commentators believe Peter was in Rome when he wrote this, therefore we are supposed to interpret Revelation in light of Peter’s reference. However, Chilton states, “Based on data from the New Testament itself, our natural assumption should be that Babylon was Jerusalem, since that was

where he lived and exercised his ministry (Acts 8:1; 12:3; Galatians 1:18; 2:1-9; cf. 1 Peter 4:17). Moreover, St. Peter's first epistle also sends greetings from Mark and Silas (1 Peter 5:12-13), both of whom lived in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12:15:22-40)." (Vengeance, 362f). See Russell's extended discussion of this issue also (Parousia, 346f).

Peter wrote to the Asian churches from Babylon predicting more martyrdom. In Revelation, John writes about Babylon to the Seven Churches of Asia, predicting more martyrdom. He predicted her imminent demise after she had filled the cup of her sin by persecuting the saints. Both books speak of present and imminent suffering. Both speak of filling the measure of suffering/sin. Both speak of Babylon. Both speak of the imminent coming of the Lord for salvation. Can such parallelism be accidental? Should we seek to find two Babylons, guilty of persecuting the saints, and doomed to imminent judgment?

Peter wrote in approximately AD 64. Why date Revelation thirty years later, when the two apostles are obviously writing about the identical issues, and the sense of urgency and imminence of fulfillment permeates both books. The only catastrophic Day of the Lord that in any way harmonizes with the themes set forth in both books, and that falls within the temporal limitations is the fall of Jerusalem as Babylon.

## **43 THE HARLOT AND HER CLOTHES**

### **REVELATION 17:4**

Gentry and others, have noted that the description of the Harlot's apparel in Revelation 17 seems to be taken directly from the priestly world of the temple at Jerusalem:

"The harlot is arrayed in Jewish priestly colors of scarlet, purple and gold (Ex. 28). She has a blasphemous tiara on her forehead, which reads: 'Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and the Abominations of the Earth.' (Rev. 17:5) This gives a negative portrayal of the holy tiara that the Jewish High Priest wore, which

said 'Holy to the Lord' (Ex. 28:36-38). Also, the Harlot has a gold cup in her hand, as did the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, according to the 'Talmud' (Dominion, 381).

Jones attempts to interpret the description of the harlot's clothes as simply descriptive of, "the very finest of material things," this being descriptive of Rome's opulence. The fact that Revelation is so "Jewish" in its content makes this highly suspect, and powerfully suggests the Temple/priesthood imagery.

Josephus describes the veil of the temple in the following manner, "In front of these, hung a veil of equal length of Babylonian tapestry embroidered with blue, scarlet, and purple and fine linen" (Wars, Bk. V., 5, 4).

Images and word pictures are created in and by a social environment. It is not a question of what a modern reader thinks or sees when he/she reads these words in Revelation, it is a question of what the first century readers would have thought. The modern interpreter of Revelation has no right to impose twentieth century social, political, military, or religious figures and symbols on Revelation. These images, the very colors of the harlot's clothes, the cup in her hand, etc., are taken directly from the cultic world of the temple at Jerusalem. Thus, the harlot's clothes are highly suggestive of Jerusalem and not Rome.

The description of the city Babylon as presented in Revelation 18:16 is highly suggestive that Jerusalem is in view:

"That great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls."

When reading this, one can hardly keep from thinking of Josephus' description of the temple and its splendor,

"It was covered all over the (sic) plates of gold of great weight, and, at first rising of the sun, reflected back a fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But this Temple appeared to strangers, when they were at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow; for as, to those parts of it that were not gilt, they

were exceedingly white” (Wars, Bk. V, 5, 6).

It was this magnificence that caused the Jewish Rabbis to say, “Whoever has not seen Jerusalem in her splendor has never seen a lovely city. He who has not seen the Temple in its full construction has never seen a glorious building in his life.” Does the description of Babylon in Revelation demand that we look beyond Jerusalem? Hardly.

We repeat what we have already stated, given the distinctive and overwhelmingly Jewish nature of the book of Revelation, and especially the covenantal nature of the language used, the descriptions of the city (Harlot) would have immediately suggested only one city to the readers, Jerusalem.

The harlot’s clothes stand in direct contrast to the clothes of the Bride of the Lamb. In 19:8, the fine linen of the Bride, “is the righteousness of the saints.” In contrast, everything about the Harlot suggests unrighteousness. As with so many other topics in Revelation, this idea is consistent with other New Testament books. In those other writings, the contrast between righteousness and unrighteousness is a contrast between the Old Covenant world of Israel and the New Covenant world of Jesus.

The Old Law demanded righteousness (Romans 8:4), but could not make one righteous (Hebrews 10:1-4). The demand for perfection was “un-do-able” (Galatians 2:10; 3:10f). Paul said, “If there had been a law given that could have given life, then truly righteousness would have been by the Law” (Galatians 3:21). This resulted in, “Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness,” they had, “a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (Romans 9:30-10:3). Israel under the Law was unrighteous.

This is nowhere clearer than in 2 Corinthians 3, where the Old Law is characterized as a Ministration of Death (v. 7, 9), and the New Covenant is, “the ministry of righteousness.” One must study Paul’s



discussion of his desire for, “the righteousness which is from God by faith” in Christ, and not by the Law in Philippians 3 to further grasp this important concept in the New Testament.

It is evident then, that the New Testament presents a consistent contrast between the unrighteousness of the Old Covenant system, and the righteousness of the New Covenant system. Further, that Old Covenant system of unrighteousness was very busily engaged in persecuting the saints of Christ, just as in Revelation the unrighteous Harlot held a cup full of the blood of the saints.

A careful reading of the Holy Writ reveals that the Jews were the instigators of and actual persecutors of the saints. While the Romans were sometimes involved, the Jews unquestionably led the charge. As Barclay says, “Again and again it was the Jews who informed against the Christians. The Jews stuck at nothing in their attempts to obliterate the Christian church.” Beagley concurs, “The implication is that the church’s enemies are not the Romans but the Jews” (Apocalypse, 28).

The clothing of the Harlot would bring to mind the cultic world of Old Covenant Israel—the world that was persecuting the Bride. The clothes of the Harlot represented all of the outward splendor, and inward bankruptcy, of a world that must be rejected. The raiment of the Bride was the very thing that the Harlot in all of her splendor could never attain—righteousness. The contrast in the apparel of the women of Revelation is, therefore, suggestive and powerful evidence that Babylon must be identified as Jerusalem.

#### **44 A PARTNERSHIP GONE SOUR REVELATION 17:10**

“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” (Revelation 17:16).

Revelation 17 is considered by many early date advocates to be

pivotal for determining the date of Revelation, and we agree. However, there is something present that seems to us to be overlooked.

Those who use Revelation 17 to prove the early date of Revelation appeal to John's statement about the 7 kings, "five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short while. The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, an is of the seven, and is going into perdition." The argument goes like this: the kings are the Roman emperors. Julius was the first emperor, and counting down from him we then have Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius. That is five emperors who had ruled. That makes Nero the sixth, under whom Revelation was penned.

The problem for some is that they do not want to include Julius in the count. However, Gentry has shown that first and second century Roman and Jewish historians did include Julius as the first emperor of Rome. (Beast, Revised, 138+) When those contemporary with John and the NT writers considered Julius the first emperor, what right does the modern commentator have to reject that consensus? Historically, Julius was the first emperor, and that means that if John is alluding to the line of emperors there can be little doubt about when Revelation was written. It was written during the reign of Nero.

The millennialists seek to mitigate the power of the countdown of the Roman emperors however, by insisting that the "kings" are not emperors at all, but kingdoms. Others, non-dispensationalists like Beale, (Revelation 867f), and Aune, (1998, 948), take a somewhat similar view.

Hitchcock claims that counting emperors is "arbitrary," and that, "to make the interpretation more reliable, the preferred view is to see the seven heads as seven successive empires represented by seven kings." Hitchcock's count has Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece, as the first five, and Rome as "the one who is." He then says, "The seventh is the final great persecutor, the reunited Roman Empire headed up by anti-christ, and the eighth is the final form of Gentile world rule—the final empire of anti-christ, which will arise

from the seventh after the anti-christ dies and comes back to life” (2003, 145). Hitchcock never tells us why this is “more reliable,” or why it is “the preferred view.” He merely asserts without proof.

Where does John indicate that the 7th is the Revived Roman empire? In fact, if we take Hitchcock’s thesis that the prior 5 represent different kingdoms, this would suggest that the seventh must be a separate and distinct kingdom altogether than a Revived Rome. But, if one takes the view that the seventh is a separate and distinct kingdom, then it is specious at best to speak of it as a Revived Rome, or a continued Rome.

If there is any indication of a “revived” empire, then it is in the eighth king, who is “of the seven” (Revelation 17:11). But there is no such link between the seventh king and the previous ones.

Furthermore, and this is critical, in Hitchcock’s view the Revived Roman Empire is the major end times persecutor. Yet, in John’s view, the seventh is only a bridge to the eighth. The eighth is the beast who does the persecuting. In Revelation 17, the seventh king is virtually insignificant. Yet, in the millennial scheme of things, the seventh is the lynch pin. We should not place our emphasis on a “king” that in John’s countdown does not merit any more than “he shall continue a little while,” and not a word is said about his persecutorial ways.

The fact is that there is contextual reason for rejecting the posit that the kings represent kingdoms. Hitchcock’s view demands that we read the text like this, “The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. There are also seven kings, which represent seven kingdoms.” In other words, Hitchcock’s view (also Aune and Beale), demands that we add another symbol to the text. For John, the seven heads represented seven mountains. The seven mountains represented seven kings. However, to Hitchcock, the seven heads represent seven mountains that represent seven kings that represent seven kingdoms. To John, the seven kings are the interpretative explanation of the seven heads and mountains. To Hitchcock, the seven kings are simply another symbol of something else.

The text makes it clear however, that the angel is explaining the

vision, “I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her”(Revelation 17:7). Thus, verses are explanatory, not visionary. They do not add more symbol, more mystery. They explain the symbols of the heads and mountains, and that explanation is that they are kings.

With these thoughts before us, I want now to present some additional thoughts that to me are very persuasive. Yet, I have found virtually no one that has noted the issues. This is rather amazing to me since what I will present seems to lie on the surface of the text.

Revelation 17 presents a partnership in persecution between the beast and Babylon. Many have taken note of this. That partnership goes bad. Many commentators have noted this. Not only does this partnership go bad, the beast turns on the whore, Babylon, and destroys her. Other commentators have observed this to varying degrees and emphasis. What seems to have been missed is that there is no other time in history that fits this scenario than the period under Nero.

Beale ignores this evidence and suggests that Revelation simply depicts a yet future time when, “At the end of history God will inspire the State and its Allies to turn against the economic-Religious system in order to remove its security and to destroy it” (1999, 882). However, one has to ask exactly how all of this was relevant, or comforting to John’s audience. This idea suggests that John was writing to suffering saints, longing for vindication, and yet, God ignores those urgent pleas to tell them of events and times unrelated to their traumatic situation. This completely undermines the “occasional” nature of the book.

If one posits Nero as the beast, then this suggests that Nero, or Rome under Nero, was somehow in partnership with “Babylon” to persecute the saints. Can it be demonstrated that there was a “partnership” between Rome and another power, whoever that might be, to persecute the saints of God? Indeed it can be, and Rome’s “partner” was none other than Jerusalem.

Harnack said, “Unless the evidence is misleading, they (the Jews,  
140

DKP), instigated the Neronic outburst against Christians; and as a rule, whenever bloody persecutions were afoot in later days, the Jews are either in the background or the foreground” (Mission, 57+). Gibbons said the cause of the Neronian persecution was the Jews. Barclay adds, “Nero was the first persecutor of the Christians, and...his favorite actor, Aliturus, and his infamous harlot, empress, Poppea, were both Jewish proselytes; and there is little doubt that it was their slanderous and perverted information which turned Nero against the Christians. The Jews whispered their slanders against the Christians into the ears of the Roman authorities with calculated and poisonous venom.” Finally, Gentry says, “The fact that the Harlot is seated on the seven headed beast (obviously representative of Rome) indicates, not identity with Rome, but alliance with Rome against Christianity” (Before, 241, n. 26). We could multiply these kinds of quotes. It is clear that there was a partnership, however tenuous, between Rome and Jerusalem, against the church.

Not only was there a partnership of persecution against the church, that partnership went sour. Rome turned on Jerusalem. This is not open to debate. Jerusalem rebelled against Nero. As a result, Nero sent his troops against Jerusalem and, “made her desolate and naked, and burned her with fire” (Revelation 17:16).

However, was there ever a partnership of persecution between Rome and anyone else, against the church, and that partnership went sour, resulting in the destruction of another capitol city? No. Consider for a moment the suggestion that Revelation was written under Domitian, the popular view.

First of all, there is a growing consensus that Domitian never persecuted the church. See our comments later in the book.

Second, not only did Domitian never systematically persecute the church, he was never in a partnership with any other entity to do so.

Third, with the two previous points being true, it is assuredly true that Domitian never turned on his partner in persecution against the church, and most assuredly never destroyed another capitol with whom he had been in that kind of partnership. Beagley makes the

point missed by many commentators: “In what sense can it be said that the Empire or one specific Emperor turns against the capital city and destroys it? How can Rome destroy Rome?” If Rome never destroyed Rome, then Babylon cannot be Rome.

Now, if Domitian never entered a partnership with anyone to persecute the church—and he didn’t-- then he cannot be the beast in Revelation.

If Domitian did not turn on his partner of persecution—and he didn’t--then he does not fit the description of Revelation.

If Domitian did not turn against his previous partner of persecution and destroy her capitol city –and he didn’t--then he is not the beast of Revelation.

To use a much over-used but appropriate term, “If the glove don’t fit, you must acquit.” The “glove” does not fit Domitian. But it does fit Nero.

Nero was influenced by the Jews to persecute the church. Nero turned on the Jews. Nero commanded the destruction of Jerusalem.

This evidence fits the list of the kings in Revelation 17, and fits perfectly the historical evidence. This evidence virtually demands an early date for Revelation, and it means that the book is focused on the destruction of Jerusalem.

## **45 BABYLON THE HABITATION OF DEMONS REVELATION 18:2**

John hears the angel’s triumphant declaration of the fall of Babylon. One of the reasons she is to fall is because she, “has become a habitation of demons.” Those familiar with the teaching of Jesus will be reminded that this is precisely what Jesus had to say about Israel. He told the parable of an evil spirit who, after being cast out of a man,

“Goes through dry places, seeking rest and finding none. Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes he finds it empty, swept and put to order. Then he goes and

takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation” (Matthew 12:43-45)

In Revelation, Babylon is a city that has fallen from a position of prominence with the Lord. She has become a prostitute and full of demons. Her former position is one of favor, but the latter end is destruction. The description of Babylon perfectly matches that given by Jesus of Israel. She had become invested by all manner of demons.

Was this description apropos of Rome, of the Catholic church, or of any modern organization? This is clearly not the case.

## **46 BABYLON AND THE SHEDDING OF ALL THE BLOOD ON THE EARTH REVELATION 18:20, 24**

“In her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth” (Revelation 18:24).

In chapter 18:24, John declares that Babylon was the city guilty of shedding the blood of, “all who were slain on the earth.” As we have seen, some try to make this designation refer to Rome, because of the countless numbers who died at her brutal hands. This is more than an issue of bloodshed, however. It is a matter of whose blood was shed, and it was the blood of God’s people,” apostles, prophets, and saints.”

We have already seen that in Matthew 23:35, Jesus identified Jerusalem as the martyr-maker.

Not only does Matthew 23 help in identifying Babylon, but there is a pattern established by Jesus and Paul that is repeated in Revelation. In Matthew, Jesus spoke of how Jerusalem had slain the prophets. He certainly knew that they were about to kill him. And He said

they were also going to kill the prophets and apostles sent by him.

In Thessalonians, Paul recounts how the Jews had killed the prophets of old, they had slain the Lord, and now they were persecuting him. The chain of prophets, Jesus, apostles is restated.

In Revelation, Babylon had slain the prophets, (Revelation 16:6). She had slain the Lord, (Revelation 11:8). And she had slain the apostles, (Revelation 18:20, 24).

Are we to ignore Jesus' and Paul's identification of the persecutors of "the prophets, the Lord, and the apostles" when we find that identical pattern in Revelation? It is surely presumptuous to ignore such consistent Biblical evidence.

Chilton is certainly correct in saying, "This language cannot be used of Rome or any other city. Only Jerusalem was guilty of 'all the righteous blood shed on the earth.'" (Vengeance, 466)

Jesus and Paul identified Jerusalem as the city guilty of long standing murderous ways against God's elect. Only by ignoring the testimony of Jesus and Paul about the chain of the prophets, the Lord, and the apostles as those slain by Jerusalem, can one claim that Babylon is other than first century Jerusalem.

## **47 BABYLON AND THE BRIDE**

### **REVELATION 19:7**

One thing is clear from Revelation, the Harlot stands in direct opposition to the Bride of the Lamb. Just as there is a striking contrast between the two cities, Babylon and the new Jerusalem, there is a contrast between the woman clothed in, "purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls," and the city arrayed with the righteousness of the saints. We would quickly note with Leonard that, "The adornments of the woman, (Babylon, DKP) are the very items which decorated the temple in Jerusalem, its hangings, furniture, implements and vessels." And the harlot city must be destroyed before the new Jerusalem can be wed to the Lamb.

The Bible teaches that prior to the parousia Christ was "betrothed"



to the church. Paul said he had betrothed the church to Christ as a chaste virgin (2 Corinthians 11:2). Jesus purchased the church by His sacrifice, and sanctified it with the washing of the water by the Word, in order to present it to himself (Ephesians 5:25f). There is a consensus that the “presentation” of the bride in Ephesians refers to the parousia of the Lord to consummate the betrothal. This is the consistent view of scripture.

Jesus depicts the Messianic Supper, i.e., the wedding feast, as occurring when the Sons of the kingdom are cast out, and the Gentiles brought in (Matthew 8:11f).

In Matthew 22, the wedding did not take place until the guests who had been invited but who had refused, had been destroyed. As Hagner says, “It is virtually impossible for post-70 readers of the Gospel not to see the destruction of Jerusalem alluded to in these words.” Thus, in both Matthew and Revelation, we find the wedding. The time of the wedding is when those who had been invited, but persecuted the messengers, were judged. There can be no doubt as to the identity of the city in Matthew 22. Can there be any doubt as to who Babylon is in Revelation? Unless scripture teaches that Christ was to be married twice, upon the destruction of two different persecuting cities, then Babylon in Revelation was Jerusalem.

In Matthew 25:1-14, the story of the wise and foolish virgins reveals that the wedding occurred at the coming of the bridegroom. Thus, the New Testament record is clear that the wedding of the Lamb would be at Christ’s parousia—and that is not the incarnation, or Pentecost.

## **THE WEDDING AS THE HOPE OF ISRAEL**

A vitally significant relationship exists between the concept of the wedding and the salvation hope of Israel. In the Old Testament, the Lord was married to Israel, “Your maker is your husband” (Isaiah 54:5), “I am married to you” (Jeremiah 3:14).

Yet, Israel was an unfaithful wife. As a result, Jehovah had to divorce

her, “Where is the certificate of your mother’s divorce, whom I have put away?” (Isaiah 50:1f). The story of Hosea provides the touching and prophetically significant background for understanding the marriage language of the New Testament. In fact, I would suggest that Hosea provides the template or blueprint for NT eschatology in many ways. In short form, Hosea presents the following:

Divorce– YHVH divorced the ten northern tribes. YHVH related through Jeremiah how He had divorced the northern tribes (Jeremiah 3:1-8).

Departure– When He divorced Israel, God “left” them and went back to His place (Hosea 5:14f). This “departure” is patently not a physical, bodily departure, but the termination of covenantal fellowship, just like in the Garden of Eden.

Death– When God divorced Israel and left her, He likewise “killed” her, planting her in the dust of the earth: “I have slain them by the words of my mouth” (Hosea 6:5). As with the “departure” this death was not physical death, but loss of fellowship and covenantal blessing.

Yet, the story of redemption, the story of eschatology including the book of Revelation is likewise foretold in Hosea:

Remarriage– “I will betroth you to myself in righteousness” (Hosea 2:19). This is one of Jesus’ favorite themes and is clearly posited in the framework of the “divorce” and destruction of Judah (Matthew 22:1-10). In Revelation we find the wedding at the destruction of the city “where the Lord was slain.” Revelation chronicles the fulfillment of the OT wedding promise (Revelation 10:7).

Return – “He will come to us like the early and latter rains” (Hosea 6:3). The coming of Christ, “in the glory of the father” is the return

of YHVH to remarry Israel.

Jesus' promise to "return for the wedding" is clearly related to the Old Covenant promises of the return of YHVH to His people, as promised in Hosea. Wright is one of the few who develop this significant theme.

"I propose that this parable (Matthew 25:14f, DKP) should be seen as a key explanatory riddle for Jesus' own action. He saw his journey to Jerusalem as the symbol and embodiment of YHWH's return to Zion. ...so YHWH was returning to his people, his city and his temple. But, who would abide the day of his coming?" (Victory, 639– See page 640 also).

Over and over in the Old Testament, YHVH left His people due to their sins. Yet, His gracious promise was that in the last days, He would return as King, in salvation of His people (cf. Isaiah 59; 62). Now to be sure, that return of their king would not be in the manner that Israel had hoped for. As Wright cogently observes, Jesus radically redefined Israel's hope and her promises:

"Throughout the teaching, story telling and career of Jesus, this message rang out again and again, in word and in deed. Israel was being redefined; and those who failed to heed Jesus' warnings would discover themselves in the position that they had thought was reserved for the pagan" (Victory, 329).

Resurrection– Hosea depicted Israel's divorce as her "death." He also depicts her remarriage as her resurrection. This is not the raising of biologically decomposed human corpses. This is the restoration of fellowship, life in the presence of God.

Since this "resurrection" promise in Hosea is the source of Paul's resurrection doctrine in 1 Corinthians 15, this has profound implications for understanding resurrection in Paul and the NT. The resurrection in Revelation is the time of the remarriage. However, as is evident from Revelation 20 the resurrection occurs at the end of the millennium. Since the wedding occurs at the judgment of Babylon, this demands that the judgment of Babylon / Old Covenant Judah,

occurred at the end of the millennium. See more on this below.

This is all we can offer on Hosea as the blueprint of eschatology, but hopefully it will pique the reader's interest.

Tragically, many, if not most Bible students today, when they read of the wedding in the New Testament, think of the wedding between Christ and the church, unrelated to the promises made to Israel. In my own fellowship, there has been virtually no recognition of the fact that Jesus' references to the wedding were reaffirming God's faithfulness to Israel, and that this connection between Christ and Israel continues to run throughout the New Testament and consummates in Revelation.

Although he was commenting on Paul's writings, Hays' comments are applicable to all of the New Testament writings and the historical and current state of affairs when it comes to understanding the Scriptures, "The Christian tradition early on lost its vital connection with the Jewish interpretive matrix in which Paul had lived and moved; consequently, later Christian interpreters missed some of Paul's basic concerns." The failure of the modern Bible student to honor the Old Testament source for the New Testament doctrine of the wedding of Messiah virtually guarantees a misapplication of the wedding motif in the NT and Revelation especially. Instead of realizing that the wedding was to occur in the last days of Old Covenant Israel, that event is divorced (pun intended) from Israel and posited at the end of the Christian age. This is misguided.

The Lord told Hosea to marry a, "daughter of harlotry" (Hosea 1:2). To the marriage three children were born, each with a name given by Jehovah to indicate the increasing infidelity of Gomer, Hosea's wife.

Finally, the Lord commanded Hosea to divorce Gomer because of her adultery, "Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; for she is not my wife, nor am I her husband" (Hosea 2:2). The story of Hosea and Gomer was a mirror of God's relationship with the house of Israel. As Hosea was to divorce Gomer, Jehovah was to divorce Israel.

And yet as just seen, in spite of judgment, there was a promise of a brighter day coming, “I will betroth you to me forever, yes, I will betroth you to me in righteousness and justice” (Hosea 2:19). The day was coming in which Jehovah would once again marry Israel and that prophecy is found in His words to Hosea:

“The Lord said to me, ‘Go again and love a woman that is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the Lord of the children of Israel, who took to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans.’ So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and a half homers of barley. And I said to her, ‘You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man; thus I will also be toward you.’ For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return, seek the Lord their God and David their king, and fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days” (Hosea 3:1-5).

Thus, in the last days, the Lord would once again marry Israel. Yet that marriage would come only after a time, “without king, or prince, sacrifice, or sacred pillar.” Jesus came to announce that the time of alienation was over. The time for the wedding had come.

We should not divorce (pun intended) Jesus’ emphasis on the wedding of the Bridegroom from these Old Testament promises of the wedding. Jesus came to confirm the promises made to the fathers of Israel (Romans 15:8).

It is no coincidence that the marriage supper motif is prominent in Jesus’ teaching. Jesus promised, “Many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” This is the promise of the Messianic Banquet of Isaiah 25, and is nothing less than the marriage supper of the Lamb. But, notice when this would be.

Jesus said this supper would be when “the sons of the kingdom

will be cast out.” It is important to note here that “Israel,” i.e. the 10 northern tribes, had already been cast out. They had already been divorced. God had cut them off “from the house of David” (2 Kings 17:20). However, God was still married to the house of Judah because He could not divorce her due to the promise of the Messiah. Judah had to remain married to Jehovah until Messiah came and the New Covenant was established. However, the time was coming when, “the kingdom of heaven shall be taken from you (Judah, the holder of the scepter), and given to another nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matthew 21:43).

Remember that at the outset of Revelation we were given the vision of “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” that echoes Genesis 49:10. God promised that the scepter would not depart from Judah until Shiloh came. That is, Judah would remain the focus of God’s relationship until Messiah came into his kingdom. Then, due to her rebellion that was actually worse than that of the 10 northern tribes (Ezekiel 23:11f) God would divorce her and mete to her the punishment of the unfaithful wife.

In Matthew 21:43 Jesus addresses the leadership of Judah, and tells them that the kingdom will be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. The scepter would depart from Judah. The echo of Genesis 49 in Revelation 5:5 becomes a thunderous chorus in Revelation as we witness the burning and stoning of the adulterous harlot who refuses to acknowledge that she is now unmarried (Revelation 18:7), “I sit as a queen, I am no widow.” Yet, this city, full of demons, guilty of adultery, guilty of killing the prophets, the Lord himself, and his apostles, was doomed. She would suffer the fate of her “younger sister” (Ezekiel 23:1-10). But, it was not all bad news.

Just like God promised that in the last days He would remarry Israel, He promised that in the last days He would save “the whole house of Israel” i.e. He would restore the 12 tribes. The tragedy of modern dispensationalism is to say that this restoration has not happened, because in their view that restoration has to be ethnic,

geocentric, socio-political and nationalistic. They insist on the restoration of the “kingdom” of Israel, when YHVH emphatically said that the “kingdom” aspect would never be restored, while the family of David would be. The problem here is that this never was the focus of the Messianic marriage prophecies.

In Hosea 1:4, Jehovah said that He was about to destroy the 10 northern tribes as a nationalistic entity. He was going to “bring to an end the kingdom of the house of Israel.” In Amos 5:1-3, the Lord said He was going to destroy Israel and she would never rise again. And notice that in Amos 9:8 God said: “Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD.” Notice the delineation between the kingdom that God said would not rise again, and the house of David that would be restored.

So, we have the emphatic declaration of God that the nationalistic form of Israel was to be destroyed, to never rise again. Of course, it will be noted that in Amos 9:11f that God promised to restore the tent of David. Do we have a contradiction here? No.

If God said that Israel was to be destroyed and never rise again, but then said that He was going to restore Israel, then there is a contradiction if the “restoration” in view is of the same form. However, in the OT God predicted a difference in covenant under the restored nation (Jeremiah 31:31f), a difference in worship (Jeremiah 3:14f), a difference in the scope of the kingdom (Isaiah 2:2f), a difference in the identity of the people of the kingdom (Isaiah 65:13f), a difference in the locale of the kingdom (Jeremiah 3:16, Malachi 1:12), and other fundamental changes in the nature of the kingdom. These prophecies demonstrate that Israel was to be eschatologically transformed. She was not to be restored in her Old Covenant form. This is demonstrated in the New Testament.

In Acts 10 Peter was sent by Jehovah to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile to preach the gospel to him. To say the very least, Peter was reluctant to go. However, with some persuasive “prompting”

he did go, and when the Spirit was poured out on Cornelius, Peter was finally convinced that it was time for a change of attitude, “Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (Acts 10:47). Not everyone welcomed Peter’s actions.

Upon his return to Jerusalem, Peter was called on the carpet to defend his actions (Acts 11). Thankfully, the leadership of the church in Jerusalem accepted the events as guided by the Spirit and indicative of a new day dawning. As a bit of time passed, the inclusion of the Gentiles into the body raised questions in regard to Torah keeping, sacrifices, circumcision. Were the Gentiles supposed to keep the Law, just as the rest of the Jews? Some affirmed it, some denied, so a conference was held, with the issue to be debated among the church prophets, apostles and leaders. The Jerusalem Conference took place in Acts 15.

The Jerusalem conference is vital to understanding the nature of the restoration of Israel. James, the ostensible “emcee” of the conference, referred to the conversion of Cornelius and the subsequent conversion of other Gentiles and said, “And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: ‘After this I will return and rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen down; and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does all these things’” (Acts 15:16-17). There are several things we want to note about this text.

First, the conversion of the Gentiles is what prompted the reference to the prophecy of Isaiah.

Second, and this is critical, the house of Israel had to be restored in order for the Gentiles to be saved. You see, the ruin of the house of Israel is referent to the destruction of the 10 tribes. They had been cut off from the house of David (2 Kings 17:20f). The tabernacle of David had “fallen down” and its “walls” breached. However, it was God’s intent to restore that breach, and to call all men to Him.

Third, since the Gentiles could only be brought in when the



tabernacle of David was restored, i.e. when Israel was restored, then since the Gentiles were being brought in, this is prima facie proof that “Israel” was in the very process of restoration. David’s tabernacle was being restored, or else the Gentiles could never be brought in.

Fourth, it is more than evident that the restoration of David’s tabernacle was in no way, whatsoever, related to a nationalistic, geo-centric, restoration. That restoration was taking place through transformation. The people of God, the righteous remnant, was being transformed into the new people foretold in the O. T. prophecies.

Our argument would be framed like this:

Israel had to be restored, in fulfillment of Amos 9:11f, in order for the Gentiles, i.e. “The rest of mankind, even the Gentiles,” to be brought to the Lord (Acts 15:17).

The Gentiles, i.e. part of “the rest of mankind” were being brought to the Lord (Acts 10, 15:14-16).

Therefore, Israel was being restored in fulfillment of Amos 9:11f.

What is so significant about this is that the restoration of Israel foretold by Amos, is the predicted remarriage of God and Israel in Hosea. So, for Simon to say that the Gentiles were being saved in fulfillment of Amos, was to say that the time of the wedding of Hosea had come. This is particularly significant then, since Paul said that he had betrothed the Corinthians to Christ as a chaste virgin, indicating that the wedding itself was near. But there is more.

Keep in mind that Paul repeatedly tells us that he preached nothing but the hope of Israel (Acts 24:14f; 26:6f, 21d; 28:16f). Not once does Paul ever say, hint, or indicate in any manner that he was preaching a distorted, allegorized, or postponed hope of Israel. He anticipated what was written in the prophets, and not something like what was written there. So, when Paul, in Romans 9:22f speaks of God’s calling of the Gentiles he justifies that ministry by directly quoting Hosea 2:23, “I will call them My People, who were not My people.”

There is a great deal more that could be said at this juncture, but this is not the venue for that. Suffice it to say however, that for Hosea, the time when God would remarry Israel is the time when He would say, “I will call them My people who were not My people” and that for the inspired apostle Paul, that time had come. That time, and that promise was being fulfilled in his ministry, as he proclaimed the hope of Israel.

Significantly, Hosea’s promise—the promise cited by Paul-- is cited by Peter as well. 1 Peter 2:9f the apostle writes to the churches of Asia reminding them of the blessings of being called children of God. His audience was to some extent, though certainly not exclusively, Gentile. He quotes from Hosea 2:23 to remind them that their conversion was the fulfillment of prophecy, “I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy: I will say to those who were not My people ‘You are My people.’” In Peter’s day, the last days (Acts 2:15f) the prediction of Hosea was being fulfilled by the salvation of the remnant of Israel, and the conversion of the Gentiles. Together, “Jew and Gentile” as Paul expressed it in Romans 9:24, were comprising the new Bride of Christ. The time of the promised betrothal had come.

Hosea said that in the last days Jehovah would betroth Israel to Himself. John was living in the last days, and Paul speaks of Christ’s betrothal to the church comprised of the remnant of Israel and the Gentiles. The marriage of Jehovah would only come when Israel was restored and Judah purged of her sin through judgment (see Isaiah 4:4f). In Revelation, Babylon (Judah) is judged and the marriage of the Lamb occurs. Other Old Covenant prophecies foretold Israel’s hope in connection with the Wedding.

For convenience we present the chart that will compare Isaiah 62 and Revelation. This will help us to visualize the true parallels between Israel’s hope and John’s Apocalypse.

Isaiah 62 Revelation Calling of the nations; “Gentiles shall see your righteousness” (v. 2); Kings of the nations shall see your (Jerusalem’s)

glory Calling of the nations (21:25f); Kings shall bring their glory to the New Jerusalem. Marriage of Israel, “You shall be called Hephzibah and Beulah (married, v. 4) Wedding of Christ (remnant, 144,000); “The time of the wedding has come” (19:7f) Your land shall be married. (v. 4) New heavens and earth, new Jerusalem Giving of the new name “you shall be called by a new name” (v. 2) 2:17–I will give a new name

3:12f–I will give a new name; New Jerusalem. Jerusalem established– (v. 7, diorthosis) See below on Hebrews 9 and diorthosis. New Jerusalem established

144,000, righteous remnant on Zion Coming of the Lord (v. 11)– “Your salvation is coming, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.” 22:12– “I come quickly and my reward is with me”– citing Isaiah

(cf. Mt. 16:27-28) Promises made to Israel Revelation is about the fulfillment of what the prophets of Israel foretold (10:7; 22:6)

It should be more than obvious that John has the Old Covenant promises to Israel in mind in his Apocalypse. The wedding was God’s promise to Israel. And since this is true, any application of Revelation to any city of “Babylon” unrelated to the fulfillment of those covenantal promises is outside the parameter of John’s concern. Revelation is focused on the consummation of Israel’s history.

Notice two factors particularly from Isaiah 62 that have a bearing on the identity of Babylon.

First, the promise of the new name. In Revelation 2:17 the Lord promised the brethren at Pergamos that if they remained faithful, they would be given a new name. Jesus also promised the faithful church at Philadelphia, “I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God” (Revelation 3:12). Jesus associated the new name with the promise of the new creation.

Are we supposed to believe that John’s promise is different from that in Isaiah? How could this posit be justified in light of John’s

emphasis on the fulfillment of Old Covenant promises, and the fact that Revelation 21, and the new creation promise, is directly from Isaiah 65?

The new name is directly associated with the promise of the marriage. Isaiah posits this in the context of the transformation of Israel. Israel would be married via eschatological transformation. Isaiah places that transformation at the time of Israel's destruction.

Unless one can delineate between the promise of Isaiah and Revelation, then, because Isaiah clearly places the new name in the context of the judgment/ transformation of Judah, we must see that this was what John was anticipating. The Lord would indeed marry Israel, but she would be a new people (now inclusive of all men, Isaiah 62:2) after the Old Covenant form was destroyed. This demands that Babylon in Revelation was first century Jerusalem.

The next element of Isaiah 62 that relates to the marriage, and the identity of Babylon, is the promise that this would be realized at the time of the parousia (Isaiah 62:11-12). What is so significant about this is that Jesus cites Isaiah, and tells us when it would be fulfilled.

Jesus came to confirm the promises made to Israel (Romans 15:8). He was sent to Israel, not the Gentiles (Matthew 15:21f). This does not mean that his work had no significance for the Gentiles. It does mean that we must honor the fact that Jesus was a Jew, sent to Israel, to fulfill God's promises to that nation, in order that salvation would then go to the nations. The promises of God concerning the nations are always related to His promises to Israel first.

Jesus desired the salvation of Israel (Matthew 23:37) and was sent to save her (Luke 19:10). Jesus was intimately familiar with the salvation promises to, and about, Israel. This is often overlooked when the modern student reads the Lord's promises. This is true in regard to his citation of Isaiah 62.

In Matthew 16:27, Jesus said, "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." Here Jesus predicts His parousia for judgment and salvation. There is no way to divorce this prophecy

from the promise of Isaiah 62. Such an interpretation creates a soteriological dichotomy unknown in scripture. God did not promise two different salvations, one for Israel and another for the nations. Salvation for the nations (Gentiles) is inextricably linked with the salvation of Israel (Isaiah 49:1-6; 62:2f).

If one attempts to say that Isaiah predicted a different coming for salvation from that that promised by Jesus in Matthew, he must be prepared to identify the time and occasion of the different parousias. He must be prepared to delineate between the nature of the salvations being offered by Isaiah, and Jesus. He must prove that while Jesus came to confirm the promises made to Israel, that in Matthew 16:27-28, He was abandoning that work, to predict another, disparate work of salvation. These are insurmountable challenges. Did Jesus say when Isaiah's promise of the parousia (when the wedding would occur, Isaiah 62:4-5) would be fulfilled? Yes, indeed.

In Matthew 16:28, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say unto you, that there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." The language is too explicit to ignore. Jesus promised to come in judgment before all of His audience died. This has a direct bearing on the identity of Babylon.

In Revelation 22:12, Jesus quotes His promise in Matthew 16:27, only this time He said, "Behold, I am coming quickly." His coming in Revelation was to be against Babylon, when the wedding would occur (Revelation 18-19). Thus, Revelation 22 is Jesus' repetition of the promise of the wedding found in Isaiah 62. The connection is direct between Isaiah 62?Matthew 16:27?Revelation 22.

Isaiah predicted the wedding of Israel at the time of the parousia (Isaiah 62:4-5, 11-12). Jesus said His parousia, in fulfillment of Isaiah 62, would be in His generation before all of His audience died (Matthew 16:27-28). John records Jesus' quotation of Matthew 16:27, and said fulfillment was coming quickly. Therefore, the fulfillment of God's promise to marry Israel would be fulfilled in Jesus' generation.

Unless one can show that John's promise of the marriage (Revelation 19) is not that of Isaiah, then Jesus' inspired time statement as to

when He was to come is definitive. The wedding had to occur in Jesus' contemporary generation. There is no other event than the AD 70 coming of Christ against Jerusalem that honors the temporal constraints, and the requirements of the "wedding prophecies."

The wedding prophecies demanded: 1.) The fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, 2.) Fulfillment at the time of the judgment of Judah (Isaiah 62/65). Coupled with the parabolic teaching of Jesus about the wedding, we can only conclude that the wedding occurred with the fall of first century Jerusalem.

Any interpretation that places the wedding of Christ (at the parousia) outside the first century is a denial of Jesus' words. This positively eliminates Rome, the Catholic church, and all other later suggestions, as Babylon. Any interpretation that places the wedding in the context of the judgment of any city or entity, other than Jerusalem, rejects the prophetic testimony concerning the wedding.

The consistent picture from Jesus' parables of the wedding, see above, is that Old Covenant Israel was invited to the wedding but killed the messengers. Therefore, other guests were invited and the wedding took place at the parousia. The time of the parousia was the time of the judgment of those who refused the invitation, Old Covenant Judah.

Jones recognized that the imagery of Revelation 19 is taken from the Jewish practice of betrothal and marriage. He acknowledges that scripture depicts the time prior to the parousia as the period of betrothal, "The time lapse between the arrangement for marriage and the wedding feast itself is indicated in the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew. 25:1-13). This time period is called the interval. So when viewed in light of the Hebrew custom of marriage, the church is now espoused or betrothed to Jesus as His wife, as was Mary to Joseph, preparing herself for the marriage supper which is yet to come. The marriage supper will follow the second coming of Jesus" (Victory, 274). Jones seems not to see his dilemma.

Revelation 19 places the wedding at the destruction of Babylon. Jones says Babylon is Rome. But Jones says the wedding takes place

at the second coming. Therefore, the second coming must have occurred at the fall of Rome.

Did Rome have to be destroyed before Jesus could present the church to himself? Does the World Council of Churches, or America, have to fall before the wedding of the Lamb? It is more consistent with scripture to believe that the former bride, the Old Covenant bride of God, would have to be put away before the wedding could take place.

If the wedding in Revelation is not the wedding foretold by Hosea and Isaiah, where in scripture do we find the fulfillment of these prophecies? If John's apocalypse is about this wedding, then Babylon can be no other than Jerusalem, for in prophecy, the wedding would follow the judgment of Judah.

In Romans 7, the writer says the Romans had died to the Law—he did not say the Law had died—in order for them to be married to another. Hebrews 8:13 says the old system itself was near to passing away at that time. It could not pass until it was all fulfilled (Matthew 5:17-18). Jesus said the time for the final fulfillment of all things that are written was the fall of Jerusalem (Luke 21:22).

One system had to give way so that another could come. Old Israel had to pass so that new Israel would remain. Old Israel was the Bride of God, new Israel would be the Bride of the Lamb. As Leonard says, “The marriage supper is a metaphor for the final repudiation of the harlot, and the introduction of the bride. This is the divorce and remarriage of the Lord, and the covenant meal or marriage supper which seals the new relationship. It is accomplished when the Bridegroom overthrows the unfaithful wife and punishes her lovers, the kings of the land with whom she has committed adultery” (Come Out, 139).

Notice that in Isaiah 62, Israel would be married to God in the day that Jerusalem would be “established” (v. 7, from diorthosis, LXX) at the coming of the Lord in judgment (v. 10f). Thus, the parousia would fulfill Israel's messianic hopes in the wedding of Israel at the diorthosis. Put another way, the diorthosis, the “establishment” of

Jerusalem, would be the consummation of Israel's prophetic hopes.

In Hebrews 9:6-10, the writer says that the Old Covenant cultus still standing at the time, was prophetic of better things and was imposed on Israel "until the time of reformation" (Hebrews 9:10, diorthosis, Strong's #1357) This time of reformation is the diorthosis foretold by Isaiah 62, when Israel's promises were fulfilled. Notice what this means.

The time of Israel's wedding would be the time of her diorthosis, at the coming of the Lord (Isaiah 62:4-12).

But, the end of the Mosaic Covenant world would be the arrival of the diorthosis (Hebrews 9:10).

Therefore, Israel's wedding would be at the end of the Mosaic Covenant world.

Thus, when Revelation depicts the wedding of Christ at the time of the judgment of the city "where the Lord was slain" and in the promise of his coming alludes directly to Isaiah 62:10-11 (Revelation 22:12) this amounts to proof positive that Babylon was non other than Old Covenant Jerusalem.

Revelation clearly places the wedding at the coming of the Lord against Babylon (19:1-10). In Matthew 24:29-31, Jesus spoke of His coming to gather the saints to himself (v. 31). This would be in Jesus' generation (v. 34) in His coming against Jerusalem. It is not the Lord's coming in the fall of Rome that is associated with the Lord taking the church to himself. The presentation of the Bride, at the parousia, against a persecuting city, is associated with Jesus' coming against Jerusalem.

McGuiggan rejects this consistent Biblical teaching, saying that all Revelation and the other texts are emphasizing is "rejoicing"—that the wedding figure is not to be pressed at all. (Revelation, 264f) He claims that in Ephesians 5, the church is fully married. Jones counters this appropriately by noting, "It is revealed that the church's relationship with Jesus is that of a wife (Ephesians 5:22-23; Romans 7:4) but in the same way Mary was betrothed to Joseph before they came together (Matthew 1:18)" (Victory, 274).



Further, McGuiggan's objections do not prove his point. He claims that joy is the only lesson to be gleaned from the wedding figure. However, the text says "Let us be glad and rejoice for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife, has made herself ready." McGuiggan concentrates on the joy, and ignores the reason for the rejoicing. If we reject the reason for the joy in Revelation, there would be no rejoicing. The wedding of the Lamb is cause for the rejoicing. To reject this as inconsequential is to manipulate scripture for one's own purposes.

The New Testament presents the story of two competing "women," Old Covenant Jerusalem, and New Covenant Jerusalem. To suggest that Revelation departs from this theme is to create a dissonance in the New Testament doctrine.

One final thought here in regard to the wedding. Few seem to realize that the millennial paradigm, espoused by Tim LaHaye, Thomas Ice, Jack Van Impe, and other leading so-called prophecy experts, actually teaches that Christ is to get married twice in the future, to two different women. Christ will one day become a bigamist. This is a startling claim, so let's take a look.

### **Pentecost says:**

"It seems necessary to distinguish between the marriage of the Lamb and the marriage supper. The marriage of the Lamb is an event that has particular reference to the church and takes place in heaven. The marriage supper is an event that involves Israel and takes place on the earth." Pentecost cites Chafer in concurrence with this view. (Things to Come, 227).

One of the foundational issues of millennialism is that God's promises to Israel are not the promises to the church, and vice versa. Thus, the promises of Isaiah, Hosea and other prophets concerning God's last days marriage to Israel have nothing to do with the church. Jesus' references in Matthew 22, Luke 14, and Matthew 25 have nothing to do with the church, but, "the wedding feast or supper is

located on earth and has particular reference to Israel (Pentecost, 227). However, in Revelation 19 the marriage involves the church and not Israel. This false dichotomy illustrates well our point made above that the modern reader falsifies the Biblical doctrine of the wedding by seeing in the New Testament a different doctrine of the wedding. The millennial failure to acknowledge the apostolic testimony that what was being proclaimed, what was taking place in the body of Christ in the first century was in fact the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel leads to the grotesque doctrine of two weddings, two brides, two sets of promises, two eschatologies.

Thus, it is unavoidably true that the dispensational view demands that Christ becomes a bigamist at his parousia. The problem of course, is that the Bible knows nothing of two weddings to two different "women," at two different times by Christ. There is only one wedding, and it was the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. It is not the wedding of the church, unrelated to Israel's promises, as posited by the amillennial and postmillennial views. Nor is it two different weddings as the millennialists suggest. The Biblical picture of the wedding is that God would marry Israel once again. However, that wedding would only take place when the unfaithful, adulterous wife, Judah, was divorced, and God once again espoused himself to Israel. This means that the wedding should be seen in the light of the putting away of Judah, the adulterous wife, and the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel that the new creation would include "Israel and the nations."

To suggest that Revelation anticipated a different wedding from that promised to Israel at the time of her judgment is unwarranted. The fact that John emphasizes the fulfillment of the prophets demands that we honor this as the source for the wedding imagery. When we do this Babylon can only be first century Jerusalem, the adulterous bride that had to be put away in order for the wedding of the Lamb to take place.

## 48 BABYLON, THE BOOK OF JOHN, AND SIGNS OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST REVELATION 19

The relationship between the gospel of John, and Revelation, is helpful in establishing the identity of Babylon. In John 20:30-31, the beloved apostle said:

“Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, but these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in His name.”

During His ministry Jesus was asked for signs of verification for His claims to being the Messiah (Matthew 12:38f). His response was that His resurrection was to be the fundamental sign. In addition, in Matthew 24:29-31, Jesus said His coming in judgment against Jerusalem would be the, “sign of the Son of Man in heaven.” Unfortunately, as Kik says, “There has been misunderstanding due to the reading of this verse, as some have thought it to be ‘a sign in heaven.’ But this is not what the verse says, it says, ‘the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.’ The phrase ‘in heaven’ defines the locality of the Son of Man and not the sign. A sign was not to appear in the heavens, but the destruction of Jerusalem was to indicate the rule of the Son of Man in heaven” (his emphasis). Thus, in Jesus’ teaching, there were to be two definitive signs of His enthronement and Sovereignty, His resurrection, and His coming in judgment against Jerusalem.

In his gospel, John lists seven miracles performed by Jesus that substantiated His claim to deity. The final miracle was His resurrection from the dead. Jesus said His coming in judgment against Jerusalem was to be a sign of His deity. Yet, John did not record the fulfillment of Jesus’ prediction of the fall of Jerusalem? Why is that?

Robinson pondered this point, “One of the oddest facts about the New Testament is that what on any showing would appear to be the single most datable and climactic event in the period—the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, and with it the collapse of institutional Judaism

based on the Temple—is never once mentioned as a past fact.” This remarkable fact led Robinson to conclude, after extensive research, that all of the New Testament books must have been written prior to that cataclysm. We concur.

John wrote to create belief in Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus himself had given the fall of Jerusalem as a sign of His Sovereignty. In his gospel, John briefly hinted about the fall of Jerusalem (John 2, 4, etc.). Yet, in the book of Revelation, the fall of Babylon at the parousia of Jesus demonstrates that He is, “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” (Revelation 19:11-16). Thus, the judgment against Babylon, in Revelation, does exactly what Jesus, in Matthew 24:30, said His coming against Jerusalem would do—demonstrates His deity.

From this perspective, the book of Revelation is simply John’s expanded discussion of the theme set forth in his gospel, the signs of Jesus’ Sonship. This is substantiated even by the title, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:1). The gospel was written to give signs of who Jesus is, Revelation was written to provide one final (imminent) sign in confirmation of Jesus as the Christ the Son of the living God.

Whereas Jesus positively gave His resurrection, and judgment coming against Jerusalem, as signs, where did He do so about the fall of Rome, the Roman Catholic church, or the Eastern European Common Market, or apostate Christianity? The purpose of Revelation was to present the judgment of Babylon as a sign of Jesus’ Sovereignty. In this context, the judgment against Jerusalem as Babylon stands as the most logical identification. This honors Jesus’ statements about one of the purposes of the fall of Jerusalem, and it honors the stated purpose of John’s writings.

## **IN THE GLORY OF THE FATHER**

As Jesus is depicted in glory, riding on the white horse, conquering his enemies, and being declared “King of kings, and Lord of lords,” we cannot help but being reminded that Jesus had promised to come

“in the glory of the Father” (Matthew 16:27-28). Simply stated, this means that Jesus was going to come as the Father had come many times. Jesus said that the Father had committed all judgment to the Son, and that the Son would judge as he had seen the Father judge, in order that men would honor him as they honor the Father (John 5:19f).

In the Old Testament, Jehovah had come many times, as we have shown earlier in this study. He had never literally, visibly appeared. His comings in the OT were for the purpose of demonstrating His Sovereignty, “that they may know that I am God,” is the reason stated some 74 times in the book of Ezekiel alone.

See for instance Isaiah 64 where Israel prayed for Jehovah to come, as He had come in the past. The coming anticipated by the prophet, which would bring in the new creation of Isaiah 65:17f, cannot therefore be a time ending, earth burning event. Isaiah anticipated the coming of the Lord to usher in the new creation. That is the new creation of Revelation 21. But, that coming of the Lord would manifest the sovereignty of God through His judgment actions, exactly as Revelation depicts the parousia of Christ in judgment of his enemies.

So, in Revelation Jesus would come as the Father had come, for the same purpose as the Father had come many times, to manifest his sovereignty. In Revelation 1:7f the context is set that the coming would be against those who pierced him, and in chapter 11 it is the city “where the Lord was slain.” This consistent picture of the parousia of Christ is strong evidence that Revelation is about the AD 70 coming of Christ in judgment of those who crucified him, and that coming not only vindicated his claims, but identified him as King of kings and Lord of lords.

## **49 BABYLON AND THE BOOK OF LIFE**

### **REVELATION 20**

“And the books were opened, and another book was opened,  
165

which is the Lamb's book of Life."

In Revelation, the saved are only those written in the Lamb's Book of Life (20:12; 22:19). What is the point?

Edershiem says, citing the Talmud, "On New Year's Day three books were opened—-that of life, for those whose works had been good; another of death, for those who had been thoroughly evil; and a third, intermediate, for those whose case was to be decided on the Day of Atonement." It is clear, therefore, that John's allusion to the Book of Life, and "the books," comes from Israel's temple imagery.

For any Jewish reader of the Apocalypse, John's allusion would have definite meaning. This reinforces the point we have made repeatedly in this work, Revelation is a book about the fulfillment of Israel's Covenant promises. It is not a book contrasting Rome, and her pagan riches, with the church. It is a book contrasting the Old Covenant world with the New.

In Revelation, the real book of Life is that of the Lamb, it is not that of the old temple. It is the Lamb and His Bride that are in conflict with the Harlot. As we have seen, Revelation deals with "those who say they are Jews but are not, for they are liars" (2:9; 3:9). The question was, "Who is the true Israel?" Old Israel had her book of life; new Israel had the Lamb's Book of Life.

With the fall of Jerusalem all the genealogical records, and "the Books," were destroyed. What Jew can appeal to the records to prove his link with Jehovah? (What a powerful argument that Messiah has come. If the genealogical records were destroyed by God, then no one afterward can properly claim to be of the Davidic lineage. Messiah had to have come before AD 70, and what better candidate than Jesus of Nazareth?) John the Immerser foresaw this (Matthew 3). The time was coming when the children of God would not be identified by genealogical roles written on tables of stone or parchment.

In addition to the above, it is important to understand the association of the "Book of Life" with the resurrection hopes of Israel.

When John said he saw the dead judged out of the Book of Life,

he was writing on a common Jewish theme that has unfortunately been lost to the modern student because of a, “benign neglect” of the study of the Old Covenant. This is tragic, since as Wilson observes, “Thorough knowledge of the Old Testament is thus imperative if one is to grasp the Hebraic foundation which underpins the theology and life of the earliest Church” (Wilson, Abraham, 108). To properly understand Revelation 20:12, and its reference to the Book of Life, we must comprehend the Old Covenant foundation of the promise. One thing is apparent, the Book of Life was tied to Israel’s last days resurrection hope.

We cannot examine every text that mentions God’s Books. We will focus on two texts that specifically predicted the time of Israel’s salvation, the time of the end, resurrection and judgment. The next chart will help visually compare these prophetic texts with Revelation.

Isaiah 2-4 Daniel 12 Revelation  
 In the last days, (2:2) Time of the end (v. 4) No more delay (10:6-7) Kingdom established, (2:2f) • Time of inheritance (v.13) Kingdom given to the saints, at resurrection (11:15f) At Day of the Lord (2:10f, 19f) •• Term not used but elements of that Day present Great Day of the Lord (6:12f; 16:14f) Day when “Branch of the Lord glorified” (4:2) Day of glorious coming of Christ (19) Salvation of Israel’s remnant, 4:2-4 Salvation of Israel, 12:1 Salvation of remnant of Israel, 7:4-8, 14:1f Salvation of those in God’s book (4:3) Salvation for those in God’s book (v.1) Salvation for those in God’s book, (20:12) ••• Israel’s salvation “by the spirit of fire and judgment” (4:4) Those written in book saved at time of Great Tribulation (v.1) •••• Salvation of those who come out of Great Tribulation (7:14) Tabernacle of God is with man (4:6) Reception of inheritance, eternal life (v.2, 13) Tabernacle of God with man Time when Israel judged in “the war” (3:13-14, 24f) All things fulfilled when power of holy people destroyed (v.7) Time when city that killed the Lord judged (11:8; 17-18)

• The coming of the kingdom and the resurrection are inextricably linked in scripture (Matthew 25:31-32; 2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Corinthians

15:51-53). Yet this concept is often ignored. Thus, when Isaiah predicted the establishment of the kingdom he was predicting the time of the resurrection. When Ezekiel and Daniel predicted the time of resurrection they were predicting the time of the kingdom. When Jesus, therefore, predicted the coming of the kingdom within the framework of the fall of Jerusalem (Luke 21:28-31) this was an implicit, but nonetheless powerful, declaration of the time for the resurrection (Daniel 12, 2, 7). The Biblical exegete cannot divorce these eschatological tenets that are so wedded in scripture.

••In Luke 23:28-31, Jesus applied Isaiah's last days prophecy of the Day of the Lord to the events of AD 70. Either He was: 1.) mistaken, 2.) He lifted the prophecy out of context, 3.) He was capriciously applying the words of Isaiah to His contemporary event even though they did not actually apply, or, 4.) He properly applied the prophecy of Isaiah.

If Jesus properly applied Isaiah's prediction to the fall of Jerusalem—and who would contend that He didn't?—then, since Isaiah's prediction included the salvation of those written in God's book, we must apply Revelation 20 to that framework as well.

•••This point is damaging to the millennial view. According to millennialists, the White Throne Judgment can only, "constitute those that are raised to condemnation" (Pentecost, Things To Come, 398). However, in Revelation, the Book of Life (not condemnation) would be opened, and according to Isaiah and Daniel, that is when Israel would be saved. Thus, millennialism says the Throne judgment is solely for condemnation, while scripture posits Israel's salvation, at the time of the Throne judgment.

Israel would not receive her full salvation until the opening of the Book of Life (Isaiah 2-4; Daniel 12). The Book of Life would not be opened until the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:1-12). Therefore, Israel would receive her salvation at the end, not the beginning, of the Millennium. Unquestionably, this has profound implications for the millennial construct, but not just for the millennialist.



Jesus taught that salvation is of the Jews. In other words, salvation flows from the Jews to the nations. If the Jews did not/have not received the fulfillment of their eschatological hopes—at the end of the millennium.—then there is no salvation for the nations.

•••Plainly, Jesus predicted the Great Tribulation for His generation, and linked it with the fall of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:21, 34). We can conclude that the Book of Life is associated with the close of Israel's history, because Jesus associated Daniel 12 with the events surrounding Israel's demise, and because Daniel posits the salvation of those written in the book at the time of Israel's Great Tribulation.

Israel's hope was indeed the resurrection, and linked with the Book of Life. Thus, when John wrote of the dead being judged out of the Book of Life, this was a powerful reminder that he was focused on the fulfillment of the Hope of Israel. Revelation 20 cannot be divorced from this context. John's focus in the Apocalypse is the imminent fulfillment of what the prophets foretold (Revelation 10:7; 22:6). The prophets were the prophets of Israel, predicting the coming of the Messiah at the consummation of, "The restoration of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). This means that the "eschatology" under consideration is the eschatology of Israel's history, it is not Historical Eschatology.

To apply the Book of Life to the future is to divorce the reference from its Old Covenant moorings. This demands that one be able to prove that Israel's Book had already been opened, and that, therefore, Revelation must refer to another Book of Life promise.

If one acknowledges the relationship of the Book of Life to Israel's Covenantal hopes, then one cannot logically argue that Israel has been cast off. If the Book of Life, and its attendant blessings for Israel, are still future, then surely God has not completed His work with Israel.

To apply Revelation 20 to a judgment of Rome, to a judgment against the Eastern European Common Market, exclusively to a judgment of condemnation, or to some future judgment divorced

from Israel's prophetic hope, is to completely ignore the proper context for understanding the Book of Life and the book of Revelation. The Book of Life belongs to Israel's promises, Israel's hope, Israel's destiny.

## **50 BABYLON AND THE OPENING OF THE BOOKS**

Not only does John record the opening of the Book of Life, he says, "the books were opened" (Revelation 20:12). This is an unmistakable reference to Daniel 7:10.

The prophet of the exile was given a vision during the night. He saw the coming of four kingdoms, and in the days of the fourth, a small horn was manifested as the enemy of God's saints (Daniel 7:8). The little horn persecuted the saints until the time of the judgment (v. 8f).

Daniel described the judgment scene, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down and the Ancient of Days did sit...and the judgment was set and the books were opened" (Daniel 7:9-10).

As the judgment scene unfolded, Daniel gave one of the great prophecies of the Old Testament, "I saw in the night vision and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days and they brought him near to Him. And there was given to Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should served Him, His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall never pass away" (Daniel 7:13-14).

It is widely held that Daniel 7:13-14 was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, with the establishment of the church. This is patently false. Daniel 7 is a vision of the judgment of the "little horn" that was guilty of persecuting the saints.

If the day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of Daniel 7:13-14, it follows that for some time before Pentecost, the Lord's saints had been persecuted (a time, times, and half time, Daniel 7:25).

Regardless of whether one identifies “the saints” as Old Covenant Israel, or the church, it is impossible to find a time of persecution prior to Pentecost.

The posit that Pentecost was the fulfillment of Daniel 7:13-14 is a miscarriage of exegesis. But if Daniel 7 was not fulfilled on Pentecost, when was/will it be fulfilled? In Matthew 24:30, Jesus predicted his judgment coming against Jerusalem, and cites Daniel 7:13-14 about the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven. Thus, Jesus applied the time of judgment of the little horn to the judgment of Israel. This is remarkable, but not unnoticed by the scholars. France says, “Whereas in Daniel 7 the Son of Man represented the triumph of Israel over other nations, the triumph of Jesus is, in the first instance, over the Jews.” France explains this by saying, “The suggestion is that Jesus’ teaching that He himself, and through him His disciples, now constituted the true people of God was deliberately carried to the extent of applying to the unbelieving Jews the Danielic visions of the crushing of the pagan opposition. In rejecting Jesus, the Jews, no less than the pagan empires were the opponents of the kingdom of God” (France, 147).

One thing is certain, Daniel 7 cannot be extended beyond the days of the Roman Empire. Daniel’s vision extended over four world empires. The last was to be the Roman. This has profound implications for the time of judgment, as well as the identity of Babylon.

Daniel 7 must be confined to the days of the Roman Empire, and not a restored Rome, for scripture knows nothing of such an idea. It follows that the opening of the books at the time of judgment occurred in the days of the Roman Empire. The judgment scene of Revelation 20 occurred long ago, because Revelation 20 is taken from Daniel 7.

This also means that Babylon in Revelation simply cannot be identified as any city, or entity, ancient or modern, that came into existence after the fall of Rome in AD 476. This automatically excludes America, the Common Market, the World Council of churches, and a host of other suggested candidates set forth by the commentators.

Daniel 7 presents the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds in judgment of the Little Horn, for persecution of the saints (Daniel 7:26f). It is when the books would be opened, and at the time of this judgment the kingdom is given to the saints (7:27).

Revelation depicts the judgment of Babylon for persecuting the saints (chapter 17-18). This is at the time of the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds (chapter 14). When this judgment occurs, the books are opened (20:12) and the kingdom is delivered (chapter 15).

Jesus foretold the destruction of Jerusalem for persecuting the saints (Matthew 23). He described that coming in typical apocalyptic language, as the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds (Matthew 24:30f). This verse is widely acknowledged to be a citation of Daniel 7:13). He also said that in the events of the fall of Jerusalem His disciples were to realize, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Luke 21:31).

Jesus applied Daniel 7:13 to his judgment coming against Jerusalem (Matthew 24:30). John cites the same text from Daniel (Revelation 11:15; 14:14) in his prediction of the judgment of Babylon. Are we to ignore Jesus’ application of Daniel? What is the basis for changing the application that Jesus made?

John’s reference to the time of the opening of the books provides a strong piece of evidence for identifying Babylon as Jerusalem.

## **51 THE NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH**

### **THE PROMISE MADE TO ISRAEL.**

#### **REVELATION 21:1**

At the conclusion of the millennium, John sees the arrival of the new heavens and earth, “ I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first earth had passed away” (Revelation 21:1). The promise of the new heavens and earth is a major study within itself, and I refer you to my book *The Elements Shall Melt With Fervent Heat* for a fuller discussion than we can offer here. Nonetheless, there are some things we need to see.

First, it is admitted by virtually all commentators that Revelation 21 is at least in some ways drawing from Isaiah 65-66.

Second, this admission means that John was focused on the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel.

Third, as we will see, according to Isaiah, the new creation would come only when Old Covenant Israel was destroyed.

For brevity, we will list here the constituent elements of Isaiah's prophecy.

?Israel would fill the measure of her sin (v. 6-7).

?Jehovah would destroy Israel, "You will leave your name for a curse to my chosen, for the Lord God will slay you" (v.65:15).

?The Lord would create a new people with a new name, "For the Lord will slay you, and call His people by another name" (v.15).

?From that destruction, the Lord would create a "new heavens and new earth" and new Jerusalem (v. 17).

Please notice the relevant issues.

?As we have seen, Revelation is about the fulfillment of the Old Covenant promises made to Israel (Revelation 10; 22).

?Isaiah 65 is the direct source for Revelation 21:1-4, the promise of the new creation, the new Jerusalem.

?Revelation is about a people/city (Babylon) that had filled the measure of her sin (Revelation 17:1-6; 18).

?This city was to be destroyed (Revelation 18).

?Following the destruction of Babylon, the Lord would give His people a new name in the new Jerusalem that was to come down from God out of heaven (Revelation 3:12?21:1-6, 10).

What is fascinating is that some scholars admit that Revelation 21 is the fulfillment of Isaiah, yet try to find in Revelation 20-21 a totally different eschatology from that foretold by Isaiah. This is untenable.

Gentry says Revelation 21, "With the shaking and destruction of Old Jerusalem in AD 70, the heavenly (re-created) Jerusalem replaced her" (Dominion, 363). If the New Jerusalem arrived in AD 70, then the new heavens and earth arrived at that time as well. This

has incredible implications for the postmillennial view.

The New Jerusalem comes at/after the removal of the heaven and earth (Revelation 21:1-2).

The New Jerusalem comes at/after the destruction of Old Jerusalem in AD 70 (Gentry).

But, the removal of the heaven and earth takes place at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:11).

Therefore, the end of the millennium comes at/after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

As can be seen, Gentry's position on the new creation in Revelation 21 effectively destroys his postmillennial eschatology. It naturally mitigates the amillennial paradigm as well. But, Gentry has posed more problems for the postmillennial view as well.

Gentry posits the sounding of the Seventh Trump in the first century, and says that its sounding meant: "Israel's time is up: 'There shall be no more delay.'" (Dominion, 407). Likewise, Mathison says that in the sounding of the Seventh Trump, "Israel's judgment has come in response to the cries of the martyrs (Revelation 6:10). With the destruction of the temple, the mystery will be finished (Cf. Ephesians 3:4-6)." Here is what is so significant, at the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, the resurrection occurs. Read Revelation 11:15f: "Then the Seventh angel sounded, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever....the nations were angry and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that You should reward your servants the prophets and saints.'" So, if Gentry, Mathison and other postmillennialists admit that the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet is the end of the Old Covenant world of Israel in AD 70, they have thereby admitted that the resurrection of Revelation 11, and the resurrection of Revelation 20 occurred at that time as well.

Notice the direct parallel between Revelation 11 and Revelation 20. In both we have the time of the resurrection. In both we have the time for the rewarding of the dead. In both we have the full arrival

of the kingdom, i.e. “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ,” and, the arrival of the New Jerusalem in chapter 21. This leads us to argue:

The time of the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet was the time of the end of the Old Covenant world of Israel in AD 70 (Gentry, Mathison, et.al.).

But, the time of the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet is the time of the dead that they should be judged (i.e. the time of the resurrection of the dead, Revelation 11:15f).

Therefore, the time of the dead that they should be judged (i.e. the resurrection of the dead) was the time of the end of the Old Covenant world of Israel in AD 70.

This leads us to:

The time of the dead that they should be judged (i.e. the resurrection of the dead) was the time of the end of the Old Covenant age of Israel in AD 70.

But, the time of the dead that they should be judged (i.e. the resurrection of the dead) was at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:11).

Therefore, the end of the millennium was the time of the end of the Old Covenant age of Israel in AD 70.

Of course, unlike postmillennialists, amillennialists believe that Revelation 21 describes an end of time, end of human history, end of the Christian age scenario. What is fascinating is that many scholars admit that Revelation 21 is based on Isaiah, yet fail or refuse to apply Revelation to the time and events foretold by Isaiah.

Notice in the listing of the constituent elements of Isaiah 65 above, that the new creation would come when Israel had filled the measure of her sin, God destroyed her, and created a new people with a new name. Here is the question: does any modern eschatological view provide for the creation of the new heavens and earth within the context of those events? The answer is no.

The postmillennialists believe that Israel is saved just before the end of the current Christian age.

The amillennialist does not believe in the total destruction of Israel for the bringing in of the new creation.

The dispensationalist does not believe that in the future, Israel fills the measure of her sin, is destroyed, and a new people created, to live in the new creation.

So, what we have is that the foundational text that foretold the coming of the new creation, the prophecy that Revelation 21 is based upon, presents an outline of events for the fulfillment of the prophecy, and yet, not one of the major eschatological paradigms follows Isaiah's outline. Isn't there something wrong here?

Revelation does honor Isaiah's prophecy however. Take a look at the chart.

Isaiah 65  
Revelation  
Salvation of the remnant (v. 8)  
Salvation of the remnant (7, 14)  
Filling the measure of sin (v. 6f)  
Filling the measure of sin (17:6f)  
Messianic Banquet (i.e. the wedding banquet, 13f)  
Time of the wedding (19:7f)  
The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' (22:17)  
Promise of the new name (v. 15)  
Promise of the new name (2:17; 3:12)  
A new people (15); "The Lord will slay you, and call His people by a new name." A new people, "I will make those who say they are Jews, but are not, to come and to know that I have loved you" (3:9).  
Destruction of the old creation (Old Covenant world; "The Lord will slay you")  
Removal of heaven and earth (20:11)  
New heavens and earth (v. 17f)  
New heavens and earth (21:1-2)  
New Jerusalem (v. 19)  
New Jerusalem (21:2-3)

These parallels powerfully demonstrate that John did indeed have Isaiah in mind. And of course this means that Revelation is about the fulfillment of God's promises to Old Covenant Israel, to be fulfilled in her last days, not in the last days of time. Since the events of Isaiah were not near when Isaiah made his prophecy, but John says they were near when he wrote, we must honor John's temporal statements. We cannot apply John to any other time than the end of the Old Covenant world of Judah that came with the catastrophic destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Judah had filled the measure of her sin (Matthew 23:29f; 1 Thessalonians 2:15f) by killing the



Lord and his apostles and prophets, and as a result, that old world was about to be removed by Christ's coming to vindicate his own suffering, and the blood of the apostles and prophets.

To apply John's prophecy of the new heavens and earth to times, events and entities other than the prophecy he is drawing from foretold is not justified hermeneutically. We need to stay within the confines of his express statements, and within the parameters of the prophecies that serve as his source. When we do, it is more than apparent that Babylon of Revelation was Old Covenant Jerusalem.

## **52 THE NEW JERUSALEM**

### **REVELATION 21:2**

“Then I, John, saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God as a bride adorned for her husband.”

Revelation is a contrast between two cities, Babylon, and the new Jerusalem. We suggest that the emphasis on the new Jerusalem demands that Babylon is the old Jerusalem. This is substantiated by noting the nature of the conflict in Revelation.

In chapter 2:9, the conflict is between those who, “say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan.” In 3:9, it is the same conflict against, “the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, but do lie.” This was not an isolated issue, but the issue of the day.

In Galatians 4:22f, Paul contrasted, “the Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with her children,” with, “the Jerusalem that is above, and is the mother of us all.” The same contrast is found in Hebrews 12:18-28, it is the conflict between the two “cities of God,” each claiming identity as the children of God. The same contrast, although admittedly not in the specific terminology of two cities, is found in Philippians 3. Be sure to read the special section below on Paul and the Apocalypse for a fuller discussion of the contrast of the

two cities.

Our point is that the emphasis on the new Jerusalem is relevant in light of the old Jerusalem. If the old Jerusalem had lain in ruins for nearly a quarter of a century, as the late date suggests, what would be the relevance of the constant emphasis on the new Jerusalem?

Any study of the new Jerusalem and the Apocalypse should include at least a cursory examination of the prophetic background of this concept. While this study alone could become very long, we will confine our investigation to just two Old Covenant texts to show that the book of Revelation is perfectly consistent with, and is the culmination of, a long line of prophecy.

We will simply enumerate the points of comparison between Isaiah 24-25, Isaiah 64-66, and Revelation. By this comparison the identity of Babylon in Revelation can be firmly established.

1.) Destruction of “heaven and earth.” Isaiah 24:1-4, 19-20? Isaiah 64:1-2; 65:17? Revelation 21:1. What is often ignored in modern discussions of the destruction of “heaven and earth” is that the Old Covenant often spoke of the giving of God’s law as the creation of “heaven and earth.” Read Isaiah 51:15-16 carefully, and see that the reference to the creation of “heaven and earth” in the text cannot refer to the creation of the material world. It refers to the creation of a “covenant world.”

Gentry recognized that Isaiah predicted the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, and the New Covenant creation to follow. Strangely, however, although Isaiah is the source of 2 Peter 3, Gentry insists that Peter speaks of something different. (Dominion, 363).

Now, if God created Israel’s Old Covenant heaven and earth by giving them the Old Covenant, would not the taking away of that Old Law be the destruction of “heaven and earth”? If He gave a New Covenant, would that not be the creation of a “new heaven and earth”?

2.) Reason for destruction of “heaven and earth” is violation of “the everlasting covenant.” Isaiah 24:5? Isaiah 65:6-7? Revelation 17:1-6. The concept found in all three passages is that of filling the measure

of sin, see our discussion above. Please note also that in Isaiah 24, it is specifically identified as the sin of violating, “the everlasting covenant.” What covenant would that be from Isaiah’s perspective? It could be none other than the Old Covenant of Israel. Thus, Isaiah 24 depicts heaven and earth as being destroyed because Israel was disobedient. In Isaiah 65-66, God would destroy Israel to create the new heavens and earth. In Revelation, Babylon is destroyed to bring in the new creation.

3.) Violation of the Law brought “the curse.” Isaiah 24:5-6? Isaiah 65:11-17? Revelation 22:3. There is actually a difference in these passages in regard to the curse. In Isaiah 24 and 65, the curse falls because of violation of the Law, but in Revelation 22:3, “there is no more curse”.

4.) The removal of the curse, Isaiah 25:7-8? Isaiah 65:17-19? Revelation 21-22. This is the promise of the removal of the curse of sin-death. See Romans 8:1-3.

5.) God dwelling with His people in “Zion.” Isaiah 24:23? Isaiah 65:24-25? Revelation 21:3. A pertinent question to ponder is: how could God dwell in Zion, if literal heaven and earth has been destroyed? See our discussion above about the consistent New Testament contrast between the old Zion/Jerusalem and the new.

6.) The Messianic Banquet. Isaiah 25:6? Isaiah 65:13f? Revelation 19:7; 21:2, 9f. The Messianic Banquet, otherwise known as the Wedding Banquet of the Messiah, is one of Jesus’ favorite themes (Matthew 8:11f; 22:1f; 25:1f; Luke 14; 22:30). Those first invited to the Banquet, Old Covenant Israel, spurn the invitation, persecute the Lord’s servants, and are consequently destroyed.

7.) Take special note that in Isaiah 24-25 the banquet comes only after the fall of, “the city of confusion,” the city guilty of violating the everlasting covenant. In Isaiah 65, the banquet of the Lord’s new people comes at the destruction of old Israel (65:13). In Revelation, the Wedding comes at the fall of Babylon, where the Lord was crucified. Should we ignore such parallels?

8.) The destruction of death. Isaiah 25:8? Isaiah 65:20f? Revelation

21:4. This is normally given as a proof that these predictions cannot be descriptive of the fall of Jerusalem, since after all, people are still dying. This fails to recognize that the death under consideration, and that is the focus of the Biblical doctrine of resurrection, is not physical death, but deliverance from sin-death. This would be accomplished through the perfection of the atoning work of Jesus, initiated at the Cross, and perfected at His parousia (Hebrews 9:28). The Hebrew writer said this was to come, “in a very, very little while” (10:37). See the section above on Babylon, Resurrection and Daniel 12 for more on this.

9.) No tears. Isaiah 25:8? Isaiah 65:19? Revelation 21:4. Many commentators see that Isaiah was not predicting the literal end of tears, but was describing the spiritual joy and blessings in the present kingdom of Christ. They even understand that Isaiah 65 is descriptive of the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. For instance, Theoderet of Cyrus an early church father, challenged the Jews and their continuing affection to their old city, “Let them show us their Jerusalem delivered from tears. For that city (Jewish Jerusalem) was handed over to many misfortunes, whereas for this city (the heavenly Jerusalem) alone enjoys life without grief and free of tears” (Theoderet was commenting on Isaiah 65:19).

Strangely, however, in spite of the fact that Revelation is a book that specifically says it is spiritual and symbolic, and obviously predicted the consummation of the prophetic hope (10:6-7) we are told that the language of Revelation is literal.

Consider this thought very quickly:

The time of no tears of Isaiah 25 would be the time of the resurrection when God would “swallow up death forever” (Isaiah 25:8).

But, the time when God would swallow up death forever, would be the time when Israel’s Messianic salvation hopes would be consummated (Isaiah 25:9f).

Therefore, the time of no tears, when death would be swallowed up, would be the time of the fulfillment of Israel’s Messianic salvation

hopes.

Once again we are reminded that Revelation is about the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, because Revelation anticipated the time when God would wipe away the tears of the remnant of Israel (Revelation 7, 14) and destroy death (Revelation 20). And, since Isaiah 24 places the time of the destruction of death at the time when the city of confusion, i.e. Jerusalem was destroyed (24:10) and John places the destruction of death at the judgment of Babylon, this proves that Babylon was Jerusalem.

10.) The coming of the Lord. Isaiah 24-25 does not specifically mention the coming of the Lord, but few question its presence here. Isaiah 64-66 speaks of the coming of the Lord (64:1-2; 66:15, etc.). In Revelation, the parousia is the focus (19, 22:6, 10, 12, 20, etc.).

This brief comparison of prophetic texts shows that Revelation is not introducing a new city into the mixture. A consistent Biblical theme is that the fall of Jerusalem is central to Biblical eschatology. This is why we said at the beginning that to identify Babylon as Jerusalem establishes Biblical eschatology as Covenant Eschatology, and not Historical Eschatology. In these Old Testament prophecies, we find the New Testament foundation for the prediction of "the end." Yet, it is evident that these texts do not speak of the end of material creation, but the end of Old Covenant Israel.

Several things are required to negate these comparisons.

1.) One must positively demonstrate that these passages are not parallel.

2.) Show that the eschatology of the texts is not covenantal but truly is Historical.

3.) Establish that some other city was ever described in the distinctively covenantal terms of these texts.

4.) Prove positively that Rome, as Babylon, had displaced Israel as the central player in God's redemptive plan.

It is not possible to prove these things. Since the prophetic themes of Isaiah 24-25 and 64-66 are the themes of Revelation, and since the prophecies of Isaiah deal with the final fall of Jerusalem and Israel,

we conclude that Babylon of Revelation is Old Covenant Jerusalem.

Be sure to read the special study Paul and the Apocalypse for a further study of the new Jerusalem.

## **53 BABYLON AND THE NEW TABERNACLE**

### **REVELATION 21:3**

“And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people.’”

John’s vision of the new creation reveals that God would establish His tabernacle among men. As with all other tenets of John’s vision, this promise springs from God’s covenant promises to Israel.

For brevity we will examine only two of the key Old Testament texts that foretold the establishment of God’s Tabernacle/Temple.

Isaiah 2-4 is one of the most significant of all Old Testament predictions. Isaiah is projected into “the last days” to see both the positive and the negative events that would transpire.

The events of the last days are about the fate of Israel. Contrary to Ice, there are not two last days periods foretold in scripture. In his attempt to establish two separate eschatons, one for Israel, and one for the church age, Ice says Old Testament references to the last days refer to Israel’s last days that will begin with the Rapture. However, he says, “Since believers today live during the church age, which will end with the rapture of the church, prophetic signs relating to Israel are not being fulfilled in our day” (Prophecy, 12). This directly contradicts what the New Testament inspired writers say. (By this we do not mean to imply that Old Testament prophecy is being fulfilled today. The New Testament writers say that Old Testament predictions were being fulfilled in their day. Jesus said all prophecy would be fulfilled at the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, Luke 21:22)

In Acts 3, Peter appeals to his Jewish audience, “Repent, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and

that He may send Jesus Christ, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began...yea, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those that follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.”

Peter is speaking to a Jewish audience, about Jewish promises, and says all of the Jewish prophets spoke of his “these days.” According to Ice, God’s prophetic clock in regard to Israel was not ticking. Peter was living in the church age, yet Peter affirmed that these Jewish promises were being fulfilled in his days. Peter knew nothing of two last days periods. As a matter of fact, he emphatically said he was living in the last days foretold by the Jewish prophets.

Isaiah 2-4 speaks of Israel’s last days, Ice admits this (Prophecy, 9). Yet, Joel 2, a passage that Ice omits in his list delineating the two last days periods, and Isaiah 2, predicted the identical events for the last days. Both predicted the salvation of Israel by judgment (Isaiah 4/Joel 3:16f). Both predicted the Day of the Lord (Isaiah 2:10f/Joel 2:29f). Both predicted the salvation of the Gentiles (Isaiah 2:3f/Joel 2:28-32). Other parallels could be produced, but the point is clear. If Isaiah 2 speaks of Israel’s last days, then Joel 2-3 speaks of Israel’s last days. This means that Israel’s last days are not in the future, but in the past.

According to Ice, Isaiah 2-4 awaits fulfillment in Israel’s last days, after the Rapture. However, in Acts 2:15f, Peter quotes from Joel 2:28f and says, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel”. Peter did not say, “This is what it will be like in the last days when Joel is fulfilled.” He did not say, “This is a foretaste of the fulfillment of Joel.” He said, “This is that.” How dare anyone deny what Peter says?

This undeniably means that Peter was living in the critical eschaton of Israel. The time for the fulfillment of Israel’s promises had come. They were not to be delayed for two millennia.

The study of Isaiah 2-4 is, therefore, extremely critical to understand God’s promises to Israel about the new tabernacle.

At the time of the end, the kingdom would be established (Isaiah 2:2-3). The Day of the Lord (2:9-11; 2:19-21) would consummate the last days period. The Lord would stand up to judge His people (Isaiah 3:13) and it would be the time of “the war” (3:25). The prophet said, “in that day” the Lord would remove the “blood-guilt” from Israel. This blood-guilt was the guilt incurred from killing the prophets and God’s elect (Isaiah 1:15; 59:3, 7; see also Jeremiah 2:34; 7:6, etc.).

In the Day that the Lord redeemed Israel, He would do so, “by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of fire” (Isaiah 4:4). When the blood-guilt was cleansed, “There will a tabernacle for shade in the daytime and heat, for a place of refuge, and a shelter from storm and rain” (4:6). Isaiah’s prediction is remarkable in its similarity to the book of Revelation. Notice the chart.

Isaiah 2-4 Revelation Prophecy for “the last days” (2:2) John was in the last days (Acts 2:15f) Israel guilty of blood-guilt, shedding the blood of the prophets see above. Babylon guilty of shedding the blood of the prophets (16:6f) Day of the Lord to punish the blood-guilt (2:19f; 4:2f) Day of the Lord to punish the blood-guilt (6:9-17). • Day of the Lord a time of War against Israel 3:13-26). Day of the Lord against Babylon “where the Lord was slain” (11:8) Tabernacle to follow the Day of the Lord (4:4-6) Tabernacle to follow the Day of the Lord (21:2f) Fulfillment far off in “the last days” (2:2) Fulfillment “must shortly come to pass” (22:6, 10, 12, etc)

• As we have seen, in Luke 23:28-31, Jesus cites Isaiah 2:19-22 (par. Hosea 10:8) in what is widely agreed to be a prediction of the fall of Jerusalem. In Revelation 6:12f, John cites the identical verses from Isaiah. If Jesus applied Isaiah 2 to the impending fall of Jerusalem, what is the hermeneutical authority for applying Revelation 6:15f—which draws from the identical verses in Isaiah—to a yet future event?

Such comparisons logically compel us to identify Babylon as first century Jerusalem. To deny this identity one must establish several things:

- 1.) That John’s vision is different from that foretold by Isaiah, yet



Jesus and John both quote Isaiah 2:20f.

2.) He must prove that there were two cities guilty of blood guilt—in the last days—to be avenged at the day of the Lord.

3.) He must prove that while Jesus applied Isaiah 2 to the events of AD 70, John applied the identical verses from Isaiah to a different city far removed in time.

4.) He must prove that the Lord was to establish His tabernacle after the destruction of two different cities. Proof of these things is lacking.

The second great O. T. prediction of the tabernacle of God is Ezekiel 37. The prophet was given a promise of the resurrection, and the salvation of Israel. In those days, “David” (the Messiah) would be king, Jehovah would establish a covenant of peace, and establish His tabernacle among men (v. 26).

In 2 Corinthians 6:14f, Paul, writing to the body of Christ, quotes from Ezekiel 37, “for you are the temple of God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them. I will be their God, and they will be my people.’” This is critical.

As we have noted repeatedly in this work the New Testament writers affirm repeatedly that they preached nothing but the hope of Israel. They longed for the fulfillment of God’s promises to the Fathers. No where does Paul or any other the other writers tell us that Israel’s hope had been deferred, postponed, or delayed. Furthermore, they never tell us that they are “allegorizing” prophecies that will one day be fulfilled literally. What they tell us repeatedly is that the events of their time were in fact the things foretold by the O. T. prophets (Acts 2:17f; 3:21f; 1 Peter 1:10f). They even tell us that the natural man could not understand those prophecies without the guidance of the apostles inspired of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:6f).

Hays notes that, “Most NT scholars have tended to assume that Paul (and the other NT authors, DKP) merely exploited the OT as a collection of oracular proof texts, without regard for original context, thus the idea that Paul read any individual OT book as a literary

or theological unity has seldom been entertained.”(Conversion,25). In addition to this view is the idea especially prominent among millennialists that when the NT writers cite OT prophecies, they are simply using “accommodative language” to say what it will be like when the OT prophecy is actually fulfilled. However, this is not the case at all. When the NT writers cite the OT prophecies, they tell us that the original prophets knew that they did not speak of their times, but of the NT first century generation (1 Peter 1:10). Those prophets spoke of “these days” (Acts 3:24f). As Jesus himself said, “Many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” (Matthew 13:17). The time of fulfillment had come.

What this means is that when Paul told the Corinthians that they were what Ezekiel 37 foretold, that Paul was not engaging in allegorical manipulation of the prophecy. He was not distorting Israel’s promises, or hi-jacking them for the church. He said that the church at Corinth, the body of Christ is what Ezekiel actually foretold. He did not tell them that they were something like what Ezekiel foretold, but that the real thing remained in the future. This clearly means Paul employed a “spiritual hermeneutic” in his interpretation of Ezekiel. Paul nowhere indicates that he expected both a literal and spiritual fulfillment of the same prophecy.

In Ephesians 2, Paul relates how in Christ, Jew and Gentile have become one. In verses 19-22, he uses temple imagery to tell how the Gentiles and Jews, “being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.” Bruce says, “As the God of Israel had once taken up His residence in the wilderness tabernacle, and later in the Jerusalem temple by His name and His glory, so now His Spirit makes the fellowship of believers, Jewish and Gentile alike, His chosen dwelling-place.” Paul’s temple theology, therefore, is related to Jew and Gentile equality. As we will see, this demanded the removal of the old temple at Jerusalem.

If Paul, in 2 Corinthians, applied Ezekiel’s prediction to the

church, what is the authority for applying John's citation of Ezekiel to a yet future building of a literal temple. Paul's doctrine of the new tabernacle is related to the mystery of God, Jew and Gentile equality. This reinforces what we have seen earlier about the necessity for the passing of the Old Covenant temple.

John was not anticipating a different temple from Paul. In his epistles, Paul spoke of the on-going construction of the temple. In Revelation, we see the consummated and perfected tabernacle. It is not two temples, but one. In Paul, it is under construction, in Revelation, it is completed, and God dwells with man. As the title of Spatafora's work suggests, in Revelation we see the transition from The Temple of God to God as the Temple completed. The process begun with the laying of "the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ the chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:19f) is now complete.

We conclude, based on the relationship of the new tabernacle to the ministry of Paul, that Babylon in Revelation was Jerusalem.

## **54 THE NEW JERUSALEM AND THE GLORY**

### **OF GOD**

#### **REVELATION 21:11**

"He showed me the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God."

As John sees the new Jerusalem come from God at the fall of Babylon, the city is described as possessing the, "glory of God." The casual reader might well ignore or miss the significance of this idea. Yet, this reference is helpful in identifying Babylon.

The, "glory of God" is a reference to the Shekinah, the manifestation of God's presence and is associated with the temple of God. It is necessary to trace the history of this idea.

In Exodus 25-40, Jehovah delivered instructions to Moses for the construction of the tabernacle. That tent was to be the "tent of

meeting.” God said, “I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory” (Exodus 29:43f). When the construction was completed, “A cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (40:34).

At a later period, when Solomon had built the temple at Jerusalem, the time of dedication had arrived. It was an August occasion. As the priests took the ark of testimony into the Most Holy Place, and exited, “The cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord” (1 Kings 8:10-11).

Later in Israel’s history the nation apostatized. Idolatry and immorality was rampant. The nation killed the prophets sent to her, and oppressed the righteous (7:23; 22:3-27; 24:7f; etc.). Jehovah sent Ezekiel, “the son of man,” to the nation calling for repentance, all to no avail. In chapter 10:18, the Son of Man was given a vision, “The glory of God departed from the threshold of the house.” Again in chapter 11:23, “The glory of God went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.” (The mountain would have been the Mt. of Olives, keep this in mind.) With the departure of the glory of God, the city of Jerusalem fell in BC 586.

In spite of the departure of the glory of God, Ezekiel was given the promise of the new tabernacle in chapter 37, a text we have already examined. In the last days, Jehovah would once again establish His presence among the people. This time, however, the tabernacle would be for all men of all nations (Isaiah 2-4). In Ezekiel 43, the Son of Man is given a vision of the new temple of God, and, “The glory of God came from the way of the east...and the glory of God came into the house.” In the ensuing description of the new tabernacle, Ezekiel sees a River of Life flowing from the temple, giving life to all (Chapter 47). We now leap forward to the ministry of the ultimate “Son of Man.”

The one term Jesus applied to himself more than any other is “Son of Man.” In the book of John, it is his exclusive title, and Jesus’ ministry reflects that of the son of man called Ezekiel.

Like Ezekiel, Jesus was sent to Israel (Matthew 15:24). He called the sinful nation to repentance (Luke 19:10). He also came proclaiming impending doom on the nation because she had shed innocent blood (Matthew 23:29f). Just like Ezekiel, Jesus signaled the departure of the glory of God from the temple.

In Matthew 23:37-38, after pronouncing seven “woes” on the city, Jesus said, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” This signaled the departure of the glory of God from that hallowed place.

Ezekiel saw the glory of God depart to the mountain east of the city, and Jerusalem was destroyed shortly thereafter. Likewise, Jesus left the temple, and went to the Mt. of Olives, and there pronounced the impending end of the age.

Ezekiel foresaw the coming of the new tabernacle, and the glory of God descending upon it. Jesus foretold His coming in the “glory-cloud” when He would “gather together” the elect (Matthew 24:30-31). The parallels between Ezekiel and Jesus are striking as the chart shows.

Ezekiel	Jesus	Title: son of man	Title: Son of Man	Sent to Israel	Sent to Israel
Message of impending judgment on Jerusalem (chap. 7)	Message of impending judgment on Jerusalem (Matthew 23-24)				
Glory of God departs the temple, goes to Mt. Olives (chap.11)	Jesus departs the temple, goes to Mt. Olives (Matthew 24:1-3)				
Predicts a new temple and new order (Ezekiel 37)	Predicts a new temple and new order (John 2, 4)				
Glory of God descends on new temple	Glory of God descends on new temple (Revelation 21:11)				
River of Life flows from the new Jerusalem/Temple (chap. 47)	River of Life flows from the new Jerusalem/Temple (John 4; Revelation 22)				
Judah is the Harlot in Ezekiel	Babylon is the Harlot in Revelation				

Quickly take note of the last comparison. In Ezekiel’s day Judah and Jerusalem had become the harlot in God’s eyes. She had committed

adultery with her lovers. Read Ezekiel 16 and 23 to gain insight into her depravity. Ezekiel, the son of Man, said that Jerusalem was the harlot. Likewise, Jesus, Son of Man, repeatedly said that Judah were once again guilty of adultery (Matthew 16; Mark 8.38). Considering that John draws so heavily on Ezekiel, and knew personally of Jesus' teaching, his referent to Babylon as the harlot and the adulterous woman lends itself toward identifying Babylon as Jerusalem.

In John 4, Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman about the water of life. One is hard pressed not to hear the echo of Ezekiel 37 and 47 about the coming new temple and the River of Life. Just as Ezekiel foretold the demise of Jerusalem, and the coming of a new temple, from which the River of Life would flow, Jesus spoke to the woman about the Water of Life, the passing of the old Jerusalem, and the coming time of a universal worship. This is precisely what we find in Revelation, and thus what Jesus said has a direct bearing on the identity of Babylon.

If Jesus associated the River of Life in the new world with the passing of Jerusalem, and if John associated the River of Life in the new creation with the fall of Babylon, how can Babylon be any other city than Jerusalem?

The Samaritans worshiped on Mt. Gerazim even though their temple there had long ago been destroyed. The long-standing debate and strife between the Jews and Samaritans is illustrated by the woman's word and Jesus' response, "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. Jesus saith to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming and now is when the true worshipers will worship God in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.'"

In the fourth century, Eusebius made the following comments:

"Christ sojourned in this life, and the teaching of the New Covenant was borne to all the nations, and at once the Romans

besieged Jerusalem, and destroyed it and the Temple there. At once the whole of the Mosaic law was abolished, with all that remained of the Old Covenant, and the curse passed over to those who became lawbreakers because they obeyed Moses' law, when its time had gone by, and still clung ardently to it, for at that very moment the perfect teaching of the New Law was introduced in its place. And, therefore, our Lord and Savior rightly says to those who suppose that God ought only to be worshiped in Jerusalem, or in certain mountains, or some definite places: "The hour cometh and now is..."

Eusebius clearly apprehended the import of Jesus' words. The old order passed, and the new was fully set in place with the fall of Jerusalem. The city fell, never again to be the exclusive locus of worship.

Earlier in his ministry, Jesus indicated this coming change in the nature of the temple. As the Lord entered the temple area, he witnessed the profanation of the entire system. Money changers were violating the sacred laws on usury. The Sadducean control of the temple sacrifices and money changing had become a shame and disgrace.

Enraged by what he was witnessing the Lord cleansed the temple with a whip hastily devised of materials at hand. Challenged to give the authority by which He acted Jesus simply responded, "Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). The Jews misunderstood him to be speaking of the physical edifice, "But he was speaking of the Temple of His body" (v. 21).

Lightfoot says, "The Lord performs an act by which He condemns the methods and manner of the existing Jewish worship. Secondly, this act, as set forth by St. John, is a sign of the destruction of the old order of worship, that of the Jewish Church, and its replacement by a new order of worship, that of the Christian Church, the sanctuary or shrine of the Living God. And thirdly, intermediate between the old order and the new order is the 'work' —the ministry, death and resurrection—of the Lord, which alone makes possible the

inauguration and the life of the new temple.”

The conflation of John 2 and John 4 presents us with the message that the Old Covenant temple was to be replaced by a new temple constituted by the body of Christ. In the Pauline corpus, the “body of Christ” is the church, and the church is the temple of God under construction.

As we have seen, Paul cites Ezekiel’s promise of a new tabernacle, and says to the church, “You are the temple of God” (2 Corinthians 6:14f). While Ezekiel foresaw the coming of a new temple on which the glory of God would reside, Paul identified that temple as the church under construction. Notice the present tense nature of the verbs in Ephesians 2, “You are being built up a habitation of God.” Peter agrees with the concept of the on-going “construction” of the temple in the first century. He tells his audience, “You, therefore, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5).

In Revelation, however, the temple of God is no longer under construction, it is completed, and the glory of God descends upon it. In the new creation, John says, “I saw no Temple in it” (Revelation 21:22) because, “The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.” What Jesus foretold in John 2:19f and John 4:20f has now become a reality. In harmony with the Old Covenant examples of the dedication of the temple of the Lord, in Revelation, the Shekinah glory of Jehovah now comes to rest upon the new temple of the Lord.

In Revelation, John sees the realization of John 4:20f. Jesus foretold the time when Jerusalem would be passe. In Matthew 24, he says the temple would disappear, in Revelation the temple is now gone. If Jesus foretold the situation that John sees coming to reality, and Jesus’ prediction dealt with the passing of Jerusalem, upon what basis do we say that John’s vision involves Rome?

The imagery of the glory of God upon the new Jerusalem belongs to temple imagery related to Israel’s promises. As Gregg says, “The Shekinah that once rested upon the temple on earthly Jerusalem has departed that institution and come to light upon the church, the new temple of the Holy Spirit and the new city of God” (Revelation,



493).

How would the fall of Rome, or the World Council of Churches complete the new temple of God? Are we to ignore the historical context of the appearance of the glory of God? Are we to ignore the covenantal significance of the glory of God departing from or descending on the temple? Should we ignore the relationship between what Jesus foretold, and what John saw?

When we honor the significance of the descent of the glory of God on the new temple of God, and the implicit contrast with the city of Babylon, the identity of Babylon becomes clear, Babylon was first century Jerusalem.

## **55 BABYLON AND THE RIVER OF LIFE REVELATION 22:1**

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

Immediately following the judgment on Babylon, the new creation comes down from heaven (Revelation 21:1f). In this new creation, there runs a beautiful, life giving River (Revelation 22:1). As with the Book of Life, the promise of the River of Life is inextricably linked with the fulfillment of Israel’s Covenant promises. Failure to honor this dooms any hope of properly interpreting the Apocalypse.

### **ISRAEL’S HOPE AND THE RIVER OF LIFE**

In the Old Covenant, the River of Life flows from Israel’s judgment:

1.) In Isaiah 35:4f, the River flows at the coming of the Lord in vengeance. Patently this cannot be referent to Jesus’ incarnation when, “He will not quarrel nor cry out...a bruised reed He will not break” (Matthew 12:19-20). It is a reference to His judgment coming. In Luke 21:22, Jesus said of His coming in judgment against Jerusalem, “these be the days of vengeance when all things that are

written must be fulfilled.”

2.) In Joel 3, the fountain of cleansing is opened in Jerusalem after the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord Joel (2:30-32; 3:14f). In Matthew 24:29-31, 34, Jesus quotes Joel, and says it would be fulfilled in His coming against Jerusalem in His generation.

3.) In Zechariah 13:1, the fountain for the cleansing of Israel would be opened in the day when, “they will look on me whom they have pierced,” (12:10) the day when there would be “great mourning in Jerusalem.” Jesus quotes from Zechariah 12:10 in Matthew 24:30, in His prediction of judgment against Jerusalem.

4.) In Zechariah 14:1-8, Jerusalem would be pillaged and captured in the Day of the Lord. The references to “in that day” absolutely limit the references to the opening of the River of Life (v. 8) to the day of the siege of Jerusalem and the Lord’s deliverance of His people.

## **THE RIVER AND THE FALL OF JERUSALEM ZECHARIAH 14,**

Zechariah 14 is significant for the study of the River of Life, and the identity of Babylon. Carrington says that besides Ezekiel, Zechariah has influenced the Apocalypse more than any other book. Zechariah’s prediction of the coming of the Lord in chapter 14 is important.

There has always been widespread belief that Zechariah 14 predicted the AD 70 parousia of Jesus. The early Christian writers applied this chapter to Jerusalem’s demise. The Second Coming Bible says Cyril and Theophylact held the view. Hengstenberg also cites Jerome, and “several others, particularly of the fathers,” who applied Zechariah “to the captivity by the Romans.” Merrill Unger, millennial writer, acknowledged that Zechariah’s prophecy was applied to AD 70 by “many early writers.” The respected Methodist scholar Adam Clarke said, “This appears to be a prediction of that war in which Jerusalem was finally destroyed, and the Jews scattered over the face of the earth.” Terry says Zechariah spoke of the AD

70 coming of the Lord. Gentry, in the modern apology for post-millennialism, has an excellent discussion advocating the AD 70 application for Zechariah's prediction. (Dominion, 468-472)

The millennialist rejects the AD 70 application, because of his insistence on a literal interpretation of scripture, regardless of how the New Covenant scriptures apply them. Attempts have also been made to apply the prophecy to the Maccabean period. Long ago, Eusebius responded to such views:

“Neither in the time of the Macedonians from Alexander onwards, not even if you include the reign of Augustus, was anything similar to the words of the prophet fulfilled. For when in those days did the Lord, Whom the prophet speaks of as divine, come among men and many nations know him and confess Him the only God, and take refuge in Him and be to Him a people? Or when in the times of the Macedonians or Persians did the king who was foretold come, sitting upon an ass and a young colt? When did He come and utterly destroy the royal array of the Jewish nation, here called Ephraim, and of Jerusalem itself, called chariots and horses, and conquer the army of the Jews?”

(Eusebius realized that in the fall of Jerusalem, Jesus came.)

Clearly, Zechariah 14 has a strong tradition of application to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Unless one can show that scripture posits the opening of two Rivers of Life, at the time of two different comings of the Lord against two different cities, then the relationship between Zechariah 14 and Revelation is firmly established. To further prove this relationship, the next chart will show the correspondence between Revelation and Zechariah 14.

## **ZECHARIAH 14 REVELATION**

Destruction of Jerusalem (v.1f) Fall of city where the lord was crucified (11:8) Escape possible (v.5) Come out of her my people lest you partake of her plagues (18:4) Coming of the lord (v.5) Coming of the Lord (14, 19) Time of light (v.6-7) No need of sun (21:23) Lord

shall be king (v.9) God on the throne (22:3) No more curse (v.11) No more curse (22:3-4) River of life flows from Jerusalem (v.8) River of life flows from Jerusalem (22:1f) Nations come to Jerusalem (v.16f) Nations come to Jerusalem (21:26f)

With this relationship established, the reference to the opening of the River of Life has a bearing on the identity of Babylon, and our view of Revelation. The River of Life would be opened as a result of Babylon's judgment (Revelation 18-22:3). The River of Life would be opened as a result of Jesus' coming against Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:1-8). Therefore, Babylon was Jerusalem.

What relationship would the fall of Rome, per the amillennial view of Babylon and Revelation, have to the River of Life? None. What Old Testament prophecy associated the opening of the River of Life with the fall of Roman Catholicism? None. What connection would the Eastern European Common Market have with the River of Life? None.

The River would flow from the fulfillment of Israel's promises. John said Revelation was the anticipation of what the prophets had foretold, and the time of fulfillment was "at hand" (Revelation 22:6-8). Any attempt to remove the River of Life from the fulfillment of Israel's promises is improper.

## **56 REVELATION AND THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS REVELATION 21-22**

Revelation ends with man restored to the Garden of Eden. Chilton, commenting on chapter 22 says, "The scene is based, first, on the Garden of Eden. . . . The blessings which Adam forfeited have been restored in overwhelming superabundance, for what we have gained in Christ is, as Paul said 'much more' than what we lost in Adam" (Vengeance, 566-567). McGuiggan says, "This picture of a river flowing and trees of life sends us back, of course, to the Garden of Eden" (Revelation, 312). The curse of the Garden (Genesis 3) is

now removed, as foretold by Isaiah 24-25 and Zechariah 14. Man is back in the presence of God, with access to the Tree of Life. This is what scripture calls, “The restoration of all things” (Acts 3:21f) and it would occur at the end of the Old Covenant world of Israel.

As Peter and John entered the temple area, the crippled man implored them for alms (Acts 3). Unable to give that, they gave him a far greater gift, his health. The excitement generated by this miracle gave rise to one of the most stirring promises, and theologically significant sermons, in scripture.

“Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”

### **THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS: THE HOPE OF ISRAEL**

Proper interpretation of Acts 3 clearly depends on the determination of what was to be, or will be, depending on a person’s view, restored. The word *apokatastasis* (restoration, Strong’s #605) means to restore, to set back to the correct position. The word itself does not indicate the object or nature of restoration. It simply means to set aright what has gone wrong. Thayer’s lexicon says it is, “the restoration not only of the true theocracy, but also of that more perfect state of (even physical) things that existed before the fall.”

The focus of restoration in Acts 3 was Israel, and through Israel, the restoration of man to Eden, not material creation. This is the overall message of Luke.

Scholars have long debated the purpose of Acts. Conzelmann suggested that Acts was to teach the church how to live in light of the failed parousia. Bruce says the purpose of the book is three-fold: 1.) To show the continuing work of Christ, through the Spirit, after His resurrection and ascension. 2.) To, “defend Christianity and Paul

against the accusations of various opponents.” 3.) To demonstrate the successful mission of Paul in standing before the emperor in Rome. Thiessen suggests a four-fold purpose: 1.) To supply authoritative information about the early church leaders. 2.) To demonstrate the unity of the early church among Jews and Gentiles. 3.) To show that Paul was not a troublemaker and thus undeserving of imprisonment. 4.) To show that God was with the apostles by means of miracles, wonders and signs.

While there is some merit to these suggestions, except Conzelmann’s, we suggest that the purpose of Acts was to chronicle the completion of the World Mission in its proclamation that God was fulfilling His promise to restore Israel. It needs to be understood that the promise of the new heavens and earth, envisioned by John in the Apocalypse, is the epitome of the restoration promises to Israel. These promises hearken back to the Garden.

## **THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL**

A study of Acts shows that, “The author appears to go out of his way to show the close connection between Christianity and its antecedents in Judaism.”

1.) Chapter 1:6–“Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

2.) Acts 2:29-37–God had fulfilled his promise to sit the Messiah on the throne of David.

3.) Acts 4:23-31–The disciples understood the death of Jesus as the fulfillment of Psalms 2. Yet Psalms 2 declared that the persecution of God’s anointed one would ensure--not prevent--the enthronement of the Messiah.

4.) Acts 5:31–Peter declares that God exalted Jesus, “to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.”

5.) Acts 13:15f–Paul shows that Jesus was given, “the sure mercies of David” (v.34) and warns of judgment if Israel rejects Him as Messiah (v. 40-41).

6.) Acts 15:13–James cites Amos 9 as proof that God was fulfilling His promise to, “rebuild the tabernacle of David that is fallen down.” The tabernacle of David had to be restored for the Gentiles to be saved. The Gentiles were being saved. Therefore, the lineage of David was being restored.

7.) Acts 17:3–Paul’s message was that Jesus is the Christ. The Messiah was to restore and save Israel (Isaiah 62).

8.) Acts 23-28–Paul repeatedly affirms that he was on trial for preaching what, “Moses and the prophets” foretold (24:14). Paul’s gospel was the message of the, “hope of the promise made by God to our Fathers” (26:6). His message was the imminent fulfillment in Christ of “the hope of Israel” (28:20).

Clearly, Luke’s concern in Acts is to chronicle, “The striking success (not the rejection) of the apostolic mission to Israel which represented the restoration of Israel as promised (Acts 15:13-18).”

With the evidence above, it would be surprising indeed if the, “restoration of all things” in Acts 3:21 was not the restoration of Israel. This view is supported by the prophetic use of Luke’s word translated restoration.

## **RESTORATION IN THE PROPHETS**

When Israel sinned, Jehovah, in fulfillment of His covenantal promises of judgment, removed them from the land. Yet amid the judgment came the promise of restoration. Those promises were both historical and Messianic. By this, we mean that there was the promise of actual restoration to the land, and the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem, and there were the promises of the coming of the Messiah to exalt Israel. The word Peter used to speak of, “the restoration of all things” was one of the favorite words used by the prophets to promise these things.

In Jeremiah 16:13-15, Jeremiah told Judah that they were about to be removed from their beloved land. Yet he also promised, “I will bring them back (LXX, apokatastasis) into their land which I gave

to their fathers” (My emphasis, See Jeremiah 24:6). This promise was fulfilled under Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 1:5;6; Nehemiah 9:36f).

In addition, Jehovah also promised to restore Israel under the righteous “Branch,” of the line of David, under whom Judah and Israel would be restored (Jeremiah 23:5f). This Messianic prediction is parallel with the prophecy of Amos 9 and other such texts. Israel’s restoration under Messiah is in view.

One of the most significant predictions of the restoration is found in Malachi 4:5-6. The Lord said Elijah was to come, and, “He will turn (apokatastasis ) the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

Elijah, the restorer, was to urge Israel to, “remember the Law of Moses.” Thus, the framework of “restoration” was Israel.

Jesus declared explicitly that John the Immerser was the anticipated Elijah/restorer (Matthew 17:10-12). Yet, it is obvious that John’s work, as Elijah, was relational and spiritual not nationalistic.

The spiritual nature of the restoration is indicated in Acts 3. Peter says, “repent, so that... He may send Jesus,” the parousia was related to Israel’s repentance, not national resurgence. Peter says God had sent Jesus to Israel to bless them, not in national restoration, but in turning them away from iniquity (Acts 3:26).

The work of Elijah was eschatological. He was to appear before the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5-6). Thus, Elijah was to do the work of restoration in anticipation of the Day of the Lord. This fits well with the context of Acts 3. Peter says Christ would come at the climax of restoration.

Elijah, as restorer, was to minister to Israel, and (attempt to) turn them back to the Law before the Day of the Lord. In Acts 3, Peter says the prophets who spoke of restoration spoke of his days--those were the days in which John as Elijah had appeared. Israel was the focus of Elijah’s ministry. Israel was the focus of Peter’s ministry of repentance. The fulfillment of Israel’s promises was the focus of John’s Apocalypse, and he said fulfillment was at hand.



## **RESTORATION**

### **AND THE PASSING OF THE OLD COVENANT**

Peter says the parousia could not occur until the prophecies of restoration had been fulfilled. The prophets are the Old Covenant prophets, Moses, “and all those who have spoken, from Samuel forward.” Peter is emphatic about the divine necessity for the yet future to him, fulfillment of the Old Covenant. This is tacitly acknowledged by commentators who seemingly fail to grasp the significance of their own comments. J. W. McGarvey says of the OT prophecies referred to by Peter “Not till all are fulfilled will Christ come again.”

In Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus stated, “not one jot nor one tittle shall pass from the Law until it is all fulfilled.” Most amillennialists (e.g. McGarvey, 259) believe the Old Testament was removed at the Cross. Yet, they assert that the Old Testament prophecies will be valid until the parousia. How could the Old Testament have been removed at the Cross and yet mankind be awaiting its fulfillment at Christ’s coming? This is a major contradiction to say the least.

The Old Covenant could not pass until it was all fulfilled (Matthew 5:17-18). All of the Old Covenant would be fulfilled at the parousia of Jesus (Acts 3:21). Therefore, the Old Covenant could not pass until the parousia of Jesus.

The Old Covenant would remain valid until it was all fulfilled (Matthew 5:17-18). The Old Covenant system was symbolic (prophetic) of coming things and would remain valid until the time of reformation (i.e. the time of fulfillment, Hebrews 9:6-10). The Old Covenant system was still unfulfilled when Hebrews was written (Hebrews 9:9; circa AD 60+). Therefore, the Old Covenant system was still valid when Hebrews was written (AD 60+).

The Old Covenant Law could not pass until it was all fulfilled (Matthew 5:17-18). All of the Old Covenant would be fulfilled by the time of, and in the events of the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Luke 21:22). Therefore the Old Covenant Law and system could not pass, until the time of and in the events of the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.

To affirm that the Old Testament prophetic hopes ended at the Cross, and that Christ gave a new set of eschatological predictions, is to deny what Peter says. Peter's hope of the parousia was tied inextricably to the fulfillment of Moses, Samuel and all the prophets. The parousia would fulfill those prophets. If the Old Covenant promises of the restoration of all things have been fulfilled, and the Law removed, Christ must have come. The parousia was to be the crowning act of fulfillment and restoration. Any attempt to posit the revelation of Christ into the future, implicitly reestablishes the Old Covenant and Israel as the Covenant people awaiting her promises.

## **RESTORATION AND THE PAROUSIA**

The word translated restoration is a distinctive word used by the prophets. Another word, diorthosis, (Strong's #1357) speaks of the same thing in the Messianic prediction of Isaiah 62:7. Jehovah promised to "establish" Jerusalem at the coming of the Lord in judgment, (v.11-12). This is the time of the "remarriage" between YHVH and Israel (v. 2ff). Thus, the Old Covenant prophets, in speaking of the restoration of Israel, used apokatastasis and diorthosis as synonyms. The lexicons agree.

Apokatastasis means "to put back into the original condition," Likewise, diorthosis means, "to restore something to its natural and normal condition." Ellingworth says the words convey the same ideas. This is significant when we compare Acts 3 with Hebrews 9:6-10.

In Hebrews 9, the writer speaks of the symbolic (prophetic) significance of the Old Testament cultus. Specifically, his focus is on the high priest and his service on the Day of Atonement, and then the wider application of the entire liturgical system that stood in, "foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances until the time of reformation."(diorthosis, 9:10).

It is imperative to honor the author's temporal perspective. When he spoke of the OT system he says, "which is symbolic for the present

time” (v.9). The “present time” was his first century time, not our present day. Otherwise, the Old Covenant cultus still stands as a type and shadow of the, “good things to come” (Hebrews 10:1-4).

The writer emphasizes that as long as the Old Covenant cultus had validity there could be no access to the Presence of God (v.8). This means man could not be restored to the Garden. He shows that Christ sacrificed Himself and entered into the Most Holy to prepare it for man (v.23-24) and that he was to return “for salvation” to those who, “eagerly await Him” (v.28). Christ would appear (the parousia) to bring man into the Presence of God, back to the Garden where the Old Covenant could never bring him.

The Hebrews writer’s point is that the Old Covenant worship signified (prophesied) the coming of better things. As long as the Old Covenant stood unfulfilled, there was no access to the Father. Those Mosaic institutions were imposed until the time of their fulfillment, the time of “reformation” (v.10). Through fulfillment, the typological significance of the old system would pass, and man would be brought into the Presence of the Father, at the parousia (Hebrews 9:24-28). Notice the direct correlation with Acts 3.

Peter says Christ would come, when all that the Old Covenant prophets predicted, was fulfilled. Hebrews says the Old Testament was typological, intended to stand only until what it foretold was fulfilled. Peter anticipated the “restoration of all things.” Hebrews anticipated the “time of reformation.” The eschatological significance of this correlation cannot be over-emphasized.

The Greek words *apokatastasis* (restoration, Acts 3:21) and *diorthosis* (reformation, Hebrews 9:10) are synonymous, referring to the same time and event.

Jesus’ Second Coming was to occur at the time of the *apokatastasis* (Acts 3:21).

Therefore, Jesus’ Second Coming was to occur at the time of the

diorthosis (reformation, Hebrews 9:10, 28) when man would be brought into the Presence of God (Hebrews 9:28).

Let me put it another way:

Jesus was to come at the time of restoration/reformation, (Acts 3; Hebrews 9:10).

The time of reformation (diorthosis) was the end of the Old Covenant age (Hebrews 9:10).

Therefore, Jesus' parousia would occur at the end of Old Covenant prophetic hope, not at the end of the Christian age.

The parousia was to be the consummating act of the Old Covenant to bring it to an end, and fully establish the New Covenant world of the Messiah. The new creation of Revelation 21-22 would follow the coming of Christ in consummation of the Old Covenant. If He has not come, the Law remains valid, and man has no salvation.

The covenantal framework of the parousia is undeniable. Biblical eschatology is Covenantal, and not Historical.

## **SUMMARY**

Peter's affirmation of the absolute necessity for the fulfillment of the prophetic hopes, culminating in the parousia, shows that the Old Covenant would remain valid until the parousia. This is confirmed by Matthew 5:17-18. John was anticipating the fulfillment of the Old Covenant hopes of Israel, that were to arrive with the epiphany of Christ.

The correlation of Acts 3, with Hebrews 9, and Revelation is remarkable. Unless John was anticipating a different salvation, a different new creation, a different restoration of all things, a different eschatology, a different parousia from Acts and Hebrews, then the vision of the new creation, in Revelation 21-22, is a vision of the New Covenant world of Christ. Are we to suppose that John was so

disconnected from the eschatological hopes of Acts and Hebrews?

In Hebrews, man would be brought into the presence of God in the, “heavenly Jerusalem” (Hebrews 12:21f) because the old Jerusalem was not to abide (13:14). The old system, the old heaven and earth, was even then “nigh unto passing away” giving way to the “unmovable” kingdom (Hebrews 8:13; 12:25-28). In Revelation, man would be brought into the new heavens and earth and the new Jerusalem, at the passing of “Babylon,” at the parousia of the Lord (Revelation 18-19).

What relationship would the fall of Rome have to do with restoring man to the Garden? What bearing would the demise of the Common Market, America, Catholicism, or whatever else, have on bringing man back into the Presence of God? As we have seen, Israel and her covenant, via the veil in the temple, epitomized separation from God. The Old Law had become the, “ministration of death” (2 Corinthians 3:6f) and thus exacerbated the problem of sin and death introduced by Adam (Romans 5-8). The Law could not give life, but it promised the coming of life (John 5:39). The Law was only given to prepare man for the arrival of the “second Adam” (Romans 5/ 1 Corinthians 15) who would restore man. The new creation promises to Israel are the promises of that restoration.

If Revelation, and the “restoration of all things” remains unfulfilled, the Old Covenant remains valid today. Israel has not received her salvation. If this is the case, salvation for the nations still awaits fulfillment. Praise God that He kept His promises to Israel, and as a result salvation is now available to all of every nation. Man has access, in Christ, to the River of Life and the Tree of Life. The restoration of all things has occurred.

## **57 SPECIAL STUDY**

### **BABYLON’S FALL WAS AT HAND**

If there is any one fact so indisputably present, and yet so inexplicably ignored in the study of Revelation, it is the overwhelming

sense of imminence stated in so many ways within the book. Revelation begins by stating in the clearest terms possible that the vision, “must shortly come to pass,” for “the time is at hand” (1:1-3). This theme of urgency permeates the rest of the book. Notice just some of the many references to the imminence of fulfillment.

- 1.) Revelation 1:1—“things which must shortly take place.”
- 2.) 1:3 – “the time is at hand.”
- 3.) 2:5 – “I come quickly.”
- 4.) 2:16 – “I will come quickly.”
- 5.) 3:11– “Behold, I come quickly.”
- 6.) 10:6 – “No more delay.”
- 7.) 11:14 – “Third woe comes quickly.”
- 8.) 12:12 – “Knows he has a short time.”
- 9.) 14:7 – “The hour of His judgment is come.”
- 10.22:6 – “Must shortly come to pass.”
- 11.) 22:7 – “I come quickly.”
- 12.) 22:10 – “Time is at hand.”
- 13.) 22:12 – I am coming quickly.”
- 14.) 22:20 – “Surely I come quickly.”

Bible students should bow to these forceful time statements. It is interesting that everyone admits that the language, taken in its normal meaning, indicates true imminence. Even Kistemaker admits that in Revelation, the statement. “Behold I come quickly’ appears three times to emphasize the imminence of Christ’s return” (When, 236). He then proceeds to explain that “quickly,” and “at hand” in his view do not mean time at all. Strimple claims that all of these statements only amount to an “alleged imminency” (When, 344). So, instead of accepting the normal definition of the words, the meaning of the language is ignored, or John is made to say something he did not say. Gentry, commenting on the time statements of Revelation 1:1-3 says this:

“The remarkable nature of our preterist assertion regarding the

events of Revelation is met with bewilderment by most evangelicals today. Yet the evidence is there for all to see. Unfortunately, right in the very first verse of Revelation certain commentators begin straining to reinterpret the obvious. Commentators employ various desperate maneuvers to get around the clear meaning of these two terms.”(Beast, 26+)

It cannot be overemphasized that the reason why commentators are unwilling to accept the normal meaning of the time statements in Revelation is because of their preconceived ideas about the nature of what John was predicting. Exegetes have resorted to changing the definitions of the statements of imminence, because John’s prophecy was not fulfilled in the manner that they believe it was supposed to. This is like tearing a page out of the Bible because you do not like it. This is not the way to interpret the Bible.

There are several different explanations given to mitigate the evident imminence of the Apocalypse.

#### **A.) FORESHORTENED PERSPECTIVE:**

**OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “ONE DAY IS WITH THE LORD AS A THOUSAND YEARS, AND A THOUSAND YEARS AS A DAY”**

Robert Shank says we must view all of these statements of imminence as, “foreshortened perspective.” This means that while the prophets said things were imminent, they really weren’t—but we are supposed to constantly believe that they are. Kistemaker likewise insists that the temporal indicators of imminence in Revelation “must be understood not from the human point of view, but from God’s perspective” (When, 248). Kistemaker attempts to show that the word *kairos*, used in Revelation (“the time is at hand”) “conveys the meaning of eschatological time, expressed not in chronological periods, but in terms of principle” (When, 238).

This perspective of looking at the time statements is another way of expressing (wrongly) “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years

and a thousand years is as a day” (2 Peter 3:8). However, Peter did not say that time statements are intended to produce eager expectation in spite of the meaninglessness of the words of imminence. Peter was affirming that God is faithful to His promises (2 Peter 3:9). He keeps His promises whether that entails a long time or a short time.

2 Peter 3:8 is the single most popular “court of appeal” in the widespread attempt to negate the force of the New Testament declarations about the nearness of the Lord’s coming. Yet, it is being totally abused. To affirm that God does not see time as man does is not the issue. The issue is God’s ability and/or desire to communicate to man. And one thing is clear, God can tell time.

In Matthew 24:36, it says God knew the “day and hour” of Christ’s parousia. If God does not see time as man when dealing with man’s world, just what “day and hour” did the Father know? What calendar was Jehovah marking to “appoint” the Day of Judgment (Acts 17:30-31)? It is patently wrong to say that God does not view time as man does in the face of Jesus’ declaration that the Father knew “the day and hour” appointed for his coming in judgment.

The “foreshortened perspective” is simply an honorably intentioned, but misguided, attempt to avoid a failed eschatology. In other words, if the interpreter maintains a belief in a literal coming of the Lord, and accepts the time statements of scripture, then Jesus did not come when he said. This means he is not inspired.

To maintain inspiration and faith, therefore, scripture has been altered to mean something different from what its words indicate. At hand cannot really mean at hand. Near and soon, quickly and shortly, no delay and at hand, “this generation,” and even, “we will not all die,” are elasticized and distorted into ambiguous meaninglessness.

## **B.) “SURELY” MEANS MAYBE.**

Walvoord, commenting on Revelation 22:12 says, “John was urged to respond because Christ’s coming could occur quickly.” MacArthur asks, “Why was the fact of our Lord’s return presented



in the language of imminency, but the exact date withheld?” His answer is, “One reason was that He desired to keep His people on the very tiptoe of expectation, continually looking for Him.” MacArthur acknowledges that the New Testament authors believed that Christ was to return in their lifetime, and wrote to that effect. He also says that Jesus did not come, yet, he insists, “God is not in the business of giving false hope” (1999, 48). Pratt does not dispute the fact that the N. T. writers used language that indicated that Christ’s coming was near, and even claims that the apostles and early church, “had to deal with the delay of Christ’s return” (When, 151). His solution to the problem is to say that Christ’s parousia was a contingent promise, based on the repentance or non-repentance of the people. So, even though the apostles affirmed, unambiguously, that “the coming (parousia) of the Lord has drawn near” Pratt affirms that what this really meant is that “If the people will repent the end is near.”

Pratt’s contention however falls on its own weight. He affirms on the one hand that when Peter said “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:15f) that, Peter explained that the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost was a realization of Old Testament eschatological hopes” (When, 150). The question is, if the eschatological promises could not be fulfilled until or unless there was repentance, then if Peter was affirming that the eschatological promises were being fulfilled, did that not mean that Israel had repented? How could the end be truly near if there had been no repenting, in Pratt’s paradigm? The point is that if the NT writers knew that the end could not come unless there was repentance, then for them to affirm that the end had drawn near was to say that in their minds—inspired by the Spirit— the necessary conditions had been met. They nowhere said, “The coming of the Lord has drawn near, that is, it could be near, if there is enough repentance.”

Another thing that Pratt overlooks, or ignores, is the object of the necessary repentance. He cites Acts 3 where Peter urged his audience to repent so that Christ could come.” This is really Pratt’s key text. The problem is, to state the case ever so briefly, that if Peter

posited repentance as the necessary requisite for the parousia, then it is still Israel that must repent for Christ to come. Is Pratt of the dispensational school that believes that Old Covenant Israel must repent before Christ can come?

If you are going to contend that repentance is necessary for the return of Christ, then you cannot ignore who it was that had to repent for Christ to come. Pratt however, does not address this critical factor. This is destructive to his claims.

These authors are insisting that, “Surely I come quickly” meant, “I might come soon, or I might not come for two millennia, I just want you to be on the tiptoe of expectation, just in case.” This is a gross misrepresentation of what John was told. John was not told Jesus “could” come quickly, he was told, “Surely, I come quickly.” There is no “maybe,” “could,” “might,” or just “hope so” in these words. To inject “could,” “maybe” or “might,” where Jesus said, “surely” is to alter Jesus’ promise.

### **C.) “QUICKLY” MEANS CERTAINTY**

In an attempt to offset the objective imminence of Jesus’ soon return, it is sometimes offered that He only meant that He was certain to return. Thus, instead of conveying the idea of time, “I come quickly” comes to mean, “I come certainly.” Ladd succinctly responds to such a suggestion, however, “How does imminence express certainty?”

We might also ask: How can certainty be expressed by language of imminence, if the prediction does not come to pass when the time statements indicate it would? How can certainty be expressed by telling a falsehood?

Notice Jesus’ words in Revelation 22:20, “Surely, I come quickly.” Here is both surety and imminence combined. Jesus was not saying, “Surely, I come surely.” The word for surely is *nai* meaning, “Yes” as a strong assertion. The word for certainty is one word, the word for imminence is another.

Many different Greek words express certainty but the words translated as, “at hand,” “shortly,” and “quickly” etc., are not some of them. Kittel’s Theological Dictionary does not list “certainty” as one of the possibilities for defining *eggus* (Strong’s 1451). Nor does Arndt and Gingrich, Thayer’s, nor Balz and Schneider. No lexicon that we are aware of does so. Why? It is simple, “at hand” does not mean certainty.

In reality, to change “at hand” from a time word to an assertion of certainty creates confusion. Man, in his normal communication, does not use words of imminence to express certainty. If God was altering the normal use without telling man of the change, then God can be properly accused of “mental reservation” in His communication.

If man hears the words “at hand” without knowing of a change in the meaning of those words, he automatically and properly thinks in time. If, therefore, the promise does not come to pass within the parameters of “shortly,” disappointment and discouragement are the natural result. Thus, the “certainty” supposedly expressed by the words has now become the actual source of uncertainty, and loss of confidence in the promises of God. You cannot create trust in God by saying He used words that mean one thing, when He actually meant something else entirely.

Summers, commenting on Revelation 1:1-3, says, “The nature of the kingdom of God is such that it cannot suffer defeat. When John was on Patmos, it appeared that it was going to suffer defeat unless God intervened quickly. This is a message to say that God is coming to the rescue of his people shortly... The verb translated... ‘must’ is an impersonal verb which indicated that a moral necessity is involved; the nature of the case is such that the thing revealed here must come to pass shortly, The aorist tense of the infinitive ‘to come to pass’ adds to the truth that immediate action is necessary. The prepositional phrase translated ‘shortly’ means just what it says—shortly, quickly, hastily. Two or three thousand years will be too late. The things revealed must happen shortly, or the cause will be lost... Any attempt to make this phrase mean no more than certainty fails

to meet the situation...They were in need of assurance of help in the immediate present-not in some millennium of the distant and uncertain future.”

It is a rule of interpretation, that if one is going to reject the normal definition of words, they must demonstrate strong evidence to justify that change. Normally, those who deny the actual imminence of the words in Revelation do so because they believe, “The bright promises associated with our Lord’s four-fold declaration ‘I am coming soon’—are blessings that obviously have not yet been realized” (Shank, *Until*, 393). Jesus’ promise to come soon could not be true, because the exegete does not see what he expected to see. The interpreter’s presuppositions and prejudices become the determining factor in defining Biblical words.

There is no justification for altering the meaning of “at hand,” “shortly,” or “quickly,” from time indicators to statements of certainty.

#### **D.) SHORTLY MEANS RAPIDLY, NOT SOON**

Another attempt to mitigate the imminence is to make the Greek term *en taxei* (Revelation 1:1; 22:6) and the word *taxus*, (Revelation 2:5, 16; 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20) translated “shortly,” or “quickly,” mean “suddenly,” “Thus meaning that there will be rapidity of fulfillment whenever the proper time may come, but that may be thousands of years later than John’s time” (Gregg, *Revelation*, 53).

The following study of the Greek term *en taxei*, appearing only 7 times in scripture, will show that it never emphasizes rapidity over imminence.

1.) Luke 18:8— “He will avenge them speedily”—The martyrs of God cried for vengeance. God promised to avenge them speedily. In Revelation 6:9f, the martyrs cried for vengeance, and were told it would be only a “little while,” until the number of martyrs was filled. In Matthew 23:29f, Jesus said all the blood of all the martyrs would be vindicated in “this generation.” The “little while,” therefore, was not relative, it referred to Jesus’ generation. In order to avoid

the imminence, one must distort the meaning of “this generation,” “quickly,” and “little while.” Can God not communicate any better than to use these words that in any other context mean nearness, but when He uses them in Revelation we are not to think time at all?

2.) Acts 12:7— Peter was in prison when the angel loosed the chains and told him “rise up quickly.” Did the angel mean to say, “Do not worry about when you get up. Today, tomorrow, next year, anytime will do, but when you finally get around to it, move with rapidity of actions.”? Is that really what the angel meant?

3.) Acts 22:18— When Paul was in the temple praying, the Lord appeared to him and said, “Get out of Jerusalem quickly.” Did Jesus mean that Paul could delay his departure for as long as he desired, but when he finally got around to leaving he was to take the fastest chariot out of town?

4.) Acts 25:4— Festus kept Paul at Caesarea because, “He himself was going there shortly.” Was Festus leaving soon, shortly, or was Festus going to hang around Jerusalem for a long time, and then take the fastest horse out of town? Rapidity of action is not the focus. Imminence of departure is.

5.) Romans 16:20— “God will bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” The imminence of Romans cannot be ignored. In chapter 9, the writer said God was going to finish His work of saving the Remnant in a short time. In Romans 13:11f, Paul says, “The day is at hand.”

Look at that text. Paul said, “The night is far spent.” Now, what does that mean? If imminence is relative, what does “far spent” mean?

6.) Revelation 1:1— “Things which must shortly come to pass.” That “shortly” does not mean rapidly is confirmed in the context. John was told, “The time is at hand.” What a foolish thing to say if this is not true imminence. Time is always present. But some special time—the “designated time” (kairos, Strongs #2540) was at hand. The time of fulfillment had come.

Let us grant for argument sake that “shortly” means “rapidly.”

Coupled with eggus in Revelation 1:3, this would mean that the time for the “rapid fulfillment” of John’s prophecy was “at hand.”

If the fulfillment was to be “rapid” it can hardly be argued that the vision encompasses a long period of time because all of the “woes,” contained in the sounding of the Trumpets for instance, were to follow one another “quickly” (Revelation 11:14).

To argue for “rapidly,” therefore, exacerbates the problem of imminence, rather than escapes it.

7.) Revelation 22:6—“Things which must shortly take place.” Notice that it says the things predicted “must” take place shortly. The word “must” is from *dei* (Strong’s #1163) and means a divine necessity. See Kittel’s Theological Dictionary, Balz and Schnieder, etc..

In Revelation 22:6, we find the Greek term *en taxei*. In verse 7 Jesus said, “Behold I come quickly,” and this is from *taxus*. These are two different forms of the same word. Both indicate imminence.

The arguments about rapidity versus imminence are not supported by any other context where the distinctive Greek term *en taxei* is used. While we do not rule out rapidity as an element of *en taxei*, it is not the dominant idea, and in no case does *en taxei* emphasize rapidity to the exclusion of imminence. This is a question of “when,” not “how fast.”

Mounce, commenting on *taxus* says the word, “When used with an adverb may mean ‘quickly’ in the sense of at ‘a rapid rate’ although this usage does not fit the context of *erchomai taxu* (coming quickly, DKP) in Revelation.” Gregg observes that to understand “shortly” as “rapidly,” “may deal adequately with the word ‘shortly,’ but it does not dispose with the problem of ‘the time is near.’” (Revelation, 53)

I have examined every Bible translation in my library, consisting of over 36 different translations. Perhaps I need more translations, yet I found not one—not one—to support the idea of the speed of Christ’s coming rather than the nearness of His coming. Why is this the case if rapidity of action is the dominant idea as some suggest? Why do none of these translations, produced by both individuals

and committees large and small, support, at least in one of them, the idea of swiftness of action to the exclusion of imminence. The reason not one of them does so is because swiftness of action is not the dominant concept.

## **E.) INITIATION OF FULFILLMENT NOT CONSUMMATION**

Gregg cites the futurist view that suggests, “The terms ‘shortly’ or ‘near’ have some meaning other than that which first comes to mind.” Those taking this view see “fulfillment as beginning shortly after John’s time, but extending long beyond, through the entire church age” (Revelation, 53).

As we will see below, (Consummation versus Initiation) this suggestion violates the Biblical pattern.

John was told of, “The things which you have seen, which are, and the things which will take place after this” (1:19). The vision of Revelation encompassed past, present, and future events. The past certainly could not be about to shortly take place, and the present could not. Therefore, only future events were about to take place.

What is significant about the “initiation versus consummation” suggestion is that it admits the genuine “soon-ness” of the time statements. However, there is a major oversight, it fails to realize that it was the parousia of Jesus that was near. Jesus said, “Behold, I come quickly.” Did He mean that He would begin to come soon, but not arrive for a long time?

The parousia is the climax of the Apocalypse. To admit that the time statements indicate the true imminence of the events predicted is to admit that Christ’s coming was near. The attempt to annul the imminence by saying the beginning of fulfillment was near, but not the consummation, is a fatal oversight. The consummating parousia was at hand.

The troubling reality is that the indications of imminence are the most ignored and abused element in most expositions of Revelation.

We must reiterate that the reason for this is the preconceived ideas of the commentators concerning the nature of the end times.

### **G.) IMMINENT BUT NOT NEAR.**

One of the most disingenuous attempts to negate the true nearness of the eschatological events predicted in scripture is that of the premillennial camp. Ice cites with approval the definition of Showers:

“An imminent event is one that is always ‘hanging overhead, is constantly ready to befall or overtake one; close at hand in its incidence’ (Oxford English Dictionary, 1901, v. 66.) Thus, imminence carries the sense that it could happen at any moment. Other things may happen before the imminent event, but nothing else must take place before it happens. If something else must take place before it happens then that event is not imminent. In other words, the necessity of something else taking place first destroys the concept of imminency...As I hope you can see by now, ‘imminent’ is not equal to ‘soon.’” (Prophecy, 105+)

It is specious to say something is imminent, but not at hand. The Oxford dictionary quote actually says something imminent is, “close at hand.” This is a desperate attempt to make time statements mean nothing objective.

Ice lists 14 New Testament passages that speak of the imminence of Jesus’ parousia and says, “As we consider these passages, we note that Christ may come at any moment—that the rapture is actually imminent. Only pretribulationism can give a full, literal meaning to such an any-moment event” (Prophecy, 106+). However, to cite passages that said Christ’s coming was near 2000 years ago, and say they mean it is imminent now, is anachronism exemplified. The New Testament writers did not say there was the possibility that Christ’s coming was near. They affirmed that, “in a very, very little while, He that will come, will come, and will not delay” (Hebrews 10:37).

It is revealing that Ice does not quote a single verse that says,



“Brethren, we shall not all sleep” (1 Corinthians 15:50f). He ignores, “There are some standing here that shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming” (Matthew 16:27-28). He omits, “those of us who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:15,17). These are not statements of “hope so,” “could be,” or “maybe.” These are inspired statements made two thousand years ago to living people. The statements affirm that Christ would positively return in their generation.

Ice affirms that the 14 verses prove Christ’s coming was “imminent” (but of course, not near.) in the first century. However, he also says the necessity for any predictive event to occur before the imminent event destroys imminence. Well, the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem was, by Ice’s admission, a predicted event that had to happen before Christ’s coming. Therefore, the prediction of the fall of Jerusalem, per Ice’s logic, means the rapture was not actually “imminent” like the New Testament writers affirmed.

According to Ice, the restoration of Israel had to occur before the rapture (Prophecy, 56+). He says that restoration occurred in 1948. How then could the New Testament writers have affirmed that the rapture was imminent in the first century? After all, per Ice, the necessity for the fulfillment of any prophecy before the “imminent” event destroys the idea of imminence. Clearly, to suggest that imminence is destroyed if anything had to occur before the predicted event is false.

Ice, citing Showers, continues his attempt to void the objective nature of the time statements, “A person cannot legitimately set or imply a date for its happening. As soon as a person sets a date for an imminent event he destroys the concept of imminency, because he is thereby saying that a certain amount of time must transpire before that event can happen. A specific date for an event is contrary to the concept that the event could happen at any moment” (Prophecy, 106).

But what about the Lord? That is, the Lord, “appointed a Day” in which He would judge the world (Acts 17:30-31). In light of that

appointed Day, He informed His followers that the Day “has drawn near” (James 5:8). Did that nullify or magnify imminence? Was the Spirit lying to Peter when He inspired him to affirm, “The time (kairos, appointed time, DKP) has come for the judgment to begin” ( 1 Peter 4:17)? It is the Father that set the Day, and it is the Father that caused Peter to say the time for the appointed Day had come. Imminence was not destroyed, imminence was emphasized.

Plainly, to argue that the time statements of scripture mean “imminent but not soon” is a desperate and specious attempt to maintain a futurist eschatology. It destroys the meaning of words, and creates meanings unknown in the lexicons. It is unworthy of those who would honor the authority and inspiration of scripture.

#### **H.) BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR KNOWS NO MAN MATTHEW 24:36**

One of the most common attempts to off-set the time statements of the nearness of Christ’s return is an appeal to Matthew 24:36, “But of that day and hour knows no man, not the angels in heaven, but the Father only.” It is maintained that because Jesus did not know the time, it is evident that no one today could know the time. If Jesus did not know when He was to come, then surely the disciples who wrote the Bible could not have known if the Day was truly near. Waldron candidly expresses what others seem hesitant to say, yet believe,

“Jesus’ statement implies that God had not revealed the date of the end of the world to any of the men or angels by which God communicated to men in the Old Testament. It also implies that He had not revealed it to the Son by which He brought that revelation to conclusion in the New Testament...Jesus is thus, plainly teaching that the time of His coming is not a part of the Revelation God chose to give men in the Word of God...It has not been put in the Scriptures and no amount of searching will find it there.”

To maintain that the New Testament statements about the nearness of Christ’s parousia cannot be taken at face value, because in Matthew 24 Jesus did not know the time himself, is to be guilty of

the worst sort of anachronistic error. The authors of the epistles most assuredly thought they knew that the end was near, “Little children, it is the last hour” (1 John 2:18). To suggest that the NT does not contain revelation about when the parousia was to occur is patently false.

This argument totally ignores the fact that Jesus’ statement in Matthew was before His ascension to the Father, and before the sending of the Spirit to inspire the apostolic revelation of the Word.

In John 14:26, Jesus told His disciples that the Father was going to send the Spirit to them. This is critical, for it is not Jesus in his humanity that was to inspire them, but the Father that knew the day and hour.

Jesus promised, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things.” Jesus was telling them that the Father would send the Spirit to guide them. Thus, when the disciples, after receiving the Spirit, wrote that the Day of the Lord was at hand, we can rest assured that the Father, who knew the Day and Hour, was causing them to tell the truth on the matter.

Jesus further told His disciples that when the Spirit came, “He will guide you into all truth, and show you things to come” (John 16:13). It is undeniable, therefore, that the function of the Spirit, sent from the Father, was to reveal the events of the future to the disciples.

This is particularly relevant in Revelation where we read, “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him to show to His servants—things which must shortly take place...the time is near” (Revelation 1:1-3). The Father was “revealing” to the Son—here, even if nowhere else—the time of the parousia. The statements in Revelation that deal with the time of Christ’s coming do not, therefore, come from the Son who said, “of that day and hour knows no man,” but from the Father. Since, therefore, it was the Father revealing the time of Christ’s appearing in Revelation, when we read, “These things must shortly come to pass,” and, “the time is at hand,” we know that the statements are not misguided declarations of hope, or inaccurate statements springing from men who could not know

the time. The statements spring from the Father Himself who was revealing the time.

This truth applies to all the statements about Christ's coming. All the epistolary statements relating to the nearness of Christ's coming were written after the sending of the Spirit by the Father. This being true, Waldron's claim that the NT does not contain revelation about the time of the parousia is falsified. It was not the "ignorance" of Jesus guiding the disciples to mistakenly say the parousia was near. It was the Father guiding them to write the Truth, "In a very, very little while, He who is coming, will come and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10:37).

For the, "no man knows the day or the hour" argument to be valid it is necessary to be able to demonstrate that after Jesus' ascension and the sending of the Spirit by the Father, it was Jesus' "ignorance" that was still guiding the disciples when they wrote that His coming was at hand. This cannot be proven because of Jesus' clear-cut statements that the Father would send the Spirit to guide the disciples into all truth, and show them "things to come."

### **I.) JESUS SAID THAT HIS COMING IN AD 70 WAS NEAR, BUT THAT HIS SECOND COMING WOULD NOT BE FOR A "LONG TIME."**

Many partial preterists acknowledge that Jesus came in the events of AD 70. However, they seek, sometimes desperately, to find another coming of Christ which is yet future. One of the arguments offered in support of this is to acknowledge that all of the imminence statements in regard to Jesus' parousia applied to his judgment coming at the end of the Old Covenant age in AD 70. However, we are then told that in the parables, Jesus spoke of the master of the servants going away for "a long time" and this must refer to Jesus' so far 2000 year absence. There are several things that strikes us about this argument.

- 1.) To admit that all statements of the imminence of the Lord's

coming refer to AD 70 virtually eliminates 90% of all NT passages from having any reference to a “final coming. Seraiah even admits that Christ spoke very little of his final coming: “It is true that the ‘eschatology of the NT is predominantly preterist.’... “The preterist interpretation is actually the most faithful to the Biblical text because it recognizes that Old Testament prophetic terminology was used by the New Testament authors. This recognition is helpful in distinguishing the prophecies of Christ’s coming that were near, in the first century (Mt. 10:23; 16:28; 24:30; 26:64; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 1:7; James 5:7-9; 1 Peter 4:7; Rev. 1:3, 7, etc.) and thus fulfilled in AD 70, from those that were far (John 5:28-29; Acts 1:11; 17:31; 1 Cor. 15:23-24; 1 Thes. 4:16. 1 John 3:2; etc.) and thus not yet fulfilled even in our day.”

But Seraiah is stepping outside and beyond the evidence. No where does the NT ever suggest that there was a “not at hand” coming of the Lord. The fact that some passages do not contain an emphatic declaration of the nearness of the end being discussed proves nothing. In other words, absence of a specific time referent does not suggest or demand that a given text is different from other texts that do give a time reference.

Furthermore, even allusions to “along time” before the parousia does not demand a passing of two millennia. They were all still confined to the generation of the first century.

Notice that in Matthew 24:42f it was the foolish worker that thought the master’s coming would be delayed. Likewise in Matthew 25 the very same servants, i.e. the same generation, to whom the talents were given is the generation of the return of the master and judgment of the servants. There is patently no justification for extending the “delay” beyond that first century generation.

The fact is that references to “delay” occur early in that generation. However, the later in that generation one travels in regard to the epistles, the more urgent the warnings of the imminence of the end become. So much so that in Hebrews were are told Christ’s coming would be in a “very, very little while” and there would be no delay.

And in Revelation the time was so short that we hear the cry: “Let the wicked remain wicked.” The urgency is palpable; the delay was over. In fact, “There shall be no more time (i.e. delay)” Revelation 10:7).

In summary then, all attempts to negate the statements of imminence fail. The truth is that in order to mitigate the nearness of the end, one must explain away, ignore, or simply deny the meaning of entire family of words. One must explain why the Spirit would use so many words that normally indicated nearness of occurrence when He meant no such thing. The Spirit had words to indicate that the events were not near, but those words were not used. The words that would best communicate the objective nearness of the end, if that is what God wanted to communicate, are the words that He used.

In what follows, we will continue to show positively why the time statements must be honored, but first this comment. If it can be shown that the statements of imminence are to be taken objectively, then 99% of modern interpretations of Revelation are shown to be false.

## **A.) THE DIFFERENT WAYS IMMINENCE IS EXPRESSED**

If the book of Revelation did not wish to express the actual nearness of its predictions, why is that imminence expressed with so many different words that normally express temporal proximity? Why are there no expressions of delay? Why is there instead the affirmation, “There will be no more delay”?

The expressions “at hand,” “quickly,” “a little while,” a “short time,” etc., all come from different Greek words and terms. These words do not indicate delay.

Some seek to dismiss the imminence by an appeal to such passages as Deuteronomy 4:26-27; 32:35 and Acts 7:17, but these texts do not support this contention. In fact, they refute it.

In Deuteronomy 4, Jehovah told Israel, “You will soon utterly

perish from the land.” Shank says, “‘Soon, not long’ said Moses. But more than seven centuries passed before the fall of Samaria, and eight and a half centuries passed before the dispersal which Moses prophesied found total fulfillment in the fall of Jerusalem” (Until, 390+).

What Shank has not bothered to tell his readers is that in the previous verse the Lord said, “When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and do evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him.” In other words, Israel would be in the land a long time. They would fall into sin, and then, “You will soon perish from the land.”

Moses did not say the dispersion was imminent when he spoke, as Shank indicates. He said that after a long time Israel would sin. When they sinned, judgment would be near. This is not “timeless imminence.” It is a prediction that judgment would be truly at hand when they sinned.

Deuteronomy 32:35 is of the same nature. However, in this prophecy Moses is projected to the time of the end. Jehovah was saying that in the last days, Israel’s judgment would be at hand. The text actually says, “I will repay them in due time.” When they would sin, “You will quickly perish out of the land.” Thus, in chapter 32, the judgment was not then at hand, but would be at hand when Israel sinned.,

Acts 7:17 is used to prove that eggus, “at hand,” does not actually mean near. See our comments elsewhere for a full discussion of that text. The passage actually establishes God’s ability to use time words as man, because God set a time to deliver Israel, and that time had come, as Stephen says. The promise was that in the fourth generation God would deliver Israel from Egypt. That time had come. God kept His promise on time. See Genesis 15:16f; Exodus 1-4.

Finally, some who object to the language of imminence in Revelation, contradict their own emphasis on the imminence found in other passages. On 1 Peter 4:7, Paher says, “Peter wrote that the end of all things was at hand—the fall of Jerusalem was not far off”

(Known, 111). Yet, in Revelation, John uses the same word as Peter. Paher says in Peter “at hand” means not far off. In Revelation he says, “at hand” means, “Historical fulfillment was many centuries in coming” (Babylon, 21). Isn’t there an old saying about consistency being so rare?

## **B.) IMMINENCE IN RELATIONSHIP TO KNOWN EVENTS**

In Revelation 12:12, Satan was cast out of heaven to earth. Cast down, he had great wrath, “Because he knoweth he hath but a short time.” The majority of commentators agree that this casting down correlates with Jesus’ ministry (Luke 10:18; John 12:31f, etc.). If this be so, we have a statement that is dated. Satan’s final defeat would be a “short time” from when he was cast out by Jesus.

Immediately prior to His passion, Jesus said, “Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (John 12:31). Jesus was anticipating the casting out of Satan by the power of His passion. Notice He said, “now” shall the prince of this world be cast out. If Satan has not yet been cast down his “now” was meaningless.

In Romans 16:20, Paul said, “The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.” Paul was anticipating the Adversary’s final defeat, and promised that it was coming shortly (*en taxi*).

The term “short time” in Revelation 12 is from oligon (Strong’s #3641) *kairon*. With reference to time oligon means, “short, a short time, a little while.” The word *kairos* means, “an appointed time.”

Ask yourself this question: Since God does not experience time in His dimension—i.e., since there is no calendar in God’s world—how could God appoint a day? How could there be an “appointed small time” measured in the heavenly realm?

Time is only relevant in this dimension, and it cannot go unnoticed that Satan was, “cast down to earth.” It is in this realm that he is stated to have, “a short time.” The context is “earth” and events on earth.



This demands that “a short time” be understood in “earthly” terms, not in some mystical “God-language” incomprehensible to man.

God set the sun, moon and stars to establish “seasons, years, months” etc.,—time. Thus, when we read of events being a short time from known historical events, upon what hermeneutical principle would one deny the objective imminence of these statements?

### **C.) IMMINENCE VERSUS PROTRACTION**

It is widely admitted that the Apocalypse is a reiteration of the prophecies of Daniel. What is often overlooked is the contrast in temporal statements about the time of fulfillment of the predictions.

Daniel was written 500 years before John penned the Apocalypse. What was John’s purpose in writing about Daniel’s predictions? Was it to simply repeat them, and tell people to keep on waiting. Had the waiting not gone on already for almost half a millennium? John was telling his readers that the time for fulfillment—not the time for more waiting—had come.

To help understand this, the identical question could be asked about the kingdom. Did Jesus come to say that Daniel’s predictions of the kingdom would come some day in the distant future, or did He come saying, “The time is fulfilled, the kingdom is at hand”? Patently, Jesus’ message, and that of John in Revelation, was fulfillment, not delay.

Consider the contrast between the protraction of Daniel, and the imminence of Revelation. In chapter 10, John sees a vision taken directly from Daniel 12. In Daniel, that vision was about, “the time of the end” (v. 4). (It cannot go without saying that John said he was living in that very time, “It is the last hour” 1 John 2:18.). Daniel wrote of the Great Tribulation, about which John wrote also (Revelation 7, 14). Daniel wrote about the time when the prophets would be rewarded. John wrote of the same thing (11:15f). Here is where it gets interesting for the consideration of the time statements of scripture.

Daniel was told, “Shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end,” “But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days” (Daniel 12:4, 13). Daniel was told that the fulfillment of his vision was not “at hand,” would not come to pass “quickly,” or in a “short season.” He was told it was far off. Did God mean what He said?

Here is a prophetic text in which time words were not relative or elastic, but objectively expressed.

From Daniel to John was over 500 years. Was that not truly a long time? Would Daniel and his readers have been justified to say, “Well, we know that God told Daniel the vision was ‘a long time’ away, but since time is relative, maybe that actually means very soon.”? The fallacy of this is obvious. Now, consider Revelation.

In Revelation 10:5-6, John saw a scene taken directly from Daniel 12:6, “The angel lifted up his hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.”

John was emphatically told, “there will be delay no longer.” There had been over 500 years of delay, but the time had come for no more delay—the time for fulfillment had arrived.

Daniel was told his vision would not be fulfilled for a long time. John was told fulfillment would be delayed no longer. It has now been four times longer from John to the present, than it was from Daniel to John. Yet, most commentators insist that Revelation remains unfulfilled. This is a denial of the promise made to John, that what had once been prolonged was now near.

Another contrast from the book of Daniel helps establish the true nearness of the time statements in Revelation. In Daniel 8, the exilic prophet was given a vision encompassing the time of the Grecian Empire, up through the death of Antiochus Epiphanes—some believe it actually reaches the time of the things foretold by John.

Let us take the earlier application just for analysis.

From the time when Daniel received his vision to the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, circa 164 BC, was approximately 400 years. In Daniel 8:26, the prophet was told, “Seal up the words of the vision, for it will be for many days.” In other words, Daniel was told that the fulfillment of his vision was a long time away. It was not at hand.

In Revelation 22:10, John was told, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.” In direct contrast with what Daniel was told, John was told his vision was “at hand.” Milligan says of the contrast between Daniel and John, “It was not a time now for sealing up, but for breaking of seals, the end was not, as in Daniel’s case far off, but at hand, almost within sight.”

Was 400 years a “long time” to Daniel, yet John’s vision, that was “at hand,” has not been fulfilled 2000 years later? This contrast in temporal perspective is prima facie proof that the time statements of Revelation must not be “elasticized” into meaninglessness.

This imminence versus protraction is vitally important to understanding the entire New Testament, in regard to the kingdom and eschatology. It is sometimes maintained that the Old Testament writers, like the New Testament authors, believed the end was present in their days. This is false. A study of just a few of the temporal contrasts in scripture validates our claim that time statements are to be taken in their normal objective sense.

1.) Not one Old Covenant writer said he was in the “last days.” The “last days” were always far off, and at the end of the age (Isaiah 2-4; Joel 2-3; Daniel 2, etc.). However, the New Testament writers affirmed that they were living in the anticipated eschaton (Acts 2:15f; 3:23-24; Hebrews 1:1; 1 Peter 1:5-7, 20; James 5, etc.).

2.) Not one of the Old Covenant writers said the end of the age had arrived, or would come in their generation. The “time of the end,” was far off (Daniel 10:1, 14) and would be long after the lifetime of Daniel (Daniel 12:4, 13). However, Jesus said the end of the age would occur in His generation (Matthew 24:3, 14, 34). Paul said Jesus came in the “last days,” at the end of the age (Hebrews

9:26). He also said the end of the age had come on that generation (1 Corinthians 10:11).

3.) Not one Old Covenant writer affirmed, “The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Yet, this was the urgent message of John, Jesus, and Jesus’ disciples (Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:15; Luke 10, etc.). Jesus said, “The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God is preached and everyone is pressing into it” (Luke 16:16). Very clearly, our Lord intended his audience to realize that what once was far off, had now drawn near in the ministry of John. It was no longer the mere object of distant or unknown hope. The imminence was real, not imagined, or relative.

4.) Jesus said, “Many prophets and wise men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” (Matthew 13:17). He said this in the context of his teaching on the kingdom. This contrast cannot be denied. What had been desired long before, and yet not seen, was now present. This proves beyond all serious doubt, therefore, that the statements, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand” must be honored as true, because what they were hearing and seeing was what the prophets had anticipated for the last days.

5.) Peter claimed, in Acts 3:19-24, that all the prophets from the beginning of the world, “foretold these days.” Peter did not say they foretold other days in their predictions of the kingdom and salvation. They foretold Peter’s days. Peter was not saying that another round of waiting for the fulfillment of the prophets was introduced by Jesus and the church. Can the contrast between the prophets of old and Peter’s day be missed? The contrast between promise and time of fulfillment cannot be ignored.

6.) 1 Peter 1:5-12. The apostle speaks eloquently of the eternal salvation of the soul. He warns his audience that before that salvation could be revealed at Christ’s coming, (apocalupsis) they must suffer, “for a little while” (v. 6). However, he reminds them that the salvation they eagerly await was predicted by the prophets of old, “To them it was revealed that not unto themselves, but to us,

they were ministering the things which have now been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into” (v. 12).

Peter is clear, the Old Testament prophets knew that Christ’s coming to bring salvation was not for their day. If time statements do not mean anything to God when He communicates with man, how could they know that? If “at hand” can mean a thousand years, how did the Lord communicate to the prophets in such a way that they understood their predictions were not “at hand”?

When Peter predicted Christ’s judgment of the living and the dead (1 Peter 4:5) he was not anticipating a different coming from that of chapter 1. Yet, in chapter 4 he says Christ was “ready” (Greek: hetoimos, Strong’s #2092)) to judge and that, “The end of all things has drawn near” (v. 7). He said the time for the judgment had come (v. 17). Thus, what Peter says the prophets knew was not for their time had “drawn near” (Greek: engeken). If the Lord was able to truthfully communicate to the prophets of old, that their predictions were not near, could He not truthfully tell Peter that it had drawn near?

7.) Hebrews 11:13f. The writer says Abraham was promised a “heavenly” city and country. The author says Abraham saw the promise “far off” (v. 13). How did Abraham know the promise was not “at hand”? How did he know it was not to “shortly come to pass”? He knew because God can tell time, and God can communicate truthfully. Jehovah never told Abraham that his promised city was “near” or must “come quickly.”

However, the Hebrew writer says to his audience, “You have come to the heavenly Jerusalem” (12:22). Here is the city anticipated by Abraham. Abraham died, “Not having received the promise” (Hebrews 11:13f) but the recipients of the Hebrew letter were even then receiving the fulfillment. That kingdom/city was even then being delivered, “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken” (12:28). The old city was not to continue, yet they

longed for the city that was “about to come” (Hebrews 13:14 Greek: mellousan).

Significantly, John foresaw the full arrival of that new Jerusalem. He saw the realization of the promise made to Abraham. John longed for the new Jerusalem in which man would dwell in the presence of God, this is the Abrahamic promise (Hebrews 6:13-20).

Whereas Abraham saw the fulfillment of his promised city “far off,” John was told, “these things must shortly come to pass” (Revelation 22:6, 10). Are we to think that “far off” meant something, yet “at hand” means nothing, time wise? The subject is the same, the city promised to Abraham. The only difference is the time statement regarding when the city would come. To ignore the temporal contrast between Abraham and John is exegetical suicide.

These temporal contrasts are compelling proof that the time statements of scripture must be honored. When the New Testament writers inform us that God communicated long time periods truthfully, how can it be argued, with any modicum of logic, that time statements of imminence are meaningless? These contrasts powerfully refute the claims of those like Kistemaker who insist that the Old Testament prophets used imminence statements to speak of Christ’s coming and the end of the age, just as the New Testament prophets did. (When, 247). Such claims are patently false in the light of the evidence above.

It might be rejoined that the Old Covenant prophets did indeed expect the Day of the Lord to occur “soon.” This would be correct, if we properly define the Day of the Lord they anticipated. Earlier, we showed that in the Old Testament when Jehovah acted in judgment, via another nation, it was called the Day of the Lord. Thus, when He used Babylon to destroy Jerusalem, “the end has come” (Ezekiel 7) and, “The Day of the Lord is at hand” (Zephaniah 1:14). In fact, the end of their “world” did come soon. However, this was not a prediction of the establishment of the kingdom at “the end of the age,” and was not the “last days.” The Day of the Lord actually was near. When Israel tried to blunt and deny the Lord’s language of its

nearness (Ezekiel 12:21f—please read this.) the Lord emphatically said that when He said it was at hand, it would occur “in your days.” When the Lord said something was “at hand,” it meant it would occur in the generation to whom it was spoken. Thus, once again the objective nature of the language of imminence is established rather than mitigated.

#### **D.) CONSUMMATION VERSUS INITIATION**

Those who argue that the focus of “shortly” (*en taxei*, from *taxus*, Strong’s #5034) is on the initiation of the events and not the consummation cannot prove their case because it was the *parousia*—the coming of the Lord that was stated to be coming “shortly.” The *parousia* is the climax, the consummation, of Revelation, and it was *en taxei*. Any suggestion, therefore, that *en taxei* simply suggests that the initial stages of fulfillment were at hand, but not consummation, are patently false.

In scripture, the prophets focused, not on the initiation of their predictions, but on the consummation. The reason for this is simple. The fulfillment of the prophecies would be the time when the blessings of the prophecy were to be realized. Note some examples.

In Daniel 10, the prophet was given a vision that included his present, the near future, and the far future. Was he told the events were at hand? If the initiation, not consummation principle is true, we might expect this, but it is not true. The prophet was not told the events were “at hand,” or “must shortly come to pass.” Daniel was told the events were a long time off (Daniel 10:1, 14f). The vision was concerned with the conclusion of the prophecy, and not the commencement.

There is a consensus that Revelation reiterates the prophecies of Daniel. Hendriksen says that while the contemporary events of Revelation serve as the “surface-soil” for interpreting the book, the “subsoil” is the Old Testament scriptures. He cites Daniel 7 as the source for Revelation 13. If this be so, notice what this means for the

commencement, not conclusion argument.

In Daniel, the prophet was informed that his prophecy of the kingdom was for the last days, and extended for a long time (Daniel 2:28-44). In chapter 7, the vision of the little horn, that would be judged at the coming of the one like the Son of Man (cf. Revelation 14) was to be in the days of the fourth beast—clearly not in Daniel’s day. In chapter 12 Daniel was told of the Great Tribulation, the resurrection, and the Abomination of Desolation. He was specifically told these events were not for his lifetime, but were for the time of the end.

Not once was Daniel told the events, “must shortly come to pass.” There is not the slightest hint of imminence in Daniel’s prophecies. This is particularly significant, because in each of the prophecies cited above, the initiation of the prophecies was at hand in Daniel’s day. He was living in the day of the first kingdom. Thus, the predictions had already begun to unfold. Yet, there is not one word in Daniel to indicate the nearness of the things foretold. There is just the opposite, he was told the events were far off. This certainly is not the case in Revelation. The Apocalypse vibrates with a sense of imminence.

Should we ignore the distinct difference in temporal statements in the two books? John is dealing with Daniel’s prophecies. Daniel was told the fulfillment of his prophecies was not imminent. John was told that fulfillment was near. This is prima facie evidence of the genuine imminence of the events of Revelation.

## **E.) DEFINITIONS OF WORDS**

Any effort to discount the imminence of Revelation must qualify, ignore, redefine or deny every time word, and every chronological statement in the book. Yet, these attempts fail on the most basic of levels.

As seen above, the same writers who insist that eggus means imminence in regard to the kingdom, and even the destruction of Jerusalem, then turn around and insist that the identical word is,



“elastic and relative” in passages dealing with eschatology. Jackson says that in Matthew 3:2, John’s message, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand,” hardly agrees with the idea that the kingdom has not come after 2000 years.” Yet, in his commentary on Revelation, he cites James 5:8, “The coming of the Lord is at hand,” and insists that “at hand,” “Does not have a chronological significance in this prophetic text.”

Here is a strange thing: both Matthew and James are prophetic contexts. Both use the identical Greek word in the identical tense. Jackson says it is “infidelity” to deny the imminence of eggus in Matthew, but in James, eggus has no chronological significance.

How does one deny the meaning of no more delay (Revelation 10:6f)? How is it possible to elasticize a little while into millennia? How can one stretch, “only a little appointed time” (Revelation 12:10-12) into 2000 years and counting? The answer is that this is possible because of preconceived ideas, prejudice and tradition.

## **F.) CORRELATION WITH OTHER TEXTS**

The time indicators of Revelation must be understood objectively, because it is possible to correlate many of these statements with other passages.

Matthew 23 and Revelation 6:9-11, the avenging of the martyrs. In Revelation, we hear the prayer of the saints for vengeance. They are told that vengeance will come “in a little while.” Jackson insists this will be at the end of time, and accordingly, the text’s “little while” must be understood in an “elastic,” “relative” sense. (Revelation, 43). If we are to accept inspiration this will not do.

The martyrs of God would be vindicated “in a little while” (Revelation 6:9-11). The martyrs of God would be vindicated in Jesus’ generation (Matthew 23:29-39). Therefore, the “little while” of Revelation 6:9-11 would be fulfilled in Jesus’ generation.

Matthew 16:27-28 and Revelation 22:12. In Matthew, Jesus promised in the clearest terms that He would return in judgment,

“There are some standing here who shall not taste of death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” This is unequivocal, it cannot be extended beyond one generation. Either Jesus was mistaken, He lied, He failed, He came, or some of those people are still alive today.

Now, compare with Revelation 22:12, “Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.” John wrote these words of Jesus later in the very generation in which Matthew 16:27-28 was uttered. Matthew demands a first century fulfillment—objective imminence. Revelation simply quotes Matthew 16. Therefore, Revelation must refer to truly imminent events—the parousia.

The time statements in Revelation cannot be dismissed lightly. They appear repeatedly, in too many different settings. Those who deny the objective temporal significance of all of the time statements:

1.) Are doing so because of preconceived ideas, e.g., they do not believe the events foretold have occurred, therefore, they must change the definitions of the words that indicated the time frame for fulfillment.

2.) Are totally inconsistent in their application. They insist that time words mean nothing when used in Revelation, but when used to predict the establishment of the kingdom, or other “mundane” events, then the words most assuredly have temporal meaning.

3.) They implicitly accuse God of misrepresentation, or at the least of being unable to properly communicate with mankind. The claim that God does not see time as man is totally irrelevant. Man is a time bound creature, and all of the predictions are about events to occur in man’s world, or relevant to man’s world. What kind of sense would it make for God to say something was imminent, when, or if, He was referring to His dimension?

Are we to suppose that God had “mental reservation” i.e., God knew that He did not mean “near” or “quickly” in man’s thinking, but He used the words anyway? God knew that man, because of the natural meaning of the time words, would think the events were near, but hey, that is man’s problem. He should not have gotten that

idea just because the language indicated those ideas.

McGuiggan castigated Lindsey for not honoring the at hand statements, “Lindsey doesn’t even touch the phrase” (Revelation, 318). Earlier, he says of the millennial view, “To claim that chapters 4-22 have not even begun to be fulfilled, 1900 years after the book was written, is to miss the whole point and bring the book into disrepute. No one could write a book today and say, ‘These things must shortly come to pass, for the time is at hand’—and then profess in their old age that they were still 1800 years in the future....John has given us a book which is said to deal with things which ‘must shortly come to pass’ for ‘the time is at hand.’ Not a word of 4-22 has been fulfilled (say they) and they claim they’re trying to honor the Word” (Revelation, 143-144). These comments soon backfire on those who make them, since they generally then proceed to project the fulfillment of the visions hundreds of years into the future.

For instance, the same statements of imminence that haunt the millennialist destroy the belief that Revelation speaks of the fall of Rome. The fall of Rome was 400 years removed from John’s day—especially from Jones’ or McGuiggan’s dating. McGuiggan says if a man predicted an event was near, but a hundred years later it had not happened, we could not honor that man. Well, if the fulfillment of Revelation was 400 years in the future, does this not bring, “at hand” and, “must shortly come to pass” into dishonor? Can 300 years, can 400 years be compressed into “Behold, I come quickly”?

The inconsistency of those who interpret Revelation as speaking of the fall of Rome, or some other yet future event, is further exemplified by Hendriksen. Commenting on Revelation 1:1-3, “These things must shortly come to pass,” Hendriksen says, “We do not believe that the term ‘shortly’ as used here, indicates that the events are to follow one another in rapid succession, swiftly....the very first verse of the Apocalypse deals the death-blow to any futuristic view” (Conquerors, 263, n. 3). Strangely, however, he insists that the book of Revelation, “spans the entire (Christian, DKP) dispensation” (p. 58). So what do we find?

On the one hand, the imminence, “deals the death-blow to any futuristic view” of Revelation. On the other hand, the book “spans the entire (Christian) dispensation.”

The only view that avoids such embarrassment is that Babylon is first century Jerusalem. Jesus predicted Jerusalem’s demise for His generation, (Matthew 24:34). Revelation predicted the imminent demise of Babylon.

### **G.) TIME MEANS TIME.**

The objection that man must understand that time statements mean nothing to God is surely one of the most common, yet patently erroneous, religious beliefs of the day. In an attempt to negate the imminence of Revelation, it is often stated that, “John is speaking according to God’s way of reckoning time and nearness. Since a day to the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as a day (2 Peter 3:8) even an event two thousand years removed might be regarded as ‘near’ from God’s perspective.”(Gregg, Revelation, 53). There are few other verses of scripture that are so abused as 2 Peter 3:8.

The question of God’s ability, or willingness, to communicate with man is very serious. If the Bible, including the time words, are not understandable, why did God provide a word revelation in the first place? Is it not dangerous to imply that God could not communicate effectively with His creation. Such a view reflects on the nature of God.

Those who say that the Bible’s time statements cannot be understood are saying either that God tried to communicate with man, but could not do so properly, or, they are saying that He could communicate accurately, but chose not to do so. If He could not communicate accurately, His power is impugned. If He chose not to communicate properly, His justice is in question. We have few choices as to whether God communicated truthfully when He said something was “at hand.”

1.) God does not know what time words mean to man, and uses the words carelessly. How could God not know the meaning of man's words of time, when God created time by setting the sun, the moon, and the stars in the sky to determine time (Genesis 1:14).

To suggest that God is ignorant or careless in His use of words is tantamount to questioning the very nature of God.

2.) God knows what time words such as "at hand" mean to man and uses them according to their proper meaning.

To admit this is to abandon any futuristic application of Revelation—or eschatology.

3.) God knows what time words mean to man, and uses them differently—but does not tell man that He is using them differently.

Why? Why would God use time words that have a concrete meaning to man differently from how man understands them? Does God wish to purposefully deceive man in regard to when events might happen? Does He wish to use the "carrot on a stick" approach?

To suggest that God uses words with definite meanings of imminence for the purpose of creating desire and expectation in man, when He was not actually going to deliver, is nothing less than dishonest. It is like the little boy who repeatedly cried "Wolf." After a while there is no cause to believe. The Proverb writer stated it eloquently "Hope deferred makes the heart sick" (Proverbs 13:12).

4.) God knows what time words such as "at hand" mean to man, but uses them differently and tells man He is using them differently.

This is the premise when interpreters appeal to 2 Peter 3:8. They are saying that while God used words of imminence, those words mean nothing after all. So if the words do not mean what they seem to, why use them? What kind of sense does it make for God to say, "I am going to use some words, but you have no idea what they mean"?

One can only wonder if those who insist that God does not view time as man does, have actually considered the ramifications of their statements? In Matthew 24:36, we are told that Jesus did not at that time know the "day or the hour" of His parousia. However, Jesus himself said the Father did know the day and hour. How could the

God that does not view time as man does know the day and hour of the parousia?

In Acts 17:30-31, Paul told the Athenians that God had, “appointed a day in which He is about to judge the world.” If time means nothing to God, if He cannot think in time as man does, how in the name of reason could He appoint a day? (histemi, Strong’s #2476)

God reckons time according to the calendar that He created. When scripture says, “In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son,” we can only conclude that the time was right in man’s world. God operates in regard to man in relationship to man’s world. And that is a time bound and time expressed world.

For God, therefore, to use words that have a concrete meaning to man, in ways that are totally foreign to man, would not be appropriate for a God wishing to communicate truthfully to His creation.

Time words normally carry their natural meaning in the Bible. Several prophetic passages demonstrate this in a powerful way. Consider Jehovah’s promise to David:

“And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever.” According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David. Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said, “Who am I, O LORD God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O God; and You have also spoken of Your servant’s house for a great while to come, and have regarded me according to the rank of a man of high degree, O LORD God” (1 Chronicles 17:11-17, NKJ).

This prophecy spanned the centuries all the way to Jesus. Did God express that promise as if it was at hand? No. If “at hand” simply

expresses “certainty,” why did Adonai not say, “David, the one who is coming is “at hand”? If “shortly” means “begin to come to pass,” or “rapidly,” why did the Lord not tell David that Messiah was to come “quickly?” If time words mean nothing to the Lord of Heaven when He speaks to man, why did He not tell the scion of Jesse that the coming King would come in, “a very, very little while”?

David plainly understood that Jehovah’s promise was not near. He understood this because God used time words in the same way that David did. God did not play “word games” with David. He does not play them with man.

For other examples of prophecies that were stated to be a long time in fulfillment see Numbers 24:17-19; Daniel 8; Daniel 10; Daniel 12, etc.. In each of these cases and others, when the prophecy spanned a long period of time as understood by man, God called it a long time. God can tell time and God truthfully communicates time to man.

If God truthfully expressed prolongation, why should we believe He did not truthfully express imminence?

To this writer’s knowledge, there is not a single example where “at hand” or corollaries ever entailed a period of hundreds of years. To the contrary, we have several Biblical examples in which God said something was imminent, man said it was not at hand and God condemned man for elasticizing His time statements. See especially Ezekiel 12:21f.

God has communicated honestly with His creation. To suggest otherwise is surely dangerous. Thus, the varied, emphatic, urgent, and repeated statements of imminence in Revelation must be honored. Better to change our concepts of the nature of eschatology, than to deny His inspired declarations as to when it would occur.

God communicates truthfully and accurately with time statements. This means that Babylon of Revelation could not be Rome, the Catholic Church, the Eastern European Common Market, the World Council of Churches, or any other entity. The fall of Rome was 400 years removed from John. The fall of Babylon was at hand. Four hundred years does not qualify as “at hand.” It goes without saying

that the other entities lie even farther outside the scope of, “these things must shortly come to pass.”

## LET THE WICKED REMAIN WICKED

A closing point. In Revelation 22:11, is an exhortation that in any futurist view of the Apocalypse is incongruous at best. Sandwiched between verse 10, where John was told not to seal the book because its prediction was at hand, and verse 12, where Jesus said He was coming quickly, is found the exhortation, “Let the wicked remain wicked.”

Most commentators ignore the significance of this verse, or divorce it from its context of imminence. Some seek to have John simply saying, “to the righteous and the holy to continue in the way of righteousness and holiness.” But the verse is more than an exhortation to holiness. It tells the wicked to remain wicked. Walvoord says, “The implication of this passage is that the time is too short to change the course of the world’s morality and that, although life will go on for both the wicked and righteous, the Lord is coming soon” (Major, 426).

One can only wonder how it can be admitted that John wrote these words 2000 years ago, and yet apply Revelation to yet future events. If the time when John wrote was too short, “to change the course of the world’s morality,” why in the name of reason would anyone worry about evangelism today?

Lenski says the verse means, “If the unrighteous and the filthy will not be warned by the words of this book, the final revelation of God, there is nothing more to be done; let him go on, his misthos (recompense, Strong’s #3408, DKP) is at hand.”

This misses the point. John does not say “if he will not hear, let him remain unrighteous, and his judgment is near.” John says the judgment is near, let the wicked remain wicked. Lenski’s view destroys the imminence of the judgment since 2000 years have passed, and judgment, per his view, has not fallen. The overwhelming nearness of



the predicted judgment is the basis for telling the wicked to remain wicked. It is the crisis at hand that is about to reach a climax that made the verse relevant to its first century readers.

Was the message, “Let the wicked remain wicked” valid during the almost four hundred year interim between John’s day and the fall of Rome? It must have been, if Revelation applies to that event.

Is the message, “Let the wicked remain wicked” still valid? If the judgment of Revelation 22 is still future it is. This means we are to tell the wicked to remain wicked. One can only assume, in this case, that the preaching of the Gospel is irrelevant and futile. On the one hand, we are to tell the world to come to Jesus, while on the other, we are to declare, “Let the wicked remain wicked.”

Revelation 22:11 is relevant only in the context of impending, imminent crisis. Only in the context of the fall of Jerusalem does John’s exhortation to, “Let the wicked remain wicked” find proper application.

The fall of first century Jerusalem is the only event that lies within the parameters of “the time is at hand” statements emphasized so strongly in Revelation. Babylon was first century Jerusalem.

## **LUKE 21 AND THE TIME STATEMENTS OF REVELATION**

Before concluding this special study we must examine the repeated statements of John that the fulfillment of Revelation was near, in the light of the warnings of Jesus in Luke 21:8.

When Jesus’ disciples asked him about the end of the age (Matthew 24:2) Jesus began to explain the events that had to happen before that consummative event. However, he warned them that before the end would come there would be false signs, and false prophets saying the end was near when it was not actually near, “Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time has drawn near.’ Therefore, do not go after them.”

This is extremely important. Jesus was speaking to living breathing human beings, and told them that they would see these events. He

was not speaking abstractly. He told his disciples that they would experience false teachers saying the end was near, (or present.) when in fact it was not. And, all of these things happened early in the first century.

In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul had to write to the church to warn them not to believe the Lord had already come. Just as Jesus said false prophets would come saying the end had come, or had drawn near, before it was, Paul had to deal with that problem at an early time (circa AD 49).

Jesus told his disciples that they would see the fulfillment of the Great Commission and the Abomination of Desolation, and when they did, they would know that the end truly had drawn near. This is critical.

In Romans, (57-59 A.D.) Paul wrote that the gospel had been preached into all the world. In Colossians 1:5-7, 23, Titus 2:11-13, etc. (60-62 A.D.) the apostle declared that the gospel had been preached “to every creature under heaven” “to all men,” “all the world” etc. It is also at this time that Paul proclaimed that Jesus’ parousia was “at hand,” (Philippians 4:5) and that Peter--the author of 2 Peter 3:8--stated “the end of all things has drawn near...the time has come for the judgment to begin” (1 Peter 4:7, 17) and that James wrote, “the coming of the Lord has drawn near.”

The time line in these texts is vitally important. At an early time, false prophets appeared in fulfillment of Jesus predictions, saying the end had drawn near, or had come. The apostles, cognizant of Jesus’ warnings, rejected those prophets, reminding the disciples of what had to happen before the end could come. Then, some 10 years later, with the fulfillment of the first of the two major signs given by Jesus, the inspired writers say that the end had drawn near.

Jesus had said, “When you see these things you will know it, (the parousia, DKP) is at the door” (Matthew 24:33). James, living at the time when he witnessed the fulfillment and appearance of the signs and echoing the words of Jesus said, “He is at the door.”(James 5:9). John records the words of Jesus, “Behold, I come quickly” (Revelation

22:12).

A final note here about the word *kairos*. As we have seen, Kistemaker claims that *kairos* does not mean time, per se, but an eschatological principle...of some sort. However, note that Jesus warned his disciples against those who would prematurely say “the time (*kairos*) has drawn near.” He then gave his disciples the signs by which they could know the end was near, “when you see all of these things then know that it is near, even at the door” (Matthew 24:32). Only when they, his inspired apostles and disciples observed the signs and declared that the time (*kairos*) was near was that to be true.

Throughout the NT, the inspired apostles and disciples of Jesus declared “knowing the time (*kairos*) that it is high time to awake out of sleep, the Day is at hand” (Romans 13:11). They said “the time (*kairos*) is short (literally, has been shortened, 1 Corinthians 7:29). They proclaimed that the “acceptable time” (*kairos*) foretold by the prophets (Isaiah 49, 61, etc.) was present (2 Corinthians 6:1-3). They said that the time (*kairos*) for the judgment had come” (1 Peter 4:17). And, they said “the time (*kairos*) is at hand” (Revelation 1:3).

So, if the eschatological time indicated by *kairos* was not truly at hand, as the New Testament writers affirmed, then they themselves were guilty of doing what Jesus told them not to do. He said not to prematurely say, “the *kairos* has drawn near.” The fact that Jesus told his disciples not to say the *kairos* had drawn near, before they saw the signs of its nearness, and the fact that they then declared that the *kairos* was near, is *prima facie* proof of either one of two things.

Either the time (*kairos*) of the end was truly near, or,

The disciples and Biblical writers did in fact become guilty of the very thing that Jesus told them emphatically not to do.

Thus, when the Biblical writers, writing in light of Jesus’ warnings, said that what he had foretold was fulfilled, and that the end had drawn near, we cannot extrapolate those statements of nearness two thousand years into the future. We cannot elasticize their statements of “at hand,” into meaninglessness. All statements that the end was

near, made before the inspired writers said it was near, were false. All statements that the end is near, written or stated after the Biblical writers said it was near, are false statements. The only preachers, the only prophets, the only teachers who were ever given divine insight into the time of Jesus' return were Jesus' first century inspired disciples, and they said that the end had drawn near 2000 years ago. If their statements that the end was near were as wrong as those before them, then they too were false teachers.

What is the difference between the Christians, that Jesus called false teachers, who prematurely said the end was near, and the apostles, who heralded that same message in the same generation? If those before the Bible writers were wrong, because their predictions were premature, then the NT writers were equally wrong for the identical reason. Was there no difference between the message of those before the disciples who said "the end has drawn near," and the message of the apostles themselves who said "the end has drawn near?" If Jesus was not speaking to his first century apostles about their generation, then their predictions, that the end had drawn near, have become, in effect, the very predictions Jesus said must be rejected as false. If the predictions of those before the apostles, and those of the apostles failed, then the apostles do indeed stand as false teachers.

Here is a vital question to consider in light of Luke 21. To what generation was Jesus speaking? Modern prognosticators insist Jesus' predictions of the end apply to ours. The end is near now. If that is true, this undeniably means that the apostles and Biblical writers are the false teachers that Jesus warned about, for they wrote that the end was near 2000 years before it was actually near.

Apply the teaching of Luke 21 to Revelation. Perhaps no other writer wrote with such urgency as John. No other writer used more words of imminence and nearness than John. John wrote that the events of his book were at hand. They were to shortly to come to pass. Jesus was coming quickly. John was one of the disciples that heard Jesus warn against making premature declarations of the end. Shall we now say that John made so many premature declarations

of the end? Had John forgotten the warnings of his master? Was he disregarding the warnings of a premature declaration of the end? Was John simply one of the many deluded prophets of the times? Shall we say that John has become one of the false teachers that Jesus warned about?

Since John did declare that the end was near, then if the end was not truly near, he is one of the false teachers that Jesus warned about. Jesus said many would come saying “The end has drawn near,” but condemned the premature message and its messengers. John said the end was near. He was either right or wrong.

According to Luke 21:8, the only generation that was to proclaim the message of the soon coming end was to be the generation that would actually see the end. Believers were to reject any message of the imminent end that was not the inspired word of the apostles. This means that John’s warnings of the soon coming parousia must either be taken as true, or we must condemn John as one of the false prophets that Jesus condemned for making premature declarations of the end.

## **TIME STATEMENTS AND THE TEST OF A PROPHET**

In Deuteronomy 18 is the well known “test of a prophet.” Simply stated, Jehovah said that if a prophet predicted something, and it did not come true, the man was a false prophet and was to be rejected. It seems not to have dawned on modern exegetes who seek to negate the temporal statements of scripture that their arguments completely negate that test. As we have seen, Strimple claims that the time statements of scripture are only examples of “alleged imminency.” In that same work, Pratt makes the amazing claim that, “We will argue that Biblical prophecies are seldom fulfilled exactly as they are given. Therefore, even if Scriptures did predict Jesus’ return would take place within a few years, his return could still be in our future, even two thousand years later.” So there you have it. Even though the Bible might have predicted events to occur within a specific time

frame, that does not mean one single thing.

This position completely negates the possibility of testing the prophets. It negates Jesus' words in Luke 21.8. After all, just because the false teachers would say "the end has drawn near" before the end had drawn near, means nothing. How could the apostles, how could anyone, reject them as false teachers, if their time statements could not be tested?

Consider Jeremiah 29:10. Jehovah said Judah was to endure seventy years of Babylonian captivity. The people and other prophets rejected this word, and claimed, "The vessels of the Lord's house will now shortly be brought back from Babylon" (Jeremiah 27:16). So, the Lord said the captivity would be "long" (Jeremiah 29:28) but the people said it would be short; they even identified that "short" time as two years (Jeremiah 28:2f). Jeremiah's response was that if the prediction of his adversary, the prophet Hananiah, came true, and the vessels were restored "shortly" then he, Jeremiah, was a false prophet. However, if after two years the vessels were not returned, Hananiah was to die. (Jeremiah 28:10-16). And Hananiah died within two years.

The test of the prophet was not only whether what he said came true, but the timing of the fulfillment his prediction. If the time element of his prediction failed, he was a false prophet.

All attempts to obviate the prophetic time statements about the parousia negate God's test of a prophet. But if prophetic time statements mean nothing, why did God condemn prophets for making false time statements?

## **58 SPECIAL STUDY**

### **PAUL AND THE APOCALYPSE**

One of the most overlooked, or unexplored, areas of study in regard to the Apocalypse, is the relationship of the apostle Paul and his ministry. In doing Internet searches of both scholarly and popular sites on Revelation, I have been unable to find a single article or book

that investigates this relationship. Yet, in our view, Paul's ministry plays a crucial role in identifying Babylon.

There are four distinctive, yet interrelated themes of Paul's message and ministry found in Revelation:

1.) The salvation of Israel, inclusive of resurrection and the new creation.

2.) The completion of the World Mission.

3.) The completion of the Mystery of God.

4.) The filling up of the measure of suffering.

While space forbids an exhaustive examination of each of these themes, we will seek to provide enough information to show that Revelation and Paul's ministry are concerned with identical issues. The implications of this are profound, and have a direct bearing on the identification of Babylon.

## **THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL**

There can be no doubt, Israel was at the heart of Paul's ministry. He repeatedly said that he preached only the "hope of Israel" (Acts 28:18f). His eschatology and gospel was firmly rooted in "Moses and the prophets" (Acts 24:14f).

In Romans 9-11, the apostle affirms his abiding love for Israel. He reminds his readers that God's promises to Israel are "irrevocable," and cites the prophets that foretold her salvation (Romans 11:25-29).

Davies comments on these chapters, "Far from revealing anti-Judaism, these chapters reveal a Paul conscious of an emerging anti-Judaism among the Gentile Christians that could draw on the endemic hostilities of the Greco-Roman pagan world to help it. He is determined to combat this." While Paul had harsh things to say about his kinsmen according to the flesh, he engaged in this rhetoric as a Jew proclaiming Israel's message to his recalcitrant brethren. When Gentiles engaged in this seemingly similar rhetoric, they did so with a decidedly anti-Jewish antipathy.

This emphasis on Israel seems to some contrary to Paul's ministry as the apostle to the Gentiles. Yet, as Nanos has correctly noted, Paul did not preach to the Gentiles because he believed Israel had been cut off. On the contrary, "The Gentile mission was based, not on Israel's rejection, but on the belief that her promised restoration had begun, with the inherent obligation to proclaim this message to all the nations" (Mystery, 269).

Paul's gospel was the proclamation of Israel's hope. We will show that Paul's gospel and the Apocalypse anticipated the same things.

## **THE RESURRECTION**

Proof that Revelation is related to the fulfillment of Israel's promises, and thus to Paul's ministry, is found in the resurrection. There is nothing more inseparably linked to Israel than the resurrection. It should be apparent to all, although it unfortunately doesn't appear to be, that the resurrection is associated with the climax of Israel's Aeon, and not the end of the Christian age.

When Paul stood on trial he made it plain that he was on trial for his eschatology, "concerning the hope and the resurrection of the dead am I being judged" (Acts 23:6). He stated, "I have a hope in God, believing all things that are written in the Law and in the prophets...that there will be a resurrection of the dead" (Acts 24:14-15). He said he was on trial for "the hope of Israel," and summed up that hope in one word, resurrection (Acts 26:6-8). So strongly did Paul relate his doctrine to Israel's promises that he stated, "I stand witnessing, both to small and great, saying no other things than that which the prophets and Moses said would come" (Acts 26:22).

Unless one is willing to divorce Israel from the last things, in violation of Paul's emphatic words, it must be admitted that Biblical eschatology is related to Israel's eschaton. If the resurrection is related to the last days, and who doubts that it is, and if resurrection is the consummation of Israel's promises, does it not follow inexorably that resurrection is related to Israel's last days? Are we to believe that



God gave the resurrection promise to Israel, but that He was going to cut Israel off at the Cross, per the amillennialist, and then bring the resurrection at the end of the Christian age, an age unrelated, so we are told, to the promises of Israel?

We have shown that Jesus placed the resurrection/harvest at the end of the Old Covenant age . This is where Daniel placed it as well (Daniel 12:3, 7). In Revelation 11, John alludes to Daniel 12 when he speaks of the time of the resurrection. The next chart will help us visualize the parallels between Jesus, Paul, and the Apocalypse.

Jesus Paul Revelation Confirm promises made to Israel (Romans 15:8) Preached the hope of Israel (Acts 24-28) Anticipated the fulfillment of the prophets (22:6) Preached resurrection (Luke 20) Preached resurrection (Acts 24:14f) Preached resurrection (11, 20) Resurrection at the end of “this age” (Matthew 13:39-40; Luke 20:34f) (Said when living in Mosaic age) “Then comes the end” (1 Corinthians 15:24) Resurrection at the time of the end (20:12f) Resurrection when power of the holy people completely shattered (Daniel 12:2-7) Resurrection (Israel’s inheritance) received when “Jerusalem that now is” cast out (Galatians 4:22-31) Resurrection at fall of Babylon (10:8-11:15) To occur in Jesus’ generation (Matthew 16:27-28; 24:30-34) “The end of the age has come upon us”; “we shall not all sleep” (1 Corinthians 10:11; 15:51) The time is at hand (1:1-3) Jesus informs us specifically when all of Israel’s promises would find consummation. In Luke 21:22, in a section admitted even by the millennialist to refer to the AD 70 catastrophe, Jesus said, “These are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.” As Bray says, “Notice that he said THESE were the days when all things which were written were to be fulfilled. Not some other days hundreds of years later. These tragic events WERE (not will be) the fulfillment of ALL the remaining prophecies concerning Israel. And if ‘all things’ were fulfilled then, how could any of these prophecies relate to Israel in our future?” (His emphasis)

In another work Bray states, “When Jerusalem was destroyed, in

AD 70, (the Christians had fled and got out of it) every prophecy in the Bible that ever had anything to do with Israel was now fulfilled.” Bray’s emphasis on Luke 21 is perceptive and well stated. However, it presents some serious problems for any futurist eschatology.

The question that begs for an answer is, if all of Israel’s promises were fulfilled at the end of Israel’s age, if there are no more prophecies concerning Israel to be fulfilled, does this not demand that the resurrection scene of Revelation 11 and 20 was fulfilled at the passing of Old Covenant Israel in AD 70? The indisputable fact is that there are no eschatological promises separate and apart from Israel. The chart shows that resurrection was the core of God’s promises to Israel. You cannot make the resurrection a promise to the Gentiles divorced from Israel. Thus, if all of God’s promises to Israel were fulfilled at the fall of Jerusalem, then the resurrection, and the eternal life that was to flow to believers as a result of it, occurred with the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.

The harmony between Jesus, Paul and John is undeniable. The chart shows conclusively that John’s apocalypse is on the same page as Jesus and Paul. He preached the hope of Israel. Jesus, drawing on Daniel, placed the time of fulfillment at the end of the Jewish Aeon. Paul told the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17), the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 10:11; 15:50), the Philippians (4:5), Timothy (1 Timothy 6:15f; 2 Timothy 4:1), and the recipients of his epistles, that the end of the age had arrived and that not all of them would die before the resurrection. John stated repeatedly that fulfillment of his vision “must shortly come to pass.” This harmony demands that Babylon of Revelation was first century Jerusalem.

To deny this identification one must prove that John was not, in fact, anticipating the resurrection in fulfillment of Israel’s promises, as were Jesus and Paul, or it must be shown that he was anticipating something different, although still related to Israel, than they. It must be proven that while Jesus, Paul and John all stated unequivocally that the time of fulfillment was near, that all of them were mistaken or misguided. None of this can be proven.

It is vitally important to realize that Paul's mission to the Gentiles was to procure the salvation of Israel. Paul's personal mission was to bring in the fullness of the Gentiles so that Israel might be saved (Romans 11:13-14, 25-27). It follows that the resurrection, the hope of Israel, could not be far removed from Paul's personal ministry.

Paul believed Israel's salvation was imminent (Romans 9:28; 13:11f) John believed that resurrection, the hope of Israel was at hand (Revelation 22:6, 10-12). Paul's mission to the Gentiles, for the salvation of Israel, demanded the demise of Old Covenant Israel (Galatians 4). In Revelation, Babylon had to fall so that the nations could flow into the new Jerusalem. When the direct relationship between Paul's personal mission, the fulfillment of Israel's promises, and Revelation is seen, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that Babylon was first century Jerusalem. The fall of Rome, America, nor the Catholic church had an primary application to the fulfillment of Israel's hope, and the mission of Paul. Jerusalem had everything to do with both.

## **THE NEW CREATION**

For Paul, the new creation was fundamental. He taught the "already-but-not yet" reality of this wondrous new world. Davies says that in Paul's eyes, "In the coming of Christ ha-olam ha-ba (the age to come, DKP) on which the eyes of the Jewish world were set, had suddenly moved from the distant future and become present fact. But he also described the advent of Christ in another striking figure that was also familiar to his Jewish contemporaries—it was the new creation." Kaylor notes that for Paul, "By incorporation into the body of Christ one participates in the beginning of a new creation."

The new creation was the focus of much Old Covenant prophecy. Isaiah 65-66 foretold the "new heavens and earth." In Romans, Paul writes eloquently of Israel's salvation, and quotes from Isaiah's prediction (Romans 10:20-21). Thus, when Paul speaks of the new

creation, he is drawing from Israel's eschatological expectation.

In Colossians 3:10f, Paul refers to the church as the "new man" created in the image of God. He then refers to the church as, "the elect of God, holy and beloved." These are terms historically reserved for Israel (Deuteronomy 7:4-7). Paul's application of these terms to the church, as the new creation, can only mean that for Paul the church is the realization of Israel's "new world" hopes. It can also only mean that Paul clearly had a "spiritual" view of Israel's new creation.

In Revelation, John also anticipated the salvation of Israel. Every tenet of his discussion of the new creation is drawn from the Old Covenant prophets. His description of the new Jerusalem is full of citations from Isaiah 60-66. In Paul and John alike, the promises of the New Covenant, the new tabernacle, the new people, the new Jerusalem, the resurrection, and a host of other tenets, constituted the "hope of Israel." Paul and John were not on different pages theologically or eschatologically.

While there are many issues that we could investigate to prove the correspondence between Paul and the Apocalypse, for brevity we will concentrate our focus on the promise of the new Jerusalem.

## **THE NEW JERUSALEM**

In Old Testament prophetic hope, Zion is the center of God's schema. In the establishment of the kingdom, the nations would come to Zion (Isaiah 2:2f). After the great Assize, (judgment) and destruction of death, Jehovah would spread the Messianic Banquet, and rule in Zion (Isaiah 24-25). The River of Life would flow from Jerusalem after the Lord had come in judgment (Zechariah 14:8). Isaiah foretold that in the new heavens and earth, Jehovah would also create a new Jerusalem (Isaiah 65:17-19). This latter text, Isaiah 65 serves as the source for the New Testament teaching about the new Jerusalem.

Isaiah predicted that Israel would ultimately fill the measure of her sin, "Your sins and the sins of your fathers will I measure into

your bosom” (Isaiah 65:6). Jackson says, “The idiom means that the Lord will fill their ‘sack’ with what they deserve. Israel’s sins had been accumulating over a long period of history, and the time of full payment would eventually come.” The time of this filling the measure of sin, and the consequent judgment, is identified by Jesus as, “this generation” (Matthew 23:34).

Jehovah warned Israel, “You will leave your name for a curse to My chosen ones. And the Lord God will slay you. But My servants will be called by another name” (Isaiah 65:15). The Lord promised however, that following this destruction, “I create a new heaven and a new earth...I create Jerusalem a rejoicing” (Isaiah 65:17-19).

In Israel’s prophetic anticipation, therefore, the new Jerusalem would follow the judgment of Israel. It is impossible to imagine that Paul was unaware of this prophetic scenario, because in his citation of Isaiah (Romans 10) he cites the verses that speak of Israel’s sin, the sin that would lead to her judgment and the new creation.

Paul was vividly aware of the prophecies of the new Jerusalem. In Galatians 4:21f, he develops the contrast between the two Jerusalems. The old Jerusalem signified Old Covenant Israel, and was in bondage. (What an incredible thing for the great Jew, Paul, to say.) The new Jerusalem was “above” and was constituted of both Jew and Gentile.

Old Covenant Judah, the old Jerusalem, was guilty of persecuting the “seed of promise.” Consequently, Paul says, “cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free” (Galatians 4:30). Paul’s, “Jerusalem that now is” was the persecutor of God’s elect.

It was in this persecution that Israel was filling the measure of her sin. Paul pointed the finger at the Jews as those, “Who killed the prophets, the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us, and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as to fill up the measure of their sin; but the wrath has come upon them to the uttermost” (1 Thessalonians 2:15-16).

For this sin Israel was to be cast out. In place of the old Jerusalem,

the “Jerusalem that is above,” the new Jerusalem, would stand triumphant, identified as the city of God. Paul follows Isaiah 65 to the letter.

The question on Paul’s mind was “who receives the inheritance, Old Covenant Jerusalem, or the new?” His answer: the new Jerusalem is the city of the inheritance. The old is to be cast out. The apostle’s words are reflected in Revelation. The chart will help visualize the comparison between Paul’s “Jerusalem that now is” and Babylon.

## **GALATIANS 4:21 REVELATION**

Hagar  
The Harlot  
Persecutor of the seed of the woman (v. 29)  
Persecutor of the seed of the woman (chap 12)  
Once the favored seed  
Once the favored seed, (Revelation 3:9f)  
City to be cast out (v. 30)  
City to be cast out (chapters 17-18)  
New Jerusalem triumphant  
New Jerusalem triumphant

Galatians and Revelation depict two women representing two cities. Galatians speaks of Hagar represented by, “Jerusalem that now is,” and guilty of persecuting the seed of promise. Revelation tells of the Great Harlot, Babylon, (Revelation 17-18) that was guilty of persecuting the seed of promise (Revelation 12).

Galatians speaks of the other woman and city. This woman is represented by the, “Jerusalem that is above.” This woman, and her seed, stands triumphant when the old Jerusalem is cast out. In Revelation, the Bride, the new Jerusalem, comes, “down from God out of heaven” (Revelation 21:2). However, this triumph comes only when the old city, Babylon, is destroyed.

There can be no doubt that Paul was speaking of Old Covenant Jerusalem. The parallels between Galatians and Revelation are direct and exact. Unless, therefore, one is able to demonstrate that Paul and John spoke of two different women, that represented two different cities guilty of persecuting the chosen seed, for which sin both cities would be destroyed, then we must identify Babylon in Revelation as Paul’s “Jerusalem that now is.” Paul’s ministry and message begins to

have a profound impact on our view of Revelation.

If one accepts the Pauline authorship of Hebrews, then that book adds to our understanding of Paul's message—and Revelation.

Unquestionably, the book of Hebrews is a contrast between Christ and Israel's Old Covenant world. Gentile issues are not at stake. Lane, commenting on chapter 12, says, "The writer compares the two covenants under the imagery of two mountains in order to contrast the distance that separated the worshiper from God under the Old Covenant with the unrestricted access to God under the New Covenant."

Russell has shown that the elements contained in Hebrews 12 are the identical ones in Revelation, i.e., Mt. Zion, the new Jerusalem, the company of angels, etc.. The parallels are so impressive that Russell concluded, "It is impossible to resist the conclusion that the writer of this epistle had the descriptions of the Apocalypse in his mind; and his language presupposes the knowledge of that book by the Hebrew Christians" (Parousia, 287).

Hebrews 12 contrasts two mountains, Sinai and Zion, just as in Galatians 4 (Hebrews 12:18-22). He also implicitly contrasts the two Jerusalems. He says, "you have not come to..." "but you have come to..." and what they had come to was the, "city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." It is clear that his contrast is between the old Jerusalem and the new just as in Galatians 4.

When the writer says in chapter 13:14, "we have here no continuing city," his point is that, "The importance of the literal Jerusalem, symbolic of the temple and the Levitical sacrifices, must give way to that of the heavenly Jerusalem. But it is exactly the latter that the readers will not participate in if they remain in Judaism of the literal Jerusalem." As Russell says, "Jerusalem, the holy city, with her sacred temple, her towers and palaces, her walls and bulwarks, was no longer 'a continuing city'; it was on the eve of being shaken and removed. But the Hebrew saint could see through his tears another Jerusalem, the city of the living God; an enduring and heavenly home, drawing very near, and 'coming down,' from heaven."

Such a statement by the author of Hebrews, that the old city was not an “abiding city,” was stunning, and could scarcely fail to have a profound impact on the Jewish readers. The Jews thought of Jerusalem as the eternal city. When Jesus said “not one stone” would be left standing on top of another (Matthew 24:2) the disciples naturally associated that prediction with the end of the age. Hurst says, “Even after AD 70, the rabbinic tradition, unlike the apocalyptists and NT writers, could not bring itself to see the earthly Jerusalem actually superseded by the heavenly city.”

The Jewish attachment to Jerusalem, and conviction that God would protect her no matter what, is exemplified in the story from Josephus that even in the closing days of the siege a “prophet” convinced 6000 of the people to flee to the porticoes of the temple in expectation that Jehovah was about to provide miraculous deliverance. They all died a horrible death in flames. (Josephus, Wars, VI, 5:2).

The New Testament execrations against Jerusalem are, therefore, strong testimony to the power of Jesus’ Olivet Discourse, and to the “spiritual” understanding of the coming new Jerusalem. The authors were not expecting a restoration of the old city. They knew, “our citizenship (lit. Home city) is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20) and, “the Jerusalem that now is” was on the verge of a horrible conflagration.

To the Hebrew writer, the old city was not the focus of God’s promises. She had served her purpose. Her temple and her altar were types of the “heavenly” realities that were about to come. As a matter of fact, that old system was now, “nigh to vanishing away” (Hebrews 8:13) so that the New Covenant world might remain. But that old world was not leaving without a struggle. Just as the children of the flesh persecuted the children of the promise in Galatians, in Hebrews, the adherents of the old world were persecuting those who were becoming citizens of the Heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 10:32f). The parallels between Galatians and Hebrews are impressive indeed, as the next chart shows.



## **GALATIANS 4 HEBREWS 12**

Jerusalem that now is We have here no abiding city (13:14) Contrast of covenants Contrast of covenants Two mountains representing the covenants Two mountains representing the covenants Persecution by adherents of Old Covenant Persecution by adherents of Old Covenant Old city to be cast out Old city to be cast out Triumph of heavenly, abiding city Triumph of heavenly, abiding city

The focus in both Galatians and Hebrews is a contrast between the Old Covenant city of Jerusalem, and the new Jerusalem. What is so amazing, is that the identical elements are found in John's apocalypse, and yet the commentators seem not to have noticed.

Few Bible students doubt that Galatians and Hebrews were written prior to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Paul was not writing post facto about the rejection of Israel. That rejection and attendant destruction lay in his near future. The question for our purposes involves the simple question: Did John envision a different new Jerusalem that would come after the fall of a different persecuting power? Or was John conversant with Paul's ideas and consistent with them as well?

John and Paul were not on two different pages theologically. This is proven in Galatians 2, where Paul said Peter and John "extended the right hand of fellowship" to him in recognition that he preached the same gospel as they. Thus, Both Paul and John anticipated the fulfillment of the promises made to Israel, specifically the new Jerusalem.

Isaiah 65 said the new Jerusalem would come after Israel had filled the measure of her sin and was destroyed.

Paul, who wrote Galatians and Hebrews before the judgment of Israel in AD 70, anticipated the coming of the new Jerusalem in connection with the judgment of Israel. This judgment would come when Israel had filled the measure of her sin. Paul's doctrine of the new Jerusalem was faithful to the Isaianic pattern.

In Revelation, John anticipated the soon realization of the new

Jerusalem promised by Isaiah. John's new Jerusalem would come when the city "Babylon," whose cup of sin was now full because of her persecution of the saints, was destroyed.

Are we to ignore the unity of Revelation with Isaiah and Paul? Are we to see the promise of two different new Creations, two different "women" guilty of persecuting God's chosen seed? Are we to be impressed with Paul's consistency with Isaiah, but divorce John's discussion from Isaiah?

Unless one is able to prove that John's message does not correspond with Paul, then Paul's message concerning the two cities becomes the interpretive key for identifying Babylon of Revelation. This means that Babylon in Revelation was Old Covenant Jerusalem.

The evidence is persuasive, Revelation was written prior to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, and was concerned with the demise of the Old Covenant world of Israel, not the end of time.

There are other elements of Paul's message reiterated and emphasized in the Apocalypse. Space forbids development of these matters, however. In Paul, there is no doubt that the controversy centers around the Old Covenant temple and the New Covenant temple. Why should we think it is different in Revelation?

We have focused on these issues to illustrate that Paul's message, and that of Revelation, is the same, i.e. the salvation of Israel. As we argue elsewhere in this work, to divorce the book of Revelation from the promises of Israel is to miss the meaning of the Apocalypse. John, in his anticipation of the new Jerusalem, the new tabernacle, the River of Life, the opening of the Book of Life, and much more, was eagerly longing for the consummation of Israel's promises.

What so many Bible students miss is that the Old Covenant external form was to be removed by judgment so that the new heavenly realities could be revealed (Hebrews 9:6-28). This was Paul's message (Colossians 2:14-22) and many commentators do not deny this. Yet strangely, they see no correlation to John's message. This is sad indeed, for Paul and John were on the same theological page. In what follows, we will show even more the significance of

Paul's ministry to the interpretation of Revelation, and the identity of Babylon.

## **PAUL, THE WORLD MISSION AND REVELATION**

Nothing was more important to Paul than the completion of his "stewardship" (oikonomian, Strong's #3622, Colossians 1:25) to proclaim the gospel to the nations. Even when it was revealed that he was about to be imprisoned, and eventually killed, he said, "None of these things move me, nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

The apostle also believed that his ministry was distinctive. Hahn says Paul was conscious that, "However much equality there may be, his apostolic office is different from that of the people who were apostles before him." He served as a royal "ambassador" of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20) and his apostolate was a special "stewardship" from Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:17; Ephesians 3:2f). Just as the other apostles were chosen by the Lord, he was as well. However, his office was one to which he was chosen "out of season" (ektroma, Strong's #1626, a powerful word indicating abortion) indicating that the time-frame for appointment had naturally come and gone.

Paul's distinctive mission was to the Gentiles, and he said it was his personal charge to present the Gentiles, as a body, to God. In Romans 15:16f, the apostle uses liturgical language to describe his work. Sanday says the language indicates that, "Paul is standing at the altar as priest of the Gospel, and the offering which he makes is the Gentile church."

Some find it hard to understand how Paul's message could be the, "hope of Israel," because he was the minister to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7-9). This can only be understood by realizing that the salvation of Israel would lead to the salvation of the nations (Isaiah

49:6f). God had to fulfill His promises to Israel, and thus bring their distinctive history to a close, for salvation to be offered to the nations (Acts 15:13f).

This scenario, the salvation of Israel heralded to the nations, to bring all nations to the Lord, was part of the prophetic schema understood by Paul. The prophecy of Isaiah 11 said the offspring of Jesse would come and establish justice. The ensign of the Messiah would be raised to proclaim salvation for the nations, “For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

In a prediction that entails the new Jerusalem, Jehovah said, “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’...The Lord has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Isaiah 52:7-10).

This latter verse is quoted by Paul in Romans 10. He cites the text to explain the world mission among the Jews. The Jews could not plead ignorance as an excuse for disobedience, because the gospel had been preached into all the world.

Paul’s references to these Old Covenant predictions of world evangelism further shows that his ministry was not divorced from Israel’s promises, but rather, inextricably bound to them. As a minister of world evangelism, Paul was fulfilling God’s promises to Israel.

Jesus said, “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world for a witness to the nations, then comes the end” (Matthew 24:14). This prediction came in response to the disciples’ question seeking a sign of the end of the age (Matthew 24:3). Thus, the completion of the World Mission was to be sign of the looming end of the age (not the end of the material world, but of the age, Greek *aion*).

When we compare the prediction of Jesus, with the ministry of Paul and the message of the Apocalypse, we find a compelling

parallel.

Jesus Paul Revelation Prediction and command of world mission (Matthew 24:14; 28:18f) Commissioned to fulfill the World Mission (Colossians 1:24-26) Vision of the fulfillment of the World Mission (Revelation 14:6-8) Mission empowered by miraculous gifts (Mark 13:11) Ministry empowered by miraculous gifts (Romans 15:19) Mission empowered by miraculous gifts (11:5-6) Message of the demise of Jerusalem (Matthew 24/ Luke 21) Message of the demise of Jerusalem (Galatians 4:22f; Hebrews 12:18f) Message against "Babylon" (14:8) Jerusalem's demise for persecuting the faithful (Matthew 23:29f; 24:9f) Jerusalem's demise for persecuting the seed of promise (Galatians 4:30-32) Babylon's demise for persecuting the saints (17:1f; 18:20f) Jerusalem killed the prophets, apostles and Lord (Matthew 23-24) Jerusalem killed the prophets, apostles and Lord (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16) Babylon killed the prophets, apostles and Lord (16:6f; 18:20-24; 11:8) Jerusalem filling the measure of her sin by the persecution (Matthew 23:29f) Jerusalem filling the measure of her sin by the persecution (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16) Babylon filling the measure of her sin by the persecution (17:4-6) Judgment of Jerusalem imminent (Matthew 24:34) Judgment of Jerusalem imminent (1 Thessalonians 2:14f) Judgment of Babylon imminent (14:7-8; 22:10, 12, 20)

The correspondence between Jesus, Paul and the Apocalypse is remarkable. To make John's message different from that of Jesus and Paul would seem to demand some powerful evidence indeed.

It was necessary for the message of Jerusalem's impending fate to be spread to all the world for a number of reasons. Terry states one reason, "According to Mark 13, it was necessary for the gospel to be thus preached before the end, and we may reasonably look for some intimation touching the divine order of the world. In the passing away of an old order, and the introduction of a new, we do not find a sudden and unlooked-for transition. God does not remove a system that has had a long career of usefulness until He has effectually provided and prepared the way for something better.

...It was necessary that the Gospel of Christ and the new teachings of His kingdom should be spread abroad beyond Jerusalem, and be immovably established in the civilized world, before the old system and worship which centered in the temple of Judaism were utterly broken down.”

As Paul proclaimed the new creation he went to the Diaspora, the Jews scattered around the world, and offered the gospel to them first because it was necessary to do so.

Paul’s commitment to completing the World Mission was not simply evangelistic zeal. It was related to his eschatological paradigm and significantly, his conviction that he personally played the pivotal and climatic role in God’s last days schema. More on this below.

Just as Jesus said the gospel would be preached into all the world as a sign of the impending end of the age, Paul affirmed that the gospel had been preached into all the world and the end was near. Further, he claimed that his personal stewardship of preaching to all the Gentiles was about to be completed.

We will simply list some of the texts from the New Testament that attest to that reality, because we have detailed the Biblical testimony about the fulfillment of the World Mission elsewhere.

1.) Paul says the gospel had been made known to all the nations and preached into all the world (Romans 10:18f; Romans 16:25-26). He also said the Day of the Lord was at hand (Romans 13:11f).

It is important to note that in Romans 10, Paul’s assertion that the gospel had been preached to the world is made in the context of his discussion of Israel’s salvation. The gospel had been proclaimed to all of Israel. Therefore, she was without excuse for her rejection of the gospel.

2.) Colossians 1:5-7—The apostle maintains that the gospel had been preached to all the nations, and was bringing forth fruit. In verse 23, he avows, “every creature under heaven” had heard the Word.

3.) Titus 2:11-13—The Cilician apostle says the gospel had appeared to all men. As a result, he says they were, “looking (prosdekoumai)

for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”

In Matthew, Jesus was asked for a sign of His coming and the end of the age at the fall of Jerusalem. One sign would be the completion of the World Mission.

In Paul’s epistles, he emphasized his personal and pivotal role in world evangelism. He also spoke of the Jewish resistance to his mission, and the impending judgment on them for their murderous history (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16). He wrote of the fulfillment of the World Mission, and the consequent imminence of the end of the age.

Revelation 14 depicts the World Mission with the message “Babylon is fallen.” In Revelation 11, the two witnesses of the Lord testify for forty-two months. When their mission was fulfilled they were slain by the city that had also slain the Lord (Revelation 11:8). Judgment then came on that bloody city Babylon.

There was but one World Mission. Paul was the pivotal player in the fulfillment of that mission. As he was engaged in that task, “the Jerusalem that now is,” sought his life and attempted to forbid him, “to speak to the Gentiles” (1 Thessalonians 2:14f). When Paul had completed his task, and he said that would be done when he stood before Nero (2 Timothy 4:17) the end would come quickly.

Clearly, Rome did not fall shortly after the completion of Paul’s mission. The Catholic Church was not destroyed, for the simple reason it did not even exist. The only cataclysmic end that occurred shortly after the completion of Paul’s mission was the fall of Jerusalem.

John’s vision of the completion of the World Mission, followed by the judgment on Babylon, fits within the framework of the ministry of Paul. While we are not suggesting that Paul was the “angel” seen by John, nor that Paul was one of the martyred “witnesses” in Revelation 11, we do believe that Paul’s ministry is fundamental to the proper interpretation of John’s Apocalypse.

The end was to follow the completion of Paul’s ministry. The end was to come after the world proclamation of the Word in Revelation.

Paul proclaimed the end of the Old Covenant system through the completion of his ministry (Galatians 4:21f; 2 Corinthians 3-4). Babylon was to fall after the ministry of the “angel” and the two witnesses.

Are we to postulate two different World Missions, with two different messages, of two different persecuting cities that were about to be cast out? Instead of this, we think it far better to see that the World Mission in Revelation, and the eschatology associated with it, are the same as in the Olivet Discourse and Paul. The message was that the Old Covenant world of Israel was about to be removed, and the new creation of God was to stand triumphant. This means that Babylon was Old Covenant Jerusalem.

## **REVELATION, PAUL AND THE MYSTERY OF GOD**

We will establish the following things in this section:

- 1.) That the mystery of God was to be consummated under the sounding of the 7th Trumpet (Revelation 10:8).
- 2.) The definition of the mystery.
- 3.) Paul’s pivotal role in bringing the mystery to consummation.
- 4.) The relationship of Paul’s message of the mystery to the passing of Old Covenant Jerusalem. We will establish that Paul’s message of the completion of the mystery was inextricably linked with the passing of the Old Covenant world of Israel, and that John’s message of the completion of the mystery, and the judgment on Babylon, are identical messages.

In Revelation 10:6-8, John was told that his vision embraced the consummation of all the prophetic hopes of the prophets. More specifically, John was told that when the seventh Trumpet sounded, “the mystery of God would be finished, which He declared to His servants the prophets” (Revelation 10:7).

The sounding of the Seventh Trumpet would indicate that the



judgment on the Great City would be complete (Revelation 11:18). Corresponding to the Seventh Trumpet is the pouring out of the Seventh Bowl against Babylon, in which the wrath of God would be completed (Revelation 16:17f). The seventh Trumpet and Bowl represent the time of the judgment of Babylon. Therefore, the time of the judgment of Babylon would be when the mystery of God would be completed.

If we can identify the “mystery of God,” we can correlate it with Babylon, because the “mystery of God” and the judgment on Babylon would both occur at the time of the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

Jay Adams, commenting on Revelation 10:7 says, “The time of the mystery (that is, that the Gentiles should come into the church on an equal footing with the Jews, not first having to become Jews themselves-cf. Ephesians 3:3-6) had finally arrived. The predominantly Jewish nature of the church was to be ended by the destruction of the Temple, the distinctive feature in which it centered.” Chilton concurs, “This ‘Mystery’ is a major aspect of the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians: the union of believing Jew and Gentiles in one Church, without distinction, ‘that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Jesus Christ through the Gospel’ (Ephesians 3:6). Gentiles, who had been strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and from the covenantal promises, are now, through the work of Christ, full sons of Abraham, heirs of the Covenant, on an equal and indistinguishable standing with the believing Jews (Ephesians 2:11-12; Galatians 3)” (Vengeance, 265). Gentry succinctly says of the mystery, “By this is meant that the Gentiles are fully accepted by God as the Temple (with its ‘separating wall,’ Ephesians 2:14) is about to be removed (Revelation 11). The end of the Temple economy and national Israel is near (1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 1:1-2; 9:26; 1 John 2:18)” (Gentry, Dominion, 407).

The New Testament writers, especially Paul, speak at length of the mystery of God, foretold by the prophets, and as the writers just cited suggest, it is Jew and Gentile equality in one body in Christ. In

Romans 16:25-26, the apostle said:

“Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for the obedience of faith” (NKJV)

Paul speaks of the mystery of God once kept secret, but now proclaimed to all the nations “for the obedience of faith.” In chapter 11, the same writer spoke of the hardness of Israel. That hardness had a dynamic purpose, the bringing in of the Gentiles into the spiritual things of Israel (Romans 11:15f). The apostle eagerly anticipated the salvation of Israel when “the fullness of the Gentiles” arrived; this, he says, is the mystery (Romans 11:25-27). When Jew and Gentile equality was accomplished God’s Scheme of Redemption was perfected.

In yet another epistle, Paul once again declares that the mystery of God is Jew and Gentile equality in Christ:

“By revelation He made known to me the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (Ephesians 3:3f).

There is no clearer definition of the mystery of God in scripture. The mystery of God foretold by the prophets and being carried out in the times of Paul was Jew and Gentile equality in Christ.

Some suggest that this equality was accomplished when Cornelius was converted in Acts 10. This simply is not true. The conversion of Cornelius by Peter was the symbolic act of equality to be sure. Peter began the call of the Gentiles. Yet, Paul said the task of presenting the Gentiles to God as an offering, and finishing that priestly function, was distinctively his (Colossians 1:25f; 2 Timothy 4:16f). The “unity

of the faith” was the goal of his entire ministry (Ephesians 4:8-16).

McRay, in a persuasive article, defines the “perfect man” and the “unity of the faith” in Ephesians 4, “This can only mean, in the total context of the discussion, the maturity of the church as evidenced in the Jewish acceptance of the inclusion of the Gentiles into the divine body, which for at least a decade belonged only to the Jews.” As the minister to “make the Gentiles obedient” (Romans 15:18) Paul ministered the miraculous gifts to Jew and Gentile converts equally (Romans 15:19). The egalite dispersion of these gifts manifested that there was no difference between Jew and Gentile.

Paul, therefore, defines the mystery of God that was foretold by the prophets as Jew and Gentile equality in Christ. This was the grand purpose of God before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:10) to be brought to realization in “the stewardship of the fullness of time,” and by the personal ministry of Paul. The mystery of God would be realized when the 7th trumpet sounded.

## **PAUL’S PIVOTAL ROLE IN THE MYSTERY**

Paul’s pivotal role in bringing the mystery of God to completion, and the implications for the identity of Babylon can hardly be overemphasized. Yet, no commentary on Revelation we have examined gives Paul’s ministry more than a passing notice. This is lamentable, because Paul’s insistence that his ministry was to bring the mystery to realization demands that we correlate the sounding of the Trumpets, and outpouring of the vials/bowls, to his ministry and his generation. When we do this it is impossible to identify any city other than first century Jerusalem as Babylon.

In Colossians 1:24-26, Paul makes a stunning claim. He says it was his personal stewardship to:

“fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and generations, but has now been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of

glory.”

Paul states emphatically (the force of the Greek text) that it was his personal, distinctive responsibility to bring the mystery to fulfillment (fulfill, from *pleroma*). He maintained that his office was given to him directly by the Lord (Galatians 1). While others certainly preached to Gentiles, he personally served as priest to offer the Gentiles to God as a sacrifice (Romans 15:16). He could say that the gospel had been preached into all the world (Colossians 1:23) yet he was given the personal responsibility to “fulfill the word of God, the mystery” (Colossians 1:25-26). The Gentile mission, and his special commission, would be completed when he appeared before Nero (2 Timothy 4:17).

Paul’s amazing status and significance is also illustrated in 2 Corinthians 3-4. In these chapters, he brings to the forefront the glory of Moses and the Old Covenant. Yet, he contrasts that glory with the glory of the New Covenant, and his ministry of bringing Old Covenant Israel out of the old glory, to the surpassing glory of the new. This transition, “from glory to glory,” was Paul’s distinctive ministry (2 Corinthians 4:1f). As Munck has observed:

“Moses and Paul are compared here with each other. The service of the former cannot in any way be matched with the service of the latter. Of Paul’s many new and startling utterances, this is perhaps the most surprising. The greatest man in the history of Israel is put beneath the traveling tentmaker. No stronger proof can be produced that as a figure in redemptive history in the age of the Messiah Paul far surpasses even the greatest of the great figures of Israel.”

Paul’s attitude toward his mission is graphically illustrated in Romans 11. He says, “I magnify my ministry,” the office of the apostle to the Gentiles (v. 13). Although he was the apostle to the Gentiles, “Israel continued to be Paul’s unmistakable priority” (Nanos, *Mystery*, 240). The apostle sought to convert Gentiles so that “some” of his brethren would be saved. He anticipates Israel’s salvation when, “the fullness of the Gentiles is come in” (Romans

11:25).

The term “fullness of the Gentiles” has inspired a great deal of comment. McGuiggan has shown that the term fullness in Romans 11 means, “spiritual wealth with which God will make the Gentiles full,” and not a numerical idea. He observes that in verse 12, the fullness of the Gentiles cannot mean number at all and says, “There is no more reason to import number into verse 25 than into verse 12.”

Thompson commenting on the fullness of the Gentiles says, “The fullness of the Gentiles is the precondition to the end. Paul is himself engaged in bringing about this fullness as ‘apostle to the Gentiles’ (11:13; 15:16-19) having already ‘fully preached’ (peplerokenai) from Jerusalem to Illyricum (15:19). This apostolic intent to bring about this ‘fullness’ gives him the desire to go to Rome and even beyond, to Spain (Romans 15:22f). The ‘fullness of the Gentiles’ is thus the completion of Paul’s missionary task.”

Without doubt then, Paul is the central player in the mystery. He tells us, emphatically, that it was his office to bring the mystery to its consummation. Yet, he tells us that his commission would be completed when he stood before Nero (2 Timothy 4:16). This means in effect that, “Paul regards himself as the one on whom the arrival of the Messianic age depends” (Munck, 41).

The import of Paul’s claims and the relationship to the Apocalypse should be apparent. Unless the apostle was an egomaniac, deluded, or simply lying, we must acknowledge his decisive role in bringing the mystery of God to its realization.

Unless Paul’s “mystery,” and John’s “mystery,” are two different mysteries, then because Paul was the pivotal player in the consummation of the mystery, we must interpret Revelation within the context of Paul’s ministry.

The mystery of God would be perfected under the 7th Trumpet. Also under the 7th Trumpet was to be the deliverance of the Kingdom (11:15) and the finishing (telesthosin, Strong’s #5050) of the wrath of God against Babylon (Revelation 15:8; 16:7f). It is possible to identify

Babylon as first century Jerusalem, because of Paul's distinctive role in the fulfillment of the mystery. As Paul proclaimed the message of the mystery, an integral part of his message was the necessity for the passing of Old Covenant Jerusalem in order for the New Covenant world of Christ to stand triumphant and receive the inheritance.

## **THE MYSTERY AND THE PASSING OF JERUSALEM**

Many commentators acknowledge that Paul emphasized the transitory nature of the Old Law and its institutions, yet they do not see the logical implication of the impending demise of Jerusalem, the city that was the very expression of the Law. In fact, the demise and rejection of Old Covenant Jerusalem is far more than an implication in Paul's epistles.

Paul expected the coming of the new Jerusalem. His concept of the new creation was one that was free of the burden of the Torah. He strongly opposed those who maintained that Gentiles "must keep the Law of Moses and be circumcised to be saved" (Acts 15:2; Galatians 2). His gospel, which he says was anticipated by the prophets (Romans 16:25-26) proclaimed justification by faith, not by works of the Law (Galatians 3:10f). As Lincoln says, "His advocacy of a law-free Gentile mission was what provoked the opposition which led to his arrest and imprisonment." As part of his gospel, Paul reminded his audiences that the Law, and its institutions, thus Jerusalem, were divinely intended to be temporary, and were destined to perish.

When writing to the Colossians, Gentiles being pressured to keep the Law, Paul told them that the Law, with its festivals, feast days and Sabbaths, was only a shadow "of good things that are about to (mellonton) come" (Colossians 2:17). The temple was the very expression of these sacramental institutions. If the feast days were a shadow of coming better things, then the temple was as well. If the sacrifices were intended to perish, then the sacred ground on which they were offered was doomed to lose its sanctity (see John 4:20-24).

Thus, in Colossians 2:20f, Paul says those cultic sacrifices and practices, which he describes as, “the elements (stoicheion) of the world (kosmos, Strong’s #2889),” were doomed to perish. This is a powerful expression of the impending doom of the temple cultus.

In Galatians 3, Paul outlines salvation by faith for Jew and Gentile alike, apart from the Law (3:6-14). This is the mystery. In 3:24, he told his readers that the Law was given by God as a guardian (paidagogos, Strong’s #3807) to instruct, protect, and discipline until the arrival of “the faith.” The Law and its institutions was never intended to be permanent. It was intended to endure until the full arrival of the faith. In language that powerfully expresses the mystery, the apostle declares that “in Christ” there is “neither Jew nor Greek” (3:28).

In chapter 4:3,9, he reminds them that to be bound to the Law was to be bound to the “elements (stoichea, Strong’s #4747) of the world (kosmos).” He then discusses the receiving of the inheritance, and contrasts the Old Covenant seed and city with the new. As noted above, Paul’s inspired declaration concerning the old Jerusalem is “cast out the bondwoman and her son” (Galatians 4:30). Plainly, Paul’s doctrine of the mystery of God included the message of Jerusalem’s destruction.

Writing to the Philippian church, composed of Jews and Gentiles, Paul assures them, “We are the circumcision” (Philippians 3:3). This was a powerful statement about the standing of the old circumcision—and an implicit reference to the mystery.

In Philippians 3:20f, the apostle says, “Our citizenship is in heaven.” As Hawthorne (p. 171) says, Paul is contrasting the two cities of God, Old Covenant Jerusalem, and the Heavenly Jerusalem. Thus, as in his other epistles, Paul’s message in regard to the mystery of God involved the necessity of the passing of Israel’s Old Covenant world.

There can be no serious doubt that the passing of the Old Covenant system was essential for the completion of the mystery of God. In Hebrews 9:6-10, the author explains that as long as “the first tabernacle still has standing” there was no access into the Most

Holy Place, the presence of God. Because of sin, this was true of Jew and Gentile alike. The veil was a constant reminder of the barrier between God and man. Yet, the Jew was “closer” than the Gentile. (It is fascinating that the temple veil kept the Jew out of the presence of God, while the wall of separation, a literal wall running around the temple complex, kept the Gentiles separated from the Court of Israel, and thus further removed from the presence of Jehovah).

In Ephesians 2:11f, Paul discussed this separation between Jew and Gentile. He reminds his Gentile readers that prior to coming to Christ, “You were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in this world.” Yet, something has taken place, they have been reconciled, “You who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who has made both (Jew and Gentile, DKP) one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace.”

Many mistakenly believe that Paul here asserts that the Law itself had been removed. This is false. The key is the term “in Christ,” or “in His body.” Paul says Christ removed the barrier for those in Christ. The Law, the objective barrier of separation, had not yet been removed, it was still “nigh unto passing” when Hebrews was written (Hebrews 8:13). Those entering Christ died to the Law, and in that sense, the wall of separation was removed for them. Yet, one must not confuse the difference between the removal of the Law itself, and the dying to the Law (see Romans 7:4; 10:4) on the part of those coming into Christ. Nonetheless, one point is certain, the Old Law was the barrier between Jew and Gentile equality.

The Hebrew writer affirms that as long as the old system stood there was no access to the presence of God. The writer of Ephesians says the Law was the barrier to Jew and Gentile equality. Thus, as long as the Old Covenant stood the objective barrier between Jew



and Gentile remained. Notice the correlation between the ministry of Paul and the Apocalypse.

Paul said the Old Law was a barrier between man and God, and that as long as the Old Covenant stood intact man could not enter “the Most Holy Place” (Hebrews 9:6-10). In Revelation, man could not enter the Most Holy Place until the wrath of God was completed (Revelation 15:8). The wrath of God would be completed in the judgment of Babylon (16:17-19). Therefore, the continuance of Babylon stood as a barrier between man and the Most Holy Place.

One must ask: did the city of Rome serve as a barrier between God and man? How had a pagan city come to replace the city of Jerusalem as the expression of man’s alienation from God. Jerusalem had represented both God’s dwelling, and man’s separation from Him, for centuries. Had Rome replaced Jerusalem in that role?

Precisely how would the Roman Catholic church serve as a barrier between Jew and Gentile, and between man and God? It is not enough to suggest that the teaching of false doctrine separates man from God, the mystery of Jew and Gentile equality is at stake here. And there is no other city, ancient or modern, that so epitomized separation between God and man, and man and man, as first century Jerusalem. It is the failure to recognize Jerusalem, both positively and negatively, as central to the Scheme of Redemption that has and does lead to so many erroneous interpretations of the scripture.

Boettner says one of the reasons why many commentators fail to see the centrality of the passing of the Old Covenant city in the New Testament is, “They do not fully appreciate what a tremendously important event and landmark in history the break-up of the Old Testament economy really was. For a period of 1500 years God had worked with and through the Jewish people exclusively in matters pertaining to salvation. This had set Israel off very sharply from all the other nations...but with the advent of the Messiah all of that was ended.” Coffman says that other than the Passion of Christ, the destruction of Jerusalem, “was the greatest single event in a thousand years, and religiously significant beyond anything else that

ever occurred in human history.” Why was this true?

The central controversy in the first century was the identity of the Sons of God, see above. As long as Jerusalem stood, the Judaizing teachers that so troubled the early church demanding that Gentiles observe the Law of Moses (Acts 15:1-2) had a leverage that was difficult to counter. They could cite scripture that declared Zion as the perfection of beauty (Psalms 48, 51). Jerusalem was, “the city of our God” (Psalms 48:1) and the temple was God’s abode. The Messiah was of the tribe of Judah, and “salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22).

It is more than evident that the Jewish Christians were emphasizing the superiority of their lineage, their Law, their city and their temple, in their polemic. In Philippians 3, Paul responds to the boasts of these Judaizers, and sets forth Christ and His spiritual things in direct contrast with the old things of Israel. Among those contrasts are circumcision and citizenship.

He says of the brethren “Our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20). Most commentators believe that Paul is referring to Philippi as a Roman colony. However, Hawthorne suggests that Paul was “conscious still of his contest with the Jews.” He says, “Jews made up their own politeumata (Strong’s #4175, citizenship) where ever they settled and that they were permitted to live according to their own laws, and follow their own religious practices. But Paul believed that these Jews, irrespective of what they themselves might have speculated about themselves, belonged to colonies that were linked to Palestinian Jerusalem, earthbound, time bound colonies without any enduring quality. By contrast he says that Christians are a colony of heaven.”

Thus, the continued existence of Jerusalem was a continuing “point” in the polemic contest between the Jews and Christians, and between Judaizers and Gentile Christians. No matter how much the Christians spoke of the new Jerusalem, the Jews and Judaizers could and did point to the city and temple still standing in the hills of Israel. This had always been the city of God. Its continued existence

validated the “superiority” of Jewish Christians, but this was to change.

The fall of Jerusalem would demonstrate forever that Old Covenant Israel could no longer claim superiority. After all, her peace and prosperity were inextricably linked with her covenantal relationship. Peace meant relationship, war and conquest meant that God was displeased with her (Psalms 41:11).

In addition, the fall of Jerusalem showed that the Judaizing Christian had no “advantage” over his Gentile brothers and sisters. Jesus had personally prophesied of Jerusalem’s destruction and resultant gathering of, “the elect from the four winds of heaven” (Matthew 24:31). It would be the Lord himself that would wipe away the last vestige of any argument for superiority. The Hebrew writer had said, “we have here no abiding city” (Hebrews 13:14) because Jehovah was about to shake “not the earth, but heaven also” (Hebrews 12:25-28). The, “Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with her children” (Galatians 4:25) would be “cast out” because, “the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free” (Galatians 4:30).

Camp is correct to note the implications and results of the fall of Jerusalem. For one, it separated the church from Judaism:

“The fall of Jerusalem separated Judaism from Christianity. Judaism was a God-ordained religion. This made it possible for Judaizing teachers to deceive and confuse people as long as the temple existed. It was one thing to appeal to people to give up paganism with its religion as it was never approved by God. It was still another thing to call on the Jews to lay aside Judaism which was given by God and at one time acceptable to God. It is easy to see how Judaizing teachers used this in opposing the church. But when Jerusalem fell, the temple was destroyed, and they could no longer use this as a means of trying to confuse people” (Spirit, 54).

While no commentators we have examined have developed the doctrine of the mystery—as understood by Paul—in the Apocalypse,

it is present. In chapter 7 and 14, we not only find the salvation of Israel, represented by the 144,000 from the 12 tribes, but the salvation of the innumerable multitude. This multitude of the redeemed is from, “all the nations, (ethnos) and kindreds (phule) and people, (laon) and tongues” (Revelation 7:9). Equal salvation for Jew and Gentile by the blood of the Lamb is represented here.

It might be countered that the focus of Revelation 7 is the fact that both the 144,000 and the great multitude come out of the Great Tribulation (7:14) and thus the eschatological nature of the text is paramount, rather than Jew and Gentile salvation. While the eschatology is the primary focus it also cannot be denied that both the redeemed from the tribes of Israel, and the great multitude, stand united and redeemed on the same basis—the blood of the Lamb. This is the mystery.

In Revelation 21, after the destruction of Babylon, the nations of the earth come into the new Jerusalem (21:24-26). The salvation of the nations in God’s kingdom, the new Jerusalem, was predicted by the prophets (Isaiah 2:2f; 49:6f, 65:11f, etc.) and was the mystery as defined by Paul (Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 3:3f). Thus, the mystery of God foretold by the prophets and as preached by Paul is very much present in the Apocalypse.

The author of Revelation says that in the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet and pouring out of the Seventh Bowl against Babylon, “the mystery of God, is finished” (Revelation 10:7). The bringing together of Jew and Gentile in Christ would be manifested by that judgment. The question is, if Babylon was ancient Rome, the Roman Catholic church, Apostate Christianity, or any other modern entity, just how would this manifest/perfect Jew and Gentile equality?

Historically, only one city exemplified Jew and Gentile separation. It was at Jerusalem’s temple that a literal “wall of separation” stood, warning all Gentiles that entrance beyond that point would result in certain death. (Josephus, Antiquities, Bk. 15:11:5). Rome even allowed the Jews to kill anyone violating this wall of separation. The fervor with which this discrimination was defended can be seen

in Acts 21:27f. The Jews accused Paul of taking a Gentile into the temple, and were about to kill Paul on the spot for this imagined desecration.

Did Rome ever stand as a symbol of separation between Jew and Gentile? Does the Eastern European Common Market maintain Jew and Gentile distinction? Just how does the existence of the Roman Catholic church delineate between Jew and Gentile? In what way does “apostate Christianity,” ostensibly as Babylon, perpetuate Jew and Gentile inequality? How would the destruction of any of these proposed “Babylons” allow for the nations of the earth to flow into the new Jerusalem? Only first century Jerusalem qualifies as the city that exemplified Jew and Gentile division. Therefore, only the fall of Jerusalem would symbolize Jew and Gentile equality.

## **SUMMARY**

John said the mystery of God would be fulfilled in the days of the 7th Trumpet. We have shown that the mystery of God was Jew and Gentile equality in Christ.

We have shown that Paul’s personal ministry was the key to the fulfillment of the mystery (Colossians 1:25f; 2 Timothy 4:16f). We have also demonstrated that Paul’s message of the mystery included the necessity for the fall of Old Covenant Israel.

The mystery of God would be fulfilled in the days of the 7th Trumpet (Revelation 10:7). The mystery of God would be fulfilled by the ministry of Paul (Colossians 1:25f). Therefore, the 7th Trumpet would sound in the days of Paul’s ministry. What an incredible implication for the interpretation of the Apocalypse.

The judgment of Babylon would bring to perfection the mystery of God, i.e., the bringing of Jew and Gentiles into equality in Christ (Revelation 10:7; 16:17f). But the judgment of Jerusalem would bring to perfection the mystery of God, i.e. the bringing of Jew and Gentiles into equality in Christ (Romans 11:25-27; Philippians 3, Galatians 3-4). Therefore, Babylon was Jerusalem.

If “the mystery of God” is Jew and Gentile equality in Christ,

and if the mystery would not be completed until the judgment of Babylon, and if the judgment of Babylon has not yet occurred, then Jew and Gentile equality in Christ has not yet been achieved.

That “perfection” was vitally linked with the completion of the World Mission, and Paul’s ministry. Yet, the Mission was completed in the first century just as Jesus predicted (Matthew 24:14; Colossians 1:23). Why then has the judgment of Babylon not occurred? Why divorce the completion of the World Mission in the first century, and the completion of the mystery of God, from the judgment on the old world of Israel that had so tenaciously maintained its “wall of separation”?

To avoid the identification of Babylon as first century Jerusalem it will be necessary to prove several things:

1.) That the “mystery” in Revelation is different from the mystery in Paul, yet the salvation of the nations in the new Jerusalem is very much the focus of the Apocalypse.

2.) One must prove that Paul was not, after all, in spite of his emphatic declarations to the contrary, the pivotal player to bring the mystery to fulfillment.

3.) One would have to show that Paul’s message of the mystery did not involve the demise of the Old Covenant world. We have proven that he, in fact, did proclaim the impending rejection and destruction of Old Covenant Jerusalem as an integral part of his message about the mystery of God.

4.) It would have to be shown that John anticipated the necessary demise of a city other than Jerusalem to bring about the consummation of the mystery and the salvation of the nations. Yet, the destruction of what other city than first century Jerusalem would demonstrate Jew and Gentile equality?

The indivisible relationship between Paul’s ministry, and the completion of the mystery of God is compelling. The completion of the mystery of God cannot be extended beyond the first century.

Paul tied the fulfillment of the mystery to the completion of his personal ministry before Nero. John said the fulfillment of his

revelation was “at hand.” Paul tied the completion of the mystery to the end of Judaism. John tied the completion of the mystery to the fall of Babylon. The integral role of Paul and his ministry in the mystery demands that we identify Babylon as Old Covenant Jerusalem.

## PAUL, MARTYRDOM, AND THE APOCALYPSE

Not only did Paul say that it was his personal responsibility to fulfill the mystery, he said it was also his personal task to complete the sufferings of Christ. In a text that has caused endless speculation, Paul declares that he (emphatically he) was commissioned to fill up what was lacking in the afflictions of Christ (Colossians. 1:24).

Dunn says, “Paul understood his apostleship in eschatological terms as the last act on the stage of this world before (as we would say) the final curtain (particularly 1 Corinthians 4:9). It was because Paul saw himself as a major actor in the final drama of God’s reconciling purpose that he could also see his all too real sufferings as somehow bringing to completion what was still outstanding of the sufferings of Christ.”

Paul’s claim to be the penultimate player in the eschatological scheme magnifies the ubiquitous New Testament problem of the *naherwartung*—the imminent expectation of the *parousia*. Given Paul’s view of himself as the critical “last days” figure, Green’s posit that, “There was a sense of imminence of the Return, which was not, however, associated with temporal proximity” is untenable. Paul’s expectation was definitely delimited.

Was Paul deluded, just another of the many Messianic zealots of the first century? Or can we find a first-century fulfillment of his expectations? We believe Paul’s expectations came true.

## WHAT IS LACKING IN THE AFFLICTIONS OF CHRIST

Paul did not believe that Jesus’ vicarious passion was somehow

lacking (Colossians 2:9-10). For him to admit such a deficiency would have fallen into the hands of his opponents at Colossae. What then did Paul's referent to what was "lacking in the afflictions of Christ" mean?

O'Brien says, "The presence of the definite article τ? suggests that the phrase 'what is lacking in Christ's afflictions' refers to something well known, and agrees with the apocalyptic notion of a definite measure of affliction to be endured in the last days. As God had set a definite measure in time (Mark 13:5-27) and the limit of the tribulations at the end, so there is a definite measure of suffering that is to be filled up. That limit of messianic woes has not yet been reached. There are still deficiencies which Paul through his sufferings is in the process of completing."

Robertson misses Paul's distinctive role in the messianic woes when he suggests that Paul's sufferings were the "leftovers," and that, "There is plenty left for Paul and for each of us in his time." Paul's "I" is emphatic, it is his office (stewardship, oikonomian) to fill the measure of the afflictions of Christ. He is insistent that, "God has set forth us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death" (1 Corinthians 4:9). Robertson says Paul's language suggests, "There is a great pageant in which the Apostles form the ignominious finale, consisting of doomed men who will have to fight in the arena till they are killed."

Paul does not mean that he and the apostles would be the last to ever suffer martyrdom. He meant that the measure of suffering would be filled by their death. Then, God's eschatological Wrath would be poured out. To extend the filling of the measure of the "afflictions of Christ" into a distant future is to ignore Paul's emphasis on his distinctive role.

The eschatological nature of Paul's task is seen in the word thlipsis. In response to the disciple's question about a sign of the end of the age, Jesus promised that they would be delivered up to "tribulation," (Matthew 24:9, 21; cf. Daniel 12:1). This word is never used of Christ's expiatory work. O'Brien says of thlipsis, "They are



the travail out of which the messianic age is born. God has set a limit to these sufferings, prescribing a definite measure for the afflictions which the righteous and the martyrs must suffer” (Colossians, 79).

Further, the eschatological nature of Paul’s afflictions is supported by the corollary concept of filling the measure of sin. To put it another way, God has three cups: the Cup of Sin, filled with the transgressions of the opponents of Jehovah, the Cup of Suffering, containing the blood of those who suffer for the Word of God, and the Cup of Wrath. This final cup is poured out in judgment on the oppressors of God’s faithful.

Many commentators recognize the eschatological nature of Paul’s afflictions. Yet, the Biblical testimony concerning Israel’s central role in filling the measure of that suffering and sin is ignored. Three key passages, paralleled in the next chart, demonstrate this vital truth.

Matthew 23 | Thessalonians 2:14-16 | Revelation

(Babylon) History of killing the prophets (v.29) History of killing the prophets  
Killed the prophets (16:6f) Jerusalem killed the Lord (chapter 21)  
Jews killed the Lord Killed the Lord

(11:8) Killed the apostles and prophets of Jesus (23:34) Killed the apostles of Jesus  
Killed the apostles and prophets of Jesus (18:20-24) Measure of sin being filled (v.29f) Measure of sin being filled  
Measure of sin being filled (6:9-11; 17:2-6) Jewish culpability Jewish culpability  
Jewish culpability — “where the Lord was slain” (11:8) Eschatological wrath imminent  
“This generation” (v. 36) Eschatological wrath imminent “Wrath has come on them”  
Eschatological wrath imminent- “Behold, I come quickly.”

Surprisingly, not one commentator consulted correlates Paul’s comments in Colossians, to Matthew 23. Only two relate Colossians with Revelation and Thessalonians, yet all these texts clearly contain the identical motif. Note particularly the parallel history of the persecution, prophets, Jesus, apostles in all three texts. Both Jesus and Paul charged the Jews with filling the measure of sin. Paul’s emphasis on his personal apostolic role in filling the measure of afflictions, and

the corresponding Jewish culpability (Matthew 23; Revelation 11:8) in that suffering, indicates that Babylon in Revelation is Jerusalem.

Paul's personal and pivotal role as end time martyr, in light of Israel as the key player in that persecution, sheds light on the nature of the eschatological "wrath to come" so eagerly anticipated by the apostle.

## **PAUL'S MINISTRY AND THE SONG OF MOSES**

Other than Isaiah, no prophetic text influenced Paul's missionary consciousness more than the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32)—and the underlying Blessings and Cursings Deuteronomy 28-30. Hays says:

"The Song of Moses, read as a prophetic prefiguration of God's dealings with Israel through the gospel, becomes in Paul's hands a hermeneutical key of equal importance with the prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah. The song describes in sequence God's election of and care for Israel (Deuteronomy 32:6-14) Israel's inexplicable rebellion (Deuteronomy 32:15-18, cf. 32:5), God's judgment upon them (Deuteronomy 32:19-35), and ultimately—and mysteriously—God's final deliverance and vindication of His own people (Deuteronomy 32:36-43) ... In Deuteronomy, Paul finds not only the prophecy of Israel's lack of faith and ultimate restoration but also the prefiguration of God's intention to 'stir them to jealousy' through embracing the Gentiles (Deuteronomy 32:21), who are invited to join with His people in praise (Deuteronomy 32:43). It is hardly coincidental that Paul quotes both of these verses explicitly (Romans 10:19; 15:10). Deuteronomy 32 contains Romans in nuce."

The Song of Moses, then, was paradigmatic for Paul. He affirmed that he was living in the last days foretold by Moses. He asserted that Moses' prediction that Israel would become "utterly corrupt" was being fulfilled (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16). He stood at the end of the long line of prophets sent to call Israel to repentance, and was

rejected, just as the prophets before him. His rejection was part of the last days messianic woes necessary to fill up the afflictions of Christ.

Paul realized that Moses had said of Israel, “Their vine is of the vine of Sodom” (Deuteronomy 32:32; cf. Revelation 11:8) and consequently, “Vengeance is Mine ... for the Lord will judge His people” (Deuteronomy 32:34-36, NKJ; cf. Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30). The judgment on Israel was the judgment that Paul proclaimed as imminent.

Paul’s statement that God had given him personally the stewardship of filling the measure of the afflictions of Christ has a direct bearing on the identity of Babylon for the following reasons:

(1) Paul saw himself as the last in the line of prophets to Israel destined to suffer, and thus fill the measure of suffering,

(2) Paul operated in light of the Deuteronomic Tradition and Song of Moses, predicting judgment on Israel in the last days,

(3) Paul believed he was living in the last days foretold by the Song of Moses,

(4) Paul constantly quoted from OT prophecies of coming judgment on Israel,

(5) It was Israel that persecuted the prophets and Paul, filling the measure of her sin. The eschatological judgment would fall when the measure was full.

In persecuting the messengers of Jesus, and penultimately Paul, the Jews were bringing swiftly to a climax their long and bloody history of killing the prophets.

John saw in Revelation 6, a vision of the martyrs of the Lord. They cried out for vengeance and judgment on their persecutors, and were promised that it would only be a “little while.” Before the judgment could come, however, the number of their brethren that should be slain had to be fulfilled. Are we to ignore Paul’s inspired declaration that he was the one destined to fill up what was lacking in the afflictions of Christ? Are we to ignore the fact that Paul states emphatically that the apostles were set forth by God as the “last to

suffer” i.e., the ones designated to fill the measure of suffering? Are we to ignore the two-fold witness of Jesus and Paul that it was Jerusalem that killed the prophets, the Lord, and the apostles and insist that Babylon must be Rome, even though Rome nor the Catholic church never killed the prophets, nor the Lord? Remember, Jesus said, “It is not possible that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem” (Luke 13:33).

The fact that Paul posits himself as the key player in filling the measure of suffering, and that it was Judah that was filling the measure sin, must be taken into consideration in the interpretation of the Apocalypse, because Revelation is about the filling up of the measure of sin and suffering, and the city, “where the Lord was slain” is the city guilty of the blood of the martyrs.

If Paul’s declaration about his pivotal role in filling the measure of suffering is to be taken seriously, and if we take seriously the identity of Paul’s persecutor, Israel, then one cannot seriously doubt that Babylon in Revelation was first century Jerusalem.

We have examined several aspects of the message and ministry of Paul the apostle as they relate to the Apocalypse. We have seen that Paul preached the hope of Israel, specifically, resurrection and the promise of the new Jerusalem. Paul’s message of the new Jerusalem included the impending rejection and demise of the old Jerusalem for her guilt of persecuting the Seed of Promise (Galatians 4).

John likewise anticipated the fulfillment of the promises made to Israel, i.e., resurrection and the new Jerusalem. Like Paul he saw these events coming only after the destruction of the city that was guilty of persecuting the Seed of Promise.

We have shown that Paul’s ministry was to fulfill the Great Commission, and he declared imminent judgment on the persecutors of God’s elect (Galatians 4; 2 Thessalonians 1). The completion of the World Mission was a sign of the end of the age (Matthew 24:14) that was to come with/at the fall of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:2-3). Likewise, John saw a vision of the World Mission that included the message of the imminent fall of Babylon, because of her persecution of the saints.

We have seen how Paul claimed that God had given him personally the responsibility to fulfill the mystery of God foretold by the prophets. The mystery of God as defined by Paul was Jew and Gentile equality in Christ. John was told that the mystery of God would be fulfilled under the 7th Trumpet. This demands that the last Trump sounded when Paul's missionary task was completed before Nero (2 Timothy 4:16f).

Finally, we have shown from Paul's words that he was personally chosen to fill up the measure of eschatological suffering. His suffering was at the hands of the Jews, whose long history of persecuting the prophets would culminate in Paul's martyrdom. The guilt of their fathers would reach the heavens in the persecution of the apostolate and Paul.

John's vision depicts the judgment of Babylon because she had a long history of persecuting the saints, and finally the apostles of Jesus. Precisely the pattern delineated by Paul. This all but demands that we identify Babylon as first century Jerusalem.

By examining Paul's work, we have shown that his message and ministry related to Israel, and the passing of the Old Covenant world. We conclude that Revelation deals with Israel, and the passing of Old Covenant Jerusalem, because John's message is parallel with Paul's.

Paul's personal ministry and message is, therefore, critical to the understanding of the Apocalypse. Yet, tragically, we have been unable to find a single commentary on Revelation that acknowledged, except in passing, that Paul and John were speaking of the same issues.

The implication for the dating of the Apocalypse goes without saying. The ramification for the interpretation of the Revelation is profound. All of the endless speculation about a futuristic fulfillment of Revelation is just that, speculation. Revelation was written before the fall of Jerusalem, and predicted the end of the Old Covenant world of Israel, not the end of time, not the destruction of Rome, not the judgment of the Roman Catholic church, or a World Council of Churches, not the end of the Eastern European Common Market. Revelation was fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.

## 59 SPECIAL STUDY: LAMENTATIONS AND REVELATION

**“Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?”**

From the first edition of this book until now, I have not found anyone developing the material below, or even discussing it for that matter. This is somewhat perplexing, but, given the consensus of opinion that Revelation must have been written after the fall of Jerusalem and is unrelated to it, perhaps not too surprising.

Nonetheless, I remain convinced that the parallels between the book of Lamentations and Revelation are tremendously significant for the proper interpretation of the Apocalypse. If the parallels are true, and I fail to see how they are not, then it becomes patently clear that Revelation is about the consummative fulfillment of God’s Old Covenant promises to Israel. It is not about “world history” but “covenant history.”

So, I want to present some thoughts on the relationship between the book of Lamentations and the Apocalypse. Lamentations was written immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Chaldeans in BC 586. Jeremiah the prophet considered the loss of the capital city, the reasons for her destruction, her beauty, her meaning and her future. Lamentations is a book of great pathos to say the least. And, in my view, Lamentations gives us strong reason to believe that Babylon in Revelation was Old Covenant Jerusalem experiencing her final destruction. What Jeremiah said in retrospect about Jerusalem, John says in prospect of the impending demise of Babylon.

My argument is that the language of Lamentations (and naturally the other prophets) is distinctively covenantal language appropriate only to a covenant city. Therefore, when we find John incorporating motif after motif, term after term from Lamentations in his apocalypse that this is more than an “echo of scripture,” it is in fact a clue as to the meaning of John’s prophecy. John is giving not only a prophetic

fore view of the destruction of Jerusalem, he is giving, in some of his verses, a prophetic lament in the fashion of Lamentations.

As we have noted, covenant terminology and thought are pervasive in Revelation. The question is, should we ignore the covenant context of this language and believe that John is simply appropriating that language for an application divorced from its covenantal roots?

There are several elements of my argument:

1.) The prophets, Ezekiel, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, etc. had predicted the coming of the Lord against Judah, in the Great Day of the Lord's Wrath (Ezekiel 7; Jeremiah 4:24f; Zephaniah 1:15f).

2.) That Day of the Lord was coming due to Judah's multitudinous sins, oppressing the poor, the widows, the orphans (Jeremiah 7) and shedding innocent blood (Ezekiel 22).

3.) The Day of the Lord was near when Jeremiah and the other prophets predicted its coming. Lamentations looks back and acknowledges the objective imminence of the language of the prophets. In other words, the prophetic declarations that "the Day of the Lord is near" or, "the end has come" were not timeless, elastic, nebulous statements that one day by and by the Lord was coming. They were statements that meant the judgment was truly near (Lamentations 4:18).

4.) The judgment of BC 586 was an outpouring of Covenantal Wrath on Judah. God was faithful to the provisions of His covenant of Blessings and Cursings (Deuteronomy 28-30) by bringing judgment on Judah for her transgressions.

With these facts in mind, examine the chart below taking note of the parallels between Lamentations and Revelation.

Lamentations	Revelation
The judgment called the Day of the Lord's anger (2:1)	The judgment called the Great Day of the Lord's Wrath (6:17; 16:14f)
Jerusalem cast down from the heaven (2:1)	Exalted Babylon cast down
Jerusalem judged for shedding innocent blood (4:12-13)	Babylon judged for shedding innocent blood (16:6f 17:6f; 18:20, 24)
Jerusalem the Harlot (Jeremiah 2-3; Ezekiel 16, 23, etc.)	Babylon the Harlot (17-18)
She is like a widow (1:1f)	Denies

that she will be like a widow (18:7) Punishment like Sodom (4:6) Spiritually called Sodom, and her punishment like Sodom coming (11:8) Jerusalem overthrown in a moment (4:6) Babylon overthrown in one hour (18:17) Time was near (4:18) The time was near (1:1-3; 22:6, 10-12, 20) Those who stand by marvel (2:10f); Disbelief at her fall (4:12) Disbelief and marvel at her fall (18:1f; 8:14f) Jehovah become the enemy—removed His hand from before the enemy The angel held back the four winds until the elect were sealed and then released (7:1-4) Judgment because of sin (1:5f) Babylon judged for her sin (17:4f) Judgment as winepress (1:15) Judgment as the winepress (14:17f; 19:15) Righteousness of Jehovah for judging (1:18) Righteousness of Christ for judging (16:6f; 19:2) Jehovah as a bowman 2:4; 3:12-13)

Time of famine 3:12

(covenant curse, Lv. 26) First rider with a bow (6:1-2)

Third horse-- famine

See our discussion of the opening seals. He has made me drink Wormwood (3:15, 19) Deuteronomy 29:18? Jer. 9:15 23:15? Lam. 3:15, 19? Rev. 8:11. Wormwood to drink Call for repentance (3:40f) They refused to repent (9:21) Death better than life (4:9) They shall seek death and not find it (9:6) No sound of joy in the streets (5:15) No sound of the Bridegroom or music (18:22) Zion is burned with fire 4:11f) Babylon burned with fire (17:10f); “utterly burned with fire” (18:8) Judgment of Jerusalem the fulfillment of prophecy (2:17) Judgment of Babylon the fulfillment of prophecy (10:7f)— Jerusalem’s judgment the fulfillment of OT Covenant Wrath (Leviticus 26/ Deut. 28-30)

Babylon’s judgment the fulfillment of OT Covenant Wrath (Leviticus 26/ Deut. 28-30)

As one examines the parallels between Lamentations and Revelation, it might be objected that some of the motifs would be common to the destruction of any city. In other words, no matter what city was under consideration, when it fell there would be no more joy in its streets. Further, God destroyed Edom and cast her down from the stars (Obadiah 1:1f). He destroyed the king of



Tyre casting him down from the heavens, just as He did Zion in Lamentations.

Still further, it might be objected that anytime Jehovah acted against any nation, as we have seen above, it is called the Day of the Lord, the Day of His anger, etc.. Therefore, just because the fall of Jerusalem in BC 586 and the judgment of Babylon are both called the Day of the Lord's anger does not mean that Babylon was Jerusalem. And these objections would be true, to an extent. However, there is something more here, something distinctive.

There are certain aspects in Lamentations and in Revelation that identify the judgment as a covenantal judgment in fulfillment of the Law of Blessings and Cursings of the Mosaic Covenant. And, as such, this means that if the judgment of Babylon was the fulfillment of the Law of Blessings and Cursings, then this means that Babylon cannot be identified as any Gentile city. She must be Old Covenant Jerusalem. So, what are some of those elements that are so covenantal?

While not exclusively covenantal the reference in Lamentations to the judgment of Jerusalem being worse than the judgment of Sodom echoes the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel where Jerusalem is called Sodom. As we have seen, only one city in all of the Bible is ever spiritually designated as Sodom. Furthermore, we cannot forget that in Deuteronomy 32, Jehovah described Old Covenant Israel as the vine of Sodom (v. 32.). Thus, for Jeremiah to liken the fall of Jerusalem to the fall of Sodom, and then John calls Babylon "Sodom," this is a strong indicator that Jerusalem is in view.

Take note Jeremiah says, "Our end was near: our days were over, for our end had come" (4:18). This is very significant in light of the time references in Revelation. Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Zephaniah all proclaimed that the judgment of Jerusalem was near, very near, and coming soon (Jeremiah 4; Ezekiel 7; Zephaniah 1:15). The scoffers rejected the objective imminence of these prophetic declarations and insisted that the Day of the Lord was not near (Ezekiel 12:21f). Perhaps they argued that, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years" etc., that time means nothing to God, that God does not see

time as man does, etc. etc., ad infinitum. The bottom line is that the scoffers did not believe that the Day was near even though God said, repeatedly, in numerous ways, that it was near.

Jeremiah looks back and essentially says, “I told you it was near. The prophets told you that the end had come.” In other words, Jeremiah is emphasizing that his time statements and those of the other prophets had been vindicated as being totally true. At hand did mean at hand. Those time statements meant that the Day of the Lord was coming in the generation to whom the warning was given (Ezekiel 12:22f). This should therefore, cause the modern commentators to take seriously the repeated, emphatic, and numerous time indicators in Revelation. And, if one does that, he is forced to place Revelation well within the first century, and to look at the judgment of Jerusalem in AD 70 as the best viable candidate for the proper interpretation of Revelation.

No other event was truly near when John wrote. The fall of Rome was nearly 400 years away, even on the late dating. That was not near or at hand. Jeremiah’s call to take heed that the time statements were valid in regard to the predictions of Jerusalem’s destruction demands that we look for events within the lifetime of John for the fulfillment of his “Behold, I come quickly,” and, “These things must shortly come to pass” declarations. Only the events of 66-70 AD fit within that time frame.

The reference to the fact that God destroyed Judah in the winepress of His anger is close to being a distinctive covenantal reference. Israel was God’s vineyard, and it is there that He established His winepress (Isaiah 5). Revelation’s two references to God destroying Babylon in the winepress of His wrath echoes God’s covenant dealings with His covenantal people.

Everything about Lamentations reminds us that the judgment of Jerusalem was indeed the fulfillment of covenantal wrath. Jeremiah draws on Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28-30 numerous times. And, as we have seen, the seals of Revelation 6 take us to the same scriptures. Now, if the destruction of Jerusalem as described by Lamentations was the fulfillment of God’s covenant with Israel, and

if John appeals to the same provisions for covenant wrath when predicting the impending fall of Babylon, we are all but forced to see that Babylon was Old Covenant Jerusalem.

Notice that Jeremiah laments the fact that Jehovah had made him drink Wormwood. This may not strike the modern reader as overly theologically significant, yet, to the ancient Jewish reader, it meant a great deal, for it meant that it was an acknowledgment of covenantal wrath.

In Deuteronomy 29:18, the Law of Blessings and Cursings, Jehovah said that He made the covenant with Israel with its provisions of wrath, “that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood.” The idea is that wormwood was “a term used in the Law and the Prophets to warn Israel of its punishment as a punishment for apostasy” (Chilton, *Vengeance*, 240). In Jeremiah 9:15, 23:15, the Lord threatened to bring the promised wormwood punishment to bear against Judah for her apostasy and idolatry. And of course that is precisely what Jeremiah was saying in Lamentations when he said that the Lord had made them to drink wormwood.

Our point is that the references to wormwood should be seen as an almost exclusively covenantal term, relating to God’s relationship with Old Covenant Israel. Now, considering the fact that Revelation is so thoroughly saturated with the language of the Old Covenant, and since it anticipated the fulfillment of the Old Covenant promises, then John’s reference to the coming of the wormwood punishment, must be referent to the outpouring of covenantal wrath against Judah. John is not simply appropriating the language of God’s covenant with Judah, he was applying the prophecies of covenantal wrath to the impending judgment. And that means that Babylon of Revelation was Old Covenant Jerusalem.

Jeremiah makes a point of saying that what had happened to Jerusalem was the fulfillment of prophecy, “The Lord has done what He purposed: He has fulfilled His word which He commanded in the days of old.” This is a significant statement. Notice that Jeremiah had personally foretold the fall of Jerusalem, along with the other

prophets. In other words, they were contemporary prophets of what was to happen in their day. Yet, Jeremiah says that the fountain of their prophecies was a Word spoken “in days of old.” This almost undoubtedly refers back to the Law of Blessings and Cursings in Deuteronomy. Jeremiah was acknowledging the fulfillment of covenantal Wrath.

We have already noted how Revelation also refers back to the Law of Blessings and Cursings, and particularly the Song of Moses. The Seals of chapter 6 anticipate the fulfillment of the covenant wrath of Leviticus 26. The prophecy of the Day of the Lord echoes Isaiah 2-4. The fulfillment of Daniel is the focus of a great deal of Revelation, Ezekiel is critical to John, and Zechariah plays a vital role. All of these passages deal with God’s relationship and His promises to Israel to be fulfilled in the last days. And John tells us that in the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, “the mystery of God as foretold by the prophets will be fulfilled” (Revelation 10:7). The fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel is the focus of Revelation.

Finally, Jeremiah insists that part of the reason why Jerusalem fell was, “Because of the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests, who shed in her midst the blood of the just...they have defiled themselves with blood” (Lamentations 4:12-13). As we have shown in this work, there is only one city, one people that is consistently singled out as guilty of shedding the blood of the saints, and that is Old Covenant Israel. (A note her: This has nothing to do with modern day Israel. These passages deal with Old Covenant, ethnic Israel. The Old Covenant is gone, and therefore, Old Covenant Israel no longer exists.)

Remember that in Deuteronomy 32:43, Jehovah said that in Israel’s last days, He would avenge the blood of His saints. And in text after text, there is a story line in the Bible in anticipation of that Day. In Revelation, as we have seen, “all of the blood shed on the earth,” was about to be avenged on Babylon, in direct fulfillment of Jesus’ prediction in Matthew 23:34f.

Jeremiah spoke of God’s righteousness to destroy ancient

Jerusalem because of her guilt of shedding innocent blood, and John anticipated the penultimate destruction of Babylon for shedding the blood of the saints. Lamentations affirms God's righteousness and justice for avenging that blood and John hails the Lord's righteousness and justice for finally avenging all the blood of the saints (Revelation 6:9f; 16:6f; 19:2f).

So, before the fall of Jerusalem in BC 586, the prophets described the impending cataclysm as the coming of the Lord and the just application of covenantal wrath due to Judah's violation of the covenant. And when that judgment came, Jeremiah looks back on it as the manifestation of God's righteousness, His justice, and His covenantal faithfulness. And, these are precisely the elements we see in Revelation.

John alludes to many of the same covenantal texts that Lamentations does (i.e. Leviticus 26 / Deuteronomy 28-30). Like Jeremiah said the fall of Jerusalem was the fulfillment of prophecies given long before, John reminds the readers that he was anticipating the fulfillment of the prophecies of old. He uses the exact same exclusively covenantal terms i.e. wormwood, to refer to the coming judgment of Babylon, and he incorporates a charge that historically was leveled at Old Covenant Israel.

The comparisons between Lamentations, its prophetic and covenantal background, and the book of Revelation are impressive and lead us to one conclusion. Babylon of Revelation was Old Covenant Jerusalem and Judah.

## **60 SPECIAL STUDY**

### **SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED**

Those who hold that Revelation speaks of the fall of Rome, apostate Christianity, or some other modern entity, either completely ignore the evidence above, or seek to mitigate it. In what follows, we will examine some of the objections to the material just provided.

## A. WHAT ABOUT IRANAEUS ?

No study of the dating and interpretation of Revelation would be complete without an examination of the testimony of the second century writer Iranaeus. The testimony Iranaeus is considered, “the earliest and weightiest external witness” for the late date.

We cannot fully examine Iranaeus’ testimony here. Others more competent to examine the technical aspects of this subject have done an excellent job in marshaling the evidence to show that the testimony of Iranaeus is, at the very least, “challengeable.” Gentry has written the best modern day apology for the early date of Revelation, and contains an extended discussion of the Iranaean testimony. We will only summarize some of his material and urge the reader to read his work. (Before, 45+).

Iranaeus is an external witness, and no amount of external evidence can outweigh the inspired internal evidence of the Apocalypse. We admit to a bias in favor of inspiration. Thus the testimony of a writer, no matter how well intentioned, who wrote over a hundred years after the book in question was penned, does not carry as much weight as the book itself.

In summary, Gentry calls into question several things about Iranaeus.

1.) There is a serious question as to whether the text from Iranaeus is properly translated when it is translated to mean that the Revelation was seen in the time of Domitian. Gentry shows, we think powerfully, that the proper translation is that John, not the Apocalypse, was seen during the reign of Domitian.

Iranaeus was discussing the identity of the number of the Beast. He says the controversy about this enigmatic enemy of God could be settled (common translation) because, “it (the Apocalypse, DKP) was seen not very long ago.” However, Gentry, citing copious sources, has shown, and a reading of the actual context of Iranaeus shows, that Iranaeus was attempting to show that John could have settled the issue about the beast, because “he” was seen not long before.

If Gentry is correct in his in-depth analysis of the translation of Iranaeus, then Iranaeus' quote has nothing to say about when Revelation was written, and thus the strongest evidence available for the late date is completely negated.

2.) There are no original copies of Iranaeus' work, only later copies in Greek and Latin. The Latin translations of Iranaeus are not good at all, and, "It may well be that the Latin text is corrupt" (Before, 55).

3.) Iranaeus, according to those who study him the most, "is often a very obscure writer" (Before, 49).

4.) In other references, Iranaeus speaks of, "ancient copies" of Revelation being circulated. How could he, on the one hand, say that the Apocalypse had been seen, "not so very long ago," and then turn around and speak of, "ancient copies" of the book? (Gentry, 58+) This lends credibility to the view that Iranaeus actually said John, not the Apocalypse, was seen not long before.

5.) Iranaeus, while reliable in some matters, is eccentric in many ways. He believed that the book Shepherd of Hermas was canonical, that the leader of the Nicolaitans was Deacon Nicolas, and that the LXX was written by inspiration (Gentry, 63). Such eccentricities may be why even late date advocate Guthrie stated, "It is of course possible that Iranaeus made a mistake" (Guthrie, 277).

6.) Iranaeus was prone to historical mistakes. He claimed that Jesus was forty to fifty years old during his personal ministry (Gentry, 63).

7.) Iranaeus admits that he was but a small child when the events he speaks of occurred, and that he wrote nothing down. He was an old man when relating the text in question. Thus, the question of the reliability of his memory, even granting the questionable translation of his quote, is suspect (Gentry, 62).

8.) Even late date advocates admit that Iranaeus was prone to error in regard to chronological matters (Gentry, 61).

9.) Other early church writers (e.g. Eusebius) had no problem rejecting Iranaeus when they differed. This shows that he was not held in as high esteem as many moderns who refuse to even consider that his testimony is questionable.

10.) Iranaeus is the fountain for nearly all other early references to the Apocalypse, “It is widely recognized that Iranaeus’ stature in early church history cause many later church fathers to depend—sometimes too uncritically—upon his witness alone to conclude many matters” (Gentry, 65). Thus, if Iranaeus’ testimony is questionable, essentially all other patristic testimony about the late date of Revelation is called into question.

Gentry offers other evidence in critique of Iranaeus that space will not allow us to present. However, it should be clear that Iranaeus is not the unassailable bulwark of testimony that many believe. It turns out then, that the strongest external evidence available to prove the late date cannot establish the case at all.

## **B. BABYLON THAT SITS ON MANY WATERS, 17:1**

McGuiggan makes this statement mean that Babylon rules over the world, and says there was only one kingdom that ruled the world in John’s day. (Revelation, 240) The “waters” here clearly refer to people (17:15) not to actual water as some have suggested. Wallace says it refers, “not to geographical location but to commercial sources of revenue and support.”(Revelation, 367). Ogden observes that Jerusalem also sat upon many peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues, “Listen to Luke’s description of Pentecost: ‘And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.’” (Avenging, 327) Russell says, “The influence exercised by the Jewish race in all parts of the Roman Empire previous to the destruction of Jerusalem was immense; their synagogues were to be found in every city, and their colonies took root in every land” (Parousia, 503).

Jerusalem did, in fact, have a profound influence throughout the world. Witness the High Priest empowering Saul to persecute Christians in cities far removed from Jerusalem (Acts 22:1f). All faithful Jews no matter where, were obligated to pay a yearly temple tax. The Jews were considered such a threat throughout the world



that on two occasions Roman Emperors expelled the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2). Just read the book of Acts, paying close attention to the geographical range of the record, and the presence and power of the Jews. It certainly is no exaggeration to say that Jerusalem, “sat on many waters,” they influenced the world.

### **C. BABYLON ON SEVEN HILLS IS ROME, 17:9**

In Revelation 17:10f, it says the woman sat on “seven hills.” McGuiggan simply asserts, “The seven mountains speak of the seven hills on which Rome stands” (Revelation, 247). Carrington said, “This text is, of course, the trump card of those who hold that the Woman is Rome; it is in fact, their one strong argument” (1931, 285). It certainly is true that Rome sat on seven hills. It is also true, if one is wishing to see Revelation 17:9 as a reference to seven literal hills, that Jerusalem sat on seven hills as well.

Vincent’s Word Studies says, “Many cities besides Rome can boast of their seven hills...especially Jerusalem.” Terry says, “If literal mountains are to be understood, we may find them at Jerusalem as well as at Rome. There were Zion, Moriah, Acra, Bezetha, Millo, Ophel, and the rocky prominence fifty cubits in height on which the tower of Antonio was erected” (Apocalypics, 431). See also Josephus, Wars Bk. 5, 5, 8.

Furthermore, Jerusalem is the Biblical city that is described as sitting on the hills. In Psalms 87:1, it says of Jehovah, “His foundation is in the holy mountains.”

The real point is that Babylon sits upon the hills. To put it another way, the woman rides upon the Beast. Babylon is one entity, and the place of the seven hills is another. As Smalley says: “The woman in 17:3 is closely associated with the beast (‘mounted on it’), but not equated with it” (2005, Revelation, 429). Likewise, Beagley says, “Babylon, though associated with Rome, is not to be identified with it” (1987, 107). In other words, the woman (Babylon) is not the beast, the woman rides on the beast. Babylon sits on the seven hills. The

seven hills equal the beast.

Speaking of the “one strong argument” for identifying Babylon as Rome, Carrington said the argument, “perishes when you remember that the heads belong to the Beast, not to the Woman, and, therefore, identify him, and not her” (ibid). Thus, it is possible that the seven hills do represent Rome, but the woman (Babylon) is supported by Rome. As Ogden says, “Remember, the woman is not the beast or any part of the beast. So, the woman is not Rome. She simply sits upon and is carried by the beast. Since the heads are also seven kings, they also symbolize the kings of the empire carrying Jerusalem.”(Avenging, 331)

This objection also fails to notice that in Revelation 17, the beast turns on the woman and destroys her (17:15f). A once friendly relationship turns sour, and whereas the woman once rode on the beast, the beast now turns on her, “will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.”

The words here are revealing. The word “desolate” is the same word used by Jesus in Matthew 24:15 in predicting the Abomination of Desolation that would appear immediately before Jerusalem’s fall. One of the punishments in the ancient world for an adulteress was to be publicly stripped naked, and this language is used of Jerusalem’s previous destruction (Lamentations 1:8; Ezekiel 16:37, 39; 23:29). Finally, the punishment of burning with fire, as we have seen, was a penalty for the daughter of a priest that had turned harlot (Leviticus 21:9). It should also not be forgotten that in Matthew 22:1f Jesus told of the marriage feast. When those invited scorned the invitation, the Father sent out his armies to burn the city of the rebellious. In that parable, those invited are none other than the Jews.

Thus, the mention of the seven hills, while it may speak of Rome, does not identify Rome as Babylon. Instead, it demands that Babylon cannot be Rome.

#### **D. BABYLON DESTROYED BY THE BEAST**

##### **REVELATION 17:16**

Actually, this is a corollary argument in support of what we have just noticed. In Revelation 17:16, it says the beast turned on the woman, hated her and destroyed her. As Terry says, “It cannot be said that the emperors or the chief princes of the empire hated Rome or ever sought to destroy that great city. For the empire to destroy its own capital is incongruous in thought and untrue in fact” (Apocalypics, 435). Yet, if Rome is Babylon who sits on the seven hills, this is demanded. But it was not civil war that destroyed Rome. It was the Huns in 476 A.D.. This in spite of McGuiggan’s attempts to say it was Rome’s “inner weakness” that finally led to her demise.

Revelation 17 is not speaking of a gradual demise resulting from inner weakness, it is speaking of a cataclysmic destruction precipitated by the beast turning on the Woman; “For in one hour so great riches is come to nothing.” (Revelation 18:17). McGuiggan attempts to make Revelation a panoramic view of Roman history covering over 400 years, yet he chides and condemns the millennialist for ignoring the time indicators of imminence in the book.

We have no record of the Romans “hating” Rome, and destroying her. Beale even admits that, “the invasions of the Goths and Huns in the fourth and fifth centuries are not fulfillments of but only illustrations and adumbrations of the last conflict narrated in Revelation 17:16” (1999, 887). This is an evasive posit that denies and violates the clear cut imminence of the impending fall of Babylon, and furthermore, still does not explain how Rome would hate Rome and turn on her and destroy her.

We do have abundant testimony of how the Romans, once friendly and supportive, turned on and hated the Jews. In addition, Russell cites Tacitus concerning the bitter animosity manifested by the Arabs against the Jews during the War. Josephus bears testimony to the awful hatred toward Jews in Alexandria, Caesarea, Syria, Scythopolis, Ascalon, Ptolemais, etc. (Wars, Bk. II, 18). See 1 Thessalonians 2:15-17 where Paul says the Jews were, “contrary to all men.” It was the Jew’s pompous arrogance toward “those outside” that finally precipitated such an amazing outpouring of rage against

them resulting in internecine conflicts in which literally thousands of Jews were slain.

Thus, it is apparent that the figure of the Beast turning on the Woman is contradictory of history, if the application is made that Babylon is Rome. On the other hand, it is harmonious if Babylon is Jerusalem. Once supported by Rome, her former ally now turns against her and destroys her. Beagley cites Milligan:

“It is difficult not to think that there was one great drama present to the mind of the Seer and suggestive of the picture of the harlot’s ruin, that of the life and death of Jesus. The degenerate Jewish Church had then called in the assistance of the world-power, Rome, had stirred it up, and had persuaded it to do its bidding against the true Bridegroom and King. An alliance had been formed between them; and as a result of it, they crucified the Lord of glory. But the alliance was soon broken; and in the fall of Jerusalem by the hands of her guilty paramour, the harlot was left desolate and named, her flesh was eaten, and she was burned utterly with fire” (1987, 110).

Finally, our identification of Babylon as Jerusalem is supported by the language John uses here to describe the punishment of the harlot city. John’s language is drawn directly from Ezekiel 16:37-41 and 23:25-29, 47 Ezekiel foretold the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians. Her former lover nations would strip her of her clothes. Her survivors would be burnt with fire. Her former lovers would now hate her. The parallels are all the more powerful when we consider as noted earlier, that the term harlot is used throughout the OT of Israel and Judah. (See especially Jeremiah 2:20-4:30). How appropriate for John to speak the same thing of the Jerusalem of his day.

E. BABYLON WHO RULETH THE KINGS OF THE EARTH,

### REVELATION 17:18

As Chilton says, “It is perhaps this verse, more than any other,

which has confused expositors into supposing, against all the other evidence, that the harlot is Rome. If the City is Jerusalem how can she be said to wield this kind of worldwide political power?" (Vengeance, 442) He responds by saying, "The answer is that Revelation is not a book about politics, it is a book about the Covenant. Jerusalem did reign over the nations. She had a covenantal priority over the kingdoms of the earth. Israel was a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6) exercising a priestly ministry of guardianship, instruction, and intercession on behalf of the nations of the world." Josephus says Jerusalem was, "esteemed holy by all mankind" (Wars V, 1, 3; V, 9, 4; V, 13, 6).

Ogden points out, "The word reigneth in this text means, 'has a kingship over' or 'having a kingdom over' the kings of the earth. Vines says it means, 'lit. hath a kingdom' suggestive of a distinction between the sovereignty of mystic Babylon and that of ordinary sovereigns.' In other words, Babylon has a sovereignty unlike that of earthly kings. Earthly kings rule through the power and authority of their position, but this city rules by virtue of its place, position and purpose in the world" (Avenging, 333).

Jeremiah says Jerusalem, in his time, was, "great among the nations, and princess of the provinces" (Lamentations 1:1). Jerusalem was set in the centre or "the midst of the nations" (Jeremiah 5:5). Davies says this means, "Here the emphasis is demographic, that is, on the visibility of the conduct of Jerusalem to all the nations of the world because of her centrality." In fact, the Jewish concept was that there were concentric circles of holiness in the world, "Israel was the centre of the earth, Jerusalem was the centre of Israel, Mt. Zion, the centre of Jerusalem" (Land, 8).

The Psalmist says Jerusalem was, "the joy of the whole earth" (48:2). In Ezekiel 5:5, the Lord said, "This is Jerusalem that I have set in the midst of the nations." Keil says this means, "Jerusalem is described as forming the central point in the earth...neither in an external, geographical, nor in a purely typical sense, as the city that is blessed more than any other, but in a historical sense in so far

as ‘God’s people and city actually stand in the central point of the God-directed world-development and its movements.’ It is clear, therefore, that, “ruleth over the kings of the earth,” from the Biblical perspective, is not a commentary on politics, but a distinctive perspective—that of the reason she rules.

Josephus says Jerusalem was, “The seat of royalty, is supreme, exalted over all the adjacent region, as the head over the body.”

A final thought: the word “earth” may not mean earth in the modern sense. Sometimes the word “earth” means land, and especially the land of Israel. Russell says translators are guilty of “incredible carelessness” when translating this word as earth instead of land (Parousia, 494).

In support of this is Acts 4:26-27. When speaking of Jesus’ trial before Pilate and the Sanhedrin, Peter cites Psalms 2, “The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together.” The kings of the earth in this text are clearly not kings of the globe. Yet, they are the persecutors of the Lord, just as Babylon in Revelation.

In Revelation 6:12-17, we find that in the Great Day of His Wrath, men would flee, including the, “kings of the earth.” The judgment of Revelation 6 and 17-18 are identical, but in chapter 6 there would be the possibility of flight. This at least precludes an “end of time” scene as sometimes suggested. But more, Revelation 6:12f is taken from Isaiah 2:10-21, a text that Jesus quotes in Luke 23:28-31 and applies to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Therefore, if Revelation 6 and 17-18 are the same, and if Revelation 6 must be speaking of the judgment on Israel in AD 70, then the, “kings of the earth” over which Babylon ruled, and which would be judged with her, are not “universal kings.”

## REVELATION 18:9

McGuiggan thinks it ridiculous to apply these verses to Jerusalem, “It must be admitted that this section must be a difficulty to all who do not regard Babylon as Rome. She is sitting on nations, ruling the kings of the earth in John’s day, persecuting Christians, and trades in this remarkable manner in the things listed here—surely this must be Rome” (Revelation, 254). He adds, “This Babylon is Jerusalem? Judaism? This Babylon is a false religion system? It seems to be coming right out of the text that whatever she is, she is the leading market of the world” (Revelation, 254).

In the margin of my copy of his commentary, I wrote some time ago, “What is so difficult about this?” McGuiggan is deploying a smoke screen for the unlearned.

For McGuiggan to deny that Jerusalem was a commercial center is inappropriate. One need not claim that Jerusalem was, “the leading market of the world” to satisfy the language of Revelation 18. In fact, the text does not even demand this at all. However, Jeremias lists Greece, Lebanon, Tyre, Sidon, Adiabene, Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Persia, Arabia, India, as just some of the sources of Jerusalem’s commerce. He says, “foreign trade had considerable importance for the Holy City.” Josephus, a contemporary of John said, “Nor indeed is Judea destitute of such delights as come from the sea, since its maritime places extend as far as Ptolemais” (Wars, Bk. III, 3, 5).

Jeremias attests to the powerful economic clout of Jerusalem “The national capitol influenced commerce in two ways. It drew trade towards Jerusalem by promoting business transactions, and it provided a ready market for trade because of the heavy demand for luxury clothing, jewelry, etc., a demand met primarily by foreign trade” (Jerusalem, 56).

Foreign trade in Jerusalem, “consisted of food supplies, precious metals, luxury goods and clothing materials” (Jeremias, Jerusalem, 38). In addition, cattle and livestock came from Moab, Hebron, Sharon, Lydda, Arabia, and other regions (Jeremias, Jerusalem, 47).

Paher cites Applebaum in an attempt to cloud the issue of

Jerusalem's importance as a trading center. He lists Jerusalem's crop production and some imports, but downplays any potential significance, yet it is Applebaum who says Jerusalem was dependent on imports for survival. Her imports actually exceeded her exports.

Israel's importance as a "world-trader" is indicated by the building of the port-city of Caesarea. Herod the Great built an artificial sea-port where none had existed. (Josephus, Wars, Bk. 15, 9, 6, p. 419). This phenomenal accomplishment is still a source of amazement today. Why did Herod undertake such an incredibly expensive and technologically challenging feat? As Cornfeld observes, "It is known that Jewish and Syrian merchants assumed an important share in foreign commerce under the empire." Undoubtedly, many of the precious goods mentioned in Revelation 18 flowed into Jerusalem from Caesarea.

Paher, referring to the slave trade of Revelation 18:13, and in his zeal to establish Rome as Babylon, makes the amazing claim that, "There is no justification to refer to first century Jerusalem as a place where a slave trade functioned" (Babylon, 105). However, Jeremias says, "The import of slaves was important; in Jerusalem there was a stone on which the slaves were displayed for auction" (Jerusalem, 36, 345f). Applebaum, cited by Paher says of the slave trade in Jerusalem, "One may assume that slaves played a significant part of the economy" (Applebaum, 624). Josephus records that when Simon Ben Giora proclaimed liberty to the slaves that sufficient numbers of them joined him that they swelled the ranks of his army, enabling him to become a serious threat. (Wars, Bk. IV:9:3)

Furthermore, it cannot be argued that Jerusalem had no "ship masters" as mentioned in Revelation 18:17. The word "shipmaster" means the one who controlled the rudder, the steersman. Applebaum says the participation of Jews in Mediterranean trade is well attested. Jewish sailors and traders traveled as far as Spain and Alexandria. (Applebaum, 689). The Jews engaged in maritime enterprise sufficiently so that they actually organized "guilds" of shipowners to protect themselves from maritime losses (p. 689)



A charge against Jerusalem being Babylon is, “The merchants of Revelation never enjoyed an unholy commercial alliance with the small first century Jerusalem” (Babylon MSS, p. 2). However, the text does not say the merchants and the city had an unholy alliance. It simply says the merchants would lament because they had lost their profitable market. This is an objection without substance.

Without question then, Jerusalem, while not geographically situated to favor such, was a major commercial center.

In addition to normal supplies and foodstuffs, there was the ongoing need for supplies to build and maintain the temple. Herod employed 1000 wagons to convey the stones for the building of the temple. (Jeremias, Jerusalem, 14). (The word “chariots” in Revelation 18:13 is “wagons,” not chariots, DKP). The temple required so many different materials that Applebaum says it, “constituted an economic unit in its own right” (Applebaum, 683).

Carrington concludes, “The long list of merchandise in 18:11-13 is surely a catalogue of materials for building the Temple, and stores for maintaining it” (Meaning, 287). He mentions the imports of precious goods, the very kind mentioned in Revelation 18, were brought from as far away as India. Herod, “had the most costly materials brought from all over the world.”

Every item listed in Revelation 18 was an integral part of the vibrant, important, and influential commercial traffic of Jerusalem. The fall of that city would be a devastating loss to the merchants as Applebaum suggests, “Undoubtedly, the destruction of Jerusalem dealt a shattering blow to the Jewish economy, eliminating the principal hub of Jewish commerce and crafts and the community’s largest source of internal and external income. The livelihood’s derived from supplying the products required for sacrifices and the numerous temple requisites were lost; also the income received from the vast public which had flowed yearly to the capital. The economic basis of a large hierarchy had vanished” (P. 698).

Well indeed, might the merchants of the sea mourn at the loss of such an lucrative source of income.

Even Titus the Roman general spoke of Jerusalem's wealth. In the closing days of the siege, he attempted to get the rebellious citizens to surrender. He gave a speech before the walls. Among other things he said, "What is our (the Romans toward the Jews, DKP) chief favor of all, we have given you leave to gather up that tribute which is paid to God, and with such other gifts that are dedicated to him, nor have we called those that carried these donations to account, nor prohibited them; till at length you became richer than we ourselves." Surely then, for anyone to argue that Jerusalem was not a wealthy city with tremendous economic influence is inappropriate.

## **G. JERUSALEM AND THE CITIES OF THE NATIONS REVELATION 16:19**

McGuiggan says these are the allies of Rome. (Revelation, 233.). Others believe that this proves the fall of Babylon must be of a universal nature. Such an objection fails to consider what Jesus said about the times surrounding the fall of Jerusalem.

In Luke 21:25f, Jesus said, "There will be signs in the sun, in the moon and in the stars, and on the earth distress of the nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectations of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." This sounds an awful lot like Revelation 16. Our point is that the language of Revelation 16 is no different from that of Luke 21 which is admitted to be predictive of the traumatic times associated with the fall of Jerusalem.

Further, one needs to take a closer look at what the text is actually saying. It says not only that Babylon would fall, but that the "cities of the nations"—or more properly "the Gentiles" would fall. There is a contrast between the Great City and the cities of the Gentiles. If this contrast suggests anything at all it suggests, "that the Great City is not a city of the Gentiles" (Carrington, 266).

The word "nations" is from the word *ethne*, and is a word that was traditionally used to contrast Jews and Gentiles. Some texts

do speak of “the nation (ethne) of Israel” Normally, however, when ethne is used, it refers to Gentiles as opposed to Jews.

Consider the question of John’s audience. John, with Peter and the rest of the apostles, was the apostle to the Jews (Galatians 2). Paul was specifically the apostle to the Gentiles. Yet while the apostle to the Gentiles, he was nonetheless a preacher to Israel—(“to the Jew first, and then to the Greek”)—with the message of impending judgment (Acts 13:40; 18:6; 28:25-28).

If the apostle to the Gentiles had the message of impending judgment on Jerusalem, would not the apostles to the Jews have the same message? As the apostle to the Jews, John’s message of judgment on Jerusalem would be natural, and explain perfectly the contrast between the fall of Babylon and “the cities of the Gentiles.”

One has but to ask what city stood in contrast to the cities of the Gentiles? Only Jerusalem can thus stand in this contrast. Rome was a city of the Gentiles, but the Great City Babylon fell, and in addition the cities of the Gentiles fell. Plainly, Babylon is not a city of the Gentiles. No Gentile entity, Rome, Catholicism, America, can be Babylon.

## **H. REVELATION 20**

One of the main objections against identifying Babylon as Old Covenant Jerusalem is the argument that says John was anticipating the arrival of the millennium. Since 1.) the millennium was to extend into the future from John, and, 2.) Christ’s coming was to occur at the end of the millennium, per amillennial and post-millennial constructs, this demands that the fall of Jerusalem cannot be identified as the time of Christ’s coming. This objection is seriously flawed because it assumes without proof that John was anticipating the inauguration of the millennium, and does not consider that he was in fact standing near its consummation and anticipating Jesus’ coming.

Undeniably, the coming of Jesus is the focus in John’s apocalypse. This is evident, but the coming of Jesus was not to be “premillennial”

as our millennial friends suppose. We will demonstrate this below, but notice first this argument:

The coming of Jesus as foretold in Revelation was at hand (Revelation 22:6, 10-12, 20). The coming of Jesus as foretold in Revelation was to come at the end of the millennium. Therefore, the end of the millennium was at hand.

This argument is inescapable for the amillennialist and postmillennialist. The coming of Jesus occurs at the end of the millennium—as both amillennial and postmillennial views acknowledge. John said that the coming of the Lord was at hand. This is *prima facie* evidence that it was the consummation, not inauguration, of the millennium that was at hand.

## **I. ISRAEL, THE RESURRECTION AND THE MILLENNIUM**

When discussing the millennium, one cannot avoid a discussion of the resurrection, since per all paradigms, the resurrection in Revelation 20 occurs at the end of the millennium. What seems to have escaped most commentators however, is the relationship between Israel, the resurrection, and the end of the millennium. We must be brief, but we must also establish some vital facts that have incredible implications for all futurist paradigms.

First, the promise of the resurrection belonged to Old Covenant Israel. Paul said that his doctrine of the resurrection was nothing but what Moses and all the prophets said would happen (Acts 24:14-15). He said that the promise of the resurrection was the hope of the 12 tribes (Acts 26:6f). And, when speaking of “the adoption, the redemption of the body,” he said that the promise of the adoption belonged to Israel after the flesh (Romans 8:23; 9:3f). Undeniably then, when Revelation 20 foretold the resurrection, it speaks of the fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel.

Second, since the resurrection promise was to Old Covenant Israel. The resurrection belongs to the end of the age of Israel (Daniel

12:2-13) then since John is predicting the resurrection at the end of the millennium, it therefore follows that the end of the millennium coincides with the end of the Old Covenant world of Israel. See more just below.

Third, both the amillennialist and postmillennialists generally concur that the old world of Israel ended in AD 70. In several public debates with both amillennial and postmillennialists, I have asked: At what point of time, and with what event, were all of God's promises to Israel fulfilled, and His covenant relationship with her terminated. Disputants from both camps have responded, "In AD 70."

If the resurrection is a promise made to Old Covenant Israel and if the resurrection was to occur at the end of the age, then it must belong to the end of the age of Israel. It is undeniably true that the age of Israel ended in AD 70. This means that the millennium ended in AD 70. You simply cannot affirm that God fulfilled all of His promises to Israel in AD 70 without affirming the fulfillment of the resurrection promise, and thus the end of the millennium at that time as well. Needless to say, this has profound implications for the dating of the Apocalypse.

Notice now the correlation between Daniel 12, resurrection, Revelation and the end of the millennium. We will make this as succinct as possible.

Daniel 12:2 foretold the resurrection of the dead.

Daniel 12:4, 8-10, foretold the resurrection at the end of the age.

Daniel was told, "when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be fulfilled' (v. 7).

Daniel was told that the fulfillment of his vision was far off, at the end of the age, not for his generation (Daniel 12:4, 8-10).

John, in Revelation, foresaw the resurrection (Revelation 11:15f; 20:10f).

John, in Revelation, saw the resurrection--the resurrection of Daniel 12-- occurring at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:10f).

The fulfillment of John's vision was inextricably tied to the

destruction of the harlot city, Babylon, “where the Lord was slain” (Revelation 11:8).

Since Daniel posits the fulfillment of his resurrection prophesy at the time of the destruction of the holy people, then unless John foretold a totally different resurrection from that of Daniel we must see the resurrection of Revelation 20, at the end of the millennium at the time when “the power of the holy people is completely shattered.”

John in Revelation was told that the fulfillment of his vision was so near that he was told not to seal up his book, for “the time is at hand.” Since John was nowhere told to seal up any part of his vision, but rather that fulfillment was so near that he was not to seal it, this can only mean that the final consummation of John’s vision, including the end of the millennium, was so near that John was forbidden to seal his prophecy.

Incidentally, if any part of John’s Apocalypse was as far off as Daniel’s vision was from Daniel, i.e. 500 years, would it not have been appropriate for John to have been told to seal at least that part of the vision? Daniel had to seal his vision because fulfillment was so far off. But it has been far, far longer from John to the present than it was from Daniel to John. So, again, if any part of Revelation was to extend longer than the 500 years that demanded the sealing of Daniel’s book, why was John not told to seal that part of his book that would extend four times longer?

The only conclusion that can be reached in the light of these contrasting temporal statements, in regard to the same issue, resurrection at the end of the millennium, is that John was standing near the consummation of the millennium, anticipating its conclusion.

Since we will have a special study below on the question of the millennium, we will allow this to suffice. The fact is that those who claim that the millennium issue poses a severe challenge to the true preterist paradigm misunderstand the issue. The objection is invalid.

**J. BUT, WASN’T ROME CALLED BABYLON ?**

Another objection against the Jerusalem/Babylon identification is the claim that in Jewish writings, it is Rome that was called Babylon, and not Jerusalem. Thus, if Revelation is calling Jerusalem Babylon, then this is not consonant with the way other Jewish authors were using the term. There are several problems with this objection, although on the surface, it might sound impressive.

First, it has to be noted that “Babylon” whoever that was, rejected the description being given to her by others. In Revelation 18, John says that Babylon said, “I am no widow.” Thus, whoever Babylon was, or would be, she would be aware of the appellation being used to describe her, and would reject and deny those terms.

In Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 we are reminded that the followers of the Lamb were claiming to be the true synagogue, while maintaining that the old synagogue was now the synagogue of Satan. The controversy is over identification. And it was not Rome denying that she was the enslaving power. Rome gladly acknowledged, indeed, boasted, of enslaving the world. So, the fact that in Revelation, Babylon rejects the names and descriptions being used to describe her is suggestive that Babylon was not Rome, but, consistent with Revelation 2-3, was the synagogue of Satan.

It certainly should not surprise us if the Jews did not call their beloved city Babylon, therefore. While Revelation is definitely a “Jewish” book, it is not a book written from the “traditional” Jewish perspective. It is written from the viewpoint of those who were following the Lamb, and paying an awful price of blood for their faith, at the hands of their former brethren in Israel. The question is paramount therefore, who was calling the harlot city Babylon? Was it those who still loved that city, and served the old ways, faithfully defending her against those who were now claiming to be the true seed? Patently not. Therefore, the fact that non-Christian Jews called Rome Babylon, and not Jerusalem is not surprising. Indeed, it would surprise us if those non-Christian Jews did call Jerusalem Babylon. But that is not the issue.

The issue of who it was calling the harlot city Babylon must be decided on the basis of those being persecuted by Babylon. It must be determined not by the citizens of Babylon denying the epithets being leveled against her, but, from the perspective of those suffering at her hands. To suggest that Revelation is joining in with the non-Christian Jews in calling Rome Babylon suggests therefore, that John was calling Rome Babylon because of Rome's oppression of Israel. That is, after all, why the Jews called Rome Babylon. But, this is patently not why Revelation calls the harlot city Babylon. The Apocalypse calls the city Babylon because of her long standing bloody history of killing the prophets, the Lord and the apostles and prophets. And that cannot be Rome.

Second, the book of Revelation is a book of codes and symbols that we are told took "wisdom" to discern. If it was common on the streets to refer to Rome as Babylon, would that take insight and "wisdom" to understand?

Third, and this is telling. Beagley says, "Hunzinger notes that all of the Jewish examples of the use of Babylon for Rome post-date the fall of Jerusalem and he concludes that Judaism adopted the name specifically because, just as Babylon destroyed the Temple the first time, Rome was the perpetrator of this evil on the second occasion" (1987, 101). So, the Jewish writings that call Rome Babylon were all written after the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet, Revelation anticipated the fall of Babylon, and called on its readers to understand who Babylon was. Revelation is not utilizing a well known buzz word for Rome. Rome was not called Babylon until after the fall of Jerusalem when the Jews reflected on what she had done to Jerusalem.

John is calling the harlot city Babylon before her destruction, predicting her fall for persecuting the followers of the Lamb. There is patently nothing like this in the non-Christian Jewish writings that call Rome Babylon. The Jewish writings call Rome Babylon because of Rome's destruction of Jerusalem. If, as suggested by the objection, John is using the term Babylon as the Jews were, then this suggests that John is calling Rome Babylon for destroying Jerusalem. This is



clearly not the case in Revelation.

So, the Jews called Rome Babylon, but did not do so until after the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome. And, they called Rome Babylon because she had destroyed Jerusalem. There is nothing here that even closely resembles the situation in Revelation.

Revelation anticipated the fall of Babylon. Further, the Apocalypse anticipates the fall of Babylon, not for destroying old Jerusalem, but for persecuting the new Jerusalem. There is a complete disparity and disjunction between the Jewish descriptions of Rome and the description of the harlot city as Babylon. The timing is different. The reason for using the title are different. The histories of the two cities are different. There is no justification for saying that because the Jews, at a later period of time, called Rome Babylon that John was doing the same. The objection is therefore falsified.

## **61 PRETERISM AND THE CHARGE OF ANTI-SEMITISM**

One of the most common objections to the views set forth in this work is that if Revelation has been fulfilled, and if Israel is no longer God's distinctive covenant people, that this is anti-Semitism. In two radio debates, my opponents have leveled that charge against preterism when I affirmed that God has kept all of His promises to Israel and that modern events are not the fulfillment of prophecy.

We cannot do an exhaustive refutation of this serious charge here, but, we can reject and refute it effectively in a brief excursus. But, we do need to ask a critical question. Exactly what is anti-Semitism? In the world of today, the answer depends on who you ask.

According to the Jewish Anti-Defamation League if you say anything that can be construed in any way whatsoever as not supportive of Israel and her rights to the land, you are anti-Semitic. There are those who actually suggest that if you do not believe that Israel remains God's chosen people, and that the land still belongs to them, and that the nations of the world must support them at all

costs, then you are not only anti-Semitic, you should be imprisoned. John Hagee, speaking on national TV said that if you do not believe that Israel remains God's chosen people, with an abiding covenant with God, then you are anti-Semitic and "a theological air-head." These are frightening charges, and irresponsible.

The modern dispensational and Zionist world has, for all intents and purposes, created a new definition of anti-Semitism. With apologies to Jeff Foxworthy, you might be anti-Semitic:

1.) If you affirm that Old Covenant Israel was guilty of killing the Lord, you are anti-Semitic.

2.) If you affirm that God has already been faithful to all of His promises to her, you might be anti-Semitic.

3.) If you affirm that God kept His land promises to Israel, and that the land does not belong to modern Israel today, you might be anti-Semitic.

4.) If you affirm that there is no such thing as a racially pure nation of Israel today, you might be anti-Semitic.

5.) If you affirm that the events of 1948 were not the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, you might be anti-Semitic.

6.) If you deny that the temple in Jerusalem, along with the priesthood and animal sacrifices will one day be restored by God, you might be anti-Semitic.

7.) If you deny the Rapture doctrine, that says Jehovah must remove the church so that He can once again resume His exclusive dealings with Israel, you might be anti-Semitic.

The charge of anti-Semitism seems totally ignorant of several major Biblical facts. One of the most glaring is the fact that the Bible was written by the Jews. As Paul pondered the "advantage" of the Jew, he asked, "What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision?" (Romans 3:1) His answer is "Much in every way. Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3:2). Now, how does this apply to our current question?

Paul said that the inspired scriptures were given to the Jews. This is an indisputable, yet critical fact. Consider then the question: Were

the Jewish (Semitic.) writers of the Bible anti-Semitic? Paul affirmed his love for his brethren, i.e. Israel according to the flesh, the Jews, and said, “I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city” (Acts 21:39). Yet, this same writer said that it was the Jews that had slain the prophets, killed the Lord, and were persecuting the apostles and prophets (1 Thessalonians 2:15f). Was Paul anti-Semitic? He certainly said he wasn’t, yet he did not shy away from stating the historical and contemporary facts about his countrymen, no matter how ugly those facts were.

Peter pointed the finger at the temple crowd and said they had killed “the prince of Life” (Acts 3:15). This is the same Peter that was so “Jewish” that he argued with God about eating unclean food, and even when the Lord “persuaded” him to go to Cornelius’ house, the first thing he did was to remind Cornelius that it was not “lawful” for him to be there (Acts 10:28). Stephen was a faithful Jew that loved his people. He had full temple privileges. Yet, his speech in Acts 6-7 has been called anti-Semitic because he dared to lay the charge of killing the prophets on the Jews. Yet, all that Stephen did was tell the facts of history, and he died on the spot for it.

The point is that if it is anti-Semitic to say anything negative about the Jews, then the New Testament writers were anti-Semitic. But, not only were the NT writers “anti-Semitic” in this definition of things, but even the Old Covenant prophets were anti-Semitic.

The Psalmist and Isaiah said that Israel killed the prophets God sent to her (Nehemiah 9) and would kill the Lord (Psalms 16; Isaiah 53). Daniel foretold the last days total destruction of Israel (Daniel 12:7). Was Daniel anti-Semitic? Isaiah prophesied that Israel would be destroyed and God would create a new people with a new name (Isaiah 65-66). Was Isaiah anti-Semitic? Zechariah foretold the time when Jerusalem would be destroyed and 2/3rds of the people destroyed (Zechariah 13-14). Was Zechariah anti-Semitic? Jeremiah and Malachi prophesied that the time was coming when the temple, the Ark, and the city of Jerusalem would no longer be theologically

significant (Jeremiah 3:14f; Malachi 1:12). Were these prophets anti-Semitic?

It cannot be supposed that any of these authors were Christians prejudiced against the Jewish nation. All of the O. T. writers were faithful members of the Old Covenant nation. Yet, they did not hesitate to lay blame and guilt at the feet of their own countrymen. Were these Biblical writers to have written in modern times, they would be accused of the rankest form of anti-Semitism. (Of course, Amos was accused of being a hater of his country. See Amos 7:12f).

Not one of the Biblical writers can be accused of anti-Semitism. They all affirmed their love for their nation. In fact, the New Testament writers not only affirmed their love of their brethren, they say, repeatedly, that the gospel that they proclaimed was the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. Paul said he preached nothing but the "Hope of Israel" (Acts 24:14f; 26:6f; 28:16f).

The facts are clear then. The Biblical writers all foretold the guilt of Israel for killing the innocent, including Jesus. They all foretold the end of the nationalistic Theocracy, the temple and the city, as the theological center of the world. Yet, in spite of these indictments, they affirmed their love for Israel and her promises, affirming in the strongest of terms that what was happening was the fulfillment of God's promises to and about that nation. They both agonized at the impending disaster, but rejoiced at the new world to come on the other side of judgment. They knew what seemingly few today realize, and that is that the shadow world of the Old Covenant was, from the very beginning, only a temporary thing, chosen to play a pivotal, awesome role in the Scheme of Redemption. However, when her mission was completed, the external form of her types and shadows was supposed to give way to the spiritual realities that they represented (Hebrews 9:6-10).

How in the name of reason can anyone claim that Paul, or any of the other Biblical writers, virtually all Jews who proclaimed their love for Israel, and who said that they preached the fulfillment of the promises made to the Fathers, be accused of anti-Semitism even

though they openly accused their countrymen of killing the Lord? This can only be done by a total misunderstanding of the message of the Biblical writers. The fault is in the modern day definition of anti-Semitism, it is not in the Biblical writers, or in those, like preterists, that preach the message of fulfillment.

In addition to these Biblical facts, unbeknownst to many today, there are “hundreds of thousands” of “orthodox Jews” who oppose Zionism as manifested in the modern state of Israel and in evangelical Christianity. One group is called Neturei Karta, and, “Neturei Karta oppose the so-called “State of Israel” not because it operates secularly, but because the entire concept of a sovereign Jewish state is contrary to Jewish Law.” Another group, Jews Not Zionists state:

“There are in fact many Jewish movements, groups and organizations whose ideology regarding Zionism and the so-called “State of Israel” is that of the unadulterated Torah position that any form of Zionism is heresy and that the existence of the so-called “State of Israel” is illegitimate. No one has had to create any antagonism between our Torah and Zionism because such antagonism exists by virtue of the essence of Judaism itself, which can never tolerate the heresy of Zionism. Zionism is wrong from the Torah viewpoint, not because many of its adherents are lax in practice or even anti-religious, but because its fundamental principle conflicts with the Torah.”

Yet another Jewish, anti-Zionist website says,

“This article provides more information that demonstrates that far from being the saviors of the Jewish people, the Zionists are the true self-hating Jews who have had nothing but contempt and outright hatred for the Jewish people and Judaism. This article proves that anti-Semitism has been the oxygen and lifeblood of the Zionists throughout the ages to the present day. By contrast, we anti-Zionist Jews having been doing all we can to reduce hatred of Jews by proclaiming the true nature of the Jewish religion in contrast to the heresy and idolatry of Zionism. We hope this will help Jews awaken

from the brainwashing of the Zionists.”

Take note of the strong language, that labels Zionism as “heresy and idolatry,” and remember that these organizations make the claim to being the true Jews, the true Israel, the true keepers of the Torah. They reject the legitimacy of the modern state of Israel, just as preterists do, although admittedly for different reasons. The reasons are not the issue. It is the fact that these are “Jews” who strongly oppose modern Zionism as illegitimate. Are these organizations anti-Semitic?

Is it not clear that the charge of anti-Semitism backfires, badly, on the dispensational world, in the light of these facts? Will the dispensationalists label all of these Jewish organizations as anti-Semitic? Is it any wonder that the press is virtually silent about the existence of these anti-Zionist organizations? Why do Jack Van Impe, Tim LaHaye, Thomas Ice, and other leading Zionists not tell their reading audiences that there are many Jews who believe that their efforts to restore Israel are in fact heretical and idolatrous?

## **ANTI-SEMITISM AND REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY**

Going hand in glove with the charge of anti-Semitism is the dispensational accusation that anti-Semitism is based on the doctrine of Replacement Theology. As defined by millennialists, Replacement Theology says that due to Israel’s rejection of the kingdom, God rejected her, and replaced her with the church.

But, according to millennialism, the church was an unforeseen, unpredicted idea in the Old Testament, and is, in the plan of God, “an emergency interim measure” to endure only until the rapture when God removes the church, and resumes His dealings with Israel. God’s promises to Israel are her promises, His promises to the church are a totally separate, unrelated set of promises.

In the non-dispensational world, among amillennialists especially, it is somewhat common to hear it said that due to the Jewish unbelief God cut them off and established the church. Ice cites Kaiser, “the

church, Abraham's spiritual seed, had replaced national Israel in that it transcended and fulfilled the terms of the covenant given to Israel, which covenant Israel had lost, because of disobedience." Make no mistake, to say that the church is not the prophesied fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, but is a "substitute" measure, is in fact, a false theology. To say that God's plan for Israel failed, due to her unbelief, and consequently God transferred her promises to the church, is not a Biblical doctrine. However, preterism does not teach Replacement Theology in this sense. Covenant Eschatology teaches Fulfillment Theology. The church was not established because God's plan for Israel failed. The church was established because God kept His promises to Israel.

Preterists believe that the destruction of the Old Covenant form of Israel was the eternal purpose and intent of God, and that the spiritual body of Christ is the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. The Jewish rejection was not un-expected, and did not substitute anything, or restructure God's plans in any way. The church was not established as a result of the failure of Israel's promises. The church was established because the removal of Old Covenant Israel was the plan all along. There is, therefore, a huge, fundamental difference between Replacement Theology, and the Fulfillment Theology of preterism. Dispensationalists need to be fully aware of this, and honor this vital distinction.

Nothing stirs the heart of the millennialist, negatively, more than the suggestion that the church has replaced Israel in God's Scheme. Interestingly however, dispensationalists teach two forms of Replacement Theology. They teach a temporary form and a permanent form. Here is what we mean.

Ice cites Gentry, who says that the church has superceded old Israel for all time, and responds by saying, "I could almost agree with his definition if he removed the phrase 'all time.' We dispensationalists believe that the church has superseded Israel during the current church age, but God has a future time in which He will restore national Israel 'as the institution for the administration of divine

blessings to the world.” Ice reiterates this temporary Replacement Theology in the article cited just above (Replacement, 20). In other words, dispensationalists admit that Replacement Theology is, at least temporarily, the will of God. Thus, dispensationalists are Temporary Replacement Theologians.

Next, as to the permanent Replacement Theology, millennialists insist that the church will be replaced by the restored nation of Israel. Ice is clear about this, “The purpose of the rapture is to end the church age so that God may return and complete His program with Israel” (Fast Facts, 158). The fact is, however, that the church was God’s eternal purpose (Ephesians 1:9-10). It was God’s eternal purpose to gather together all things in Christ, in one body, and that body is the church (Ephesians 1:20f). The spreading of the gospel to bring all men to Christ, in the church, was ordained before time (Ephesians 3:8f) to manifest Jehovah’s glory “in the heavenly places.”

According to millennialists however, God’s real purpose is, in reality, to replace what He had eternally purposed to establish, and re-divide humanity. Dwight Pentecost says, “Gentiles will be the servants of Israel during that age” (Things, 508). When the reign of Jehovah-Jesus is established, “the distinction of Israel from the Gentiles will again be resumed” (Things, 519) He adds, “Objection is sometimes raised that God has forever broken down the barrier that separates Jew and Gentile and makes them one. This view arises from the failure to realize that this is God’s purpose for the present age, but has no reference to God’s program in the millennial age” (Things, 528). Ice says, “At the parousia the times of the Gentiles cease and the focus of history once again turns to the Jews.” Finally, LaHaye and Ice, in their book state, “In the tribulation, there is no longer a body of believers knit into one living organism. There is rather a return to national distinctions and fulfillment of national promises in preparation for the millennium” (Charting, 2001, 117).

Could there be any clearer iteration of Replacement Theology? Please catch the power of the millennial paradigm here. Christ died to establish the church. He did not die to establish the kingdom.



His passion prevented and postponed the establishment of the kingdom. Yet, the blood bought body of Christ, eternally ordained (although supposedly not predicted) will be removed, to be replaced by a cultus of bloody animal sacrifices, in a geographically oriented kingdom on earth and of earth. The unity in Christ will disappear. The better priesthood of Christ will be subsumed under the Zadokite priesthood. The animal sacrifices, once removed and condemned by the one time for all time sacrifice of the Lamb, will be re-instituted. The earthly temple, which was a mere type and shadow of the true tabernacle, will once again be constructed, and the spiritual temple of the body of Christ removed and replaced by that physical edifice.

The truth is that Old Covenant Israel was never God's determinative goal. It was God's eternal intent to remove the Old Covenant nation, with its temple and cultus, with something far better (Galatians 3:23f; Colossians 2:14f; Hebrews 8:1-3; 9:6-10). Paul, in preaching the glory of Christ and the church, said that the goal of all previous ages had arrived (1 Corinthians 10:11). Now if what Paul was preaching, salvation in Christ, in the church, was the goal of all the previous ages, then dispensationalism crumbles, for it asserts that what Paul preached was an unforeseen, unpredicted, Replacement Theology. Further, if what Paul proclaimed was the goal of all previous ages, then the pejorative charge of anti-Semitism leveled against preterism is falsified.

It is time to reconsider the charge of anti-Semitism, and examine the other side of the coin. If it is anti-Semitic to say that God kept His word to Israel, that all of His promises to her were fulfilled, and that the church is the fulfillment of her promises, then what is it to say the opposite, if the church is in fact the goal of all previous ages?

According to the Bible, and even millennialists, the gospel of Christ will never pass away. Ice, commenting on Matthew 24:35 (correctly) insists that the Greek of the text is emphatic and powerful, and that Jesus was asserting that the gospel will never pass away. Likewise, Fruchtenbaum says, "The law of Christ will never be rendered inoperable." We could not agree more. If then the gospel will never

be rendered inoperable, never be rendered void, or inapplicable, how can it be argued that in the millennium virtually every fundamental tenet of the gospel will be ignored, nullified, mitigated, or voided?

1.) The gospel message of Jew /Gentile equality in Christ will be replaced by the Old Covenant ethnic and religious divisions, according to millennialism. What happens to the gospel that has removed those distinctions?

2.) The eternal gospel of Christ forbids physical circumcision as a command of God (Galatians 5). So, how is it that in the millennium all men must be circumcised, or suffer condemnation? What happens to the eternally operable gospel of Christ?

3.) The eternal gospel of Christ forbids animal sacrifices. How then will animal sacrifices become mandatory upon penalty of condemnation for failure to comply? How can the gospel, that Ice says will never pass away, be in effect in the so-called millennium, and at the same time, animal sacrifices be mandated? Does one obey the gospel and not offer bloody sacrifices, and thus incur gospel condemnation, or, does one obey the gospel and refuse to offer animal sacrifices, and incur millennial wrath?

4.) The gospel of Christ has established the spiritual temple of the body of Christ abrogating the importance of a physical edifice. Yet, according to millennialism, a physical temple will once again be the geo-centric capital of the world. So, what happens to the “never inoperable” gospel, that nullified and abrogated temple worship?

5.) The priesthood of Christ, the Melchizedek priesthood, abolished the Levitical priesthood. Yet, millennialists tell us that in the millennium the Levitical Zadokite priesthood, will be restored. So, what happens to the gospel, the never inoperable gospel that removed the Levitical priesthood?

6.) The Communion Table of Christ memorializes the deliverance from Death, and the unity of believers. Yet, it will supposedly be replaced by restored feast days of the Old Covenant, feast days that were always mere rehearsals of the coming realities, and stood as barriers between Jew and Gentile. What happens to the gospel

Supper?

7.) The feast days that will supposedly be observed in the millennium were shadows of better things to come, and have been replaced by the reality that they foreshadowed, the reality of Christ and the church (Colossians 2:14f). So, what happens to the gospel that nullified and removed those shadows?

So, if all of these things will occur in the millennium, what becomes of the eternal, never inoperable gospel of Christ, that condemns the practice of those things? If you nullify the gospel, is that not anti-gospel? If you re-establish what has been taken away, does that not nullify grace (Galatians 2:18f)? If you set up again that which Christ died to remove, does that not negate the efficacy of his death? If not, why not? And if you negate the efficacy of his death, and return to the practice of that which he died to remove, do you not thereby affirm that his death was in fact a justified act (Hebrews 6:1-6)? If, in any way, you negate, nullify, remove, or replace the gospel, is that not an anti-gospel theology?

As Ice insists, in Matthew 24:35 Jesus emphatically told his disciples that his word will never pass away. That could not be clearer, and that is precisely what I affirm. However, what is the word of Christ? Is it not the gospel of Jesus Christ? Follow closely.

The word of Christ will never pass away and there will never be a time when the gospel of Christ is inoperable (Matthew 24.35, Ice/Fruchtenbaum).

But the word of Christ is the current gospel, the Covenant of Grace that forbids animal sacrifices, physical circumcision, temple worship, an earthly kingdom, etc...

Therefore, the gospel of Christ—the current Covenant of Grace that forbids animal sacrifices, physical circumcision, temple worship, an earthly kingdom etc., will never pass away. It will never be replaced by Israel, and by all of those practices.

What Ice needed Jesus to say was, “My word—the Covenant of Grace--will stand until it is taken out of the way so that Israel is restored.” Of course, Ice cannot produce any passage that even

remotely suggests that the Gospel of Christ will ever be removed, abrogated, superceded, or mitigated in any way. The current kingdom of Christ cannot be moved (Hebrews 12.28) and the Church age is the, “age without end” (Ephesians 3.20f)

In light of all of this, let me say again that it is time to reconsider the charge of anti-Semitism, and to consider whether dispensationalism is, in reality, anti-Christian, anti-gospel of Christ.

## **WHAT PRETERIST REALLY BELIVE JUST FOR THE RECORD**

It is ironic that the position set forth in this work, and in the preterist paradigm, would ever be called anti-Semitic. Nonetheless, Ice claims, “It appears that supersessionists believe that Israel is a ‘has been’ and has no future in the plan of God. The church inherits all the blessings, while Israel is meant to endure only curses” (Midnight, 2005, 21). This accusation has no ground whatsoever in doctrinal truth, or social reality. While I cannot speak for every advocate of Covenant Eschatology, I can say that those that I know, and that is many of the leading preterists, are in no way anti-Semitic. On the contrary, Covenant Eschatology is diametrically opposed to any kind of anti-Jewish sentiment.

Preterists affirm that Israel was chosen by God for an exclusive, distinctive and marvelous role in God’s Scheme of Redemption.

Preterists affirm that all Biblical eschatology is focused on the last days of Israel’s aeon, not the end of the Christian age.

Preterists affirm, with scripture, but against dispensationalism, that Israel’s last days were in the first century, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:15f; Acts 3:23f).

Preterists affirm that God’s promises to Israel were “irrevocable” (Romans 11:28f).

Preterists affirm that because of the irrevocable nature of God’s promises to Israel, that they did indeed remain God’s chosen people until the fulfillment of those promises.

Preterists affirm, with scripture, but against dispensationalism, that God kept His promises to Israel at the time He promised, and did not fail, and did not postpone His promises (Psalms 89:34). Dispensationalism says that Christ could not keep God's promises on time, and therefore failed in his mission.

Preterists affirm, with scripture, but against dispensationalism, that God gave Israel all of the land that He promised them (Joshua 21:43; 1 Kings 4:20f, Psalms 44:2-4, etc.).

Preterists affirm, with scripture, but against dispensationalism, that Old Covenant Israel was a type and shadow of better spiritual things to come, and that Christ and the church is the fulfillment of all of those types and shadows (Colossians 2:14f; Hebrews 9:6-10, 24f).

Preterists affirm, with scripture, but against dispensationalism, that God's promises to restore Judah and Israel, i.e. "all Israel" were fulfilled in the first century (Romans 9-11; Acts 15:13f; Revelation 7, 14).

Preterists affirm, with scripture, but against dispensationalism, that the promises of the "restoration of the earth" were fulfilled, in Christ, as declared by the inspired apostle Paul. Isaiah said that, "in the acceptable time," and, "in the day of salvation" God would, "restore the earth and the desolated inheritances" (Isaiah 49:8). Paul, faithful Jew who preached nothing but the hope of Israel, said, "We then as workers together with him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain, for He says: 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you' Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation."

Paul was speaking of the salvation in Christ, in the church, and he said that what he was preaching was the fulfillment of God's promise to restore Israel and restore the earth. The argument is quite simple, but inescapable:

Israel would be restored, and the earth and the desolated inheritances restored, "in the acceptable time, and in the day of salvation" (Isaiah 49:6f).

Paul said that he was living in the acceptable time, and in the day of salvation when he wrote 2 Corinthians 6.

Therefore, Paul was living in the time of the restoration of Israel, and the restoration of the earth and desolated inheritances.

Since Paul, preacher of the hope of Israel, said that the time foretold by Isaiah was present in his day and in his ministry, then it cannot be anti-Semitic for us to accept that, and to reject the literalistic, materialistic proclamations of Zionism. In truth, it is, in the truest sense possible, anti-Semitic to reject the true definition of the fulfillment of the hopes of Israel.

Preterists affirm, with scripture, but against dispensationalism, that God made the New Covenant with Israel and Judah, in Christ, and that as a result, all men may now enjoy the blessings of that covenant (Matthew 26:26f; 2 Corinthians 3-4; Hebrews 8).

Dispensationalism says God failed to establish the covenant with Israel when it was supposed to be made. In one of the more ludicrous theological claims, Ice says that the covenant with Israel and Judah has not yet been made, yet, the church is enjoying the benefits of that non-existent covenant. In an email exchange, I asked Ice if the New Covenant promised in Jeremiah 31 has been established. His response was: ‘I do not believe that the new covenant of Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 37 has been established yet.’

Yet, in response to the question of whether the church is enjoying the benefits of that covenant today, Ice said, “I believe that the new covenant is applied to the church today because of the clear statements of Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25, and 2 Corinthians 3:6. The new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31 will be made with ‘the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.’ Thus, it is not being fulfilled today, but will be in the millennium for Israel. Ezekiel 37:22 refers to the ‘house of Israel.’ I believe there are many other references that anticipate Israel’s new covenant found throughout the Old Testament (Deut. 29:4; 30:6; Isa. 59:20–21; 61:8–9; Jer. 32:37–40; 50:4–5; Ezek. 16:60–63; 34:25–26; 36:22–32; 37:21–28; Zech. 12:10)” (His emphasis).

Just exactly how the church can enjoy the benefits of a non-

existent covenant that had to be made with Israel and Judah before anyone else could benefit from it, is surely one of the unfathomable mysteries of millennialism. How can the church, never the object of the promises to Israel per the millennialists, be the first participants in the covenant with Israel and Judah, when the Bible is very plain that blessings would only flow “to the Jew first, and then to the Greek.” Dispensationalism has the blessings of a non-existent covenant flowing to the Gentiles first, and then, when it is finally made, to the Jews.

Is it not, in reality, anti-Semitic, to agree with unbelieving Israel, that the gospel is not their anticipated New Covenant, and urge them to anticipate the establishment of a covenant that is intrinsically at odds with the gospel? Is it not the epitome of anti-Semitism to reject the gospel as the only New Covenant that can bring anyone blessings in the Messiah? You do not love anyone by pointing them away from that alone which can bring them eternal blessings.

You do not love anyone by telling them that the gospel, which abrogates animal sacrifices, physical circumcision, geo-centric temple worship, genealogically confined priesthood, and bloody animal sacrifices, will one day be set aside and all of those things, so opposite of the gospel, will be restored.

Preterists affirm, with scripture, but against dispensationalism, that Israel would be saved, not from judgment, but through judgment, by being eschatologically transformed (Isaiah 4:4; 27:9f; 59:17f, etc.).

Preterists affirm, with scripture, but against dispensationalism, that the Old Covenant form of Israel had to pass and a New Covenant people with a new name would be created (Isaiah 65:13f), “I will destroy you, and call my people by a new name.” If the OT predicted that the Old Covenant form of Israel had to pass in order for Israel to enter her New Covenant world, it is not anti-Semitic for the preterist to teach this. It is, however, anti-Semitic to deny it and to point Israel back to the old creation.

Preterists affirm, with scripture, but against dispensationalism, that Christ has forever removed the barriers between men, and that

all men stand equal in their right to seek Christ, and that in Christ, there is no Jew or Gentile. It is, however, most assuredly anti-gospel, anti-Christian, anti-Christ, to affirm that the fundamental message of the gospel will be abrogated one day, in favor of the re-institution of Jew/Gentile distinctions, “For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor” (Galatians 2:18).

Preterists affirm, with scripture, but against dispensationalism, that all prophecy was fulfilled at the time of the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Luke 21:22).

Preterists affirm, with scripture, but against dispensationalism, that God’s covenantal wrath against Israel was completed at that time, and that Israel is not today, nor will she ever be again, under covenantal wrath. Ice is simply wrong to assert that preterists believe that, “Israel is meant to endure only curses” in the future (Midnight, 2005, 21). I know of no preterists who believe that.

It is important to understand however, that millennialists do believe that Israel will one day be under covenantal wrath again. Two thirds of all Jews are destined to perish in the Great Tribulation. Jerusalem is doomed to be destroyed at least two more times. (Have you ever wondered: Why is it not considered anti-Semitic to believe that two thirds of all Jews must perish, and that Jerusalem must be destroyed at least two more times??) Now, which is more anti-Semitic, the view that says Israel is not now, and will never be under covenantal wrath again, or the view that says Israel will one day suffer covenantal wrath that will surpass anything they have ever experienced?

I am suggesting that dispensationalism is, in reality, the worst sort of anti-Semitism because it minimizes the tragedy of Jewish rejection of the gospel and encourages them to look for the restoration of the physical temple, priesthood, sacrifices, circumcision, and earthly king and kingdom, when in fact, Jesus was offered those things and turned them down (John 6:15). The gospel of Christ, the only hope of Israel must be abrogated, nullified or simply ignored for the dispensational concept of the millennium to be established.



Christ rejected the offer to be king on an earthly throne, because that was from the very beginning, a symbol of rebellion against God (1 Samuel 8:5-8; 10:19; 12:17f). Since Jesus rejected the very kind of kingdom anticipated by dispensationalism, preterism cannot be anti-Semitic for rejecting that kind of kingdom as well.

I am suggesting that dispensationalism is the worst sort of anti-gospel message, because it anticipates the restoration of virtually everything that the gospel of Christ— that will never pass away, per Ice— nullifies and condemns: animal sacrifices, physical circumcision, Jew/Gentile distinctions, geo-centric temple worship, Levitical priesthood, and more.

The reader needs to ask this question: how can it possibly be construed as anti-Semitic to say that God has been faithful to His covenant people, and fulfilled all of His promises to them, right on time? How can preterists be accused of fostering anti-Jewish sentiment by proclaiming the equality of the Jew with all men? How can advocates of Covenant Eschatology be called anti-Semitic when they affirm that Israel is not now, and will never again be under covenantal wrath? How can it be claimed that realized eschatology genders anti-Semitism when we proclaim that God has fulfilled “the hope of Israel”?

Preterists affirm that hatred and persecution of any people, including the Jews, is an abomination before God. Christ died for all men, and for any man to use what the Jews in the first century did as an excuse to hate, vilify, ostracize and persecute the Jews today is theologically wrong, socially unacceptable, and condemned by the gospel. God does not hate the Jews, and preterism does not imply, encourage or teach any person to hate the Jews. For any person to use the message of Covenant Eschatology to gender racism, discrimination, and anti-Jewish sentiment is grossly abusing and distorting the truth of God’s faithfulness and His love for all men. Those who say otherwise are either ignorant of the true message of preterism, or guilty of fear mongering and distortion of the facts.

**62 SPECIAL STUDY:**

## **DID THE MILLENNIUM BEGIN OR END IN AD 70?**

Among partial preterists it is claimed that the millennium began in AD 70. Duncan McKenzie is perhaps the leading advocate of this view. I will interact with McKenzie's work here since it is the most widely known.

Postmillennialists say the millennium began in the ministry of Jesus and continues until the "end of time" and human history.

I intend to demonstrate the fallacy of both of these paradigms.

McKenzie bases his claims that the millennium began in AD 70 on the following:

1 The saints were not reigning with Christ before AD 70.

2 Satan was not bound before AD 70.

3 1948 was the end of the times of the Gentiles.

4 The New Creation of Revelation 21-22 arrived at the beginning of the millennium in AD 70, not at the end.

5 Romans 11:25f predicts the yet future salvation of Israel.

For brevity, we will interact with these tenets as I set forth the evidence for a forty year millennium that began in the ministry of Jesus and extended until approximately AD 70. What follows is a greatly expanded and revised version of an article that was published in *Fulfilled!* magazine.

## **DOES THE BIBLE TEACH A FORTY YEAR MILLENNIUM?**

I believe the evidence is overwhelming that John was anticipating the end of the millennium, not its initiation. This demands of course, that the millennium was a relatively short period of time running roughly from the ministry of Jesus until approximately AD 70. Of course, this will strike a dissonant cord with all of those who insist that the millennium must be either a literal thousand years, or that the millennium is just another term for the Christian age, as do the amillennialists, postmillennialists and the partial preterists who claim that the millennium began in AD 70.

So, our purpose will be to demonstrate two things: 1.) That the

millennium of Revelation 20 began with the ministry / passion / resurrection of Christ, 2.) That the millennium terminated forty years later at the resurrection and termination of the Old Covenant age in AD 70.

While some find the idea of a forty year millennium strange to the ears, it was not an uncommon thought, even among the ancient rabbis. Dr. Randall E. Otto describes the following Jewish views:

“While this interim period of the messianic age was placed at four hundred years in 4 Ezra 7:28 and Apocalypse of Baruch 29-30, “older traditions concerning the days of the Messiah fix a very short interval for the interim period, namely, forty years (R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus; Bar. In Sanh. 99a; R. Aqiba: Midr. The. On Ps. 90:15; Tanch. Egeb 7b, Pes. Rabb. 4a).” Similarly, the Qumran materials indicate such a period, as, for instance, the Damascus Document: “from the day of the gathering in of the unique teacher, until the destruction of all the men of war who turned back with the man of lies, there shall be about forty years” (CD xx, 14-15), and a Commentary on Ps 37:10: “I will stare at his place and he will no longer be there. Its interpretation concerns all the evil at the end of the forty years, for they shall be devoured and upon the earth no wicked person will be found” (4QPsalms Peshar [4Q17, ii, 6-8]).” This view was not uncommon in the ancient writings.

With these things in mind, lets’ take a look at the idea of a forty year millennium.

### **THE ELEMENTS OF THE MILLENNIUM ARE THE ELEMENTS OF THE FORTY YEARS FROM JESUS’ MINISTRY TO AD 70**

The axiom that things equal to one another are the same applies to the millennium. Here is what we mean. Revelation describes the millennium as containing certain elements: (We will discuss these and other elements in-depth below).

1.) The initial vindication / resurrection of the martyrs with Christ. This correlates to the betrothal period, the initiation of the restoration of all things and the initiation of the New Creation.

2.) The binding of Satan.

3.) The rule of the saints with Christ: “I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge”

4.) The saints as a priesthood.

5.) The loosing of Satan.

6.) The destruction of Satan and the resurrection of “the rest of the dead” at the end of the millennium.

According to Hebrews 11:39-40 the living and the dead would receive their blessings at the same time. This is a critical point. Thus, if the martyrs of Revelation received thrones, priesthood and authority, then the living saints received those things at the same time and this is precisely what we find.

The amillennialists and postmillennialists believe that the thousand year reign is a “symbolic figure covering the entirety of the Christian era” (E. G. Gentry, *Dominion*, 54).

This view is at odds with two facts. First, we have proven that the Biblical pattern is that prophets focused on the consummation of their visions not the initiation. (See again Daniel 10-12). This means that John in Revelation 20, was focusing on the consummation of his vision when he said “the time is at hand.” This is the second fact, John said his prophecy “must shortly come to pass.”

Remember, John was to write about the things that were already, and the things that were to take place (Revelation 1:19). The things that were already present—the millennium per amillennialism and postmillennialism.— were not “at hand”—they were already present. This positively demands that John was living toward the end of the “millennium.” This cannot be over-emphasized. If John was anticipating the imminent consummation, and not the initiation of the millennium then all of the traditional schools of eschatology fall to the ground.

Both amillennial and postmillennial views say the millennium

was on-going when John wrote. They also agree that the parousia is “postmillennial.” However, John said the parousia was imminent. This demands that it was the end of the millennium that John was anticipating.

If the millennium is the Christian age, then since John said the coming of Jesus, which was to occur at the end of the millennium, was at hand this means that John was saying the end of the Christian age was at hand. This cannot be true; the Christian age has no end (Ephesians 3:20-21).

The millennium began before John wrote the Apocalypse. Therefore, the consummation of the millennium was at hand. If this be the case, the coming of Christ can be associated, not with a yet future event, but with the fall of Babylon, Jerusalem of the first century. We need then to establish that the millennium had begun prior to John’s writing and to show that it was the consummation of the millennium that he was anticipating. We will do so by examining the constituent elements of the millennium as presented in Revelation 20, and compare those elements with the ministry of Jesus and the epistles.

#### Millennium, Revelation 20 Jesus’ Ministry, Pentecost-Epistles

1 Saints resurrected (v.4, 6) Saints resurrected (John 5:24) “the hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Man”

2 Satan Bound (v. 2) Satan Bound (Luke 10:18; Matthew 12:25f–cf. 2 Thessalonians 2)

3 Saints on Throne (v. 4) Saints on Thrones (Ephesians 2:5-7) #4-Existence of Kingdom (v. 4) Existence of Kingdom (Colossians 1:13)

5 Saints served as Priests to God (v.6) Saints served as Priests to God (1 Peter 2:5, 1 Peter 2:5; Rev. 1:5-6)

6 Fellow-saints to be persecuted to fill the measure of suffering Saints had to be persecuted to fill the measure of suffering (Matthew 23:33f; 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16; 1 Peter 1:5f)

7 Filling the measure of suffering to be accomplished in a little while (6:9-11; 12:12f). Filling of the measure of suffering in Jesus’

generation (Matthew 23:33f; 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16).

8 The final vindication of the martyrs comes at the end of the millennium in the judgment of Satan the persecutor. The final vindication of the martyrs comes at the Day of the Lord in judgment of Babylon the persecutor.

9 The passing of the old heaven and earth and arrival of the new creation at the end of the millennium (20:10-12) Awaiting the passing of the old heaven and earth and the arrival of the new creation (2 Peter 3; Revelation 6:12– At the Day of the Lord)

10 The second coming of Christ for the wedding– at the judgment of Babylon– occurs at the end of the millennium The second coming of Christ for the wedding– at the judgment of Babylon– occurs at the end of the millennium (Matthew 22; 25)

**Notice some important facts based on these comparisons.**

### **1 The living were resurrected,**

awaiting the consummation of the resurrection at the last hour (John 5:24-28; 6:44). Notice Jesus' "the hour is coming and now is" and "the hour is coming" in John 5. John later wrote: "It is the last hour" (1 John 2:18). The resurrection scenario of Revelation is not different from John 5. The fact that 1 John says the consummative last hour was upon them proves that the end of the millennium was near.

Kik makes an important observation about the Greek of Revelation 20, "That verse 4 is speaking of the lives of the saints upon the earth is again indicated by the tense used in speaking of those who did not worship the beast, neither his image, neither received his mark upon his forehead. In the King James version, the verbs sat, was given, lived, reigned, are all in one tense; while the verbs had worshiped, had received, are in another. But in the Greek the same tense is used for all—the aorist. Since they are all in the same tense they must refer to the same time. That is, the time of not worshiping the beast and not receiving this mark is the same time as that of sitting on the

thrones and living and reigning with Christ.”

The fact is that the NT definitely posits the resurrection as a process that had been initiated and was awaiting the consummation. This is patently true based on the resurrection of Christ as the first fruit. This means that the millennium had begun but that the consummation was near.

## **2 Satan was bound for the millennium.**

Here too we find common ground with the ministry of Jesus and the forty years.

When Jesus cast a demon out of a man, the disciples marveled. Jesus said this was not possible unless the strong man was being bound (Matthew 12:29). As he sent his disciples out on the “limited commission” they returned incredulous at their success. Jesus told them: “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18; cf. Revelation 12).

Note the comparison between 2 Thessalonians 1-2 and Revelation. We have suffering / martyrdom (2 Thessalonians 1; 2:7f? Revelation 20:1-4). See Revelation 6:9-11; 12:12.

We have the binding of the enemy of God: “You know what is restraining him...” “The one who now restrains him will do so until he is taken out of the way” (2 Thessalonians 2:5-7); the binding of Satan (Revelation 20:1-4).

We have the release of the man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:8) just as we have the releasing of Satan (Revelation 20).

We have the destruction of the enemy at the end (2 Thessalonians 2:8? Revelation 20:10).

Now, Christ’s parousia in vindication of the suffering Thessalonians and the destruction of the persecuting enemy, would be in the lifetime of the Thessalonians (2 Thessalonians 1:4-10). The coming of the Lord in judgment of the man of sin is the final vindication of the martyrs in Revelation 20. So...

The destruction of the man of sin is the destruction of Satan at the end of the millennium.

The destruction of the man of sin of 2 Thessalonians 2 is the parousia of 2 Thessalonians 1.

The coming of the Lord in 2 Thessalonians 1 was to be in the lifetime of the Thessalonians, when the Lord came to give them relief from the persecution they were then experiencing.

Therefore, the destruction of the man of sin, at the end of the millennium, would occur in the lifetime of the Thessalonians.

### **Notice also:**

Paul said the last enemy, death, would be put down at Christ's parousia (1 Corinthians 15:19-25).

John said death would be destroyed at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:10f).

Therefore, Christ's parousia would be at the end of the millennium: Jesus said "Behold, I come quickly!"

Thus, the end of the millennium was near when John wrote.

These are thematic and temporal parallels. Therefore, the millennium extended from Jesus' ministry until AD 70.

### **3 The living and the dead had been enthroned with Christ "in the heavenlies" (Ephesians 2:1-6).**

"He has raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places, in Christ."

Notice that even the "location" or sphere of the enthronement is the same in both Ephesians and Revelation. And note that that living saints were enthroned "with" Christ. The force of this "with" is very powerful, and takes us back to chapter 1 where Paul says Christ had been raised from the dead, and enthroned at the Father's right hand in the heavenly places. He had been given a name above every name both "in this age and the age to come." This is language of royalty, kingship, of sovereignty.



McKenzie claims that Ephesians 2 is not parallel with Revelation 20 because in Revelation, Satan is bound while in Ephesians 2, Satan is “the ruler of this world.” This is a false contrast.

Did Jesus not bind Satan in Matthew 12? Yet, he still called him “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31f). Likewise, while Paul spoke of Satan as the “god of this world,” he nonetheless said the Ephesians had been enthroned with Christ and he affirmed that the man of sin, Satan’s instrument, was bound, although active, when he wrote Thessalonians. There is no disjunction between Ephesians and Revelation. And there is much more here.

Notice that the martyrs in chapter 6 and chapter 20 received their robes and thrones prior to the Day of the Lord. They received the thrones at the first of the millennium. Thus, the parousia did not take place at the beginning of the millennium. It is first the bestowal of the kingly robes and then, later, after the “little while” the Day of the Lord for their vindication occurs. Similarly, it is first the thrones and then, after the millennium, the throne judgment for the judgment of their persecutor.

Both McKenzie and Dale deny that the saints ruled with Christ prior to the parousia. This is a key point with McKenzie who says it is the key to understanding eschatology. He holds that Daniel 7 is one of the most important chapters in the entire prophetic corpus and depicts the saints receiving the kingdom at the parousia.

There is no doubt that this is the scenario presented in Daniel. However, Daniel does not dwell on the issue of martyrdom as does Revelation, although it certainly does mention it. What Revelation presents for us is the initial declaration of victory, the initial enthronement, the initial receiving of the kingly robes. Daniel does not show us the Messiah sitting at the right hand, ruling and waiting until his enemies are put under his feet. He does not show us the time when he would “rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.”

Daniel is not focused on the beginning so much as on the final victory, whereas Revelation is more expansive, more comprehensive.

What is not to be missed in all of this is the indisputable fact that

the initial enthronement / bestowal of robes takes place before the parousia. Let me express my thought succinctly:

The martyrs were given kingly robes and enthroned while they awaited their vindication (Revelation 6:10; 20:1-4).

The vindication of the martyrs is posited at the Day of the Lord, at the conclusion of the “little while” when the number of martyrs was fulfilled (Revelation 6:1-17)- the judgment of the “rest of the dead” (Revelation 20:10-12).

Therefore, the bestowal of the kingly robes and the enthronement of the martyrs was prior to the Day of the Lord and the filling of the number of the martyrs.

Unless there is no relationship between the bestowal of the kingly robes in chapter 6 and the seating on the kingly thrones in chapter 20, then it is undeniably true that the enthronement and en-robe-ment (Is that a word?) are not synchronous with the parousia. And this being true, then the enthronement of the martyrs in chapter 20 did not take place at the AD 70 parousia. It occurred prior to that, at the initiation of the millennial period when Christ was seated at the right hand of the majesty on high (Acts 2:29f, etc.) “henceforth expecting until his enemies are made his footstool” (Hebrews 10:10f) and while he ruled in the midst of his enemies. This makes the parousia at the end of the millennium.

There is something else here as well, and it has to do with the New Creation. McKenzie says that the initiation of the millennium and the New Creation are concurrent events: “The new heaven and new earth do not happen after the millennium. They are concurrent with it. That is, the new heaven and earth and the millennium are two images of the same time, the AD 70 full establishment of God’s kingdom (cf. Isaiah 65:17-25, where the new heaven and earth is described using language associated with the millennium” (Antichrist, 2009, 303).

This will not work however, for it denies that the New Creation had already begun prior to the parousia. Just as McKenzie’s paradigm denies that Christ and the saints ruled prior to AD 70, this claim

denies that the New Creation had begun prior to Jesus' coming. This is, of course, patently false.

Did not Paul say: "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation, all things have passed away, behold, all things have been made new" (2 Corinthians 5:17)? This is the New Creation that was awaiting perfection at the parousia. It had already been initiated, already begun.

And notice the "already-but-not-yet" aspect of the New Creation in Galatians. Paul addresses the issue of whether Christians were to keep Torah, and specifically whether Gentile believers had to be circumcised. He tells the churches that by faith in Christ they had died to Torah, and entered the liberty of Christ. They were no longer bound to the Law of Moses, but were the true seed of Abraham and heirs of the promises made to him.

He makes what had to be some astoundingly challenging statements to his audience: "In Christ, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails, but faith that works through love" (Galatians 5:6). This definitely was not Torah. This was something new. But for Paul it was the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises. It was the New Creation (Hebrews 11:13-16).

Longenecker catches the force of the New Creation in Paul's thought. And for our purposes it is significant that he sees that in Paul, the New Creation had already begun: "What Paul has in mind when he envisages the inauguration of a new world is not, of course, the establishment of a completely new physical universe of matter—a world of cause and effect relationships, held together by forces of gravitational attraction at the molecular level. Instead he envisages the establishment of a new realm of existence. It is the sphere of life wholly different from the 'cosmos' that has been crucified to Paul, a domain where distinctive patterns of life are operative. As his comments in 6:14-15 highlight, Paul belongs to this new world, where different standards apply, different rules are followed, different habits are formed, different ways of life are practiced, and a different ethos exists. The world in which he used to live was characterized by

many things, one of which was fundamental distinctions between those who were circumcised and those who were not, those who observed the law of God and those who did not. But Paul has seen the death of that world and now lives in a world where that distinction is not applicable.”

I would observe that contra the claim that Paul had already seen the death of the old world, Paul saw that demise as coming very soon (Hebrews 10:37). Nonetheless, Longenecker is correct to see the in-breaking of the new order. And notice that the order of the day which Paul was seeking to instill in the Galatian churches is the manner of life that was to characterize the impending new age: “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails, but the New Creation” (Galatians 6:15)

Our point here is that patently the New Creation had already been initiated. But, if the new age had already broken into the old, then this means that the millennium had begun. This corresponds perfectly with the idea of the bestowal of the royal robes in chapter 6, which, as we have seen, corresponds to the enthronement at the beginning of the millennium in chapter 20.

Remember that McKenzie and Dale posit the initiation of the millennium with the enthronement of the martyrs in chapter 20. They likewise say that the new creation arrived at that time. But, once again, this denies the initiation of the new creation in Paul’s writings and this is untenable. Unless Paul is discussing a different new creation from John, then since Paul is emphatic that the new order had already begun in Christ, before the parousia, then clearly, the new creation would not find its initiation at the parousia. It would find its perfection at the end of the millennium.

Confirmation of this is found in Luke’s account of Peter’s discourse about the restoration of all things. Peter urged his audience to repent in light of the coming of Christ to bring the restoration of all things to a consummation. (What should also not be missed is that the work of restoration had begun with John the Immerser. Jesus, alluding to the prophecies of the coming of Elijah to “restore (apokatastetai) all

things, said John was Elijah– Matthew 17:10-12).

### **Acts 3:21:**

“That He may send Jesus, Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21).

Since John began the work of restoration, as seen earlier in this work, this demands that Christ’s parousia would consummate it. The work of the restoration of all things had begun, but was awaiting completion. Gentry has correctly apprised what Peter was saying: “The force of ‘until’ .... makes the times of restitution simultaneous with Christ’s mediatorial session in heaven. He will come again not to introduce the restitution predicted by the prophets, but because He shall then have completed it” (Dominion, 2009, 501).

Gentry is correct to see the restoration perfected and finalized at the parousia. He is wrong to extrapolate that parousia 2000 years removed from its initiation. This is confirmed in the rest of the NT.

Notice Philippians 1:6f: “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

Was the work that Christ had begun in them not the work of restoration? The very word *apokatastasis* (Cf. Acts 3:21) carries with it the idea of reconciliation. It means to put back in the proper condition. The work Christ had begun in them, through Paul, was the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

Christ was performing the work of restoration. This is equal to “he must reign until his enemies are put under his feet.” It is equal to “rule thou, in the midst of thine enemies.” His parousia would perfect, complete and finish that work.

So, the new creation is the result and the completion of the restoration of all things, as most scholars agree. Per McKenzie’s view, however, the restoration of all things would not and could not begin until AD. In fact, it would seem that in McKenzie’s paradigm, there

is no “already-but-not yet” aspect of the restoration of all things. The restoration came all at one singular moment, with no prior initiation, simply consummation.

What we find however, is that everywhere we turn in the NT we find the indications that the elements of the millennium were already present, already initiated. It was the final victory, the perfection of the work begun, that the church was eagerly awaiting. They had already been enthroned in the heavenly places, and they already ruled with Christ, but they were eagerly longing for the manifestation of the sons of God and the new creation. This was the consummation of their hope, not the initiation.

#### **4 The existence of the kingdom.**

It is clear from both Revelation and the rest of the NT corpus that the kingdom began on Pentecost. The foundation of the Messianic temple was laid then (Ephesians 2:19f) and the kingdom and the temple are surely concurrent realities. In addition, in Revelation 1:6 the alternate translation is “he has made us to be a kingdom of priests.”

Colossians 1:13 is undeniable: “He has translated us out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.” Likewise, in Hebrews 12:28 the writer affirms that they, first century, pre-AD 70 saints were “receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.” The present participles indicate that this was something going on at the time, not something that was purely future.

Do these texts deny that the kingdom was still “coming” in such texts as Matthew 16:28; 25:31f; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 11, etc.? No. What they prove however is that the kingdom of Messiah had begun in its infancy but was “in process” awaiting consummation, the “perfect man” of Ephesians 4:13f.

For those like McKenzie and Dale who deny the reality of the rule, reign and kingdom of Christ prior to AD 70 this is a fatal reality. Likewise, for the postmillennialists who claim that the millennium

did begin prior to AD 70 but awaits its termination at some distant future time, the fact that the kingdom had begun and was awaiting perfection at the parousia is fatal, because Revelation posits that coming of the Lord when “the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ” as coming soon. It was at hand. And this means that the end of the millennium was truly near when John wrote.

### **5 The Martyred Saints Serve as Priests to God,**

**and Their Living Brethren Were Priests On Earth at the Same Time (v.6).**

John says the martyrs were priests who reigned with Christ for the millennium. In this they share an organic unity with Christ.

Zechariah 6:13 foretold that in the Messianic Temple, Messiah would be both priest and king on his throne.

Hebrews 8:1-3 tells us that Jesus was serving as High Priest over the True Tabernacle, as he sat at “the right hand of the throne of majesty” – exactly where the Psalmist said he would rule in the midst of his enemies (Psalms 110:1-2).

In Revelation 20 – just as their Lord sat on the throne as king and priest, the saints sat on thrones and served as priests. This was not only true of the dead. The living saints were priests as well (Hebrews 13:15, 1 Peter 2:4; Revelation 1:6). Take note of the latter verse.

The language of priesthood is used throughout the NT to speak of the living saints. Paul called on living Christians to “present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable to Christ” (Romans 12:1-2). This is liturgical language. In Hebrews 13:15 it says, “By him therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise unto God.” They were clearly being called priests, offering spiritual sacrifices. This is what Peter affirmed when he wrote the diaspora and said they had been created as a priesthood unto God to offer up spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5).

John opened the Apocalypse by taking note that the (living) followers of Messiah had been made “kings and priests” (1:6).

Likewise, he was brothers with those “kings and priests” in suffering and the kingdom (1:9). Just so, in Revelation 5:10 the martyred saints praise the Lord because they had been made “kings and priests.” Note once again the organic unity between the living and the dead.

So, what we have in both chapter 1 and chapter 5 is the declaration that the suffering saints already had been declared to be the very thing that chapter 20 posits for the beginning of the millennium. This logically demands that the millennium had begun at some point in the past. Thus, in Revelation 20-22 it was the end of the millennium that was near. Let me develop this point a bit more.

Note that in Revelation 6:9-11, in the opening of the fifth seal, John was given a vision of the dead martyrs. They cry out for vindication (ekdekeesis) via the judgment of their persecutors. That judgment is to play out “on the earth” (ge). They are given white robes and told to rest for “a little while” until the number of the eschatological measure of the martyrs is filled up (v. 11– cf. Matthew 23:31-36). Their vindication would occur at the end of the “little while” at the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord (v. 12-17). There is something important here that is commonly overlooked.

Very clearly, the bestowal of the kingly robes occurred before the Day of the Lord. The bestowal of the robes occurred under the fifth seal; the Day of the Lord is under the sixth. They were thus declared to be “kings” prior to their vindication, prior to the Day of the Lord. They ruled as kings before the parousia. And note that the Day of the Lord came at the terminus of the “little while.” This can hardly be denied.

The robes given to those martyrs were robes of royalty, robes of kings. The word translated as “robes” is from stole (στολε) and Thayer’s and other lexicons say these were the robes worn by kings, by royalty. So, the martyrs were given kingly robes and told to rest for a “little while” until their martyrdom was vindicated in the judgment of their persecutors. Again, take note that their full vindication was not when they received their kingly robes. Their full vindication was at the Day of the Lord, Christ’s parousia which occurred after the



bestowal of the kingly robes, and after the period of the “little while.” This is critical.

There is no question therefore that as Revelation 20 depicts the martyrs as priests, the rest of the NT depicts their living brethren as priest as well. Therefore, unless there is a temporal disjunction between the living and the dead we must conclude that the millennium in Revelation 20:1f is a depiction of the organic unity between the living and the dead saints. And since the first century, pre-AD 70 saints were priests, this means that the millennium began prior to the parousia of Christ.

### **6 & 7 The martyrs were told**

that they would only have to wait “a little while” before their full victory was achieved, but first, their living brethren had to suffer to fill the measure of suffering (Revelation 6:9-11; 1 Peter 1:4f). This “little while” motif is directly related to either the millennium itself, or, more probably, the “little season” at the end of the millennium.

Three times in three chapters we find the promise that Satan would have only a little time to accomplish his evil before he utterly failed. The next chart will parallel those passages.

Revelation 6	Revelation 12	Revelation 20	Past Suffering (v.9f)
Past Suffering (v.5-6)	Past Suffering (v.4)	Satan defeated, (v.10)— (robes given); cf. Luke 10:18	Satan defeated, (cast out, v.7f); time of the kingdom (12:10)
More Suffering to come (v.10-11)	More Suffering to Come (v.12)	More Suffering to come (v.7-9)	

after the millennium Suffer only “a little while” (kronon mikron, v.11) Satan has but “a little while,”

(oligon kairon, v.12) Satan loosed a “little while,” (kronon mikron, (v.3, 7-9) Vindication at the Day of the Lord Vindication at the destruction of Satan Vindication via destruction of Satan— i.e. the persecutor, Revelation 12-- at the GWT judgment, at the end of the millennium

These parallels demonstrate one thing beyond doubt: the “little

while” period was “post-millennial” (or near the end) but what follows from this is not classical “postmillennialism.”

The little while of Revelation 6, a time of persecution, was to be followed by the consummative Great Day of God’s Wrath (6:12-17) when God vindicated His martyrs. In Revelation 20 the little while was to be a time when Satan once again unleashed his power against the saints (20:8-9). This was followed by the consummative victory (v. 9f). When would this be? Well, the filling up of the measure of suffering is posited by Jesus for his generation as well as the attendant judgment against Jerusalem the persecutorial power. The next chart will help us see this.

Matthew 23 Revelation 6 Revelation 20 Past Suffering, (v.29-31)  
Past Suffering, (v.9) Past Suffering, (v.4) Satan Bound, Matthew  
(12:28); saints “raised from dead”; on thrones in early church period  
(Ephesians 2:5-7) Satan bound; white robes given, symbol of royalty  
and victory (v.10) Satan bound for thousand years, (v.2); saints on  
thrones More suffering to come (v.34) More suffering to come (v.11)  
More suffering to come (v.3, 7-9) Final victory in Jesus’ generation  
(v.35-39) Final victory in “a little while” (v.10-17) Final victory in a  
little while, after the little season of Satan’s loosing (v.3, 9-10) ”Behold,  
I come quickly.”

In Matthew 23:29-39 Jesus castigated the Jews for persecuting the prophets-(past suffering). He said he was going to send His own prophets to them and they would also kill them, (more suffering). It must also be seen that Jesus’ prophets and disciples are the ones that the New Testament writers insisted were on thrones reigning with Jesus, compare Revelation 20 and the chart above.

In Matthew 23:34-36 Jesus said judgment on the Jews would come in that generation. It was to be a judgment so comprehensive it would encompass all the martyrs all the way back to creation (23:35). This judgment would have its physical foci at Jerusalem, but its spiritual scope would be universal. That judgment was the coming of the Lord in power and great glory to gather the elect (Matthew 16:27-

28; 24:29-31).

Our point is that in Revelation the final destruction of Satan would be after the saints had endured a “little while” more of persecution. But this “little while” would be after the millennium (Revelation. 20:3, 7-9). Jesus definitely placed his coming in final vindication of the martyrs in his generation at the fall of Jerusalem. Thus, the millennium, the “little while,” and Christ’s parousia must be placed within the framework of that first century, ending in the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.

This comparison is troublesome for the traditional views of eschatology. None of them adequately account for the correlation of the “little while” texts in Revelation, nor the “little while” of Matthew 23.

This correlation places the “final coming” in vindication at the fall of Jerusalem in Jesus’ generation. In so doing, it posits the consummative judgment of Revelation 20 at that event as well. This absolutely forbids any interpretation that extends John’s vision hundreds or thousands of years into his—or our.—future. It demands that we honor John’s emphatic declaration that “the time is at hand.”

1 Corinthians 15:24-28 depicts the then present reign of Christ to be followed by His victory over the last enemy, death, at “the end”—the parousia. Revelation 20 presents the reign of Christ in the millennium. At the end of the millennium death is destroyed, when Satan, the persecutor is crushed. Will it be contended that scripture teaches about two parousias, both of which are for the purpose of destroying death? First Corinthians 15 therefore, since it depicts a then present reign of Christ proves the first century millennial reign of Jesus.

Some falsely claim that Jesus and the saints did not truly reign during the forty year period. In 1 Corinthians 15:24 Paul spoke of Christ’s then current status, “He must reign until his enemies are put under his feet.” Paul uses the present infinitive which means Christ was currently reigning, and would continue to reign until his enemies were put under him.

The time of his rule is the time of the putting down of his enemies. If he was not ruling before AD 70 then he was not putting down his enemies before AD 70, but, 1 Corinthians 15:24; Colossians 2:14f; Hebrews 10:13, etc. all speak of how Christ had begun to put all enemies under him. He was ruling in the midst of those enemies, awaiting the consummation of his conquering work. This is one of the key weaknesses of McKenzie's view, for he does not have the initiation of the reign of Messiah and the saints until the parousia, based on Daniel 7. This overlooks the reality of Christ's reign as demanded in 1 Corinthians 15, and, it denies that Christ was ruling during the time of putting his enemies under his feet.

William Bell astutely notes that if Christ did not begin to rule until AD 70 then the putting down of his enemies, and ruling in the midst of his enemies, did not begin until AD 70. Paul said, "He must reign until his enemies are put under him." His reign and the putting down of his enemies are synchronous events. The Psalmist said: "Rule thou, in the midst of your enemies" (Psalms 110:2). The ruling until the enemies were put under him, and the ruling in the midst of his enemies are parallel statements. Paul makes it indisputably clear that Christ had begun the work of putting his enemies under him: "He has put all things under him, but we do not yet see all things put under him" (1 Corinthians 15:27; cf. Colossians 2:14f).

The time of the end (1 Corinthians 15:24) is when Messiah finalized his triumph over his enemies, not the time when he would begin to put down his enemies. Revelation depicts that final victory, "when the thousand years are finished" (20:7). So, in Revelation, the beginning of the millennium is the beginning of Messiah's conquering work. The millennial reign is the consolidation of Messiah's rule. The end of the millennium is when that work was perfected.

## **8 The final vindication of the martyrs**

occurs at the judgment of Babylon. But, the final vindication comes at the end of the millennium in the destruction of Satan, the persecuting power.

Remember that both Dale and McKenzie posit the parousia at the beginning of the millennium. However, when we examine the chapters just listed and correlate all of the testimony this is untenable.

In Revelation 6:9f the martyrs cry for vindication. They are given their royal robes and told to wait for the little while until their vindication at the Great Day of the Lord's wrath. So, to reiterate the critical point made above, the parousia for their vindication is not the same time as their reception of their royal robes. The giving of the robes is under the fifth seal; the Day of the Lord is under the sixth.

Chapter 14 presents that Day of the Lord, the coming of one like the Son of Man, for the time of the harvest. The harvest is undeniably the time of the resurrection— especially when seen in light of Israel's festal calendar which is depicted in "reader's digest" form in Revelation 14.

Just as in chapter 6 we have the martyrs, in chapter 7 and 14 (parallel chapters) we find the 144,000 who "came out of the great tribulation" (7:14). They have suffered for and with the Lamb and washed their robes in his blood. They are the first fruits redeemed to God (14:4). And, to make the connection with chapter 6 secure, they are wearing the "white robes" (stole) of those in chapter 6.

So, in chapter 14 we find the same imagery as in chapter 6 and chapter 20. We find initial enthronement and the anticipation of the consummation. In chapters 7 and 14 the 144,000 wear the robes of those in chapter 6, and they await the harvest. However, and this is critical, they are waiting the Day of the Lord which is the time of their vindication and the harvest.

These are not two different "Great Days" of God in chapter 6 and 14. There are not two harvests and times of vindication; it is one consummative event. The Great Day of the Lord is the time of the harvest. And this carries through into chapter 16.

Notice that the judgment against Babylon is announced under the third bowl of wrath:

"And I heard the angel of the waters saying: 'You are righteous, O

Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.' And I heard another from the altar saying, 'Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments'" (Revelation 16:5-7).

So, what we have here is the announcement of the anticipated vindication of the martyrs, the martyrs of chapter 6, 7 and 14. When would that vindication of the martyrs take place? In the outpouring of the seventh bowl of wrath, in the "Great Day of God Almighty" (16:14) the judgment of Babylon when she was "remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath" (16:19).

Let me express my thoughts succinctly here:

The martyrs would be vindicated at the Great Day of the Lord (Revelation 6:1f; 14:14; 16:6-19).

The vindication of the martyrs at the Great Day of the Lord follows their initial enthronement / reception of robes.

The vindication of the martyrs at the Great Day of the Lord occurs in the judgment of Babylon (i.e. Jerusalem).

Therefore, the initial enthronement / reception of the royal robes preceded the Great Day of the Lord against Babylon (i.e. Jerusalem).

Now, let me make the point in regards to the millennium.

In chapters 6-16 we have one harmonious story. Revelation is "recapitulating" the story over and over. Chapter 20 is no different. The initial enthronement of the martyrs in chapter 20 clearly precedes the consummative victory over Satan, the persecuting power. That final victory comes, undeniably, at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:10).

So, unless Revelation 20 depicts a different victory, for a totally different set of martyrs from those depicted in the previous chapters, over a different persecuting power, it is unequivocally true that the final victory would come in the judgment of Babylon, in the Great Day of the Lord. Let me put it like this.

The Great Day of the Lord for the vindication of the martyrs would be at the judgment of Babylon, the persecutor of the martyrs (16:6-19).

But, the vindication of the martyrs would be at the destruction of Satan– the persecutor of the martyrs– at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:10).

Therefore, the judgment of Babylon, the persecutor of the martyrs– would be at the Great Day of the Lord, at the end of the millennium.

There are some important questions to be asked here.

a Are there two “Great Day of the Lord” judgments in Revelation? Most will say no.

b Are there two destructions of Satan, one in Revelation 12 and another in chapter 20? Clearly not.

c Does heaven and earth pass away twice in the Apocalypse? Again, most will say no. I am unaware of any paradigm that teaches that heaven and earth passes away twice in Revelation.

d Are the martyrs vindicated at two (or three!) different times at different comings/judgments in Revelation? No.

Virtually no one believes any of these things. Yet, in order to posit the millennium as future one must believe all of these things.

It is positive that the Great Day of the Lord was to occur at the time of the destruction of creation in chapter 6. But, the Great Day of the Lord is placed at the judgment of Babylon in chapter 16. Since creation and Satan was to be destroyed at the end of the millennium, then the vindication of the martyrs in the judgment of Babylon was to occur at the end of the millennium.

Since Jesus and Paul have already informed us that the vindication of the martyrs would occur in the judgment of Old Covenant Jerusalem in the first century, and since Jesus described that event as the destruction of creation (Matthew 24:29f) the correlation is perfect.

So, as we have already noted, unless you can prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that Revelation is predicting a totally different vindication, of a totally different group of martyrs, at a totally different time from

that foretold by Jesus and by Paul, then we have to conclude that the Great Day of the Lord in Revelation, at the end of the millennium, occurred in the judgment of Old Covenant Jerusalem, Babylon, in AD 70.

Unless one can divorce Revelation 20 from the previous chapters and prove that it is discussing a different time and different events, then it is virtually certain that the judgment of Babylon, at the Great Day of the Lord, occurred, not at the initiation of the millennium, but at the end. This falsifies the postmillennial paradigm as well as that of McKenzie and Dale. The millennium did not begin in AD 70.

John was not anticipating the beginning of the millennium. He was standing near its close awaiting its consummation and Christ's triumph over the persecuting powers of the old world. This is why when Jesus said, "Surely, I am coming quickly," John responded, "Even so, Come Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). Take a bit of a closer look at the destruction of Satan. Notice that in Revelation 20:7 Satan is loosed at the end of the millennium and goes out to make war with the saints. In his assault, fire comes out of heaven and destroys his forces, and he is cast in the lake of fire (v. 10). So, the destruction of Satan is patently at the end of the millennium. Notice now Romans 16:20: "The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly."

Gentry comments on Romans 16:20: "Romans 16:20 hearkens back to the Adamic Covenant" (Dominion, 1992, 113). Okay, so Romans 16 hearkens back to Genesis 3:15 which is the promise of the ultimate destruction of Satan and the Adamic Curse. Paul said that the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15– the overcoming of the Adamic Curse at the destruction of Satan, was at hand, coming soon. Now watch:

The destruction of Satan- and the overcoming of the Adamic Curse– would be at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:7-10).

The destruction of Satan and the overcoming of the Adamic Curse was near when Paul wrote Romans.

Therefore, the end of the millennium – the destruction of Satan



and the overcoming of the Adamic Curse – was near when Paul wrote.

Everywhere we turn, and every element of Revelation that we examine points us inexorably to the conclusion that the end of the millennium was near when John wrote.

### **9 The passing of the old heaven and earth**

and arrival of the new creation is at the end of the millennium (20:10-12).

As we have shown, McKenzie has the parousia and the arrival of the new creation at the beginning of the millennium. But again, this will not do.

Since we have commented on the new creation and the end of the millennium a bit just above we will make our comments here brief.

Notice that in Revelation 20:11 we have the passing of the Old Creation. McKenzie sees this a parenthetical statement that reiterates the beginning of the millennium of 20:1f. He says the millennium and the new creation are “concurrent.” However, this is untenable.

There is no question that “the rest of the dead” are not raised until “after the thousand years are over” (Revelation 20:5). This is indisputable. Consider the following then.

In Revelation 20:11-13 we find “the rest of the dead” being raised:

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.”

If the dead in these verses are not “the rest of the dead” mentioned in verse 5 then who in the world are they? Did John introduce the concept of the resurrection of the “rest of the dead” at the end of the

millennium, and then, after describing the events of the millennium, and bringing us to the end of the millennium, that he then mentions the resurrection of the dead, but that these dead have nothing to do with the “rest of the dead” mentioned earlier? If the dead of v. 12 have no relationship to “the rest of the dead” why mention them? Are there three classes of “the dead” in Revelation 20?

Okay, so if the dead of Revelation 20:11f are indeed the “rest of the dead” of verse 5, then this means that verse 11f is a description of the end of the millennium. Let me put it simply:

The rest of the dead would be raised after the thousand years were finished (Revelation 20:5).

The dead of Revelation 20:11f are “the rest of the dead” of verse 5.

Therefore, the raising of the dead in Revelation 20:11f occurs at the end of the millennium.

With this established look now at the fact that verse 11 also posits the passing of the old heaven and earth at the same time as the raising of “the rest of the dead” : “earth and heaven fled away and no place was found for them, and I saw the dead small and great standing before the throne.”

So,

The raising of the rest of the dead and the passing of the Old Creation are synchronous events (Revelation 20:11-13).

But, the raising of the rest of the dead occurs at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:5).

Therefore, the passing of the Old Creation occurs at the end of the millennium.

We have shown above how the postmillennialists increasingly espouse the view that the New Creation arrived in AD 70, and we will examine this more closely below. If this is true (and it is) then the fact that the resurrection of the “rest of the dead” and the passing of the old world undeniably belong to the end of the millennium demands that the end of the millennium was near when John wrote. Postmillennialism’s own admissions falsify that eschatology.

**10 Revelation 19:7 says, “The marriage of the Lamb**

**has come.”**

When was this? It was at the time of the judgment on Babylon, i.e. Jerusalem. In Revelation 21:2 after the millennial reign, the bride is, “adorned for her husband.” The wedding in chapter 21 is not different from that in 19. It was not the wedding of chapter 19 delayed a thousand years. Chapter 21 is a fuller description of the bride. The time for the wedding is at the coming of the Lord but this is after the millennium. The coming of the Lord was to be the coming against the city, “where the Lord was crucified” (11:8). And remember, Jesus, the Groom, said, “Behold I come quickly” and Revelation closes with the exhortation: “The Spirit and the Bride say, Come!” (Revelation 22:12, 17f).

Notice particularly the postmillennial problem with the issue of the wedding. Gentry believes for instance in a divided Olivet Discourse. He believes that Matthew 25 and the parable of the Virgins (and all of chapter 25) is referent to Christ’s second coming at the end of human history (Dominion, 2009, 332; Olivet, 2010, 136+). However, as we have seen Gentry also, in an unguarded moment perhaps, posits the wedding in AD 70. So here is what we have.

The coming of the Bridegroom for the wedding in Matthew 25 is the second coming of Christ at the end of the millennium (Gentry).

However, the wedding of the Groom took place in AD 70: “The bride totally supplants Israel in AD 70” (Dominion, 2009, 420).

Therefore, the coming of the Bridegroom for the wedding in Matthew 25, the second coming of Christ at the end of the millennium, occurred in AD 70.

This is simply inescapable, and needless to say, is destructive to the postmillennial paradigm. To posit the wedding in AD 70 demands the end of the millennium at that time.

You cannot say that AD 70 was the betrothal. Paul is emphatic that the betrothal had already occurred (2 Corinthians 11:2). So, once again, to acknowledge that AD 70 was the time of the wedding is to admit that it was the second coming, and of course, in the postmillennial paradigm, that is the end of the millennium.

The wedding motif is likewise destructive to the idea that the millennium began in AD 70. As we have demonstrated sufficiently above, the Throne judgment occurs at the end of the millennium. But, the Throne judgment of Revelation 20 is the judgement of Matthew 25:31f, which in turn is the time of the wedding in Matthew 25:1f. So, let me put it like this:

The Great White Throne Judgment occurs at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:10f).

The Great White Throne Judgment is the Great Judgment of Matthew 25:31f.

The Great Judgment of Matthew 25:31f is the time of the second coming of Christ for his wedding (Matthew 25:1f).

Therefore, the second coming of Christ for his wedding occurs at the end of the millennium.

The ten points above are, it seems to me, definitive proof that John was standing near the end of the millennium. There is much, much more evidence that could be produced, but consider a few concluding significant issues.

The promises to the seven churches of Asia are linked with the new creation that follows the millennium. Revelation 2:7 promised the tree of life. In Revelation 22:2-4 the tree is given after the millennium. In Revelation 2:25-26, Jesus promised the church at Thyatira the “power over the nations” (see Revelation 19:15).

The premillennialist says this coming and giving of power can only be before the millennium. But unless this promise is to be severed chronologically from the promises to the other churches, then since all the other promises are “post-millennium” promises, the coming of the Lord in 2:25-26/19:15 must be viewed as occurring at the end of the millennium, and not at the beginning. And the fact that the coming of the Lord depicted in the letters to the seven churches was to occur in their lifetime, shows that it was the end of the millennium being anticipated.

The coming of the Lord anticipated in the letters to the seven churches was the coming of the Lord that was to occur in their

lifetime (e.g. Revelation 3:1-5; 3:10-12).

But, the coming of the Lord anticipated in the letters to the seven churches was the coming to bring “end of the millennium” blessings (i.e. new name, new Jerusalem, etc.).

Therefore, the coming of the Lord anticipated in the letters to the seven churches, the coming to occur in their lifetime, was the end of the millennium coming of the Lord.

Take note of another correlation that bears on the time of the end of the millennium.

The final defeat of Satan, when Satan would be crushed, would be at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:10f).

But the final defeat of Satan, when Satan would be crushed, was near when Paul wrote Romans: ‘The God of Peace shall crush Satan under your feet shortly’ (Romans 16:20).

Therefore, the final defeat of Satan, when Satan would be crushed, at the end of the millennium, was near when Paul wrote Romans.

Do you catch the power of that? The end of the millennium was near when Paul and John wrote. Now, unless Satan was to be crushed at different times, in different judgments, both of which judgments were near in the first century, then we must conclude that Paul and John anticipated the same victory. And what this means, undeniably, is that the consummation of the millennium was near when Paul and John wrote their respective books.

## **WHEN THE 1000 YEARS ARE OVER**

One way of determining whether the forty year period could have been the millennium is to examine what was to happen at the end of the millennium, and to compare that with the language of imminence found in the NT. If the events that Revelation posits at the end of the millennium were coming soon in the rest of the NT, this constitutes prima facie evidence that the end of the millennium was near. While some of the material below may seem a bit redundant, it is important to examine in the specific context of imminence. With

that in mind notice the following:

### **1 Satan would be released at the end of the millennium.**

In 1 Peter 5:8 is depicted: “The Devil walks around seeking whom he may devour.”

### **2 War with the saints would come**

at the end of the millennium, but Satan’s release and that “war” would only be for a short season (Revelation 20:10). In 1 Peter 1:4f the apostle writes to the very churches that John addressed and told them that they had to suffer, but only for a little while (1 Peter 1:5f).

### **3 The destruction of Satan**

would occur at the end of the millennium. In Romans 16:20 Paul said: “The God of peace shall crush Satan under your feet shortly.” Let me reiterate the argument from above.

The destruction of Satan would be at the end of the millennium.

But, the destruction of Satan was near when Paul wrote Romans.

Therefore, the end of the millennium was near when Paul wrote Romans.

### **4 The resurrection**

(i.e. “the rest of the dead,”) came to life after the 1000 years (20:7-12). Peter affirmed that Christ was, “ready (hetoimos) to judge the living and the dead” (1 Peter 4:5). He said that the appointed time for that judgment had arrived (1 Peter 4:17). Since Revelation 20 posits the Throne Judgment at the end of the millennium, and since Peter asserts that the time for the judgment of the living and the dead had come this serves as prima facie proof that the end of the millennium was near.

### **5 Opening of the books**

judgment is clearly at the end of the millennium. Jesus addressed

this judgment in Matthew 16:27-28: “There are some standing here that shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom” (Matthew 16:27-28). And, he reiterated that promise in Revelation 22:12: “Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me.” The argument therefore is quite simple and yet definitive:

The Great Judgment of the Living and the Dead would occur at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:10-12).

But, the time for the judgment of the living and the dead had arrived when Peter wrote (1 Peter 4:5-17).

Therefore, the end of the millennium, the time of the Great Judgment of the Living and the Dead, had arrived (had drawn near, 1 Peter 4:7) when Peter wrote.

I would note that the opening of the books at the resurrection is directly linked with the consummation of Israel’s eschatological hope that was bound up in her seven feast days. Specifically, the last three feast days foreshadowed the Day of Judgment (Rosh Ha Shanah, the feast of Trumpets), the Day of Atonement (which is the time of the opening of the books), and Feast of Harvest, which foreshadowed the resurrection. As noted, postmillennialists and almost all futurists say the Mosaic Covenant ended in AD 70. Yet, Torah would stand until all of its types and shadows were fulfilled (Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 9:6-10). Thus, to say that the day of judgment, Christ’s parousia and the resurrection are still future demands that Torah remains in effect. This is inescapable. See our discussion immediately below.

6 Heaven and earth fled, the New Creation– God dwells with man – “These things must shortly come to pass” (Revelation 22:6, 10-12). See the comments above that establish this more clearly. Also, see my book, *The Elements Shall Melt With Fervent Heat*, for a thorough study of the passing of “heaven and earth.”

## THE MILLENNIUM AND ISRAEL'S FESTAL CALENDAR

As just suggested in Israel's festal calendar, the New Creation would come at the climax of the last three feast days– Trumpets (Rosh Ha Shanah, i.e. judgment), Atonement and Harvest / Tabernacles. Tabernacles is when God's presence would be restored to man through resurrection.

In Revelation 14:1-4 we have the first fruits of the Harvest (cf. John 5:24f) which corresponds to the enthronement of the martyrs in Revelation 20:1-4. They were awaiting the Harvest (Feast of Booths) which would occur at the destruction of Babylon, the city guilty of killing the saints (14:6f)– this is the end of the millennium of 20:10f.

So, in Revelation 20-21, at the end of the millennium resurrection, we hear the victory declaration: “The tabernacle of God is with man!” (Revelation 21:3). Here is the fulfillment of Israel's festal calendar, the Feast of Tabernacles.

It is commonly argued that the “ceremonial aspects” of Torah ended at the cross and that Israel ceased to be God's covenant people at the cross, while OT prophecy remained (to AD 70) or remains valid (futurism). Simmons has now taken the position, a total reversal of his earlier views, that, “The Law of Moses and ethnic Israel were left behind at the cross.” This is so demonstrably false, that such a claim is a manifestation of utter desperation on the part of those who make it. Paul asked, in approximately 57 AD: “Has God cast off His people who He foreknew? God forbid!” Some Gentile Christians in Rome were claiming, as do amillennialists and now Simmons, that the answer to Paul's query should have been, “Yes, God did cast off His people at the cross!” Unfortunately for those who make such claims, Paul's words are an unmitigated falsification of that view.

In regard to the question about the passing of the “ceremonial and sacrificial” elements of Torah let me make the following observation:

The feast days were fundamentally covenantal.

The feast days were fundamentally ceremonial.



The feast days were fundamentally sacrificial.

The feast days were fundamentally prophetic.

These facts are indisputable. So, to claim that the sacrificial and ceremonial aspects of Torah were abrogated, that the Mosaic Covenant was nullified, but that the prophetic elements of Torah remain unfulfilled is an insurmountable self contradiction. The abrogation of the sacrifices would annul the typological and prophetic elements. To abrogate the covenant would likewise annul the prophetic element. There is no scriptural justification for delineating between the ceremonial, the sacrificial, the covenantal and the prophetic. There is no such division in scripture; that is an unwarranted theological invention.

The fact that Revelation 20-21 depicts the fulfillment of Israel's last three feast days at the end of the millennium proves therefore that the "sacrificial and ceremonial" aspects of Torah remained valid when John wrote.

### **Watch carefully:**

Israel's Feast Days (Thus, Torah itself) would remain valid until what the Feast Days foretold was fulfilled (Matthew 5:17-18; Colossians 2:14-16; Hebrews 9:6-10).

But, those feast days foreshadowed the resurrection -- the hope of Israel -- at the end of the millennium.

Therefore, Israel's Feast Days (Thus, Torah itself) would remain valid until the end of the millennium.

Clearly, the consummation of Israel's age and the end of Torah is inseparably tied to the end of the millennium.

### **Finally**

The resurrection was the salvation hope of Israel (Isaiah 25:8;  
361

Acts 26:6-8; Romans 11:25f).

The resurrection of Revelation 20:10f– at the end of the millennium– was therefore the salvation hope of Israel.

Daniel 12:2-7 posits the resurrection hope of Israel as fulfilled in AD 70.

Therefore, the end of the millennium was in AD 70.

Biblically, there was no resurrection divorced from Israel's hope. Thus, the resurrection of the "rest of the dead" at the end of the millennium must be interpreted within that framework.

## **THE MILLENNIUM AND POSTMILLENNIAL PROBLEMS**

I want to present here some material in regard to the postmillennial paradigm. We have touched on it a good bit above, but there is much more to be seen. Some of this will be repetitive, but, not all of it, and it is important to see what is happening in the postmillennial world.

It is common in postmillennial circles to affirm that the New Creation arrived in AD 70. This includes the views of McKenzie, cited above, who holds that the New Creation of Revelation 21 came in AD 70 and that the end of the millennium was (perhaps) in 1948 or at least very near to us today. Please grasp the significance of that. Let me document this a bit.

Roderick Campbell applies Revelation 21, "I make all things new" to AD 70.

Jonathin Seriah, says, "The 'heaven and earth' of Judaism that passed away in the first century (2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 21:1) were 'obsolete and growing old' (Hebrews 8:13)."

Kenneth Gentry, considered by many to be the leading spokesman of modern postmillennialism says that in Revelation 21:1f, "The Heavenly Jerusalem is the bride of Christ that comes

down from God to replace the earthly Jerusalem (Rev 21:2-5) in the first century (Rev 1:1, 3; 22:6, 10). With the shaking and destruction of the old Jerusalem in AD 70, the heavenly (recreated) Jerusalem replaces her” (Dominion, 2009, 367). He insists: “It seems clear from the time statements in Revelation following the New Jerusalem imagery that this must come to pass not long after John wrote (Revelation 22:6, 7, 10) (Dominion, 2009)147, n. 44.

DeMar likewise says: “The transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant encompassed monumental changes. Various expressions are used to describe it” (Last Days Madness, 1994,56). Among the expressions that Demar gives to describe the transition from the Old Covenant to the New is “New Heavens and a New Earth (Revelation 21:1)”

Finally, Chilton, even before his conversion to the full (true) preterist eschatology, was adamant that the New Jerusalem of Revelation has already arrived: “We are living in the new heaven and the new earth; we are citizens of the New Jerusalem.” Chilton clearly posited the arrival of the New Jerusalem at the removal of the Old Jerusalem in AD 70.

So, what is the problem you say? Let me express the problem succinctly:

The New Creation of Revelation 21 arrived with the passing of Old Covenant Judaism in AD 70 (Campbell, Seriah, Gentry, DeMar, Chilton, et. Al.– postmillennialism– Look at Gentry’s quote again: “With the shaking and destruction of the old Jerusalem in AD 70, the heavenly (re-created) Jerusalem replaces her”).

But, the Old Creation passed away at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:11-12).

Therefore, the end of the millennium arrived at the passing of Old Covenant Judaism in AD 70.

Do you see the problem? It is fatal to the postmillennial paradigm that insists that the millennium began in the ministry of Jesus and continues to this day. (It is equally fatal to the claim that the millennium began in AD 70). There is simply no way to deny that the passing of the old world occurs at the end of the millennium.

Per the postmillennial construct, the Christian age is the millennium and endures until the end of human history. But again, if the New Creation arrived in AD 70, then since the Old Creation was destroyed at the end of the millennium, ushering in the New Creation, then that means that the end of the millennium is inextricably tied to the first century and the end of the Old Covenant age.

The only way to counter this severe problem is to be able to prove beyond a shadow of doubt that the destruction of Satan, the raising of the rest of the dead and the destruction of the Old Heaven and Earth did not, after all, occur at the end of the millennium in Revelation 20:7-12. That cannot be proven however, since the destruction of Satan and the raising of the “rest of the dead” are both emphatically posited at the end of the millennium by the text. And, the raising of the rest of the dead at the end of the millennium, occurs at the Throne Judgment when the Old Creation passes.

We would also note this:

The Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:12 is the Throne Judgment of Matthew 25:31.

But, the Throne Judgment of Matthew 25:31f was to occur in the first century at the judgment of Old Covenant Jerusalem (Matthew 24:34-- This is proven by the fact that Revelation 21 is the time of the Wedding. Matthew 25:31 is the time of the Wedding, but, the time of the Wedding was in AD 70, Matthew 22: 1-10– and Gentry concurs).

Therefore, the end of the millennium Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:12 was to occur in the first century at the judgment of Old Covenant Jerusalem.

So the problem is indeed very real. But, the next problem is, if

possible, even more severe.

## **AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE CURSE**

### **Revelation 22:3**

Revelation 21:1 introduces the New Creation, including the New Jerusalem. The rest of chapters 21-22 describe the blessings found in that New Creation. It is one continuous description of the New Jerusalem and the New Creation that arrived in 21:1. There is no gap, no huge temporal disconnect between chapter 21 and chapter 22. No long unfolding over millennia.

Gentry said it well, but of course did not see the implications for his view: “It seems clear from the time statements in Revelation following the New Jerusalem imagery that this must come to pass not long after John wrote (Revelation 22:6, 7, 10). Notice that in Revelation 22:5 the text concludes the description of the New Jerusalem and then immediately says: “And he said to me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets send his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass” (en taxei– see my in-depth discussion of en taxei on pages 178ff).

Now, if the New Heavens and Earth and the New Jerusalem were not included in the things that must shortly come to pass, then the contextual flow is quite misleading. The New Creation is the direct antecedent, as Gentry takes note. This demands that it is the New Jerusalem that must, from John’s perspective, “shortly be done.”

Notice now that chapter 22 tells us of the River of Life flowing out from under the throne. And where is that throne located? In the New Jerusalem which arrived in chapter 21:1-2. So, this drives home the point we are making. Chapter 22 is directly, inseparably connected to chapter 21, and that means that chapter 22 is part of the on-going description of what arrived in AD 70 per the postmillennial paradigm. Now, at this juncture, let me digress for a moment to take note of Romans 8:18f.

In this great text Paul speaks eloquently of the redemption of “creation” or “the creature.” It is popular among commentators, especially postmillennial ones, to say that Paul was anticipating the renewal of the physical cosmos. It is claimed that as a result of sin in the Garden that the rocks, trees bugs, slugs and mosquitos of the natural world were placed under “the curse” at that time, and only the parousia of Christ will reverse that curse. (But observe that in Revelation 22:7 Jesus rather emphatically said “Behold, I come quickly!”) This is, ostensibly, the focus of the redemption of creation and the goal of Christ’s parousia.

What this means, or should mean, is that the New Creation is the redemption of the bugs, slugs and mosquitoes, in a restored physical cosmos– the New Heaven and Earth. Now, quite frankly, I have never read a single commentator explain how the curse affected rocks for instance, and how the removal of the curse will liberate rocks from “the curse.” And this is not an attempt to be facetious. It is asking a legitimate question. You cannot affirm that rocks are under the curse, without at least inviting the question of what happens to rocks when the curse is destroyed.

Okay, so Romans 8 is the prediction of the time when the curse is removed from material creation per the postmillennial eschatology.

Revelation is the depiction of the arrival of the New Creation – the restoration of the Garden – where there is no death (Chilton, commenting on Revelation 21, says God has already taken away our tears, Paradise, 205f).

The New Creation is the goal of “creation” when the Adamic curse is removed.

But, the New Creation arrived in AD 70. Gentry actually says: “The bride totally supplants Israel in AD 70” (Dominion, 2009, 420, my emphasis). So, the marriage, not the betrothal, took place in AD 70.

In an amazing admission and affirmation, Gentry admits that the Jewish expectation, and the Old Testament prediction, was that the age to come would fully arrive at the end of the Mosaic age:

“From the linear perspective of the Old Testament, ancient Israel believes that the “age to come’ will be the Messianic era that would fully arrive after their current age ends. Yet in the New Testament we learn that the ‘age to come’ begins in principle with the first century coming of Christ. It overlaps with ‘this age’ which begins in Christ.” Thus, we are not only children of ‘this age’ (present, sin-laden temporal history) but are also spiritually children of ‘the age to come’ (the final, perfected eternal age). We have our feet in both worlds” (Dominion, 2009, 326, my emphasis– See my book *We Shall Meet Him In The Air, the Wedding of the King of kings* for a fuller analysis of Gentry’s comments here. Note that he implies that the OT prophets were essentially wrong, because the “age to come” did not, in Gentry’s view, fully arrive at the end of the Old Covenant age in AD 70).

Do you catch the power of that? The OT prophets expected and foretold the full arrival of the age to come– which in reality is just another term for the redeemed creation – at the end of their current age. That means that the OT prophets foretold the full arrival of the New Creation, the redemption of the creation at the end of the Old Covenant age! (See my full discussion of Gentry’s problematic admission in my *We Shall Meet Him In The Air, the Wedding of the King of kings*).

And of course, this is precisely what Gentry, DeMar, Seriah, Campbell and other postmillennialists affirm, when they say that the New Creation arrived in AD 70 at the fall of Jerusalem. (Note also McKenzie’s posit that the New Creation arrived in AD 70). The fact that the New Creation was “in process” prior to AD 70 falsifies that claim, demonstrating that it was the consummation / perfection of the “already-not- yet” in view in Revelation 21-22).

Now, of course, these good men might well cry “Foul!” at this, and claim that the New Creation began to be established and will one day come into full bloom at some distant point. This was Chilton’s position in *Paradise Restored*. However, this overlooks several key issues and facts found in the NT.

If AD 70 was the beginning then it was the betrothal of Christ. But, as Revelation 19 points out it was the Wedding (the consummation) that was near in the judgment of Babylon / Jerusalem— not the betrothal. And remember that Gentry says that the New Covenant bride “fully supplanted” the Old in AD 70. Once again, this is destructive of the postmillennial eschatology. Jesus was not coming to get betrothed. Let me put it like this:

The time of the wedding and the time of the New Creation are synchronous events (Rev. 21:1-4— “I saw the New Jerusalem Adorned as a bride...”) (Admitted by McKenzie, Dale and the postmillennialists as well).

The time of the wedding is the time of the consummation of events already begun / initiated—the climax of the betrothal period.

The New Creation is likewise the consummation of events already begun-- (2 Cor. 5:17).

The Wedding and the New Creation arrived in AD 70 (This is the postmillennial view as demonstrated, as well as McKenzie / Dale ).

Therefore, the consummation— the finalization of the betrothal and the perfection of the New Creation was in AD 70— not the initiation.

This demands that AD 70 was the end—not the beginning—of the millennium.

For those (postmillennialists) who say that the millennium began in Jesus ministry, but that somehow AD 70 was a “kick-start” or something similar, the fact that the betrothal had already taken place, and the fact that the New Creation had already begun prior to AD 70 is devastating. To admit that AD 70 was the wedding and arrival of the New Creation is to admit that AD 70 was the consummation— not the initiation.

Likewise, for those like McKenzie and Dale, the admission that AD 70 was the wedding and the arrival of the New Creation demands that AD 70 was the end, the consummation of a process already begun. Both men, however, deny that Christ’s rule had already begun



prior to AD 70. This is tantamount to saying that the New Creation and the betrothal had not yet been initiated.

The betrothal can be directly tied to the initiation of the “sitting on thrones” concept, the receiving white robes concept, the being seated in the heavenlies concept, the “restoration of all things” concept, etc. etc.. All of these are tenets of the already begun process that was awaiting perfection and consummation. But, in Revelation and the rest of scripture, that consummation is the end of the millennium not the beginning.

Note Gentry’s admission just above. He admits that the OT prophets foretold the “full arrival” of the “age to come” at the end of their Old Covenant age. Well, were those OT prophets wrong in what they predicted? We are not talking here of the misguided hope of the Jews concerning the nature of the kingdom. What we are talking about here is what the inspired prophets actually foretold. And one thing is certain: Gentry is correct when he says the OT prophets foretold the “full arrival” of the New Creation at the end of Israel’s Old Covenant age in AD 70. But consider the following.

The new creation had already broken into the old prior to the consummation in AD 70. Scholars have acknowledged this for literally centuries. When Paul said, “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation, old things are passed away, all things have become new” it is all but universally stating that the promised New Creation had begun to arrive. All that was waiting was the consummation, the full arrival.

Note the comments of Longenecker on Paul’s view of the two ages in Galatians:

“What Paul has in mind when he envisages the inauguration of a new world is not, of course, the establishment of a completely new physical universe of matter– a world of cause and effect relationships, held together by forces of gravitational attraction at the molecular level. Instead he envisages the establishment of a new realm of existence. It is the sphere of life wholly different from the ‘cosmos’ that has been crucified to Paul, a domain where distinctive patterns

of life are operative. As his comments in 6:14-15 highlight, Paul belongs to this new world, where different standards apply, different rules are followed, different habits are formed, different ways of life are practiced, and a different ethos exists. The world in which he used to live was characterized by many things, one of which was fundamental distinctions between those who were circumcised and those who were not, those who observed the law of God and those who did not. But Paul has seen the death of that world and now lives in a world where that distinction is not applicable.” My only objection to Longenecker’s comments are in regard to his claim that Paul had already seen the death of the Age. This is incorrect, since Paul affirmed some years later that the passing of the Old Covenant was “nigh” (Hebrews 8:13).

So, the new age had broken into the Old. The old was “nigh unto passing” (Hebrews 8:13). Christ had begun the work of “restoration” but would perfect it at the parousia. Gentry and postmillennialists agree with this view as well. Notice Gentry’s comments on the “restoration of all things” spoken of by Peter in Acts 3:21-24::

“This ‘restoration of all things’ begins in the first century during the ministry of Christ. John Calvin notes in this regard that ‘Christ by His death has already restored all things...but the effect of it is not yet fully seen, because the restoration is still in process of completion, and so too our redemption.’ In fact, Peter informs his auditors of the events begun in their time: ‘Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days (Acts 3:24). This contemporary focus is also clear from Matthew 17:11, where John Baptist functions as an Elijah introducing the restoration of all things in the New Covenant (cf. Malachi 4:5-6)” ( Dominion, 2009, 501).

Gentry then concludes that the “restoration of all things” which of course is the redemption of creation from the Adamic “the curse” (Romans 8:18f) will be completed at the end of the age, the second coming of Christ. Note what he says, however: “The restoration of all things is a reformation that supplants the old order (Hebrews

9:10)” (Dominion, 2009, 502). Gentry has hopelessly entrapped himself here. For brevity, let me offer this. I develop this much more extensively in my book *We Shall Meet Him In The Air, The Wedding of the King of kings*.

The restoration of all things (which is the removal of the Adamic Curse, and the redemption of “creation” of Romans 8) “is a reformation that supplants the old order (Hebrews 9:10)” (Gentry).

But, the reformation that supplants the old order is the end of the Old Covenant (Hebrews 9:6-10)!

Therefore, the restoration of all things (which is the removal of the Adamic Curse, and the redemption of “creation” of Romans 8) occurs at the end of the Old Covenant.

Let me follow up with this:

The restoration of all things (which is the removal of the Adamic Curse and the redemption of “creation” of Romans 8) occurs at the end of the Old Covenant.

But, the end of the Old Covenant arrived in AD 70 (Gentry, DeMar, Serial, etc.; McKenzie, Dale ).

Therefore, the restoration of all things (which is the removal of the Adamic Curse, and the redemption of “creation” of Romans 8) occurred in AD 70.

Do you see the insurmountable self contradictions in the postmillennial view? Remember that postmillennialists hold to the following, based on the citations above:

? The Adamic Curse will be removed (Romans 8) at the time of the New Heaven and Earth. Postmillennialists posit this at the end of the millennium which they claim is the end of the Christian age.

? The restoration of all things began in the ministry of John and was continued by Jesus and will be consummated at the parousia of Christ.

? The New Creation, the New Jerusalem, arrived with the destruction of the Old Covenant world in AD 70.

But notice: since the New Creation arrived at Christ’s coming at the end of the age in AD 70 per postmillennialists (as well as McKenzie

and Dale) themselves, this demands that the Adamic Curse was fully removed in AD 70! And of course, the postmillennialists, as well as McKenzie and Dale insist that the Adamic Curse has not yet been completely removed.

Notice again that in Revelation 21-22 we find the description of the New Creation– the New Creation that postmillennialists tell us arrived in AD 70. Notice now Revelation 22:1-3:

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.”

Notice that this is the description of the blessings found in the New Jerusalem. So...

The New Jerusalem arrived in AD 70 (postmillennialists).

In the New Jerusalem that arrived in AD 70 there is no more curse.

Therefore, there has been no more curse since AD 70.

Now, remember this critical point: postmillennialists tell us that the restoration of all things had begun under John. And of course, this is undeniably true. The restoration would continue until the parousia and the arrival of the New Creation. But, they tell us that the Christ came and the New Creation arrived in AD 70! So here is the question:

If the New Creation arrived in AD 70 at the parousia of Christ and the passing of the Old Creation, then since Revelation 22 says that in the New Creation that arrived in AD 70– there is no more curse -- how in the name of reason can it be affirmed that the Adamic Curse does in fact continue today?

Let me take note of the emphatic wording in Revelation 22:3. It is quite literally, “And every curse will not be any longer” (Kai pan katathema ouk estai eti). The word pan is a form of panta, which

means, “all, every, etc.” So, every curse, all the Adamic Curse, would cease to exist in Christ and the New Creation which arrived in AD 70. The curse, every curse, (clearly the Adamic Curse is in view) would pass at the destruction of Satan at the end of the millennium. As seen in Romans 16 that end of Satan was near. Jesus affirmed the same thing in Revelation 22: “Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me.” This time of Christ’s coming and the time of reward of every man is nothing less or other than the judgment of Revelation 20:11-12 which was to be at the end of the millennium, when “the rest of the dead” were raised to life and reward. Thus..

The judgment of the rest of the dead, all the dead, was to occur at the end of the millennium.

But, the rewarding of every man was at hand and coming quickly at Christ’s parousia when John wrote Revelation (Revelation 22:12).

Therefore, the end of the millennium was near when John wrote Revelation.

The fact that the end of the millennium is posited, repeatedly, in Revelation as being near, and coming soon falsifies the postmillennial eschatology.

There is not one syllable in Revelation 21-22 to suggest that the arrival of the New Creation in AD 70 was just a “jump start” on the way to the actual consummation and the removal of the Adamic Curse at an eschaton beyond AD 70. No hint of such. In fact, remember that Gentry says the restoration of all things began with John. So, what role did AD 70 play if not consummation? The unequivocal testimony of all NT prophecies of Christ’s parousia is that it would bring the consummation, the final realization of what had begun. So, if AD 70 was the coming of the Lord, and if it was the end of the age, and if it was the arrival of the New Creation, then it was the consummation.

Remember also that Gentry admits that the OT prophets anticipated the full arrival of the age to come at the end of the Old Covenant age– which he affirms came in AD 70. So, once again, since Revelation 21-22 describes the arrival of the New Creation in

AD 70 this logically demands that from AD 70 there has been no curse! The Adamic Curse was removed in AD 70. (Significantly, in my debate with James Jordan he admitted that the Adamic Curse was destroyed in AD 70, but then insisted that we are still waiting on the consummation. I noted that the destruction of the Adamic Curse is what Paul was anticipating in 1 Corinthians 15. Thus, to admit the AD 70 removal of the Adamic Curse is to admit the eschatological consummation. There is no “consummation” beyond 1 Corinthians 15 or Revelation 21-22. MP3s of that debate is available from me.).

So, according to the admissions of the postmillennialists, it must be true that the “creation” was redeemed in AD 70– which of course completely nullifies all claims that the Adamic Curse was a curse on material creation, for natural creation has manifestly not been “redeemed” since AD 70.

## **SUMMARY OF OUR MILLENNIUM STUDY**

Every element of the millennium was present in the living saints during the 40 years between Jesus’ ministry and AD 70.

The end of the millennium resurrection was the hope of Israel. If that has not happened, Torah remains valid; Israel remains God’s covenant people. Daniel 12 falsifies this idea.

McKenzie says, “I believe we are currently in the time at the end of the millennium when the Gog and Magog invasion happens (Rev. 20:7-10).” He says that this invasion “will happen in the not too distant future” (p. 465, n. 78). This suggestion raises several issues:

### **1.) This view demands the ability to prove**

that modern Israel is in fact the fleshly seed of Abraham. This cannot be done, as shown above.

### **2.) It demands that God currently**

has two chosen covenantal people– one that despises the very name of the Son of God.

### **3 Do those who take this view espouse**

the Two Covenant view of John Hagee that Israel today remains under the Covenant with God, and that her covenant promises take precedence over the gospel? If not, why not?

If Torah remains valid for Israel, do they need the gospel? Hagee says no. But, if they need the gospel and must respond to it for salvation, does this not nullify circumcision—and thus, their right to the land? This alone nullifies any claim that 1948 was in fulfillment of prophecy.

### **4 Those who take this view must,**

just like the dispensationalists, prove that God promised, anywhere, to restore Israel in a state of rebellion. That cannot be done. God nowhere, at any time, promised to restore Israel to her land while she was in a state of rebellion and unbelief. See my Israel 1948, Countdown to No Where book for definitive proof of this.

### **5 This view likewise raises the issue of circumcision**

addressed above. Is physical circumcision still binding for the Jew today? Does it still guarantee the land? Why was Paul's doctrine of circumcision "the offence of the cross" if in fact he was affirming that it would remain perpetually valid for fleshly Israel, but was nullified only for those entering Christ?

### **6 This view demands that Israel's "last days"**

existed in 1948– and today as well. Yet, Deuteronomy 32 posits Israel's "last end" as occurring at the time when the blood of the martyrs would be avenged. Jesus said that would be in AD 70 (Matthew 23).

### **7 Acts 3 posits the "restoration of all things"**

foretold in prophecy at the time of Christ's parousia. Yet, those espousing the 1948 restoration of Israel actually admit that Christ's second coming occurred in AD 70. If the restoration of all things

foretold in prophecy was to be at the second coming (and it was), and if the second coming was in AD 70, per these partial preterists, then 1948 was patently not the fulfillment of prophecy.

### **8 If 1948 was the fulfillment of God's promises**

to Israel, then undeniably, Torah remains valid in all of its aspects, including the cultus, animal sacrifices, and circumcision as just noted. Matthew 5:17f cannot be ignored, and Hebrews 9:6-28 proves that Torah would stand and only stand, until the second coming, which, again, these partial preterists posit in AD 70. To understate the case, this is problematic for that position.

### **9 This view demands that Romans 11:25**

was either fulfilled in 1948 or remains to be fulfilled in the (near) future. However, the OT prophecies that serve as Paul's source for his prophecy demand an AD 70 fulfillment.

### **10 Jesus was emphatic: The events of AD 70**

was to be when "all things that are written must be fulfilled" (Luke 21:22). Revelation 10-11 is likewise emphatic that the sounding of the seventh trumpet would be the consummation of all – not just some or even most – that the prophets foretold, and that would be the time of the judgment of the city "Where the Lord was slain" (11:8-17). Since Jesus and John affirm that all prophecy would be fulfilled in AD 70, that leaves no room for fulfillment of prophecy in 1948 or beyond.

These are only a few of the major obstacles to the partial preterist position that the millennium began in AD 70 and ended in 1948 with the restoration of "Israel."

We have shown definitively that the postmillennial and amillennial view that the Christian age is the millennium will not stand up under scrutiny. We have shown that in fact, the postmillennial admissions of the arrival of the New Creation and the wedding of the Lord in AD 70 is self defeating and demands the end of the millennium in AD 70.



Much more could be said. However, all of the evidence points irrefutably to the fact that the millennium began in the ministry of Christ and extended for the forty years until AD 70. The millennium did not begin in AD 70. The millennium did not end in 1948. We are not in the millennium. Christians are in the everlasting, unmoveable kingdom of Messiah.

## **63 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JERUSALEM'S FALL**

The significance of identifying Babylon can hardly be overestimated. All agree that the theme of Revelation deals with the coming of the Lord to judge that Great City. This is the time when the new Jerusalem and new heaven and earth would come, and when the resurrection would take place. In the new creation, the River of Life would flow and the Tree of Life would be for the healing of the nations. All of this would follow immediately upon the fall of Babylon (chapters 20-22).

**THE IDENTITY OF BABYLON IS THE KEY TO BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY. THE DEFEAT OF DEATH, THE JUDGMENT AND THE NEW CREATION ALL COME AS A RESULT OF HER FALL.**

This has incredible implications for the traditional views of eschatology, as we will see. If Babylon was Rome, these things followed the fall of Rome, if Babylon is the Roman Catholic church the new creation will not come until the Vatican is destroyed.

Babylon's identity, therefore, is the key to interpreting Revelation. If the fall of Babylon is not the fall of literal Babylon, must we see the imagery describing her demise as descriptive of literal events, i.e., stars falling from the sky, a mountain being thrown into the sea, a sea-beast, a land-beast etc.? Likewise, if these things are not literal, we must be cautious in speaking about a literal resurrection (chapter 20) a literal coming of the Lord (chapter 19) etc..

If the fall of Babylon is not an “end of time” event, then Revelation cannot be used to support the current (20th century) speculation about the “Battle of Armageddon,” the Man of Sin, the Mark of the Beast, and the millennium.

If “Babylon” was a figurative designation of a first century “covenant city,” then Bible eschatology as a whole must be re-examined, for all other New Testament eschatology is inter-related to the Apocalypse. We have shown that Revelation is not speaking about future “end of time” eschatological events, but a first century event—the fall of the Old Covenant city of Jerusalem.

The significance of the fall of Jerusalem can hardly be over-estimated. However, as Carrington says:

“It may appear to us that too much is made of the greatness of Jerusalem; but this is only because it does not fire our imaginations today. Jerusalem was perhaps more impressive than Rome. It had its marble temple roofed with gold; and no doubt the palaces of the priests were in the same style. It carried on commerce with the whole world. It was the oldest city in the world with a conscious and continuous history; and what a history. It had faced the archaic empires of Egypt and Babylon; it had come into real power and importance by defeating the successors of Alexander the Great; the leadership of Rome, the New York of its time, was a mere episode. Throughout that long period of time, the whole tract of man’s history, as far as it really counts, she had been the elect of God; God had chosen her, and her alone, out of all the nations of the earth; the rest of the earth was in darkness. Now all that glory was to perish” (Meaning, 289f).

Sadly, most Bible students today, when they hear that Jerusalem’s fall was an age changing event, shake their heads in disbelief. This is a sad demonstration of how far removed the modern Bible student is from understanding the importance of God’s covenantal relationship with Israel through the ages. The reader is urged to read the book of Lamentations, the book written to mourn the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians.

Jeremiah sorrows over the fact that the feast days have ceased, and Judah “is among the nations”; her enemies have become her masters (1:3-5). In fact, Jehovah Himself had become the enemy of Judah. (Lamentations 2:4-5) and had, “cast down from heaven the beauty of Israel,” as He came on the clouds (2:1-2). In a foreshadowing of the last days, Jeremiah said, “The Law is no more, and her prophets find no vision from the Lord” (2:9). Jeremiah even challenges passers by who might not appreciate the magnitude and significance of Zion’s demise, “Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, Which has been brought upon me, Which the Lord has inflicted in the Day of His fierce anger” (1:12). Jeremiah extols the former glory of the capital city, and the incredible pathos felt due to her destruction.

To appreciate the importance of the fall of Jerusalem one needs to understand the Jewish view of the city, temple, the priesthood, the entire cultus. Spatafora says, “The Temple and its ritual therefore, had a cosmic importance. They were essential in maintaining the balance of the world order. Harmony was maintained, blessings flowed as long as the proper cult was offered. The welfare of Israel, nay, of the whole world of the seventy nations, was dependent on the proper performance of the service of the temple, each stage and each moment of which had a closely determined effect on some corresponding stage or moment in the beneficial working of the forces of nature” (Temple, 29f).

Jerusalem stood as the representative of God to the world. It was the only divinely ordained center of worship in the world (John 4). The priesthood, the sacrifices, the genealogies were all there. That center of worship had stood for centuries.

However, the Messiah had come, and the kingdom was established. It was necessary that the old give way to the new. The Law could not save, but condemn (Romans 7-8; Galatians 3:10). It was a ministration of Death (2 Corinthians 3). There was a need for deliverance from the system of death. But, old Israel would hear nothing of this message, and persecuted, “the children of the promise” (Galatians 4). As a

result, foreseen and prophesied by God (Daniel 9:24-27) Israel filled the measure of her sin and God's exclusive Theocratic relationship with her was for all time terminated. As Stephenson notes, in so far as Israel was concerned, "The destruction of the temple could be seen as tantamount to the destruction of the nation." He says that the temple and Israel's place as the elect are inextricably tied together and cites the Talmud to the effect that with the destruction of Jerusalem, "an iron wall intervened between Israel and the Father in heaven" (p. 130).

The fall of Jerusalem was the vindication of the first century Christians. As N. T. Wright says, "So closely do they belong together, in fact, that the destruction of the temple--predicted already in symbolic action, and here in prophetic oracle--is bound up with Jesus' own vindication, as a prophet and also as Messiah. (Victory, 511)

The fall of Jerusalem was the manifestation of the Son-ship of Jesus, emancipation from the curse of the Old Law, the consummation of Israel's history as God's people, the termination of Israel's unfettered ability to persecute the church, and the perfection of God's Scheme of Redemption.

Harnack commented on the impact of the fall of Jerusalem, "No Christian, even supposing he were a simple Jewish Christian, could view the catastrophe which befell the Jewish state, with its capital and sanctuary, as anything else than the just punishment of the nation for having crucified the Messiah. Strictly speaking, he ceased from that moment to be a Jew; for a Jew who accepted the downfall of his state and temple as a divine dispensation, thereby committed national suicide" (Mission, 63).

Sproul says it is time to change the modern ignorance of Jerusalem's incredible significance in God's covenant dealings, "No matter what view of eschatology we embrace, we must take seriously the redemptive-historical importance of Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70" (Last Days, 26). Perhaps all of this is why Coffman says the fall of Jerusalem was, "Religiously significant beyond anything else

that had ever occurred in human history.”

This is the story of Biblical eschatology. The Bible is not about the end of time but the end of Israel’s Old Covenant History. The fall of Babylon was the coming of Jesus at the end of the age (Matthew 24:3f) when God’s New Covenant people was fully manifested to the world as the new Israel. Babylon is destroyed. The new Jerusalem came down from God out of heaven. He makes His place with man, and those who are His dwell with him. The tree of Life is restored, and the River of Life flows for those who would drink (John 4:13-14).

Those who see in the prediction of Babylon’s fall a panoramic view of all world history, and “end of time” eschatology, are creating a disunity in scripture. The consistent Bible teaching about “end time things” pointed to the end of the Old Covenant world of Israel at the demise of Jerusalem. While many acknowledge the significance of Jerusalem to Israel, they fail to see the importance of Jerusalem to the Scheme of Redemption (Romans 11:25-36). Thus, they relegate the predictions of her fall to secondary status, and unrelated to matters of salvation. This very clearly is wrong. See Isaiah 2-4; Isaiah 65-66; Daniel 12; Joel 2-3; Zechariah 12-14, etc., where salvation is depicted as perfected at the time of Israel’s judgment.

## **64 IMPLICATIONS FOR TRADITIONAL VIEWS**

As suggested above, the identification of Babylon as Jerusalem identifies Biblical eschatology as Covenantal, and not Historical. Unfortunately, the traditional views, in some cases, almost completely ignore the fall of Jerusalem as of major significance to the over-all Bible story. It is, therefore, fitting that we briefly take note of the traditional views, and how the fall of Jerusalem impacts upon them. Let us assure the reader that in what follows we are not trying to be harsh or overly critical. We intend only to note what we see as inconsistencies in the traditional views of eschatology, not to impugn the integrity or sincerity of any believer. However, the issues

are serious and must be addressed.

## **1 PREMILLENNIALISM**

The premillennialist incorrectly emphasizes the nationalistic and literalistic aspect of Israel's promises—i.e. the Old Covenant aspect concerned with the externals. But that Old Law with its Land, priesthood, sacrifices, temple, etc., was simply a “shadow of good things to come” (Hebrews 10:1f). The Law was never intended to be permanent (Galatians 3:23f). The New Covenant is the permanent covenant (Matthew 24:35).

Israel's physical things were a shadow of the spiritual, and the spiritual was the goal and focus of the old (Colossians 2:14-16).

When the millennialist insists on a yet future restoration of national Israel with its temple, priesthood, sacrifices, etc., he is implicitly rejecting the spiritual work of Christ in favor of that which could never justify. Millennialism thus makes the shadow the substance, and makes the substance the shadow.

In the refusal to see the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 as God's final verdict on the old things of Israel, the millennialist casts his vote with the Jews of Jesus' day, who rejected him because he did not offer the kind of kingdom they demanded. The old had served its purpose and vanished. Those who insist on its restoration are seeking to restore what God never intended to last.

Further, the premillennialist is in the unenviable position of both ignoring and emphasizing imminence. They insist that the parousia was not really near when John said it was. On the one hand, they then quote John to prove that Christ's coming is at hand today. Thus, they both deny and affirm John's time statements. If John's time statements were not true in the first century, however, they can hardly be true today.

## **2 AMILLENNIALISM**

On the other hand, the amillennialist would relegate Israel to history at the Cross, before God had fulfilled His promises to her. After the Cross, Paul was still preaching nothing but the Hope of Israel (Acts 24-26). How could Paul still be preaching the Hope of Israel, if Israel was cut off at the Cross as the amillennialist says? Was Paul confused? This is a serious error in the amillennial camp.

The amillennial view is that in His personal ministry, Jesus offered the kingdom to Israel, but they rejected him. At the Cross, therefore, God rejected Israel. Beginning at Pentecost, God supposedly started all over with a new set of promises unrelated to Israel.

Yet, the consistent New Testament testimony is that in the establishment of the church, God was fulfilling His promises to Israel (Acts 2:29f). Furthermore, after Pentecost, Peter was anticipating the imminent fulfillment of, “all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21). These prophecies sprang from, “Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken” (v. 21). For Peter, the promises of God to Israel were not terminated or all fulfilled at the Cross. Peter, like Paul, was only preaching what the prophets had predicted. It is essential to see that Peter tells us that what the prophets had foretold, and known was not for their time, was, “ready to be revealed” in the first century (1 Peter 1:10-12).

When Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, went from city to city he always went first to the Jews. Why is that, if God was through with Israel at the Cross? Was this a sentimental courtesy on Paul’s part? Hardly, it was a divine necessity.

Paul said the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16-17). When he preached to the Jews at Antioch they rejected his message of salvation. Consequently he threatened them with Old Covenant Wrath (Acts 13:40-41)—a strange thing to do if the Old Covenant was no longer around. He then said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first” (Acts 13:46). Why was it necessary to preach

to the Jew first?

It was necessary for the gospel to be preached to the Jews in all the world for them to fill up the measure of their sin by persecuting the preachers of the kingdom of heaven.

In Matthew 23:31f, Jesus said he was going to send “prophets, wise men, and scribes” to the Jews. In response, the recalcitrant nation would “kill and crucify” them, and, “persecute them from city to city.” This persecution would result in filling up “the measure of your fathers.” This would all be after Pentecost. Those who say that Israel’s cup of sin was full, and God terminated His relationship with them at the Cross, are at odds with Jesus. Paul witnesses to this in I Thessalonians 2:15-17, as he chronicles the unrelenting persecution not only committed by the Jews, but instigated by them through the Gentiles. In addition, Paul speaks of his sufferings as necessary to, “fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ” (Colossians 1:24).

These sufferings must be seen in their eschatological context of filling God’s three cups: the Cup of Sin, holding the sins of the oppressors of God’s faithful, the Cup of Suffering, the cup holding the blood of God’s faithful, and the Cup of Wrath, the Cup to be poured out when the Cups of Suffering and Sin were full. The filling of these Cups was predicted to be complete in Jesus’ generation (Matthew 23:36; I Thessalonians 2:15f; Revelation 6:9-11; 17:6f).

The preaching of the Gospel to the Jews first was also necessary because as Terry states:

“According to Mark 13, it was necessary for the gospel to be thus preached before the end, and we may reasonably look for some intimation touching the divine order of the world. In the passing away of an old order, and the introduction of a new, we do not find a sudden and unlooked-for transition. God does not remove a system that has had a long career of usefulness until He has effectually provided and prepared the way for something better. It was necessary that the Gospel of Christ and the new teachings of His kingdom should be spread abroad beyond Jerusalem, and be



immovably established in the civilized world, before the old system and worship which centered in the temple of Judaism were utterly broken down” (Apocalypics, 233+).

God’s promises to Israel were “irrevocable” (Romans 11:29). His relationship with them could not be terminated until the Law had fully accomplished His purposes, and was fulfilled (Matthew 5:17-18; Galatians 3:19-29). The amillennialist cuts short God’s relationship with Israel before He had fulfilled His promises to her. How could He reject Israel at the Cross, before He had even fulfilled, on Pentecost, His promise to Israel to establish the kingdom? For a generation the church proclaimed the fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel in Christ. That message was rejected, but God was faithful. The fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 was the visible demonstration that God had kept His promises, and there was no longer any need for the old “City of God.”

### **3 POSTMILLENNIALISM**

Unlike premillennialism and amillennialism, postmillennialists see the fall of Jerusalem as a significant event. Gentry for instance, spends considerable time in his definitive apology for postmillennialism, setting forth the fall of Jerusalem as a major prophetic theme. He agrees that Babylon is Jerusalem.

Authors such as DeMar and Chilton have written excellent works, on Matthew 24 and Revelation for instance, that posit the fall of Jerusalem as the most significant Covenantal action in history. Yet, the postmillennialist also believes, “Even rebellious Israel will be re-incorporated into the kingdom (Acts 1:6; Romans 11)” (Gentry, Dominion, 491). This is to be after the worldwide proclamation of the gospel.

The postmillennialist is hard pressed to justify a distinctive role for Israel in the future. Balyeat seeks to justify this by positing two great commissions in the New Testament. He believes that the conversion of Israel will be in response to a future worldwide proclamation. He

insists, in opposition to millennialism, that the great commission of Matthew 24:14 was fulfilled before AD 70, “We have the inerrant testimony of scripture that it was fulfilled” (Babylon, 217). Yet, he insists that the commission of Matthew 28:18f, “is a much more comprehensive mission than that expressed in Matthew 24:14” (ibid).

This argument is untenable. Every Greek word used by the inspired writers to describe the “world” that was predicted to be evangelized is used by other inspired writers to say the “world” had been evangelized. This includes the words used by Jesus in Matthew 28:18f. Thus, any future conversion of Israel based upon a projected second commission is false.

Further, postmillennialists use Romans 11 to prove a yet future glory for Israel. However, Revelation shows that the fulfillment of Israel’s promises was at hand.

Paul says Israel’s salvation would come when, “the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” (Romans 11:25). This fullness is not a numeric fullness, but a state of blessedness as evidenced by the way Paul uses the term in the rest of the chapter (v.12). See also Ephesians 4:8-13.

Second, Paul taught in this same context that God’s work of saving Israel was to be accomplished very soon, “For he will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth” (Romans 9:28.)

Third, our special study on Paul has shown that the apostle was personally responsible for bringing in “the fullness of the Gentiles.” He was the one with the “stewardship” for the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:2f) and served as a priest to offer the Gentiles to God (Romans 15:16f). To look centuries beyond Paul’s ministry for the fullness of the Gentiles, and thus the salvation of Israel, is to deny Paul’s emphatic words concerning his personal and pivotal role in God’s Scheme. The “short work” of Romans 9:28 is defined by the ministry of Paul.

The postmillennialist must candidly confront this imminence. The postmillennialist is (normally) insistent that the millennialist

honor the chronological constraints of scripture, although as I write this book, there are some interesting developments. Seriah says, “I acknowledge that most of the passages in the New Testament that are prophetic refer to the coming of Christ against the apostate Jews in the first century (specifically the passages that have ‘near’ time references). We do not, however, agree that a ‘near’ time reference can be inserted into every prophetic passage in the N. T.” So, for Seriah, the time element of one prophecy cannot be “imported” into another passage. See my in-depth response to Seriah in my book *The Elements Shall Melt With Fervent Heat*.

Now certainly, one must be cautious in applying one text to another. However, the idea of *analogia scriptura*, comparing scripture with scripture, is valid, and practiced by Seriah. The only reason that he objects to the application of time statements from one text, to other passages, is because he realizes that if the time statement of 1 Peter 4:7 applies to 1 Thessalonians 4, his futurism is falsified. So, someone that normally emphasizes the time statements of scripture is forced to avoid those same statements to maintain his futurism. The same is true of Mathison.

Keith Mathison is editor of the *When Shall These Things Be?*, a work cited herein. When not seeking to refute Covenant Eschatology, Mathison is emphatic about what “at hand” means, “Clearly, then, Jesus expected His pronouncement of impending judgment to be fulfilled within forty years.” (Hope, 112). He has even stronger language, “Those interpretations of the Olivet Discourse which set its fulfillment as either partially or totally future are forced to ignore its context in Matthew, ignore the similar language of judgment in the Prophets, and distort the words of Christ in 24:34. Jesus said that ‘all’ (not some) of the signs mentioned in verses 4-33 would take place before that generation (not some future generation passed away.)”

When one reads Mathison’s writings against millennialism, there is no ambiguity, no uncertainty, about the meaning of the language of imminence. However, in his comments in *When*, all of a sudden,

Mathison changes his tune. His references to the at hand time statements turn from “clearly,” “unmistakable,” and “undeniable,” to “it is possible,” “some suggest,” and, “some believe.” Instead of telling his readers that he has no doubt about the meaning of “near,” “soon,” “quickly” and “shortly,” Mathison leaves the impression that these time statements are, after all, a bit nebulous, and uncertain.

These commentators need to inform their readers about their true convictions. The millennialists are waiting with bated breath, I am sure, to know if Mathison now accepts their argument that, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” does not demand a first century fulfillment after all.

If the postmillennialists are going to try to convince Bible students to take the language of the Bible seriously, they are going to have to stop giving out such uncertain, self-contradictory statements. Gentry for instance, when dealing with Revelation, affirms that the time statements preclude a futuristic application. He argues, “One of the most helpful interpretive clues in Revelation is at the same time both one of the most generally overlooked among lay students of scripture and one of the most radically reinterpreted by evangelical scholars. This clue is the contemporary expectation of the author regarding the fulfillment of the prophecies. John clearly expects the soon fulfillment of his prophecy.”

Gentry responds to those who claim that the time statements in Revelation must be seen “as a measure of God’s time, not man’s.” He says that this argument, “is destroyed by the very fact that John repeats and varies his terms as if to dispel any confusion” (Beast, 27). So, one cannot interpret Revelation as futuristic because God said its fulfillment was near. He even says that, “the most radically reinterpreted key to understanding Revelation,” is the temporal indicators of its soon fulfillment. We could hardly agree more.

However, in a disconcerting change of theology, Gentry tries to posit the Day of the Lord in 2 Peter 3 in the distant future, because, “The mockers scoff at the promised second advent of Christ due to the long wait associated with it (2 Peter 3:3-4) ...Peter even suggests

that it might be thousands of years before Christ's return, in that delay is based on God's time rather than man's" (Dominion, 303).

So, on the one hand, the time statements are "radically reinterpreted" by the scholars in attempting to avoid the first century application of Revelation, but then, Gentry "radically reinterprets" the language of 2 Peter 3, and other texts, to avoid the first century application.

For instance, the time constraint of Romans 9, and Paul's ministry, control the text of Romans 11, a prophecy that Gentry posits in our future, at the end of the Christian age. The issue is the same in both texts—the salvation of Israel. Thus, whatever Romans 11 is discussing, it cannot be future to us, or the normal postmillennial emphasis on time statements is negated.

This imminence also refutes the postmillennialist in regard to the millennium, as we have seen. While the coming of the Lord is clearly "postmillennial" in Revelation, the coming of the Lord was at hand. If the postmillennialist is going to emphasize imminence in other contexts, he must honor it in this matter. This means that the millennium had already begun—as admitted by the postmillennialist—but was about to be consummated by the imminent parousia of Jesus. If the postmillennial parousia was at hand in the first century, then modern postmillennialism is surely untenable.

The Bible is plain that Israel's salvation would come when Israel was judged at the coming of the Lord (Isaiah 2-4; 27; 51-66; Daniel 12; Joel 2-3; Zechariah 10-12, etc.). In each of these passages, the coming under consideration is the AD 70 parousia of Jesus.

Romans 11:26-27 places Israel's salvation at the coming of the Lord. For the postmillennialist, to justify his futuristic interpretation of Romans 11, he must demonstrate that Israel had two salvations, at two different comings of the Lord, separated by millennia, one salvation associated with judgment, another not. In Romans 11, Paul quotes from Isaiah 27, 59 and Jeremiah 31 in his anticipation of Israel's salvation. Significantly, Isaiah 27 and 59 posit Israel's

salvation coming through judgment. Revelation echoes Isaiah 63, in chapter 19, in its anticipation of Christ's judgment against Babylon. If Revelation foretold a different salvation/judgment from what Paul taught in Romans 11 why does John draw from the same section of Isaiah?

Finally, the postmillennialist places great emphasis on the parables of Matthew 13. It is insisted that these parables teach the progressive success of the church until the harvest (Matthew 13:39f) at "the end of the world." Jesus said the time of the harvest at his parousia would be the fulfillment of Daniel 12:3 (Matthew 13:43) but Daniel 12:7 placed the fulfillment of Daniel's prediction at the time when, "the power of the holy people has been completely shattered." This means the time of harvest was at the end of the Old Covenant age in AD 70 and is not to be at the end of the Christian age.

In Revelation, the harvest occurs with the fall of Babylon, and was near. The correspondence between Matthew 13 and Revelation is precise as we have seen. Daniel and Jesus placed the time of the harvest at the end of Old Covenant Israel. The postmillennial attempt to place the harvest, and thus eschatology, in the future, based on the interpretation of Matthew 13 is therefore, misguided.

In summary then, the identification of Babylon as Jerusalem demands that we rethink traditional concepts of eschatology. As just seen, the various paradigms tend to either ignore the fall of Jerusalem, or relegate it to secondary status. This simply is un-Biblical.

The story of the fall of Babylon is the story of the perfection of God's Scheme of Redemption. To introduce Rome, the Catholic Church, apostate Christianity, the "one world-religion," a restored literal Babylon, America, or any other entity as the central player in the book of Revelation is inconsistent with the rest of the Bible story. It violates the chronological parameters established by the book of Revelation. It is inconsistent with the distinctively covenantal language of the Apocalypse. It is a rejection of the express statements of the book itself. Revelation and the rest of the Biblical record is clear, Babylon, that Great City, the Mother of Harlots, was Jerusalem

of the first century.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we provide a visual recapitulation of what we have documented in this book. The chart lists on the left what scripture says about Jerusalem. On the right is what John says about Babylon.

### JERUSALEM IN THE O. T., GOSPELS AND EPISTLES BABYLON

Her destruction would settle the issue of Sonship, Jew- v- Christian  
Her destruction would settle the issue of Sonship, Jew- v- Christian  
Called Sodom and harlot because of sin  
Called Sodom and harlot because of sin  
Was the persecutor of saints  
Was the persecutor of saints  
Killed the prophets, Jesus and the apostles.  
Killed the prophets, Jesus and the apostles.  
Guilty of all the blood shed on the earth  
Guilty of all the blood shed on the earth  
Persecution of the saints filled her cup of sin  
Persecution of the saints filled her cup of sin  
Destruction after the completion of the world mission  
Destruction after completion of the world mission  
Destruction would consummate God's wrath  
Destruction would consummate God's wrath  
Marriage of the Son after destruction  
Marriage of the Son after destruction  
Mystery of God completed at destruction  
Mystery of God completed at destruction  
New heavens and earth after destruction  
New heavens and earth after destruction  
New Jerusalem after destruction  
New Jerusalem after destruction  
River of Life opened after destruction  
River of Life opened after destruction  
Book of Life opened after destruction  
Book of Life opened after destruction  
New tabernacle established at destruction  
New tabernacle established at destruction  
Resurrection at destruction  
Resurrection at destruction  
Destruction leads to universal worship  
Destruction leads to universal worship  
Destruction foretold by the Prophets of old  
Destruction foretold by the Prophets of old  
Destruction imminent in the first century  
Destruction imminent in the first century

How is it possible to ignore such harmony? The testimony on the left, concerning Jerusalem, is widely recognized to be true. How can it be maintained that Babylon of Revelation is not Jerusalem, when every element that identifies Jerusalem is attached to Babylon? To maintain the futurist interpretation and late date for Revelation, each of the parallels above would have to be negated.. We have examined the chief objections to our position, and found them lacking in logic, the text, and history.

We have not examined all of the evidence that supports the view that Babylon was first century Jerusalem. However, the evidence tendered provides compelling evidence that powerfully supports the contention that Babylon of Revelation was first century Jerusalem.

The wonderful thing about Covenant Eschatology is that it removes fear from our future. Babylon has fallen. The Great Tribulation, the Beast, and all of the fearsome events foretold by John, have come and gone, conquered by Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The modern prognosticators who keep “stirring the pot” with dire predictions of the imminent future are doing the church, and the world, a great disservice. John did not predict the end of time.

Those who belong to Christ dwell in His presence in His New Covenant world. In Him, all things have become new. The Scheme of Redemption is complete. Truly “The Spirit and the Bride say ‘Come.’” We urge the reader to lay aside the fear and doubt inherent in the futuristic interpretation of Revelation, and accept the truth of Realized Salvation in Christ.



## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>WHO IS THIS BABYLON?</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>BABYLON AND MATTHEW 24</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>THESE THINGS MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>REVELATION 1:1-3</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM:</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>EVEN THOSE WHO PIERCED HIM</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>REVELATION 1:7.</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>YOU HAVE TRIED THOSE WHO SAY THEY</b>	
	<b>ARE APOSTLES, AND HAVE FOUND THEM TO</b>	
	<b>BE LIARS</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>REVELATION 2:1</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>DID SMYRNA EXIST AT AN EARLY DATE?</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>REVELATION 2:9</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF</b>	
	<b>GOD</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>REVELATION 3:9-10</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>THE FIERY TRIAL THAT IS ABOUT TO</b>	
	<b>COME</b>	<b>25</b>
	<b>REVELATION 3:10</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>THE SEALED BOOK OPENED</b>	<b>27</b>
	<b>REVELATION 5:1-4</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>DO NOT WEEP. BEHOLD, THE LION</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, THE ROOT OF DAVID,</b>	
	<b>HAS PREVAILED TO OPEN THE SCROLL.</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>REVELATION 5:5</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>JOHN THE IMMERSER AND THE GREAT</b>	<b>31</b>
	<b>DAY OF THE LORD</b>	<b>31</b>
	<b>REVELATION 6:12-17</b>	<b>31</b>
	<b>THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD</b>	<b>34</b>
	<b>DEFINING THE DAY OF THE LORD</b>	<b>36</b>

<b>13</b>	<b>THE SEALS AND GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL</b>	<b>40</b>
	<b>REVELATION 6</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>THE GREAT TRIBULATION</b>	<b>42</b>
	<b>REVELATION 7</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>AND THE SECOND EXODUS MOTIF</b>	<b>45</b>
	<b>REVELATION 7</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS</b>	
	<b>REVELATION 8</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>THEN OUT OF THE SMOKE LOCUSTS CAME UPON THE EARTH</b>	<b>54</b>
	<b>REVELATION 9:3</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>THEY WILL SEEK DEATH AND WILL NOT FIND IT</b>	<b>55</b>
	<b>REVELATION 9:6</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>THERE SHALL BE NO MORE DELAY</b>	<b>56</b>
	<b>REVELATION 10:6</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>THE COMPLETION OF THE MYSTRY</b>	<b>58</b>
	<b>REVELATION 10:7</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE TREADING DOWN OF THE CITY</b>	<b>59</b>
	<b>REVELATION 11:2</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>THE TIME, TIMES AND HALF TIME</b>	<b>61</b>
	<b>THE TREADING OF THE CITY FOR 1260 DAYS;</b>	
	<b>THE TWO WITNESSES TESTIFY FOR 42 MONTHS</b>	<b>61</b>
	<b>REVELATION 11:2-3</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>BABYLON: THAT GREAT CITY</b>	<b>65</b>
	<b>REVELATION 11:8</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE RESURRECTION</b>	<b>72</b>
	<b>REVELATION 11 AND DANIEL 12</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>THE WOMAN AND HER SON</b>	<b>73</b>
	<b>REVELATION 12</b>	<b>73</b>

<b>26</b>	<b>THE LAMB ON ZION</b>	<b>76</b>
	<b>REVELATION 14:1</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>THE 144,000</b>	<b>78</b>
	<b>REVELATION 14</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE WORLD MISSION</b>	<b>84</b>
	<b>REVELATION 14:6</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE TIME OF HARVEST</b>	<b>84</b>
	<b>REVELATION 14:14-20</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE FLOWING OF THE BLOOD</b>	<b>99</b>
	<b>REVELATION 14:20</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>MORE ON BABYLON AND THE EXODUS MOTIF</b>	<b>101</b>
	<b>REVELATION 15:1-5</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>32</b>	<b>BABYLON, CONSUMMATION OF VENGEANCE, AND ENTRANCE INTO THE MOST HOLY PLACE</b>	<b>103</b>
	<b>REVELATION 15:8</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>33</b>	<b>BABYLON: PERSECUTOR OF PROPHETS</b>	<b>105</b>
	<b>REVELATION 16:6</b>	<b>105</b>
	<b>HE WILL AVENGE THEM SPEEDILY.</b>	<b>109</b>
	<b>LUKE 17-18</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>34</b>	<b>THE COMING WAR</b>	<b>113</b>
	<b>ARMAGEDDON, “THE WAR” OF THE GREAT DAY OF GOD</b>	<b>113</b>
	<b>REVELATION 16:14</b>	<b>113</b>
	<b>ARMAGEDDON: THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>35</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE</b>	<b>117</b>
	<b>REVELATION 16:18</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>36</b>	<b>BABYLON DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS</b>	<b>118</b>
	<b>REVELATION 16:19</b>	<b>118</b>

<b>37</b>	<b>BABYLON “REMEMBERED BEFORE GOD”</b>	<b>119</b>
	<b>REVELATION 16:19</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>38</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT</b>	<b>123</b>
	<b>REVELATION 16:21</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>39</b>	<b>BABYLON, AND EZEKIEL 16</b>	<b>124</b>
	<b>REVELATION 17</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>40</b>	<b>BABYLON THE HARLOT</b>	<b>125</b>
	<b>REVELATION 17:1</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>41</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE BLOOD OF</b>	
	<b>THE SAINTS</b>	<b>127</b>
	<b>REVELATION 17:4</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>42</b>	<b>BABYLON’S JUDGMENT WHEN HER CUP</b>	<b>132</b>
	<b>WAS FULL</b>	<b>132</b>
	<b>REVELATION 17:4</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>43</b>	<b>THE HARLOT AND HER CLOTHES</b>	<b>134</b>
	<b>REVELATION 17:4</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>44</b>	<b>A PARTNERSHIP GONE SOUR</b>	<b>137</b>
	<b>REVELATION 17:10</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>45</b>	<b>BABYLON THE HABITATION OF DEMONS</b>	<b>142</b>
	<b>REVELATION 18:2</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>46</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE SHEDDING OF</b>	<b>143</b>
	<b>ALL THE BLOOD ON THE EARTH</b>	<b>143</b>
	<b>REVELATION 18:20, 24</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>47</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE BRIDE</b>	<b>144</b>
	<b>REVELATION 19:7</b>	<b>144</b>
	<b>THE WEDDING AS THE HOPE OF ISRAEL</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>48</b>	<b>BABYLON, THE BOOK OF JOHN, AND</b>	<b>163</b>
	<b>SIGNS OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST</b>	<b>163</b>
	<b>REVELATION 19</b>	<b>163</b>
	<b>IN THE GLORY OF THE FATHER</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>49</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE BOOK OF LIFE</b>	<b>165</b>
	<b>REVELATION 20</b>	<b>165</b>

<b>50</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE OPENING OF THE BOOKS</b>	<b>170 170</b>
<b>51</b>	<b>THE NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH THE PROMISE MADE TO ISRAEL. REVELATION 21:1</b>	<b>172 172 172</b>
<b>52</b>	<b>THE NEW JERUSALEM REVELATION 21:2</b>	<b>177 177</b>
<b>53</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE NEW TABERNACLE REVELATION 21:3</b>	<b>182 182</b>
<b>54</b>	<b>THE NEW JERUSALEM AND THE GLORY OF GOD REVELATION 21:11 JESUS AS THE SON OF MAN</b>	<b>187 187 187 188</b>
<b>55</b>	<b>BABYLON AND THE RIVER OF LIFE REVELATION 22:1 ISRAEL'S HOPE AND THE RIVER OF LIFE THE RIVER AND THE FALL OF JERUSALEM ZECHARIAH 14, ZECHARIAH 14 REVELATION</b>	<b>193 193 193 194 194 195</b>
<b>56</b>	<b>REVELATION AND THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS REVELATION 21-22 THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS: THE HOPE OF ISRAEL THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL RESTORATION IN THE PROPHETS RESTORATION AND THE PASSING OF THE OLD COVENANT RESTORATION AND THE PAROUSIA SUMMARY</b>	<b>196 196 196 197 197 198 199 201 201 202 204</b>
<b>57</b>	<b>SPECIAL STUDY BABYLON'S FALL WAS AT HAND A FORESHORTENED PERSPECTIVE:</b>	<b>205 205 207</b>

OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “ONE DAY IS WITH THE LORD AS A THOUSAND YEARS, AND A THOUSAND YEARS AS A DAY”	207
B “SURELY” MEANS MAYBE.	208
C “QUICKLY” MEANS CERTAINTY	210
D SHORTLY MEANS RAPIDLY, NOT SOON	212
E INITIATION OF FULFILLMENT NOT CONSUMMATION	215
G IMMINENT BUT NOT NEAR.	216
H BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR KNOWS NO MAN MATTHEW 24:36	218
I JESUS SAID THAT HIS COMING IN AD 70 WAS NEAR, BUT THAT HIS SECOND COMING WOULD NOT BE FOR A “LONG TIME.”	220
A THE DIFFERENT WAYS IMMINENCE IS EXPRESSED	220
B IMMINENCE IN RELATIONSHIP TO KNOWN EVENTS	224
C IMMINENCE VERSUS PROTRACTION	225
D CONSUMMATION VERSUS INITIATION	231
E DEFINITIONS OF WORDS	232
F CORRELATION WITH OTHER TEXTS	233
G TIME MEANS TIME.	236
LET THE WICKED REMAIN WICKED LUKE 21 AND THE TIME STATEMENTS OF REVELATION	240
TIME STATEMENTS AND THE TEST OF A PROPHET	241
58 SPECIAL STUDY	245
PAUL AND THE APOCALYPSE	246
THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL	247
THE RESURRECTION	248
THE NEW CREATION	251
THE NEW JERUSALEM	252

<b>GALATIANS 4:21 REVELATION</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>GALATIANS 4 HEBREWS 12</b>	<b>257</b>
<b>PAUL, THE WORLD MISSION</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>AND REVELATION</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>REVELATION, PAUL AND THE MYSTERY OF GOD</b>	<b>264</b>
<b>PAUL'S PIVOTAL ROLE IN THE MYSTERY</b>	<b>267</b>
<b>THE MYSTERY</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>AND THE PASSING OF JERUSALEM</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>277</b>
<b>WHAT IS LACKING</b>	<b>279</b>
<b>IN THE AFFLICTIONS OF CHRIST</b>	<b>279</b>
<b>PAUL'S MINISTRY AND THE SONG OF MOSES</b>	<b>282</b>
<b>59 SPECIAL STUDY:</b>	<b>286</b>
<b>LAMENTATIONS AND REVELATION</b>	<b>286</b>
<b>“Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?”</b>	<b>286</b>
<b>60 SPECIAL STUDY</b>	<b>293</b>
<b>SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED</b>	<b>293</b>
<b>A WHAT ABOUT IRANAEUS ?</b>	<b>294</b>
<b>B BABYLON THAT SITS ON MANY WATERS, 17:1</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>C BABYLON ON SEVEN HILLS IS ROME, 17:9</b>	<b>297</b>
<b>D BABYLON DESTROYED BY THE BEAST</b>	<b>298</b>
<b>REVELATION 17:16</b>	<b>298</b>
<b>REVELATION 17:18</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>F BABYLON AND THE MERCHANTS</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>OF THE SEA</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>REVELATION 18:9</b>	<b>303</b>
<b>G JERUSALEM AND THE CITIES OF</b>	
<b>THE NATIONS</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>REVELATION 16:19</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>H REVELATION 20</b>	<b>307</b>
<b>I ISRAEL, THE RESURRECTION AND</b>	<b>308</b>
<b>THE MILLENNIUM</b>	<b>308</b>
<b>J BUT, WASN'T ROME CALLED BABYLON ?</b>	<b>310</b>

<b>61</b>	<b>PRETERISM AND THE CHARGE</b>	<b>313</b>
	<b>OF ANTI-SEMITISM</b>	<b>313</b>
	<b>ANTI-SEMITISM AND REPLACEMENT</b>	
	<b>THEOLOGY</b>	<b>318</b>
	<b>WHAT PRETERIST REALLY BELIVE</b>	<b>324</b>
	<b>JUST FOR THE RECORD</b>	<b>324</b>
<b>62</b>	<b>SPECIAL STUDY:</b>	<b>329</b>
	<b>DID THE MILLENNIUM BEGIN OR END IN AD 70?</b>	<b>330</b>
	<b>DOES THE BIBLE TEACH A FORTY YEAR</b>	
	<b>MILLENNIUM?</b>	<b>330</b>
	<b>THE ELEMENTS OF THE MILLENNIUM</b>	<b>331</b>
	<b>ARE THE ELEMENTS OF THE FORTY YEARS</b>	<b>331</b>
	<b>FROM JESUS' MINISTRY TO AD 70</b>	<b>331</b>
	<b>NOTICE SOME OF THE FAVTS BASED ON THESE</b>	
	<b>COMPARUSINS</b>	<b>334</b>
	<b>1 The living were resurrected,</b>	<b>334</b>
	<b>2 Satan was bound for the millennium.</b>	<b>335</b>
	<b>3 The living and the dead had been enthroned</b>	<b>336</b>
	<b>with Christ "in the heavenlies" (Ephesians 2:1-6).</b>	<b>336</b>
	<b>Acts 3:21:</b>	<b>341</b>
	<b>4 The existence of the kingdom.</b>	<b>342</b>
	<b>5 The Martyred Saints Serve as Priests to God,</b>	<b>343</b>
	<b>6 &amp; 7 The martyrs were told</b>	<b>345</b>
	<b>8 The final vindication of the martyrs</b>	<b>348</b>
	<b>9 The passing of the old heaven and earth</b>	<b>353</b>
	<b>10 Revelation 19:7 says, "The marriage of the Lamb</b>	<b>354</b>
	<b>has come."</b>	<b>355</b>
	<b>WHEN THE 1000 YEARS ARE OVER</b>	<b>357</b>
	<b>1 Satan would be released at the end of the</b>	
	<b>millennium.</b>	<b>358</b>
	<b>2 War with the saints would come</b>	<b>358</b>
	<b>3 The destruction of Satan</b>	<b>358</b>
	<b>4 The resurrection</b>	<b>358</b>



5	Opening of the books	358
	THE MILLENNIUM AND ISRAEL'S FESTAL CALENDAR THE MILLENNIUM AND POST MILLENNIAL PROBLEMS	362
	AND THERE SHALL BE NO MORE CURSE Revelation 22:3	365
	SUMMARY OF OUR MILLENNIUM STUDY	374
	1 This view demands the ability to prove	374
	2 It demands that God currently	374
	3 Do those who take this view espouse	375
	4 Those who take this view must,	375
	5 This view likewise raises the issue of circumcision	375
	6 This view demands that Israel's "last days"	375
	7 Acts 3 posits the "restoration of all things"	375
	8 If 1948 was the fulfillment of God's promises	376
	9 This view demands that Romans 11:25	376
	10 Jesus was emphatic: The events of AD 70	376
63	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JERUSALEM'S FALL THE IDENTITY OF BABYLON IS THE KEY TO BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY. THE DEFEAT OF DEATH, THE JUDGMENT AND THE NEW CREATION ALL COME AS A RESULT OF HER FALL.	377
64	IMPLICATIONS FOR TRADITIONAL VIEWS	381
	1 PREMILLENNIALISM	382
	2 AMILLENNIALISM	382
	3 POSTMILLENNIALISM	385
	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	391
	JERUSALEM IN THE O. T., GOSPELS AND EPISTLES	391
	BABYLON	391