

An Eschatological Commentary

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Introduction

This essay outlines a view of eschatology that I believe is most consistent with what the Scriptures teach. When I first became a believer, I learned the Dispensational eschatological view, and initially didn't know any different views existed. I became interested in speculation about the antichrist and one world government. I read books like *Prince of Darkness*¹ with fascination. I remember listening to the Bible Answer Man² host Hank Hanegraaff tell callers his views on the mark of the beast and the prophecy in MAT 24:34, “*this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place*” thinking, *what in the world is going on in this guy’s head?* I read some pre-millennialist commentary on O.T. Prophecies and just couldn't disagree more.

While I was still a dispensationalist, I came across some atheists who claimed Jesus was a false prophet due to the fact that his above mentioned prophecy in MAT 24 had failed to come to pass. They pointed out what seemed to be obvious; the sun & moon weren’t darkened, the stars didn’t fall from heaven, etc. I didn’t know how to respond with my Dispensationalist mindset. I asked a respected teacher what Jesus meant when he said “this generation.” He suggested that Jesus may have been referring to some future generation. I accepted it for the time, but I could still hear Haanagraaf telling his listeners that when Jesus said “this generation” he meant it.

At some point, certain things about other systems of interpretation seemed to make sense, and certain things about Dispensationalism seemed not to. I read several books on the subject including *Revelation: Four Views*³, *A Case for Amillennialism*⁴, *Three Views of the Millennium and Beyond*⁵, and *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*⁶. I also began sitting under the teaching of the author of one of those books, Steve Gregg⁷. When he first expounded REV 20, it was as if a light came on and the whole chapter came clearly into focus. The same held true for DAN 9.

After all this (over the course of time), I came to the conclusion that of the three main eschatological systems, Amillennialism made very good sense, Postmillennialism had some very good points but was lacking, and Dispensationalism made little sense and seemed to run counter to the teaching of Scripture at many points.

For some time, I merely thought that it didn't matter much what view a person held, and I still believe that a person can be a Dispensationalist and be a hero of the faith, but at some point I began to see that Dispensationalism can have some negative consequences. After reading the book *Whose Promised Land?*⁸ I realized more than ever that many Christians are focusing their efforts towards an unbiblical end. Then a friend recommended a book to me⁹ that was based on a system that I'd heard of, but hadn't really come face to face with. It described what has been variously called ultradispensationalism, hyperdispensationalism, or Bullingerism (for its founder). This system of theology unabashedly teaches that there are 2 separate and distinct people groups with 2 different forms of relationship with God; the Jews and the Gentiles. The entire Bible except the writings of Paul is directed to the Jews; Paul's writings are directed to Gentiles. So we Gentiles (unless you're Jewish – and what precisely determines whether you are a Jew; must you trace your lineage to the Aaronic priesthood?) don't fall under the teaching of Christ! I consider myself quite open to various interpretations, but I don't see how this can be considered anything other than heresy. 1Ti 6:3-5 seems to confirm this; “*If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ... From such withdraw yourself.*” Consider the Sermon on the Mount. Our Lord Jesus himself gave a sermon, and some feel as if his words there should not be heeded! Jesus’ teaching there whereby he broke new ground explaining what God desires of his people may be the most important words in Scripture, but in any case should at least be *as important* as any.

Although hyperdispensationalism and regular Dispensationalism are very different animals with respect to orthodoxy, I must say (as several others¹⁰ have noted) that hyperdispensationalism is consistent Dispensationalism. If there are 2 different people groups that God deals with differently you might as well not make the distinctions arbitrary. The book I read wasn't crazy; it made sense. It was wrong, but it made sense. It could easily convince any ungrounded Christian to become a “Paulstian” (only follow the teachings of Paul).

Having said that let me be clear: I'm not trying to say that regular Dispensationalism is some terrible thing; many wonderful Christians follow the system. I recently listened to a sermon recording of A.W. Tozer¹¹ wherein he said, “the nations are laid out according to the 12 tribes of Israel.” There we see the focus on the literal nation of Israel, and I

thought it very strange to hold such a belief, but Tozer is no less a giant of the faith whose sermons and writings should be recommended to every Christian. Again, Rees Howells was a Dispensationalist and I've personally read of perhaps no greater man of God²³. Dispensationalism was at its zenith during his times, though, and that is surely part of the reason he was a dispensationalist. Nonetheless, I do think that it's a good thing to understand the Scriptures as best we can even when our understanding runs counter to others whom we regard highly. I don't think the Scriptures support Dispensationalism; in fact they run counter to it. If you read through this and still think the Scriptures are best understood the way Dispensationalism describes them, fine. *"Let each be fully convinced in his own mind."* (ROM 14:5)

Why Bother?

This may not be the most important topic, but I think it's still worth the effort. Among the reasons:

- Truth. If anyone reading this prefers an opposing view because they truly believe it to be true, then it doesn't matter as much who is right or wrong. If, on the other hand, they prefer an opposing view because of the traditions of men (their church teaches it, their Bible school taught it, etc.), or because they might lose fellowship if they switched views, then this is not good.
- I have mentioned what I consider negative consequences of Dispensationalism. If Israel is not truly the focus of prophecy, then any time we spend focusing on that particular nation (giving it preferential treatment) is unprofitable. An extreme example of this is churches that bring in Jewish unbelievers, extending fellowship to those who bring no glory to Christ. More examples to follow.
 - Such emphasis detracts (to some degree) from the glory merited by Christ. The Old Testament descriptions of the kingdom are glorious; we should attribute that glory properly.
 - Some (hyperdispensationalists, e.g., John Hagee) go so far as to say that a Jew is saved by other means than the Gospel. This can hardly be anything other than heretical and essentially condones the condemnation of an ethnic group. What's more, they teach that the only portion of Scripture relevant to our time is the writings of Paul. Thus they reject the very words of Christ, who, according to Peter, had the words of eternal life. It seems that their souls might be in jeopardy.
- Scripture is limited. Each of us wishes there was more in there about any given topic. With this in mind, it is interesting that there is so much there about eschatology. It seems to merit some level of effort to understand it.

- The Biblical evidence in favor of the (essentially Amillennial) view is overwhelming, and in my opinion, very clear (unless one can't get past reading all Scripture through an alternate grid).

After watching the movie, "Waiting for Armageddon¹⁹," even after accounting for the fact that whoever made the movie was cherry-picking fairly radical views of Dispensationalism, I realized just how much this theology leads logically to a focus on war. Many people look fondly toward Armageddon and support Israel blindly. This is dangerously far afield of the kinds of things Jesus would have as his follower's focus on.

Worse, most Dispensationalists teach that a new temple will be built (see section on Ezekiel for an alternative interpretation of what sounds like a future temple). They teach that the sacrificial system will be reinstituted (the ashes of a rare red heifer are being collected, etc.). This sure seems like blasphemy. Christ's atoning work on the cross paid the penalty for sin. Anyone attempting to offer animal sacrifices to God after what Christ has done is denying the efficacy of his work.

The Purpose and Fulfillment of Israel

Israel's purpose was to be the light to the nations (DEU 4:5-6, 7:6-8, ISA 42:6). The purpose of the church is the same. Israel failed; the *true church* has succeeded. What possible reason would there be to revert to the failed methodology of using Israel (note: this is one of the themes of the book of Hebrews)? And how would this ever work unless God were to *force* allegiance of the recalcitrant members of a nation of individuals?

Israel also represents Christ in many cases. In several chapters of Isaiah, "my servant Israel" is a reference to Christ (ISA 49 for instance). In HOS 11:1 we read, "*When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son,*" yet MAT 2:15 tells us this was fulfilled when Christ came out of Egypt. Israel fulfilled = Christ = his body = the church. Note however, that prophecies that were directed to Israel that I consider to be fulfilled in the church began with the actual remnant of Israel (Jewish apostles and disciples). Shortly thereafter, the Gentiles were grafted into this olive tree (ROM 11) and the tree grew into the true, complete Israel.

Literalism

Speaking figuratively was a very common practice in Jesus' times; in our times it isn't. We should be careful not to read Scripture through our modern grid that tends much

more towards literalism. Dispensationalists accuse non-dispensationalists of having a lower regard for Scripture because they take portions non-literally (dispensationalists take some parts non-literally as well, but we'll get to that). If a given portion is *not intended to be taken literally*, however, then to take it in a manner in which it was never intended to be is to not afford it its due.

We must understand that Scripture is replete with symbolism. The fact that Dispensationalism is a late development in the history of Christianity is testament to the fact that modern culture doesn't relate to the way people of the East wrote in ancient times. The prophets are mostly occupied with symbolic writing. Dispensationalism mostly denies this, but the NT interpretation of the prophets disproves Dispensational strict literalism.

Israel was a physical kingdom in the old covenant; the church is a spiritual kingdom in the new. Everything in old/new covenant is understood this way:

Old	New
Physical Sacrifices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book of Leviticus 	Spiritual Sacrifices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" ROM 12:1</i> • <i>"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" HEB 13:15</i>
Physical Blessings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock... And the LORD will take away from you all sickness... And He will deliver their kings into your hand" DEU 7</i> 	Spiritual Blessings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" EPH 1:3</i> • <i>"... according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior" TIT 3:5-6</i>

<p>Physical Nation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you.” DEU 4:1</i> 	<p>Spiritual Nation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.” MAT 21:43</i> • <i>“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” 1PE 2:9</i> • <i>“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” PHI 3:20</i>
<p>Physical Exodus & Conquest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exodus from Egypt • <i>“Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.” JOS 1:3-4</i> • Achan & family severely judged during early stages of conquest. • The Israelites are left to wander in the desert for 40 years to (among other things) rid them of their Egyptian ways. 	<p>Spiritual Exodus & Conquest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders... He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.” MIC 7:15-19. <u>Spiritual</u> sins are cast into the sea as the <u>physical</u> Egyptians were.</i> • <i>“...who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” LUK 9:31. “Decease” in this passage means literally, exodus. Jesus is discussing a spiritual exodus that would lead his people to the spiritual Promised Land.</i> • <i>“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ACT 1:8 (conquest - see notes @ REV 19:11 for more on conquest.)</i> • Ananias & Saphyra severely judged during early stages of church. • The Israelites are in a transitional (wandering) period for about 40 years

	before the destruction of Jerusalem to (among other things) rid them of their Jewish practices (a theme of the book of Hebrews).
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While there is some literal application of things that happened to Israel in the Old Testament, the main application to our spiritual nation should be spiritual. I recently heard some sermons¹² by a preacher wherein the pastor continually made references to “our nation” (the United States) and what should be done from a public policy standpoint. We are a spiritual nation, a peculiar people, citizens of a different nation (PHI 3:20), aliens in this world (HEB 11:13). Whatever particular nation a Christian is domiciled in makes *absolutely* no difference to God, and we have no particular interest in the earthly political sphere. I happened to agree with most of this pastor's politics, but that's not primarily our concern as Christians. We are to pray for civil authorities (1TI 2:1-2), and to be salt and light to the entire culture infusing it with God's ways, but nowhere are we told to do that physically through force of law.

Some Christians go even further and get heavily involved in the politics of Israel believing them to be God's people (as a parallel category to the church). I recently got a mailer from a pastor¹³ whose sole mission is apparently to support Israel unconditionally. He claims to be in very close personal contact with current and past Israeli heads of state, thinks that he and those leaders follow the same God even though they reject Christ, and wrote a book opposing Jimmy Carter's attempt at a peace process in the Middle East. I'm no Jimmy Carter fan, but I can't fathom a Christian making the support of a foreign government one's mission in life.

When I was a Dispensationalist, I had this idea that the world's focus was on Israel. This seemed to be true when I was following the theology in the late 90s. After about 2001, Israel has had much less news attention. But perhaps it's because I'm not always looking for it?

I also recently listened to some sermons¹⁴ by a preacher who was teaching something closer to law classes and U.S. public policy than Biblical exposition. In a sermon about the doctrine of “interposition” he went back and forth between what Jewish leaders did in the Old Testament and what pastors did during the American Revolution on the assumption that they are equivalent. The doctrine of interposition apparently teaches that a leader chosen by the church is a spiritual magistrate and has the duty to usurp the powers of civil authorities when they counter God's laws. The sermon began by reading the narrative of Phinehas who speared two lovers to death when Moses or his

underlings should have (NUM 25:6-8). Based on all this, I don't see how this preacher could disapprove of a modern Christian leader killing abortion doctors.

So you see that the way we view Scripture relative to strict literalism vs. non-literalism can make a *big* difference.

Difficulties with Dispensationalism

If the reader is unaware of the eschatological distinctives of Dispensationalism, here they are⁴²:

- A strictly literal interpretation of Scripture.
- As such Israel is seen as a literal nation; the promises made to Israel will be fulfilled literally in the future. Israelites are still God's chosen people, but the plan for them in God's time clock is essentially on hold now.
- Jesus intended for Israel to fully accept him at his first coming, but since they didn't, they were put on hold and the church is sort of inserted as a parenthesis in God's timeline. The parenthesis will terminate at the rapture (see order of end-time events below).
- The church and Israel are 2 separate groups treated differently by God in different "dispensations," or distinct time periods in which God deals with his people. There are other dispensations, but they are beyond the scope of this treatise.
- Most Biblical prophecy (including all of Revelation beyond chapter 3) has yet to be fulfilled.
- The order of end-time events will be:
 - The rapture: Jesus comes to take believers (those already dead are resurrected) to heaven.
 - Seven year tribulation: a terrible time for those left behind. The bulk of Revelation prophesies this time.
 - Second coming of Christ:
 - The battle of Armageddon occurs.
 - Christ wins the battle revealing himself to the remaining Israelites.
 - Christ comes to the earth to establish his kingdom.
 - The saints previously raptured accompany him back to earth.
 - Nations (as opposed to individuals) are judged as to their place in the next dispensation.
 - Satan is bound for a time.
 - Millenium: 1000 year period (as mentioned in REV 20) where Christ reigns physically on earth. The saints who accompanied Christ rule with

him and live with regular mortals. This time will fulfill the prophecies to Israel and another temple will be built.

- Final Rebellion of Satan after he is loosed: as mentioned in REV 20. Christ destroys Satan.
- Final Judgment. The unjust are resurrected here.

The major difficulties with Dispensationalism will be shown in the commentary alongside the Scriptures in the next major section, but following are some over-arching points.

- **Gap:** The flow of prophecy must always be broken by a huge time gap (of which we're living in now) that dispensationalists discovered (which gap wasn't really discovered until recent church history). The commentary will show a different and (I think) much more plausible interpretation. See especially Daniel 9.
- **Revived Roman Empire:** Rather than simply interpreting Rome as what it was and letting it fall in naturally where it's mentioned in prophecy, there has to be a revived (future) Roman Empire. Applies to much of Revelation, but see also Daniel 9.
- **Future Warfare Fought Using Ancient Methods:** Dispensationalism must explain why several putative future prophecies describe warfare using ancient methods. This is often handled by the ridiculous explanation that the layout of the land in the valley of Megiddo or somewhere is too difficult for modern (or even semi-modern) means.
- **Continuous Re-identification of Biblical References:** Dispensationalism continues to assert that this or that group is the reincarnation of the 10 horned beast of Daniel or the invaders of Israel. First it was some group before the League of Nations, then it was the League of Nations, then it was the European Union, etc. The same applies for Gog/Magog of Ezekiel. First it was Soviet Union, then after it fell, it moved to Islamic nations.
- **Elevation of Ethnicity:** Dispensationalism says that God regards members of the Jewish line higher than others (at least in different dispensations he does). Problems with this view are mentioned in multiple places herein but suffice to say here that this notion shattered by Paul in (especially) ROM 2 (see notes on ROM). God's relationship with his people is not presently race-based *nor has it ever been*.
- **Literalism:** As mentioned in the previous section, Dispensationalism adheres to a strict literalistic interpretation of Scripture. But actually, it's not entirely consistent, and selectively chooses which things to take literally. Most Dispensationalists, for instance, wouldn't take Jesus' statements about non-aggression literally enough to forbid fighting in war, or his statements about not taking oaths literally, but the early Christian church did²⁶. To demonstrate the frequent use of non-literalism in Scripture (something that was a common form of communication in Jesus' day), consider these samples. Note that the first nine (and one further down) come from the gospel of John. One of the themes of this gospel is people incorrectly taking Jesus

literally which harkens 1CO 2:14: *"the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God ... because they are spiritually discerned."*

- Jesus said, *"I am the door."*
- Jesus said, *"I am the vine."*
- Jesus said, *"destroy this temple and I will raise it up again."* His listeners incorrectly understood him literally.
- Jesus told Nicodemus *"you must be born again,"* Nicodemus incorrectly understood him literally.
- Jesus told the woman at the well he had water which, when drunk, would permanently quench thirst. She incorrectly understood him literally.
- When his disciples returned with food while Jesus was talking with the woman at the well and Jesus told them that he had food that they didn't know about, they incorrectly understood him literally.
- When Jesus said he had bread that would permanently sate their hunger, the people incorrectly understood him literally.
- Jesus told the disciples to beware of the "leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." They thought he was referring to the fact that they hadn't any bread left. Jesus rebuked them, *"How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? — but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees."* MAT 16:11-12.
- Jesus said, *"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* The Pharisees incorrectly thought that he was speaking of literal slavery, not slavery to sin.
- Jesus said, *"If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out..."* Did he literally intend for people to pluck out their eyeballs? Many people have actually mutilated themselves!
- Jesus said, *"When you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing"* (MAT 6:3). Your hands don't actually know anything nor have discussions.
- Jesus *"Lazarus sleeps."* His disciples thought he meant literal sleep, but he really meant Lazarus was dead.
- Jesus said, *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh"* (JOH 6:51). Catholic beliefs aside (their interpretation of this verse is prima facie nonsense); he is not referring to his literal flesh.
 - Similarly, when Jesus said, *"this is my body,"* Catholics take it literally. Jesus based this statement on what the Jews already said during passover, *"This is the bread of affliction, which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt."* Jesus obviously didn't mean the bread he was holding was literally his body any

more than the Jews meant that the bread they were holding was the actual bread eaten hundreds of years earlier. Some Jewish mystics did believe that, but it's facile.

- David says the same thing here: *"Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the Lord. And he said, "Far be it from me, O Lord, that I should do this! Is this not the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?"* 2SA 23:15-17. Obviously, he means, "does this not represent the blood?"
- ZEC 13:3: *"It shall come to pass that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, 'You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the LORD.' And his father and mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies."* In the future, Godly parents will run their false prophet children through with the sword? I think not.
- MAL 4:5: *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD."* Jesus informs us that John the Baptist fulfilled this prophecy (but not literally), *"For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come."* (MAT 11:13-14, also MAT 17:12-13). Note that the Levites incorrectly took this prophecy literally. They asked John the Baptist if he was Elijah and he said he was not (JOH 1:21). John recognized that they were asking if he was literally Elijah (this is the only way to reconcile the words of Jesus and John).
- ACT 2:17: *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh..."* The Spirit wasn't poured out on every human that day. Rather it was poured out on a wide sampling of them rather than a few select individuals.
- AMO 9:12 mentions *"the remnant of Edom,"* but in ACT 15:17, James, speaking during the Jerusalem Council, quotes the verse from the Septuagint version which renders the same phrase as *"the rest of mankind"* demonstrating that Amos wasn't speaking of literal Edom which no longer existed at the time of the Jerusalem Council.
- JOH 21:25: *"And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."* This is an example of non-literal hyperbole (exaggeration for effect).
- Atheists or adherents to other religions point to verses such as the following⁴⁸ to prove that Scripture teaches silly, ancient, pre-scientific views of the earth when they are obviously not intended to be taken literally:

- ISA 11:12: *"He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth."*
- JOB 9:6: *"He shakes the earth out of its place, And its pillars tremble"*
- The Scribes and Pharisees took the words of Deuteronomy literally by wearing phylacteries on their hand and/or forehead (MAT 23). They missed the point of the original instructions. Those Scriptures tell the people that they should keep his commands in their heart. They go on to mention binding them to the hand and forehead, but this is figurative (hand symbolizing what you do; forehead symbolizing how you think). Strapping a scroll to your forehead and thinking you're pleasing God is completely missing the point. I think it's a similar (not as nutty, but similar) mistake to take a similar scripture literally (REV 13 below). See notes on REV for more.
- *"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes."* DEU 6:6-8
- *"Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes."* DEU 10:6
- *"Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon... He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads..."* REV 13:11,16

Last Days

What is meant when the writers of the New Testament speak of "the last days?" As a major eschatological interpretational key, the phrase "Last days" or similar phrases is mentioned by all the major New Testament writers: John, Peter, Paul, & the writer of Hebrews. The scriptures intend this to refer to the days they were living in, not some future period as is believed by so many:

- *"...these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come," "...but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"* 1CO 10:11, HEB 9:26
- *"He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you"* 1PE 1:20

- *"has in these last days spoken to us by His Son"* HEB 1:2
- *"Little children, it is the last hour"* 1JO 2:18
- *"...all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days"* ACT 3:24

Note also:

- The proponents of the idea that "last days" speaks of a future time believe in a literal millennium, and that the rapture/tribulation happens before that thousand-year period. Thus, "last days" can't logically speak about the times approaching the millennium as they suppose because there will, according to that view, be at least a thousand years of days subsequent to those days.
- Examples frequently speak of very near times, e.g., "the last hour" indicates the very last part.
- Revelation, the consummation of the New Testament, speaks of things soon to take place. See notes there for more.

The Temple System

If prophecy speaks of a literal Israel, and many of the prophecies speak of temple worship with its attendant animal sacrifice and festivals, then we are to believe that we will go backwards to the old things that were a shadow of future fulfillment (COL 2:16-17). This may be the biggest flaw in Dispensational theology – they mandate literal fulfillment of prophecy, so all the Old Testament prophecies which seem to indicate a renewal of that form of worship must be fulfilled in the future. Yet to believe this seems blasphemous. Christ's work on the cross ended the need for that system. This is the main point of the book of Hebrews.

Kingdom Prophecies

The Jews anticipated the Kingdom of God to be a geo-political reality. That would be the way most of us would normally take the scriptures which foretold that Israel would be the *"borrower and not the lender," "the head and not the tail," "the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains... all nations shall flow to it,"* etc. The majority of Jews were quite prepared and anxious to accept a ruler who would propel them to the top and crush their oppressors (they even tried to force him into establishing just such a kingdom [see notes at JOH 6]). This was a selfish and unspiritual attitude for them to have. They didn't get their wish; Jesus and the writers of the New Testament redefined what all those prophecies spoke of in spiritual terms (at least until their ultimate fulfillment [see notes at ISA 65]). When Jesus' coming was announced, the angel said

that we would “*save his people from their sins*” (MAT 1:21); his first coming brought spiritual victory, not physical or political.

When did/will the kingdom of God become a reality? Jesus tells us:

- “*The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within (or among) you.*” LUK 17:20
- “*But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.*” MAT 12:28
- “*Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”*” MAR 1:14-15. What is fulfilled? The Old Testament prophecies about the kingdom.
- “*Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: “Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ Blessed is the kingdom of our father David That comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”*” MAR 11:9-10. The people were shouting blessings to Jesus and saying that the kingdom had come (because of “*all the mighty works they had seen*” as it reads in the parallel passage in Luke). In Luke’s version, the Pharisees told Jesus to rebuke the people for saying such things, but Jesus in turn rebuked them, “*I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out*” thus affirming their words – the kingdom had come.

Was it somehow only present when Jesus was actually here on earth? No Paul tells us that we are in it, and Isaiah prophesied it that way as well:

- “*He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*” COL 1:13-14
- “*For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever.*” ISA 9:6-7. From the time of Christ on earth forward: that’s when he reigns over his kingdom.

The kingdom of God is not (yet) a literal, physical thing. It’s not something you can directly see with your eyes:

- “*...the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (ROM 14:17).*

All of the Old Testament prophecies related to “the kingdom” are taken as not yet fulfilled by Dispensationalists, and fulfilled by Amillenialists. Every kingdom prophecy that is quoted in the New Testament is quoted as being fulfilled in their time. This is even summed up in a few places:

- “*But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ*

would suffer, He has thus fulfilled." ACT 3:18. Note that not all the prophets directly foretold of Christ's suffering, but the one thing related to his suffering that they all foretold was the kingdom.

- *"For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."* LUK 21:22
- *"...all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days"* ACT 3:24

Indeed, Jesus spoke all about the Kingdom. If the Kingdom didn't come, then ultradispensationalism (as mentioned previously) would be the correct way to interpret Scripture. Note that I don't mean by this that there are no unfulfilled prophecies; just very few from the Old Testament.

The Land

At several important places in eschatological Scriptures, there is mention of "the earth" or "the land." The Greek word (ge) and the Hebrew word (erets) both have a range of meaning that includes land and earth, so they could be translated to either English word. When Scripture speaks of "*the land*" it often indicates the land of Israel. Thus, sometimes "*the earth*" may mean "*the land*" and give an entirely different meaning. Here are some examples:

- *"And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."* MAL 4:6. This verse reads "the earth" in the NKJV, but many other translations render it "*the land*." It indicates the land of Israel.
- *"Then he said to me, 'This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: 'Every thief shall be expelled,' according to this side of the scroll; and, 'Every perjurer shall be expelled,' according to that side of it.'"* ZEC 5:3. In context, this is speaking against Israel, not the entire earth. Thus, the Hebrew *erets* should be translated *land* and is translated thus in other versions.
- *"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn..."* MAT 24:30. If this verse can read "tribes of the land" it brings a whole new meaning (tribes of the land of Israel).
- *Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar."* MAT 23:34-35. We know this instance really means the "land" of Israel; he's addressing the leaders of Israel, and their history.
- Many instances in REV. We shall see later in the comments of that book how

many Scriptures therein more likely refer to the land of Israel than the entire earth.

Additionally, when considering “the land,” I think it’s fairly obvious that it often takes on a new meaning in the New Testament. The inheritance in the O.T. was the land; the inheritance in the N.T. is Christ. Christ is the antitype of Israel (the land):

- Israel and Christ are used interchangeably at times in Isaiah, such as in ISA 49:3 where the “servant, O Israel” is unquestionably Christ.
- *“When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.”* HOS 11:1 (quoted in MAT 2:15 as actually speaking of Christ, not Israel).

“Dwelling in the land” in PSA 37 is the equivalent of abiding in Christ in JOH 15. Jesus quotes that same chapter in psalms, *“the meek shall inherit the earth”* in his Beatitudes; his most famous delineation of the blessings afforded to his followers.

Abraham was promised that his descendants will inherit the land (GEN 12:7); Jesus & Paul clarify who the descendants of Abraham are: not the ethnic descendants of Abraham; but the spiritual. And the promise of a simple parcel of land was a token that expanded to include the whole world (just as Sabbath & tithes expanded to include all of our days and all of our increase). God laid claim to the portion then; he claims it all now:

- *“Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.”* PSA 2:8
- *“For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.”* ROM 4:13
- *“Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth”* MAT 5:5

The actual land isn't even what Abraham himself was looking for; the city below speaks of the kingdom of God of which we're part of now:

- *“By faith he [Abraham] dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country... for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”* HEB 11:9-10

The promise to Abraham concerning the land is repeated to Jacob. That promise is clarified by Jesus to include the Gentiles. We (Gentiles & Jews) now inhabit the land.

- *“Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: “I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”* GEN 28:12-14

- *“When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness.”* MAT 8:10-12. Jesus is speaking to a Gentile. He says many of such will join the patriarchs while the ethnic Israelites who haven’t such faith won’t. The parallel in LUK 13:29 includes north and south.
- *“Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.” And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”* GEN 28:16-17
- *“Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”* JOH 1:50-51
- *“Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door (or gate) of the sheep.”* JOH 10:7. Jacob said this place (the place where angels were ascending & descending) is the gate (the land). Jesus **is** the gate; he is Jacob’s ladder. The land/gate is the place where you climb the ladder to get into the kingdom.

This quote sums it up pretty well:

“In the Christological logic of Paul, the land (like the law, particular and provisional) had become irrelevant... The people of Israel living in the land had been replaced as the people of God by a universal community which had no special territorial attachment... The land has for him been “Christified.” It is not the promised land (much as he loved it) that became his “inheritance,” but the Living Lord, in whom was a “new creation” ... To be “in Christ” ... has replaced being “in the land” as the ideal life.”⁴⁷

Covenants

There are four covenants to consider when thinking about God’s dealings with Israel. I don’t think any of them apply to Israel any longer.

Covenant	Status
Abrahamic: GEN 12, 15	Has been fulfilled physically and spiritually. Physically because God gave them the land he promised (see notes below this table); spiritually in the church (GAL 4, especially vs. 28)
Sinaitic: DEU 28	The covenant was <u>conditional</u> . Israel broke the conditions repeatedly. God finally rescinded the covenant and the curses outlined in DEU 28 have befallen them (note that the curses are also to be a sign <u>forever</u> [vs. 46]). See notes @

	MAT 21
Davidic: 2SA 7	Fulfilled in Christ. See notes @ 2SA 7, ACT 15
New / Everlasting: JER 31:31-34	Fulfilled in Christ and his church. See notes @ JER 31

Some say that there remains a promise related to the land as stated in GEN 15 because they never occupied that much land.

- *“To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates”*

However, Scripture states that all the land promised had been given.

- *“So the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it.” JOS 21:43*
- *“You are the Lord God, Who chose Abram, And brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans, And gave him the name Abraham; You found his heart faithful before You, And made a covenant with him To give the land of the Canaanites, The Hittites, the Amorites, The Perizzites, the Jebusites, And the Girgashites— To give it to his descendants. You have performed Your words...” NEH 9:7-8*

Even to the river Euphrates:

- *“David also defeated Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his territory at the River Euphrates.” 2SA 8:3*
- *“So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River (footnote will say this is a reference to the Euphrates) to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt.” 1KI 4:21*

Some also say that the modern return of the Israelites to their land is a fulfillment of prophecy.

Yet this modern formation of the nation of Israel doesn’t fulfill any of the prophecies.

- *“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God drives you, and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you” DEU 30:1-3.* Note that they return after repentance from a place of captivity. The modern Jews have not repented, nor did they come from captivity. This was fulfilled in the return from the Babylonian captivity (Ezra, Nehemiah).
- *“Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.” EZE 11:17.* Ezekiel is writing while they are in Babylon. The return from Babylon was fulfilled. To the extent that any of these prophecies of returning to the land may have a dual fulfillment (and I think they do), the secondary fulfillment is not likely to be like the first – the prophecy was already fulfilled by literal Israel, the secondary fulfillment is more likely to be fulfilled by spiritual Israel.
 - *“...being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.” JOH 11:51-52.* Note how this speaks of a gathering in of the Gentile children of God who were scattered (just like the prophecy above).
- *“The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, To the Mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, A remnant of them will return...” ISA 10:21-*

22. The remnant returns to “the Mighty God.” Who is the Might God? We see in the previous chapter that it’s Jesus:

- “*For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*” ISA 9:6
 - Thus, the remnant that returned was the minority of Israelites who turned to Jesus. I can’t point to one or two further references in this essay that further describe this remnant; there are just too many – you’d just have to read it all I suppose.
 - Note also that the remnant doesn’t return to the land of Israel; they “return” to Jesus. Paul confirms this in quoting the above passage (he interprets “*the remnant will return to the Mighty God*” as, “*The remnant will be saved.*”
 - “*Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved*” ROM 9:27
- See notes @ JER 29, ISA 43:5-6.

Introduction Summary

The Old Testament prophets spoke of a kingdom. This kingdom was described in very majestic terms. These prophecies have been fulfilled. They also prophesied of an end to God's dealings with the nation of Israel (not with “*Israelites indeed*” (JOH 1:47), but with national Israel). The fulfillment of these prophecies is described in the New Testament. The church is now one body; there is no distinction between any groups (ROM 10:12). God's special people are those who regard him (JAM 4:8), who have believed in Jesus, and have fallen under his lordship.

Format of Commentary

- Book in light blue large heading font (like “Introduction Summary” above)
- Chapter # in blue underline
- Verses under also in blue...
- Comments near verses in black including *other italicized references*.

O.T. Prophets

The prophecies listed and their cross references in the New Testament will show that they prophesied the kingdom of God *now*, not some millennium kingdom later, and that the physical nation of Israel in the Old Testament finds its true fulfillment in the spiritual nation of the church.

2 Samuel

Chapter 7

1 Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, 2 that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains."

3 Then Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you."

4 But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, 5 "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? 6 For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. 7 Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'" 8 Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. 9 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth. 10 Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously,

The Davidic covenant: a prophecy dual fulfilled in David's descendants & Christ.

11 since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house.

12 "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

This is fulfilled in Christ & the church, not after the second coming during a millennium. "When you rest" proves it; after the second coming David will have risen; he will no longer be resting with his fathers, thus this cannot be fulfilled in a literal

millennium after the second coming of Christ. Note that Peter specifically mentions that David is in his grave in his time:

- *“Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. “For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”’ “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” ACT 2:29-36*

13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

Solomon built a house; Jesus is building a better one:

- *“you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1PE 2:5*
- *“... I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” 1TI 3:15*
- *“but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.” HEB 3:6*
- *“For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building.” 1CO 3:9*
- *“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” EPH 2:19-22*
- *“Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.” JOH 14:23*
- *“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” MAT 16:18*
- This is surely the “house” prophesied as Stephen indicated when he quoted Isaiah (indicating that God lives in the hearts of his people): *“However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: ‘Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, Or what is the place of My rest?’” ACT 7:48-49*

14 I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him

with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. 15 But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”””

Jesus sits on David's throne because he rules over God's people. This prophecy doesn't pertain to national Israel.

Isaiah

Themes include:

- The unfruitfulness of Israel and the future time when she'll bear fruit.
- Judgment of Israel during the Jewish war in the year 70 A.D.
- A future kingdom wherein God will see the fruit he desires. I will demonstrate why I believe this speaks of the church age, not a future literal millennium.
- Barren lands & unhealthy people contrasted with lush lands and healthy people.
- The servant of Jehovah (the meaning of which changes as the book progresses).

1: 25 I will turn My hand against you,
And thoroughly purge away your dross,
And take away all your alloy. ISA 1:25

This verse is very much like MAL 3:1-3. The Malachi passage is about John the Baptist (MAT 11:10 says so) and Jesus' purifying Israel at 70 A.D.

- *“Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,” Says the LORD of hosts. “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the LORD An offering in righteousness.” MAL 3:1-3*

Chapter 2

2-4: Now it shall come to pass in the latter days

That the mountain of the LORD's house
Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow to it.

3 Many people shall come and say,
“Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,

And we shall walk in His paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 He shall judge between the nations,
And rebuke many people;
They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore. ISA 2:2-4

There's little doubt that this doesn't literally mean the Earth's features will change such that mount Zion will be the highest as is indicated in verse 2. "Mountain" used non-literally in Scripture indicates government or kingdom. Specifically, it refers to the kingdom of God; the church:

- *"For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest... But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel."*
HEB 12:18, 22-24

As for "all nations," we see Jesus referring to all nations in the context of the gospel spreading:

- *"Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'*" LUK 24:46-47

Verse 4 ("beat the swords to plowshares") is usually said to refer to a future millennial kingdom. However, it can't speak of a literal millennium because the (supposedly literal) battle of the final rebellion of Satan and his followers against Christ and his followers (REV 20:7-10) is said to follow the millennium, but this says they won't learn war. The old covenant included physical warfare; new covenant is spiritual. The meaning of "swords to plowshares" is that we become farmers sowing (the seeds of the Gospel as in the parable of the sower in MAT 13) & reaping.

21 To go into the clefts of the rocks,
And into the crags of the rugged rocks,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty,
When He arises to shake the earth mightily. ISA 2:21

As discussed in the introduction, *Earth* here could be translated *land*. We will see much about this as we go along. For now, note the similarity to this verse from Revelation:

- *“And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains...”* REV 6:15

Chapter 5

1-4 Now let me sing to my Well-beloved

A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:

My Well-beloved has a vineyard

On a very fruitful hill.

2 He dug it up and cleared out its stones,

And planted it with the choicest vine.

He built a tower in its midst,

And also made a winepress in it;

So He expected it to bring forth good grapes,

But it brought forth wild grapes.

3 “And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,

Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard.

4 What more could have been done to My vineyard

That I have not done in it?

Here we see an example of another theme in Isaiah: a vineyard which God desires to be fruitful, but isn't. The story is finished when Jesus concluded it in the parable of the wicked vinedressers (MAT 21:33-41). In the end, Jesus says this referring to the judgment of national Israel in AD 70 and transferal of the kingdom of God to another kingdom,

- *“He will destroy those wicked [vinedressers] miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.”* MAT 21:41

Chapter 9

6-7 For unto us a Child is born,

Unto us a Son is given;

And the government will be upon His shoulder.

And His name will be called

Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of His government and peace

There will be no end,

Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,

To order it and establish it with judgment and justice

From that time forward, even forever.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

This is a prophecy of Jesus. Notice the flow of the passage: he is born, he is destined to rule, he becomes king, his rule will increase, and there is no end. There is no hint of a break in time, a parenthesis, or a millennium here ("from that time forward").

Chapter 11

Here we have the famous "lion will lie down with the lamb" messianic prophecy. Most would say this speaks of some future time. Below the passage, I list why I don't think it does.

1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

It starts off speaking of the first coming without much doubt (this verse is repeated in ISA 53:2 which is a passage that unquestionably speaks of Jesus' first coming).

2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

It continues with his first coming; Jesus said "*The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me*" in LUK 4:18.

3 His delight is in the fear of the LORD,
And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes,
Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;
4 But with righteousness He shall judge the poor,
And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,
And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

We continue with Jesus at his first coming. Jesus didn't judge according to the flesh (or by the sight of his eyes) (JOH 8:15). He certainly decided for the meek. He struck the earth with the rod of his mouth, and slays the wicked with the breath of his lips by speaking the words of God.

- "*I have slain them by the words of My mouth*" HOS 6:5

5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins,
And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

6 " The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.

This is where we turn the corner and start speaking of something yet future, right? I don't think so. This passage speaks of the peaceful coexistence of the Gentiles and the Israelites. The predatory animals picture the (former) enemies of Israel (his sheep). We see this confirmed in these passages:

- *"All you beasts of the field, come to devour, All you beasts in the forest. His watchmen are blind, They are all ignorant; They are all dumb dogs, They cannot bark; Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber." ISA 56:9-10*
- *"So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered... And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid." EZE 34:5,28*
- Dan. 7: The vision of the four beasts are the Gentile world rulers which often opposed Israel.
- *"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 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, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity." EPH 2: 14-16 (speaking of the peace between the former enemies).*

7 The cow and the bear shall graze;

Their young ones shall lie down together;

And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole,

And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.

The child plays with the cobra. This speaks of the children of God having the ability to overcome spiritual powers that (prior to Christ) had deadly force over them:

- *"Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." LUK 10:19.* Was he speaking of literal serpents & scorpions? Well, in Paul's case, yes. But I think he was mostly referring to the powers of darkness.
- *"...who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water." DEU 8:15.* Fiery serpents? God had punished them with fiery serpents:
- *"So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died." NUM 21:6.* I think this judgment and the discussion of serpents/scorpion speaks of spiritual battles.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD

As the waters cover the sea.

The spread of the Gospel has virtually filled the earth with the knowledge of the Lord:

- *"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God..." 2CO 4:6*
- The writer of Hebrews quotes Jeremiah in describing the new covenant: *"None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all*

shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them” HEB 8:11.

- Not just the priests, but all God's people.

10 “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse,
Who shall stand as a banner to the people;
For the Gentiles shall seek Him,
And His resting place shall be glorious.”

- “Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: ... [he then quotes the above verse]” ROM 15:8-9,12
Paul speaks of current fulfillment, not future.

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

Here is another repeated theme in Isaiah; exoduses. “The Lord recovers his remnant a second time”: first time is the exodus out of Egypt. The second exodus is spiritual:

- “As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders... He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.” MIC 7:15-19. Spiritual sins are cast into the sea as the physical Egyptians were.
- “...who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” LUK 9:31. “Decease” in this passage means literally, exodus. Jesus is discussing a spiritual exodus that would lead his people from spiritual bondage to the spiritual Promised Land (Jesus said the Son would make you free after the Jews said [erroneously] that they had never been in bondage). Thus, here in Isaiah we have Egypt the first salvation (vs. 16), Babylon will be the second, and both are a type of Christ's salvation.

12 He will set up a banner for the nations,
And will assemble the outcasts of Israel,
And gather together the dispersed of Judah
From the four corners of the earth.

13 Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart,
And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off;
Ephraim shall not envy Judah,
And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.

Ephraim (the northern kingdom) ceased to exist. Thus, this is not literal. It speaks of God's people being as one.

14 But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west;
Together they shall plunder the people of the East;
They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab;
And the people of Ammon shall obey them.

This can't be literal; none of these nations exist (I don't think they existed even in Jesus' time). Isaiah is using enemies which were extant in his day to prophesy that the enemies of God will be vanquished. Here's another example:

- *"I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult."* NUM 24:17. This was literally fulfilled when David defeated the Moabites (2SA 8:2), but nobody disagrees that this is also a prophecy of Christ. Christ "battered the brow of Moab" by defeating God's enemies.

15 The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt;
With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River,
And strike it in the seven streams,
And make men cross over dryshod.

16 There will be a highway for the remnant of His people
Who will be left from Assyria,
As it was for Israel
In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.

Again we see the first exodus compared to a future exodus. The "highway" is the straightway of the Lord that John the Baptist spoke of (see Chapter 19 next).

Chapter 19

23 "In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians.

24 In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land,"

Another theme in Isaiah (we've already seen it once): the highway. It speaks of walking; walk = way of living in Biblical imagery (see 35:8, 40:3). Israel will join with the peoples of former enemy lands and serve together. Israel will be a 3rd - Israel will end up being the minority in the church:

"In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." ZEC 8:23

Chapter 24: Judgment.

Again, *Earth* in this book and in Revelation could be translated *land* (same word in Hebrew). It's up to the opinion of the translators which to use. Land would refer to Israel (see introductory section "The Land"). Throughout this chapter, I show reasons

why I think it speaks of the land of Israel.

1 Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste,
Distorts its surface
And scatters abroad its inhabitants.

Earth is used, but the inhabitants are “scattered abroad.”

2 And it shall be:

As with the people, so with the priest;
As with the servant, so with his master;
As with the maid, so with her mistress;
As with the buyer, so with the seller;
As with the lender, so with the borrower;
As with the creditor, so with the debtor.

3 The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered,
For the LORD has spoken this word.

Land is used in vs. 3 & 13 - same Hebrew word as all the usages of *earth*.

4 The earth mourns and fades away,
The world languishes and fades away;
The haughty people of the earth languish.

World probably isn't to be taken literally as it isn't when it's used in reference to Babylon in context in the verse cited below... Their world (Babylon's) is coming apart:

- 13:11: *“I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.”*

5 The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants,
Because they have transgressed the laws,
Changed the ordinance,
Broken the everlasting covenant.

"The covenant" speaks of Israel.

6 Therefore the curse has devoured the earth,
And those who dwell in it are desolate.
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned,
And few men are left.

"The curse" speaks of the curses promised Israel in Deuteronomy and elsewhere if they turned away from God.

- *“But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...”* DEU 28:15

7 The new wine fails, the vine languishes,
All the merry-hearted sigh.

8 The mirth of the tambourine ceases,
The noise of the jubilant ends,

The joy of the harp ceases.
9 They shall not drink wine with a song;
Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.
10 The city of confusion is broken down;
Every house is shut up, so that none may go in.
11 There is a cry for wine in the streets,
All joy is darkened,
The mirth of the land is gone.
12 In the city desolation is left,
And the gate is stricken with destruction.
"The city" speaks of Jerusalem.
13 When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people,
It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree,
Like the gleanings of grapes when the vintage is done.
14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing;
For the majesty of the LORD
They shall cry aloud from the sea.
15 Therefore glorify the LORD in the dawning light,
The name of the LORD God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea.
16 From the ends of the earth we have heard songs:
"Glory to the righteous!"
But I said, "I am ruined, ruined!
Woe to me!
The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously,
Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously."
17 Fear and the pit and the snare
Are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.
18 And it shall be
That he who flees from the noise of the fear
Shall fall into the pit,
And he who comes up from the midst of the pit
Shall be caught in the snare;
For the windows from on high are open,
And the foundations of the earth are shaken.

During AD 70, those who escaped the city of Jerusalem were greeted with cruelty just as great (they would sometimes be disemboweled to try to find swallowed gold). "The windows from on high" - this punishment is not just by men, but God.

19 The earth is violently broken,
The earth is split open,
The earth is shaken exceedingly.

20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard,
And shall totter like a hut;
Its transgression shall be heavy upon it,
And it will fall, and not rise again.

This speaks of earthquakes. We'll see more about this when we discuss the Olivet Discourse.

Chapter 25

6 And in this mountain
The LORD of hosts will make for all people
A feast of choice pieces,
A feast of wines on the lees,
Of fat things full of marrow,
Of well-refined wines on the lees.

Israel has been judged in the last chapter, now the Gentiles are invited to the feast as in the parable of the wedding feast that Jesus told.

Chapter 26

1 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:
We have a strong city;
God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks.

As in 60:18, we have a prophecy about a future city whose walls are salvation. Obviously, we're not talking about a physical city here; we're not talking about a future literal Jerusalem.

2 Open the gates,
That the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in.

...

18 We have been with child, we have been in pain;
We have, as it were, brought forth wind;
We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth,
Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

The nation Israel was supposed to bring forth a child, but all that passed was gas.

19 Your dead shall live;
Together with my dead body they shall arise.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;
For your dew is like the dew of herbs,
And the earth shall cast out the dead.
Take Refuge from the Coming Judgment

This may speak of resurrection, but more likely the restoration of the nation (in the form of the church) like the restoration of the dry bones in EZE 37.

Chapter 27

1 In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong,
Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent,
Leviathan that twisted serpent;
And He will slay the reptile that is in the sea.

The serpent is Satan (as we know from REV), whom Jesus destroyed at the cross:

- *"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,"* HEB 2:14

2 In that day sing to her,
"A vineyard of red wine!

The vineyard probably refers to the church after it has been granted as the vineyard to bear fruit as in the parable of the wicked vinedressers:

- *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."* MAT 21:43

10 Yet the fortified city will be desolate,
The habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness;
There the calf will feed, and there it will lie down
And consume its branches.

The fortified city left desolate is Jerusalem as it was in 70 A.D. as foretold by Jesus:

- *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate..."* MAT 23:37-38
- *"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near."* LUK 21:20

11 When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off;
The women come and set them on fire.
For it is a people of no understanding;
Therefore He who made them will not have mercy on them,
And He who formed them will show them no favor.

Israel (the nation) was broken off as a branch:

- *"And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree..."* ROM 11:17
- *"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned."* JOH 15:6

Chapter 28

16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

*“Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation,
A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;
Whoever believes will not act hastily.*

The stone is Christ; what's laid on the stone (Zion) is the church. Thus we should see this as an interpretational key in Isaiah:

- *“Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” ROM 9:33. Speaking about Christ & quoting this verse.*
- *Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes’? MAT 21:42-43*
- *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect... HEB 12:22-23*
- *“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.... Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” EPH 2:11,19-22. The Gentiles have become part of Israel (the true Israel).*

Chapter 32

15 Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,
And the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
And the fruitful field is counted as a forest.

Another contrast between the barrenness of Israel (as in the verse referenced below) and the fruitfulness of the church:

- *“Sing, O barren, You who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, You who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate Than the children of the married woman,” says the LORD.” ISA 54:1 Quoted in EPH 4 in reference to the church.*

Chapter 35

This chapter is without doubt a prophecy about the time of Christ. The first few bullets

below show the similarities of this chapter to chapter 40:3-5 (a passage that we know is about John the Baptist & Jesus because it's quoted in the gospels as being so):

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'" ISA 40:3-5

- Vs. 2: They shall see the glory of the Lord
- Vs. 8: A highway: This is the way made straight by John the Baptist. It may also speak of Jesus as "the way, the truth, and the life."
- Vs. 1: Wilderness: see also 32:15 above.

1 The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them,

And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;

This is often quoted as having been fulfilled literally in the way modern Israel has cultivated their desert abode so skillfully. All the reasons I've included about the way this passage is actually interpreted by the New Testament aside, is God's trigger really tripped by the agriculture proficiency of his people? Are not spiritual things many times more important?

Concerning a wilderness becoming fruitful, the wilderness represents the wild, spiritually untamed nation of Israel. The blossoming of fruit represents the spiritual awakening of God's people – the church – the nation that the kingdom was given to (MAT 21:43).

- *"Their souls shall be like a well-watered garden"* JER 31:12 (another kingdom passage)
 - Contrast with MAT 15:12-13: *"Then His disciples came and said to Him, 'Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?' But He answered and said, 'Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.'"*
- *"Is it not yet a very little while Till Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, And the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest?"* ISA 29:17
- *"I will open rivers in desolate heights, And fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, And the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, The myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the cypress tree and the pine And the box tree together"* ISA 41:18-19
 - Note the similarity to Jesus words in JOH 4:14: *"but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life"*
- *"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not*

return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. "For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." ISA 55:10-12. The fruitfulness comes from the watering of his word.

- *"To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."* ISA 61:3 This passage is quoted by Jesus in LUK 4:17-19. The unfruitful place becomes a forest of trees (righteous people).

2 It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice,
Even with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
The excellency of our God.

3 Strengthen the weak hands,
And make firm the feeble knees.

Compare to what the writer of Hebrews writes about his present time:

- *"Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed."* HEB 12:12-13

4 Say to those who are fearful-hearted,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Behold, your God will come with vengeance,
With the recompense of God;
He will come and save you."

This is fulfilled in Christ:

- *"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."* MAT 1:21

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the dumb sing.
For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,
And streams in the desert.

7 The parched ground shall become a pool,
And the thirsty land springs of water;
In the habitation of jackals, where each lay,
There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

The thirsty land is probably not literal. It's probably more in the sense of the thirst of a people as in, *"I spread out my hands to You; My soul longs for You like a thirsty land."* PSA 143:6

8 A highway shall be there, and a road,
And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.
The unclean shall not pass over it,
But it shall be for others.
Whoever walks the road, although a fool,
Shall not go astray.

Again with the highway: The ultimate fulfillment of the highway (or just, "the way") is Christ: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life."* JOH 14:6

9 No lion shall be there,
Nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it;
It shall not be found there.
But the redeemed shall walk there,

10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
And come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness,
And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

- We are the ransomed: *"... the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."* MAT 20:28
- The sorrow gone is worldly sorrow: *"For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death."* 2CO 7:10
- More on the ransomed: ISA 51:11.

Chapter 41

8 But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend.

This is the first reference to the servant of Jehovah. This starts as a reference to Israel and evolves into Jesus later.

17 The poor and needy seek water, but there is none,
Their tongues fail for thirst.
I, the LORD, will hear them;
I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.

Compare to Jesus' words (note again; it's not literal):

- *"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." JOH 7:37*

Chapter 42

1 "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold,
My Elect One in whom My soul delights!
I have put My Spirit upon Him;
He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

2 He will not cry out, nor raise His voice,
Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.

3 A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench;
He will bring forth justice for truth.

Already, we see the servant of The Lord now speaking of Jesus, not Israel:

- "He will not quarrel nor cry out, Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory; And in His name Gentiles will trust." MAT 12:19-21

4 He will not fail nor be discouraged,
Till He has established justice in the earth;
And the coastlands shall wait for His law."

5 Thus says God the LORD,
Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it,
Who gives breath to the people on it,
And spirit to those who walk on it:

6 "I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness,
And will hold Your hand;
I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people,
As a light to the Gentiles,

7 To open blind eyes,
To bring out prisoners from the prison,
Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.

Opening the eyes of the blind:

- *"to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."* ACT 26:18
- *"To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace."* LUK 1:79

8 I am the LORD, that is My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.

9 Behold, the former things have come to pass,
And new things I declare;

Before they spring forth I tell you of them.”

Chapter 43

5 Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west;

6 I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’

And to the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’

Bring My sons from afar,

And My daughters from the ends of the earth

Perhaps a double reference to the Israelites' return from Babylon and the church age, but probably more importantly fulfilled in the church:

- *“but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.”* JOH 11:51-52
- *“They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.”* LUK 13:29. This prophecy is fulfilled by the gathering in of those of faith (Jew & Gentile). For proof, see notes @ MAT 8.

16 Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea

And a path through the mighty waters,

17 Who brings forth the chariot and horse,

The army and the power

(They shall lie down together, they shall not rise;

They are extinguished, they are quenched like a wick):

18 “ Do not remember the former things,

Nor consider the things of old.

19 Behold, I will do a new thing,

Now it shall spring forth;

Shall you not know it?

I will even make a road in the wilderness

And rivers in the desert.

20 The beast of the field will honor Me,

The jackals and the ostriches,

Because I give waters in the wilderness

And rivers in the desert,

To give drink to My people, My chosen.

21 This people I have formed for Myself;

They shall declare My praise.

18-21: After speaking of the deliverance from Egypt, he says that it's not even to be remembered in comparison to the new deliverance in Christ.

The church is the people formed to proclaim his praises:

- *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” 1PE 2:9*

Chapter 46

13 I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off; My salvation shall not linger.
And I will place salvation in Zion, For Israel My glory.

Zion indicates his people:

- *“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect...” HEB 12:22-23*

Chapter 48

12 Listen to Me, O Jacob,
And Israel, My called:

...

18 Oh, that you had heeded My commandments!
Then your peace would have been like a river,
And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.
19 Your descendants also would have been like the sand,
And the offspring of your body like the grains of sand;
His name would not have been cut off
Nor destroyed from before Me.”

The name of Jacob was cut off (while the faithful remnant was not).

Chapter 49

1 “Listen, O coastlands, to Me,
And take heed, you peoples from afar!
The LORD has called Me from the womb;
From the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name.
2 And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword;
In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me,
And made Me a polished shaft;
In His quiver He has hidden Me.”
3 “ And He said to me,
‘ You are My servant, O Israel,
In whom I will be glorified.’

The servant (Israel) is Jesus. This is obvious in the context.

4 Then I said, 'I have labored in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain;
Yet surely my just reward is with the LORD,
And my work with my God.'"

5 " And now the LORD says,
Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant,
To bring Jacob back to Him,
So that Israel is gathered to Him
(For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD,
And My God shall be My strength),

6 Indeed He says,
' It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,
That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

It was the lesser thing that Jesus restored the remnant; the greater was the whole world.

7 Thus says the LORD,
The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One,
To Him whom man despises,
To Him whom the nation abhors,
To the Servant of rulers:
"Kings shall see and arise,
Princes also shall worship,
Because of the LORD who is faithful,
The Holy One of Israel;
And He has chosen You."

8 Thus says the LORD:
"In an acceptable time I have heard You,
And in the day of salvation I have helped You;
I will preserve You and give You
As a covenant to the people,
To restore the earth,
To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages;

The acceptable time is our time:

- *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."* 2CO 6:2

9 That You may say to the prisoners, 'Go forth,'
To those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.'
" They shall feed along the roads,
And their pastures shall be on all desolate heights.

10 They shall neither hunger nor thirst,
Neither heat nor sun shall strike them;
For He who has mercy on them will lead them,
Even by the springs of water He will guide them.

11 I will make each of My mountains a road,
And My highways shall be elevated.

12 Surely these shall come from afar;
Look! Those from the north and the west,
And these from the land of Sinim."

13 Sing, O heavens!
Be joyful, O earth!
And break out in singing, O mountains!
For the LORD has comforted His people,
And will have mercy on His afflicted.

God Will Remember Zion

14 But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me,
And my Lord has forgotten me."

15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child,
And not have compassion on the son of her womb?
Surely they may forget,
Yet I will not forget you.

16 See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands;
Your walls are continually before Me.

17 Your sons shall make haste;
Your destroyers and those who laid you waste
Shall go away from you.

18 Lift up your eyes, look around and see;
All these gather together and come to you.
As I live," says the LORD,
"You shall surely clothe yourselves with them all as an ornament,
And bind them on you as a bride does.

19 "For your waste and desolate places,
And the land of your destruction,
Will even now be too small for the inhabitants;
And those who swallowed you up will be far away.

20 The children you will have,
After you have lost the others,
Will say again in your ears,
'The place is too small for me;
Give me a place where I may dwell.'

The children (all of us) are described in GAL 4, especially 26-27:

- *"but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband.""* GAL 4:26-27

21 Then you will say in your heart,
' Who has begotten these for me,
Since I have lost my children and am desolate,
A captive, and wandering to and fro?
And who has brought these up?
There I was, left alone;
But these, where were they?"

Chapter 51

10 Are You not the One who dried up the sea,
The waters of the great deep;
That made the depths of the sea a road
For the redeemed to cross over?
11 So the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
And come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness;
Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

This (as well as 35:11) speaks of the ransomed returning after a second exodus. Note that Jesus performed an exodus (see notes at 11:11)

16 ...
That I may plant the heavens,
Lay the foundations of the earth,
And say to Zion, 'You are My people.'"

In Zion, he is making a new creation: *"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation."* GAL 6:15

Chapter 54

1 "Sing, O barren,
You who have not borne!
Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,
You who have not labored with child!
For more are the children of the desolate
Than the children of the married woman," says the LORD.

The "children of the desolate" are the Gentiles:

- *"but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all."* GAL 4:26.
- *"Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'? Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world."* JOH 16:19-21. Jesus is speaking of the same children referenced in GAL 4 above. More on God bearing children at the end of Isaiah.

10 For the mountains shall depart

And the hills be removed,
But My kindness shall not depart from you,
Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,"
Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

Covenant of peace:

- *"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* EPH 2:15
- *"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful."* COL 3:15. See also EZE 37:26.

Chapter 56

3 Do not let the son of the foreigner

Who has joined himself to the LORD
Speak, saying,
"The LORD has utterly separated me from His people";
Nor let the eunuch say,
"Here I am, a dry tree."

Trees in Isaiah represent fruitful people (see ISA 61:3). *"Blessed is the man... He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper."* PSA 1:1-3

4 For thus says the LORD:

" To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,
And choose what pleases Me,
And hold fast My covenant,

5 Even to them I will give in My house

And within My walls a place and a name
Better than that of sons and daughters;

I will give them an everlasting name
That shall not be cut off.

6 “ Also the sons of the foreigner
Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him,
And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants—
Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,
And holds fast My covenant—

7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain,
And make them joyful in My house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
Will be accepted on My altar;

For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

He's using terms of worship that his contemporaries could relate to in prophesying about the church age (people of all nations):

- *“For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire... But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn...”* HEB 11:18, 22

8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says,
“Yet I will gather to him
Others besides those who are gathered to him.”

- *“There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.”* LUK 13:28-29

59:20

“The Redeemer will come to Zion,
And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,”
Says the LORD.

The redeemer comes to those who turn from transgression. It's not that he will turn them from their sin (as in turning rebellious Israel around).

Chapter 61

1 “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me,
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn,

When Jesus first quotes this (LUK 4), he stops midway through verse 2. That part of the prophecy was already being fulfilled. The second part (day of vengeance), would be fulfilled later:

- *"For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."*
LUK 21:22. More on that later.

...

11 For as the earth brings forth its bud,
As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth,
So the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

Causing righteousness to spring forth:

- *"The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."* MAR 4:26-29

Chapter 63

3 "I have trodden the winepress alone,
And from the peoples no one was with Me.
For I have trodden them in My anger,
And trampled them in My fury;
Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments,
And I have stained all My robes.

This probably speaks of Christ's first coming & destroying forces of evil; he will be with his saints at his second coming, but was alone at his first:

- *"...when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"* HEB 1:3

4 For the day of vengeance is in My heart,
And the year of My redeemed has come.

"Day of vengeance" probably refers to 2nd coming; "year of my redeemed" to first. Thus he has the 2nd in view while the first is at hand.

Chapter 65

17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;
And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.

This passage probably has double meaning:

- A literal new creation:
 - *"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."* 2PE 3:13
- A spiritual one:
 - *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."* 2CO 5:17
- In the spiritual one we taste of the powers of the future creation:
 - *"...and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come..."* HEB 6:5.

Many other references to old vs. new speak of forgetting about old.

18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;

For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing,
And her people a joy.

19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem,

And joy in My people;
The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her,
Nor the voice of crying.

20 "No more shall an infant from there live but a few days,

Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days;
For the child shall die one hundred years old,
But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.

This verse simply means that 100 years will be like nothing. I think it speaks of eternal life when eternal life had not yet been revealed. This must be the interpretation no matter one's eschatology since in any case it would be after the resurrection (new heavens and earth), and we won't literally be having babies at that time:

- *"For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven."* MAT 22:30.

Chapter 66

7 "Before she was in labor, she gave birth;

Before her pain came,
She delivered a male child.

The birth of the church:

- *"Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you."* JOH 16: 20-22
- *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,*

Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting." Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel." MIC 5:3

- *"Now 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. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne."* REV 12:1-5. The woman is the remnant of Israel.

8 Who has heard such a thing?

Who has seen such things?

Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day?

Or shall a nation be born at once?

For as soon as Zion was in labor,

She gave birth to her children.

Again, Galatians 4 outlines this whole process of giving birth, "...but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all."

...

20 Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.

This offering is the offering of the Gentiles: "that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit." ROM 15:16

Jeremiah

Chapter 3

14 "Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. 15 And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

16 "Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days," says the LORD, "that they will say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the

LORD.' It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore.

17 "At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.

18 "In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers.

This speaks of a time when the ceremonial laws will have passed away ("they will say no more, "The ark of the covenant"). At that same time, "Jerusalem shall be called the Throne of the LORD." According to dispensational theology, during the church age the ceremonial laws have been suspended, but they will be reinstated during the kingdom age (when national Israel is back in God's plan). This passage nullifies that view because it merges the two features together (ceremonial laws don't apply, but Israel is at the center of God's plan). The passage is a kingdom passage and I think it speaks of our time.

Chapter 18

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

We see here conditional promises. Many people are under the impression that God's promises to Israel are unconditional. This isn't so. Note that Scripture doesn't have to repeat conditions at every junction.

This is similar to a wedding ceremony wherein it's implied that the parties will be faithful: the minister doesn't say "*till death do you part unless one of you cheats in which case all of what I just said will be nullified.*" It's implied that the conditions apply as long as both parties are faithful.

Conditions can be inferred from the instances where they *are* stated. Following is another instance of God pulling the plug on a promise because someone didn't hold up his end of the bargain:

- *"Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: 'I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the LORD says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.'" 1SA 2:30*

Chapter 29

14 I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

I think we have dual fulfillment here; the return from Babylon and the future gathering or deliverance from sin. The return from Babylon is compared to the deliverance of sin. Compare to ZEC 9 where the coming of the Messiah is mixed into the rest of the chapter which discusses deliverance:

- *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation... Return to the stronghold, You prisoners of hope... The LORD their God will save them in that day, As the flock of His people...”* ZEC 9:9, 12, & 16.

The Babylonian empire consisted of many nations, so there is no reason for a future fulfillment (some would say this was fulfilled in modern times). It need not mean every nation in existence; merely all nations they were driven into. As further evidence, we have these references to their going into captivity as going into “all the nations:”

- *“But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known. Thus the land became desolate after them, so that no one passed through or returned; for they made the pleasant land desolate.”* ZEC 7:14
- *“O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.”* DAN 9:7 (speaking of the Babylonian captivity)

I think the (second) fulfillment is described in these places: (more on these verses later):

- *“And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”* MAT 24:31
- *“And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”* MAT 8:11
- *“and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.”* JOH 11:52

Chapter 30

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2 “Thus speaks the Lord God of Israel, saying: ‘Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you. 3 For behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,’ says the Lord. ‘And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.’”

As for Judah returning, a significant minority of those 10 tribes who originally broke off and went to Samaria returned before the northern kingdom was taken away by the Assyrians.⁴⁶ Thus, when the Israelites returned from captivity, they represented Israel

and Judah. For those who say that this is yet to be fulfilled, from where would the “lost tribes” of Israel come? Would not some peoples in our time or some future time be vastly less able to represent those 10 tribes than those who did so in ancient times?

As further evidence, we have the enacted parable of Ezekiel in EZE 4. Ezekiel is to lay on one side for Israel for 390 days representing the number of years of their judgment and on the other side for Judah for 40 days representing the number of years remaining for their judgment. The 40 years certainly represents the remaining time Judah is to remain in captivity, and the 390 years would date back to the time that Israel originally split from Judah (which led ultimately to their captivity). And thus, the completion of the iniquity of both nations would occur at the same time. In this sense, both nation’s “captivity” would be completed.

...

9 But they shall serve the Lord their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them.

This we know speaks of Christ now because the majority of ACT 2 explains it.

...

24 ... In the latter days you will consider it.

The whole chapter speaks of (what appears to be nothing more than) the literal return of Israel. Yet, at the end it informs us that in the latter days (which are the days of the New Testament as I’ve explained) we will “consider it” or “understand” it as some versions read. It indicates that there is more to this prophecy than just its surface meaning.

Chapter 31

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

This passage is quoted in HEB 8 & 10 below as being fulfilled. The old Israel didn't all know the Lord, but the new Israel will, and they won't need the priests to teach them:

- *“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: [passage above quoted] In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now*

what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” HEB 8:7-13

- *“For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them” HEB 10:14-16*
- *“For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” MAT 26:28*
- *“And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.” JOE 2:23 (fulfilled on the day of Pentecost just after Christ’s ascension [ACT 2:16-17]).*
- *“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” JOH 14:26*

The covenant was established with (the remnant of) Israel in the upper room. Note that the remnant included representatives from both Israel and Judah as mentioned in the prophecy.

- *“Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” LUK 22:20*

We also see the “house of Jacob” (all Israel) mentioned in the angel’s proclamation to Mary. See introduction section “Kingdom Prophecies” for why we know this was fulfilled in Jesus’ time.

- *“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” LUK 1:31-33*

Afterward, more Jews joined in the covenant (the day of Pentecost and afterward), followed by Gentiles (starting at the house of Cornelius). The Gentiles were grafted in among them as Paul describes:

- *“For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree...” ROM 9:16-17*

And again, they become part of the commonwealth (nation, house) of Israel:

- *“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” EPH 2:11-13*

35 Thus says the LORD,
Who gives the sun for a light by day,
The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night,
Who disturbs the sea,
And its waves roar
(The LORD of hosts is His name):

36 "If those ordinances depart
From before Me, says the LORD,
Then the seed of Israel shall also cease
From being a nation before Me forever."

37 Thus says the LORD:
"If heaven above can be measured,
And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath,
I will also cast off all the seed of Israel
For all that they have done, says the LORD.

This is most commonly seen as an affirmation of the permanence of the nation of Israel, but I think it's the reverse. If those ordinances (sun, moon, stars) depart, then ethnic Israel will cease to be a nation. Those ordinances did depart:

- *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken."* MAT 24:29. (See comments for MAT 24).

This comes directly after a prophecy about the new covenant that the New Testament says has been fulfilled. Additionally, this cannot be literally followed because REV 21 says there will be no Sun nor Moon then. Thus, those ordinances will depart, and the seed of Israel will cease (in one sense) from being a nation before God.

- *"The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light."* REV 21:23

Ezekiel

Chapter 11

He gathers them, gives them the land, and gives them a new heart.

17 Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel."' 18 And they will go there, and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. 19 Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

Probably most Christians believe that the parts that speak of the heart refer to us (the church), but what of this land? Consider these verses from PSA 37 about “land” or “earth” (reference introduction section, “The Land”):

- 3 *Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.*
- 9 *For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth.*
- 11 *But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*
- 22 *For those blessed by Him shall inherit the earth, But those cursed by Him shall be cut off.*
- 29 *The righteous shall inherit the land, And dwell in it forever.*
- 34 *Wait on the LORD, And keep His way, And He shall exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.*

Now compare this with what Jesus says in the beatitudes:

3 *“Blessed are the poor in spirit,*

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 *Blessed are those who mourn,*

For they shall be comforted.

5 *Blessed are the meek,*

For they shall inherit the earth.

6 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,*

For they shall be filled.

7 *Blessed are the merciful,*

For they shall obtain mercy.

8 *Blessed are the pure in heart,*

For they shall see God.

9 *Blessed are the peacemakers,*

For they shall be called sons of God.

10 *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,*

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (MAT 5:3-10)

The psalmist is thinking of the land of Israel, but Jesus is broadening the meaning of “the land.” Not only Israelites will inherit this land. As for gathering the people (vs. 17 in the text under consideration), compare to this statement speaking of people in general entering the kingdom of God. Note also the context – Jesus marveling over the faith of a Gentile and tying that to people being gathered from all directions into the kingdom – an Israelite kingdom:

- *“When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be*

weeping and gnashing of teeth.”” MAT 8:10-12

Chapter 34

11 ‘For thus says the Lord God: “Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord God. 16 “I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.”

- *“...for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” LUK 19:10*
- *“Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.” HEB 12:12-13*

17 ‘And as for you, O My flock, thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats. 18 Is it too little for you to have eaten up the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the residue of your pasture— and to have drunk of the clear waters, that you must foul the residue with your feet? 19 And as for My flock, they eat what you have trampled with your feet, and they drink what you have fouled with your feet.”

20 ‘Therefore thus says the Lord God to them: “Behold, I Myself will judge between the fat and the lean sheep. 21 Because you have pushed with side and shoulder, butted all the weak ones with your horns, and scattered them abroad, 22 therefore I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. 23 I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd.

Jesus, the good shepherd (JOH 10), is tending this flock now.

24 And I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.

25 “I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.

See notes @ ISA 11:6 (also reference vs. 28 below). The people living under the new

covenant under Christ won't be treating each other like these corrupt shepherds were.

26 I will make them and the places all around My hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing.

His hill is probably another reference to Zion which, as I've mentioned many times (e.g., ISA 2), is fulfilled in the church.

27 Then the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase. They shall be safe in their land; and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. 28 And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid.

Here we have reference to Israel (sheep) dwelling safely with wild beasts. This sounds just like ISA 11; see notes there as to why this speaks to our age.

29 I will raise up for them a garden of renown, and they shall no longer be consumed with hunger in the land, nor bear the shame of the Gentiles anymore. 30 Thus they shall know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and they, the house of Israel, are My people," says the Lord GOD.

Jesus compared the kingdom of God (not just the kingdom of the nation of Israel) to a mustard plant & to a great tree which harkens back to this "garden of renown." It could also refer to the body of Christ because Jesus referred to himself as "the true vine."

Chapter 37

15 Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 16 "As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: 'For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.'

...

"Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand."

As has been said, representatives of both nations were present with Jesus at his establishment of the new covenant. An additional application of this uniting of what has been broken is, no doubt, the uniting of Jews & Gentiles vis-à-vis the covenant of peace spoken of below.

This prophecy (especially the following portion) is about Jesus' first coming; not second:

- The world will be destroyed at his second coming (2PE 3:10).
- Its forever (not for a thousand year millennium that is commonly supposed to be the time of national Israel at Christ's second coming).
- The "covenant of peace" has been fulfilled (see comments below vs. 26).
- The tabernacle is there, but it won't be during the eternal age (REV 21:22). Thus, it

must be a spiritual tabernacle/temple (as the church is – see notes @ EPH 2).

- The “prince” David (vs. 25) is Christ – the good shepherd. Jesus is our king and shepherd now. We aren’t waiting for some future restoration of the ethnic nation of Israel before he fulfills this role.
- Israel is gathered from among the nations (concerning “many nations”, see JER 29), which has already been fulfilled.
- “...they shall be My people, and I will be their God” is language very similar to the description of the new covenant in JER 31, which we know is fulfilled in the church (see notes there).
- This passage is so similar to the prophecy of chapter 34 that it should be obvious that they both speak of the same thing. In that passage, there is even more evidence of its fulfillment in the church (see notes above).

21 “Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land;

“Land” is fraught with meaning. Reference introductory section, “The Land.”

22 and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. 23 They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

24 “David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. 25 Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. 26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore.

Shepherd:

- Again we see reference to “one shepherd” as in chapter 34 above. This is Jesus, the “good shepherd” of JOH 10 who is certainly our shepherd now. Jesus says he’s the one shepherd in the context of mentioning “other sheep not of this fold” which no doubt refers to the Gentiles. Notice how the shepherd (vs. 24) flows right into the land (vs. 25) which flows right into the covenant of peace (vs. 26). This is all one prophecy.
 - *“As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”*

JOH 10:15-16

A covenant of peace:

- Here is another reference to that covenant: *"I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods."* EZE 34:25. The "wild beasts" are the Gentiles - see notes ISA 11.
- Here is the fulfillment: *"Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 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..."* EPH 2:11-15

27 My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 28 The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore."

Chapters 38-39

These chapters describe the battle where Gog comes against Israel and is destroyed by God. I'm not going to include all the verses, but I think the following is the bottom line when it comes to these 2 chapters:

- They can't be speaking of a literal future battle:
 - Ancient warfare is described:
 - Weapons are bucklers, shields, swords, horses, bows & arrows.
 - Plunder the enemy intends to take includes cattle.
 - City defenses are walls, bars, gates.
 - People will not gather wood, but instead burn the weapons used in the battle for 7 years. After a future battle, people won't be burning tanks or aircraft to cook their food.
 - The most charitable thing I can say about the myriad attempts to come up with explanations about how a future battle could match this description is that they are just silly (again, see introductory section, "Literalism").
- They probably can't be describing a literal historical battle because no known battle fits the description.
- This leaves us with a spiritual interpretation, i.e., this describes spiritual warfare (prior to Christ's second coming). This would comport with what is described about Gog / Magog in the only other place in the Bible where they're mentioned: REV 20. Notice that Gog receives the same fate, i.e., fire in both places (EZE 39:6

& REV 20:9). See notes @ REV 20 for more. Notice also that there are many “7s” here as there are in Revelation.

Chapters 40-48 (verses not shown – too many)

These chapters mostly describe a new temple and the prescribed activities of priests. They putatively refer to a literal future millennium wherein Israel is restored to the place it should've held in the O.T. They either refer to the church spiritually, or to a state Israel could have attained to as may be indicated in this verse: *“Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern”*. EZE 43:10

The reasons these chapters can't speak of literal millennium follow:

- There are references to family life & marriage, but Jesus says there will be no marriage in the resurrection (after his coming):
 - *“They shall not take as wife a widow or a divorced woman, but take virgins of the descendants of the house of Israel, or widows of priests.”* EZE 44:22
 - *“It shall be that you will divide it by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. They shall be to you as native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel.”* EZE 47:22
 - *“But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage;”* LUK 20:35
- There is a reference to dying, but resurrection bodies don't die:
 - (44:22 above mentions widows)
 - *“So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.””* 1CO 15:54
- It commands people to be physically circumcised, but circumcision is no longer a valid practice:
 - *“Thus says the Lord GOD: “No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel.”* EZE 44:9
 - *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.”* GAL 5:6
 - *“Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.”* 1CO 7:19
 - *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.”* GAL 6:15
 - *“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from*

God." ROM 2:28-29

- [Perhaps the most important reason] Animal sacrifices are taking place, but the old covenant is obsolete. If one responds that these future sacrifices are done as a memorial, note that the sacrifices spoken of in Ezekiel are for sin, not a memorial, and if we want a memorial, why don't we just continue the memorial of communion? And if for memorial, why don't we offer them today? Further, as has been noted, one of the themes of the book of Hebrews is that the old Jewish system is null & void, not something to be returned to (his readers being inclined to do so due probably to increasing persecution).
 - *"There was a chamber and its entrance by the gateposts of the gateway, where they washed the burnt offering. In the vestibule of the gateway were two tables on this side and two tables on that side, on which to slay the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering."* EZE 40:38-39
 - *"And He said to me, 'Son of man, thus says the Lord GOD: 'These are the ordinances for the altar on the day when it is made, for sacrificing burnt offerings on it, and for sprinkling blood on it.'" EZE 43:18*
 - *"Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come — In the volume of the book it is written of Me — To do Your will, O God.'" Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God..." HEB 10: 5-12*
 - *"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire" PSA 40:6*
- A Levitical order is spoken of, but there has been established a new priesthood because the old was inadequate.
 - *"But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood," says the Lord GOD."* EZE 44:15
 - *"Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from*

which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." HEB 7:11-17

Daniel

I believe this book prophesies almost exclusively Jesus' first coming (not his second).

Chapter 2

Here we have a prophecy concerning global kingdoms. They prophesy the only ones which are truly global ending with the kingdom of God which transcends national allegiances. The last one is different because it won't be overcome by any other.

31 "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

The stone that (apparently) starts small but grows into a great mountain parallels the images Jesus used (a tiny mustard seed that grows to a tree, leaven that infiltrates the whole lump of dough).

36 "This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. 37 You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold. 39 But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly

strong and partly fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

“the God of heaven will set up a kingdom.” Whatever your eschatology, this is the kingdom of God. The only question is whether this is speaking of the first coming or the second (as dispensationalism teaches). Every evangelical believes the kingdom represented by the iron to be the Roman Empire. What in this text (or anywhere else) would lead the reader to believe that this was some *future reincarnation* of that empire? Nothing; as mentioned above, the prophecy predicts the succession of world empires from that time forward. The Roman Empire followed the Greek, and Jesus initiated his kingdom during the rule of that Roman Empire (see introductory section “Kingdom Prophecies”). It continues to this day and will never be destroyed.

Further, how would it be that a prophet of the Old Testament would skip over Christ’s first coming, and go directly to his second? I don’t believe any Old Testament writers even knew of any second coming; the first was of primary importance.

Chapter 7

In this chapter, those sections (such as verses 9 & 10) which are indented and formatted in the narrow prose form are (as all eschatological camps would agree) asides that don’t necessarily flow chronologically with the rest of the material.

I believe the little horn speaks of the papacy. For all the reasons for this, see notes at 2TH 2 around the discussion of the “man of sin.”

Vision of the Four Beasts

7 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.

2 Daniel spoke, saying, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man’s heart was given to it.

5 “And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: ‘Arise, devour much flesh!’

6 “After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four

wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

7 "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

The ten horns may not be an exact number, but may simply indicate that the Roman Empire is made up of a number of nations.

8 I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

The little horn subdues some of the kings/kingdoms of the Roman Empire. The papacy had more power than whole nations. Apparently, the little horn won't rise until some of the other horns are out of the way. This comports with Paul's indication that the Roman Empire is the only thing in the way of the man of sin (see notes @ 2TH 2):

- *"And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time."* 2TH 2:6

Vision of the Ancient of Days

9 "I watched till thrones were put in place,
And the Ancient of Days was seated;
His garment was white as snow,
And the hair of His head was like pure wool.
His throne was a fiery flame,
Its wheels a burning fire;
10 A fiery stream issued
And came forth from before Him.
A thousand thousands ministered to Him;
Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.
The court was seated,
And the books were opened.

I think this is one of the very few places that the O.T. speaks of Christ's second coming. The fiery stream issuing forth sounds a lot like the fire at Christ's second coming:

- *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."* 2PE 3:10

11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the

burning flame. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

Their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged: I think this means that the empires were overtaken, but the lands and the people therein remained until the end of the vision. This is in contrast with the kingdom of the messiah which is everlasting (vs. 14 below).

13 "I was watching in the night visions,

And behold, One like the Son of Man,

Coming with the clouds of heaven!

He came to the Ancient of Days,

And they brought Him near before Him.

14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,

That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion,

Which shall not pass away,

And His kingdom the one

Which shall not be destroyed.

I think this refers to Christ's ascension as seen from heaven (he comes with the clouds here in the same way he left earth as described in the passage from Acts below to the ancient of days [the father]). He goes to (officially) receive his kingdom similarly to the way the nobleman receives his kingdom in the following parable. Several Roman rulers did a similar thing by travelling to Rome (the seat of authority) to receive their commission to rule and then return to the land they actually ruled.

- *"Therefore He said: 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'" LUK 19:12-14*
- *"Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'" ACT 1:9-11*

Daniel's Visions Interpreted

15 "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16 I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: 17 'Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints

of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'

19 "Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20 and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.

Note that there is no indication of any gap of thousands of years in this description of the Roman Empire. Such a gap is required by dispensational theology (the little horn must be the AntiChrist that will arise from a future "revived" Roman Empire) but it's not there. The horns all arise while the beast is still alive, and it's later destroyed (vs. 26).

21 "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

23 "Thus he said:

'The fourth beast shall be
A fourth kingdom on earth,
Which shall be different from all other kingdoms,
And shall devour the whole earth,
Trample it and break it in pieces.

24 The ten horns are ten kings
Who shall arise from this kingdom.
And another shall rise after them;
He shall be different from the first ones,
And shall subdue three kings.

These "kings" are no doubt actually "kingdoms" just as the four beasts which represent empires/kingdoms are called "kings" in vs. 17 above.

25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High,
Shall persecute the saints of the Most High,
And shall intend to change times and law.
Then the saints shall be given into his hand
For a time and times and half a time.

Here we have our first reference to the 3.5 year period. Whatever this period indicates, I

think it's the same thing wherever it's mentioned (here and multiple times in REV). I think it represents the time of the church age (see notes @ REV 11).

That being the case, I think the little horn represents the papacy specifically, and all those forces that oppose the church generally (in the same way that the beast represents something specific and general – see notes @ REV 13).

26 'But the court shall be seated,
And they shall take away his dominion,
To consume and destroy it forever.
27 Then the kingdom and dominion,
And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven,
Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.
His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

This surely speaks of the second coming of Christ. The court seated speaks of final judgment, the dominion of the little horn (all those who oppose Christ) is destroyed, and now all dominions are under his reign.

Note that this kingdom is everlasting; it doesn't last a thousand years as dispensationalism would say (supposing that it's the same kingdom as REV 20). The kingdom was initiated by Christ at his first coming (see introductory section "Kingdom Prophecies"), and it never ends.

Chapter 8 references prophecies about the Medo-Persian and Greek empires. Note that the "little horn" of chapter 8 is not the same as the little horn of chapter 7.

Chapter 9

24 "Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.

- "To finish the transgression:" This speaks of the Jews committing the full measure of their sins (filling up the cup of God's wrath).
 - *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your*

fathers' guilt." MAT 23:29-31

- *"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."*

1TH 2:14-16

- "To make an end of sins / make reconciliation for iniquity:" This obviously speaks of Christ's work on the cross. The dispensational view that this is literally the *end of all sin*, i.e., Christ's second coming and ushering in the millennium doesn't work because under that scenario there is still Satan's final rebellion (REV 20) yet to come. This speaks of the fact that Jesus will make an end of sins in his people.
 - *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* JOH 1:29
 - *"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself"* 2CO 5:19
 - *"...we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."* ROM 5:11
- "To anoint the Most Holy:" This was fulfilled at the cross.
 - *"For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another — He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."* HEB 9:24-26
- "To seal up vision and prophecy:" I think this means to fulfill prophecy; to seal it by completing it. Further prophecies are made in the N.T., but as for O.T. prophecies, I'm endeavoring to show that nearly all (with a few exceptions such as DAN 7:9-10, 26-27 above) have been fulfilled. This is indicated in this verse (speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem):
 - *"For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."* LUK 21:22

Note that 70 weeks, literally "70 sevens", interpreted by all camps as 70X7 or 490 years, have passed since the prophecy was uttered. Nowhere in this chapter do we see a gap of thousands of years as is necessary for Dispensational theology. It's either a 490 year prophecy or a false prophecy. The length of 70X7 comes from this verse where Moses says that punishment (the prophecy of Jeremiah to be taken into captivity for 70 years) will be multiplied by 7:

- *"And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins."* LEV 26:18

The prophecy is that there will be 490 years of dealing with the Jews ("70 weeks are determined for your people") until certain things would be accomplished.

25 "Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.

The timing of this decree is disputed, but Scripture seems to indicate it was Cyrus' decree:

- *"Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, 'You shall be built,' And to the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'"" ISA 44:28*
- *"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom... He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah." EZR 1:1-2*

The problem with this is that using the supposed time of Cyrus as the starting point for the 490 year prophecy pushes the end (or even the 69th week) past the time of Christ.

This problem is only caused by what is quite possibly an incorrect assumption about the time of Cyrus³⁶.

26 And after the sixty-two weeks

Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;

And the people of the prince who is to come

Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.

The end of it shall be with a flood,

And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;

But in the middle of the week

He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,

Even until the consummation, which is determined,

Is poured out on the desolate.

These 2 famous verses parallel each other (they describe the same thing in a different way). Such parallelism in Scripture and Hebrew writing is common. Both verses have 2 parts as indicated by the highlighting. The first part of each describes Christ's work; the second describes the judgment on Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

- "Then" in vs. 27 is used not in the sense of "after this," but in the sense of "at that time."
- "he" in vs. 27 can be none other than the antecedent – Messiah of the previous verse; Messiah is the subject of that verse. The secondary subject would be "the

people,” but that doesn’t fit because it’s not a “he.” The “prince,” supposed to be the anti-Christ by dispensationalists makes no sense – he’s simply not one of the subjects of vs. 26.

- “The end of it shall be with a flood:” This speaks of a flood of invading armies. “Flood” is used this way several times in Scripture, for example:
 - *“Who is this, rising like the Nile, like rivers whose waters surge? Egypt rises like the Nile, like rivers whose waters surge. He said, ‘I will rise, I will cover the earth, I will destroy cities and their inhabitants.’ Advance, O horses, and rage, O chariots!” JER 46:7-9*
 - *“Behold, waters rise out of the north, And shall be an overflowing flood; They shall overflow the land and all that is in it, The city and those who dwell within; Then the men shall cry, And all the inhabitants of the land shall wail. At the noise of the stamping hooves of his strong horses, At the rushing of his chariots, At the rumbling of his wheels, The fathers will not look back for their children, Lacking courage” JER 47:2-3*
- “...the prince who is to come:” Titus (the Roman ruler in AD 70) really was a prince; his father, Vespasian, was the king.
- “...abominations... one who makes desolate:” For a discussion of the abomination of desolation, see notes at MAT 24:15 (the interpretation of this phrase is provided for us there).
- “...he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week:” Christ offers the new covenant first to the Jews. Remember that this 490 year prophecy is for them. This is the last 7 years of God's dealing with them.
 - *“Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers...” ROM 15:8*
- “...middle of the week:”
 - This indicates the time when Christ was cut off - after 3.5 years; about the middle of the last week, and after the duration of his ministry.
 - The rest of the last week probably refers to the time after Christ’s death on the cross but before the Gospel officially began to be extended to the Gentiles. Thus we close God’s dealings with national Israel; Daniel’s people.
 - It’s possible that the things after the messiah being cut off (destruction of Jerusalem) aren’t part of the 70 weeks; the prophecy would close (the end of the 70th week) at the official beginning of the inclusion of Gentiles (as mentioned above) during Peter’s visit to Cornelius or Paul’s vision of Christ. The inclusion of the destruction of Jerusalem would be there because it’s the last thing pertinent to the Jews; God has stopped dealing with them as a nation, but the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem was afterwards.

Chapter 12

While I didn't include material for chapters 10 & 11, I think chapters 8-12 can be outlined like this:

- Chapter 8: Daniel's time through the time of Christ.
- Chapter 9: Destruction of Jerusalem.
- Chapter 10: Daniel prays for further understanding of those visions.
- Chapter 11: The answer to his prayer; we repeat with more detail. Daniel's time through the time of Christ.
- Chapter 12: Destruction of Jerusalem (with possibly a view towards the final resurrection).

1 At that time Michael shall stand up,
The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people;
And there shall be a time of trouble,
Such as never was since there was a nation,
Even to that time.
And at that time your people shall be delivered,
Every one who is found written in the book.

The "time of trouble such as never was" surely speaks of the same thing as the following verse. See notes there for reasons why that speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem. Michael standing up seems to indicate that he protected the nation until he stood up and got out of the way and allowed intense persecution.

- *"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."* MAT 24:21

"your people... written in the book." Here we seem to transition to the true Israel. When Jesus tells his disciples that their names are written in the verse below, he surely doesn't include the Sadducees & Pharisees. "Your people" are people like Daniel – Christians.

- *"Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."* LUK 10:20

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

This may speak of the resurrection, but it may be speaking spiritually of us rising to newness of life:

- *"Therefore He says: 'Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.'"* EPH 5:14

3 Those who are wise shall shine
Like the brightness of the firmament,

And those who turn many to righteousness

Like the stars forever and ever.

“turn many to righteousness” sounds like evangelism. As for shining / brightness / stars / glory (brightness), again, this may be future, but it may be speaking spiritually of the church age:

- *“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts”* 2PE 1:19
- *“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”* 2CO 3:18
- *“Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.”* ISA 60:1-3
- *“Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”* MAT 13:40-43. Note that Jesus says this will happen at the end of “this age.” Jesus was living in the Jewish age.

4 “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

Running to and fro and increasing in knowledge here is in contrast to running to and fro and not finding the word of the Lord in the following prophecy in Amos about the lack of any words from the Lord during the inter-testamental period. Thus, this refers to the great growth of the knowledge of God in the church age. The “time of the end” doesn’t have to refer to the end of the world; there are many ends of many ages referred to in Daniel.

- *“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord God, “That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, But shall not find it.”* AMO 8:11-12

5 Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. 6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?”

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

"How long" asked in verse 6 could be asking how long once the things mentioned begin until they finish; if so, the 3.5 years (time, times, and half a time) could refer to the length of the Jewish war (the destruction of Jerusalem referred to here as the power of the holy people being shattered) which did in fact last that long. Note that the next verse transitions to a question about *"the end of these things"* referring to what is mentioned in 1PE below.

The man clothed in linen held up his hands and swore *"by him who lives forever."* This harkens back to the following verse from DEU 32 which is also speaking of the destruction of Israel and also swears by him who lives forever:

- *"For the Lord will judge His people And have compassion on His servants... For I raise My hand to heaven, And say, "As I live forever... I will make My arrows drunk with blood, And My sword shall devour flesh" DEU 32:36, 40, 42*

8 Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things*?" 9 And he said, "Go *your way*, Daniel, for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

This passage is referred to by 1PE chapter 1 (see notes below). There can be no mistaking this. 1PE 1 describes the church age; thus, that is the fulfillment.

- *"Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have 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... Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit" 1PE 1:10-12, 22*

Parallels between the two passages above:

- DAN mentions *"the end of these things"* and *"the time of the end."* 1PE mentions *"these last times."*
- DAN sees *"a man clothed in linen."* 1PE says that angels desire to look into these things.
- Someone in DAN asks, *"what shall be the end"* and *"how long."* 1PE says that the prophets inquired *"what, or what manner of time."* This must be what Peter is referring to because this is the only case in Scripture of a prophet asking and being denied. The revelation was given *"to us"* – the writers of the N.T.
- DAN reads, *"Many shall be purified."* 1PE reads, *"you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit"*

Thus we see that Daniel asked these questions and was denied the answer because the time was not yet, but we are given the answer by Peter. The answer is the sufferings of

Christ (DAN 9) and the glories that would follow (DAN 12).

Hosea

Chapter 1:11 Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel

Shall be gathered together,
And appoint for themselves one head;
And they shall come up out of the land,
For great will be the day of Jezreel!

Judah = Jew, Israel = the Israel of God (GAL 6:16, the rest of God's people who seek him through Christ). They have come together under one head:

- *“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh - who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 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”* EPH 2:11-15

Chapter 2

This all speaks of the new covenant; the church. Note that God *will* betroth the church to him forever; he will divorce Israel (ISA 50:1, JER 3:8), but betroth the church.

18 In that day I will make a covenant for them

With the beasts of the field,
With the birds of the air,
And with the creeping things of the ground.
Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth,
To make them lie down safely.

19 “ I will betroth you to Me forever;

Yes, I will betroth you to Me
In righteousness and justice,
In lovingkindness and mercy;

20 I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,

And you shall know the LORD.

21 “ It shall come to pass in that day

That I will answer,” says the LORD;

" I will answer the heavens,
And they shall answer the earth.

22 The earth shall answer

With grain,
With new wine,
And with oil;
They shall answer Jezreel.

23 Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth,
And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy;
Then I will say to those who were not My people,
' You are My people!'
And they shall say, 'You are my God!'"

This is all one passage about the return of Israel which ends with words that are quoted in 1PE 2:9-10 speaking of the church: *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."*

Chapter 3

4 For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. 5 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.

Days w/o king or sacrifices: inter-testamental period. After that, the remnant of Israel will seek Jesus in the last days of the Jewish age (reference discussion of "last days" in introduction).

Chapter 9

14 Give them, O LORD—
What will You give?
Give them a miscarrying womb
And dry breasts!

The prophet is wishing them barrenness, for it will be better. This in reference to the final judgment of Israel, as Jesus mentions:

- *"But Jesus, turning to them, 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 say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed! Then they will begin to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"'"*
LUK 23:28-29

Chapter 10

8 Also the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel,
Shall be destroyed.

The thorn and thistle shall grow on their altars;

They shall say to the mountains, "Cover us!"

And to the hills, "Fall on us!"

This is, again, speaking of the final judgment of Israel. See quoted verses above as well as notes @ REV 6:16, "...and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

Chapter 14

Here we have the summation of the book in a passage that speaks of the new covenant throughout.

1 O Israel, return to the LORD your God,
For you have stumbled because of your iniquity;

2 Take words with you,
And return to the LORD.

Say to Him,

" Take away all iniquity;

Receive us graciously,

For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips.

Christ took away iniquities.

3 Assyria shall not save us,

We will not ride on horses,

Nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands, 'You are our gods.'

For in You the fatherless finds mercy."

We don't trust in military might - we've beaten our swords into plowshares to plant the seed of the Gospel.

4 " I will heal their backsliding,

I will love them freely,

For My anger has turned away from him.

5 I will be like the dew to Israel;

He shall grow like the lily,

And lengthen his roots like Lebanon.

Jesus spoke of the lilies.

6 His branches shall spread;

His beauty shall be like an olive tree,

And his fragrance like Lebanon.

7 Those who dwell under his shadow shall return;

They shall be revived like grain,

And grow like a vine.

Their scent shall be like the wine of Lebanon.

Grain: *"And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain — perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body"*
1CO 15:37-38

8 " Ephraim shall say, 'What have I to do anymore with idols?'

I have heard and observed him.

I am like a green cypress tree;

Your fruit is found in Me."

This speaks of the future time in which Israel would be his people – when they will be fruitful. Jesus told national Israel that fruit would come from the church: *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."*
MAT 21:43

9 Who is wise?

Let him understand these things.

Who is prudent?

Let him know them.

For the ways of the LORD are right;

The righteous walk in them,

But transgressors stumble in them.

At the very end of the book he asks a question as if to indicate that nobody at that time would understand the fulfillment. This similar to DAN 12 (see notes there).

Micah

Chapter 2

12 I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob,

I will surely gather the remnant of Israel;

I will put them together like sheep of the fold,

Like a flock in the midst of their pasture;

They shall make a loud noise because of so many people.

"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold (the Gentiles); them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd." JOH 10:16

See notes @ ZEC 2 for more about the abundance of people.

Chapter 4

1 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days

That the mountain of the LORD's house

Shall be established on the top of the mountains,

And shall be exalted above the hills;
And peoples shall flow to it.

4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree,
And no one shall make them afraid;
For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

This is a good example of a prophet describing an idyllic life in terms that his reader could relate to. Thus, most or all of such prophetic language can be seen this way. The way they worshipped God was via the temple, so the prophet speaks of a new temple; the way they saw themselves was as a nation, so the prophet speaks of a new nation, the way they saw themselves as prosperous/fruitful was by having their own vine/tree, and so forth.

5 For all people walk each in the name of his god,
But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God
Forever and ever.

Since this verse describes different people following their gods, it can't refer to some future millennium ruled by Christ; it speaks of our age.

Zechariah

Chapter 2

1 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand. 2 So I said, "Where are you going?" And he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its width and what is its length."

3 And there was the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him, 4 who said to him, "Run, speak to this young man, saying: 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it. 5 For I,' says the LORD, 'will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.'"

Such measurement won't mean much in the future; walls won't be able to contain Jerusalem, and God himself will be her protector. Her walls will be salvation:

- *"In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks."* ISA 26:1
- *"Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, Neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; But you shall call your walls Salvation, And your gates Praise."* ISA 60:18

This idea of Jerusalem having to greatly expand to contain its future inhabitants surely applies to the church because the same theme is applied to the church in the following example:

Passages from Isaiah	Applied to Church
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Sing, O barren, You who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, You who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate Than the children of the married woman,” says the LORD. <u>Enlarge the place of your tent, And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your stakes. For you shall expand to the right and to the left, And your descendants will inherit the nations, And make the desolate cities inhabited.”</u> ISA 54:1-3 “<u>The children you will have</u>, After you have lost the others, Will say again in your ears, ‘<u>The place is too small for me; Give me a place where I may dwell.</u>’ Then you will say in your heart, ‘<u>Who has begotten these for me</u>, Since I have lost my children and am desolate, A captive, and wandering to and fro? And who has brought these up? There I was, left alone; But these, where were they?’” ISA 49:20-21 	<p>“... for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with <u>her children</u>— but the Jerusalem above is free, which is <u>the mother of us all</u>. For it is written:</p> <p>“ Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has <u>many more children</u> Than she who has a husband.”” GAL 4:25-27</p>

Chapter 6

12 Then speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: “Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD; 13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”’

This is speaking of Jesus, of course, and this is how he built the temple (the church):

- “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” MAT 16:18

15 Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the LORD. Then you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. And this shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.”

- The church is the people “afar off” who will build the temple:
 - *“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 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, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”* EPH 2:13-22.
- Again, they are God's building:
 - *“For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.”* 1CO 3:9
- The Jews were supposed to be the builders, but they rejected the cornerstone:
 - *“... let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’”* ACT 4:10-11

Chapter 8

3 Thus says the LORD: I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, The Holy Mountain.

This coming need not be the 2nd. In the first chapter he speaks of a return where he mentions his house being built (as in chapter 6 above), and a surveyor's line being stretched out over Jerusalem (which probably speaks of the judgment of Jerusalem as his “house” was being built):

- *“Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Return to Me,” says the LORD of hosts, “and I will return to you,” says the LORD of hosts... Therefore thus says the LORD: “I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house shall be built in it,” says the LORD of hosts, And a surveyor's line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.’”* ZEC 1:3, 16

...

20 “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Peoples shall yet come, Inhabitants of many cities;
21 The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, “Let us continue to go and

pray before the LORD, And seek the LORD of hosts. I myself will go also.” 22 Yes, many peoples and strong nations Shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, And to pray before the LORD.’

This speaks of peoples of all nations coming to the church (which again, is the holy nation and the spiritual Jerusalem).

23 “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”’

A small number of Jews spread the gospel to a large number of Gentiles at the beginning of the church age. The church is lopsided in favor of Gentiles during our time:

- “... but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written: “Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband.” GAL 4:26-27

Chapter 9

The split between chapters 1-8 and 9-14 here is very similar to the split between 1-39 and 40-66 of Isaiah. Chapters 1-8 speak mostly about what is going on in his time (rebuilding of temple) with a view to the future; the remainder contains strictly future prophecies. Of the remaining chapters, the first 3 (all would agree) begin with Alexander the great and end with the destruction of Jerusalem; the last 3 (I believe) repeat the same events with the added view forward to the church age. Thus both sections begin with God's protection & end with his lifting that protection.

9 “ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your King is coming to you;

He is just and having salvation,

Lowly and riding on a donkey,

A colt, the foal of a donkey.

10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim

And the horse from Jerusalem;

The battle bow shall be cut off.

He shall speak peace to the nations;

His dominion shall be ‘from sea to sea,

And from the River to the ends of the earth.’

After his triumphal entry, the king goes on to conquer the entire earth in a peaceful way (which Christ has done):

- See notes for REV 19:11-15
- “He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up

sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore. ISA 2:4 (see notes there)

- 11 "As for you also,
Because of the blood of your covenant,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.
12 Return to the stronghold,
You prisoners of hope.
Even today I declare
That I will restore double to you.
13 For I have bent Judah, My bow,
Fitted the bow with Ephraim,
And raised up your sons, O Zion,
Against your sons, O Greece,
And made you like the sword of a mighty man...."

9-10 (which we know speaks of Jesus) was a parenthesis whereby Zechariah drifted off into the future momentarily. The fact that they were rescued from Alexander the great may have occasioned the mention of the greater future king. Now he is back to the nearer future – the Maccabean revolution.

Chapter 10

This chapter either continues the prophecy about the Maccabean revolution, or it speaks of the church age, or both. See notes @ Revelation 11:2

- 7 Those of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man,
And their heart shall rejoice as if with wine.
Yes, their children shall see it and be glad;
Their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.

Sounds like the day of Pentecost:

- *"For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day."*
ACT 2:15

- 8 I will whistle for them and gather them,
For I will redeem them;
And they shall increase as they once increased.

Here through vs. 10 is probably a Messianic parenthesis just as 9:10-11 is. Both passages are in the midst of describing Israel's deliverance and drift into the future ultimate deliverance.

- 9 "I will sow them among the peoples,
And they shall remember Me in far countries;
They shall live, together with their children,
And they shall return.
10 I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt,
And gather them from Assyria.

I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon,
Until no more room is found for them.

This probably speaks of people from Gentile nations (common Gentile enemy nations) *coming to* God. Note that this *cannot* be taken literally; Assyria no longer exists. If the rejoinder is, “then this refers to the nation or nations that are situated where Assyria used to exist” then you’re no longer taking it literally. Why be bound to a half-literal interpretation?

Chapter 11

This chapter speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD.

- 1 Open your doors, O Lebanon,
That fire may devour your cedars.
2 Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen,
Because the mighty trees are ruined.
Wail, O oaks of Bashan,
For the thick forest has come down.
3 There is the sound of wailing shepherds!
For their glory is in ruins.
There is the sound of roaring lions!
For the pride of the Jordan is in ruins.

Mighty trees / thick forest / shepherds all speak of people – the leaders of Israel.

...

7 So I fed the flock for slaughter, in particular the poor of the flock. I took for myself two staffs: the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bonds; and I fed the flock.

Beauty represents their relationship with God; bonds with each other (see vs. 14). Both are broken.

8 I dismissed the three shepherds in one month. My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. 9 Then I said, “I will not feed you. Let what is dying die, and what is perishing perish. Let those that are left eat each other’s flesh.” 10 And I took my staff, Beauty, and cut it in two, that I might break the covenant which I had made with all the peoples.

The covenant was broken & the new covenant was later established. “Eating each other’s flesh” happened during the siege against Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

11 So it was broken on that day. Thus the poor of the flock, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of the LORD. 12 Then I said to them, “If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.” So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.

13 And the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter” —that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter.

Notice below how loose / non literal the stated fulfillment below is (It reads, “spoken by Jeremiah” but we know it actually refers to this passage. The reason it references Jeremiah are beyond the scope of this discussion). This demonstrates that we have to pay close attention to what the NT writers have to say about fulfilled prophecy.

- *“Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” And they said, “What is that to us? You see to it!” Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.*

But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.” And they consulted together and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter’s field, as the LORD directed me.” MAT 27:3-10

Here are 2 other quick examples:

- **Scripture:** *“And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it. But every man’s servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it. A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it. In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones.” EXO 12:43-46*
- **Fulfillment:** *“Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, “Not one of His bones shall be broken.”” JOH 19:32-36*
- **Scripture:** *“A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more.” JER 31:15*
- **Fulfillment:** *“Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying [above verse]” MAT 2:16-17*
 - This is strange because the children in Bethlehem weren’t descendants of Rachel; they were descendants of Judah. Rachel was buried in the area,

however, so there is some connection. The point is we would never make the connection had Matthew not told us.

There is a very loose correlation between the Scripture (which doesn't even look like a prophecy) and its fulfillment.

14 Then I cut in two my other staff, Bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

Chapter 12

Chapters 12 - 14 are somewhat of a repetition of 9 - 11. That section started out with the "burden of the word of the Lord" against Hadrach; same here against Israel.

1 The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: 2 "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. 3 And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. 4 In that day," says the LORD, "I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. 5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.' 6 In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem.

"Firepan:" Something in the midst of fire yet not being burned up. Thus Israel survives this conflict (Maccabean revolution). The torch speaks of God using them to judge surrounding nations.

7 "The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah.

The Maccabean revolution started in the less glorious Judah, then later all Israel got in on the action.

8 In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them.

"Feeble like David:" average Joes fought valiantly in the revolution.

9 It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will

mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

Now we have a view into the more distant future, but not the future from our perspective; rather it speaks of Christ & A.D. 70. "Pouring out the Spirit of grace" refers to Pentecost:

- *"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh'" ACT 2:14-17*

Regarding that Spirit of grace & Jews mourning:

- *"Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?" HEB 10:28-29*
- Same event here: *"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen."* REV 1:7
- Note that each of the 3 verses here in Zechariah (10-12) repeats "mourn" just as each of the following 3 verses repeat "fire:" *"And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."* MAT 3:10-12
- Speaking of near future & suddenly giving a vision further in the future happened back in 9:9 too.
- This section is focused on *intense* mourning (like AD 70). Nothing indicates the certain joy that would be present upon the coming of the Lord with favor.
- Finally, we know this was fulfilled in the first century (Calvary & continues to A.D. 70) because John tells us so: *"For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced" JOH 19:36-37*

11 In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. 12 And the land shall mourn...

Chapter 13

This chapter flows right from the last & describes the first century church.

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

The fountain for sin speaks of the blood of Christ.

2 "It shall be in that day," says the LORD of hosts, "that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land.

3 It shall come to pass that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, 'You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the LORD.' And his father and mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies.

The early church didn't tolerate false prophets.

4 "And it shall be in that day that every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; they will not wear a robe of coarse hair to deceive. 5 But he will say, 'I am no prophet, I am a farmer; for a man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.' 6 And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'

These wounds can be anywhere on the body (other versions translate this way). These are, no doubt, the self-flagellation wounds of false prophets which the bearer is attempting to explain away lest he be killed (figuratively).

7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,
Against the Man who is My Companion,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
"Strike the Shepherd,
And the sheep will be scattered;
Then I will turn My hand against the little ones.

This is fulfilled in the scattering of the apostles: "*Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'*" MAT 26:31

8 And 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:

This speaks of a *portion* of Israel being saved. This is the remnant (the true Israel). Dispensationalism says that all Israel will be saved (ROM 11:26). I believe Romans is speaking of all *spiritual* Israel; this is speaking of a portion of *national* Israel (the remnant) which formed the beginning of the church (following from vs. 7 above which we know speaks of the apostles). See notes @ REV 14.

9 I will bring the one-third through the fire,
Will refine them as silver is refined,
And test them as gold is tested.

They will call on My name,
And I will answer them.
I will say, 'This is My people';
And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

"... that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ ..."
1PE 1:7. Note that Peter's target audience is Jewish.

Chapter 14

The Day of the LORD

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

All the nations: Rome *was* all the nations. It consisted of all the known nations, & soldiers of all nations were present during the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

3 Then the LORD will go forth
And fight against those nations,
As He fights in the day of battle.

He is judging Israel, but fighting for the remnant.

4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,
Which faces Jerusalem on the east.
And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,
From east to west,
Making a very large valley;
Half of the mountain shall move toward the north
And half of it toward the south.

- The last time God left the city & stood on the Mount of Olives (mount to the east is Mount of Olives), it was to leave it behind & watch it be judged ("*And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which is on the east side of the city.*" EZE 11:23). This is no doubt the same thing.
- Here is another example of topographical changes taking place, yet not literally (speaking of John the Baptist): "*The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough ways smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'*" LUK 3:5

5 Then you shall flee through My mountain valley,
For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.
Yes, you shall flee
As you fled from the earthquake
In the days of Uzziah king of Judah.
Thus the LORD my God will come,
And all the saints with You.

Though God lifts his protection, he splits the mountain (figuratively) & provides a way of escape for his remnant: *"Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her."* LUK 21:21

6 It shall come to pass in that day
That there will be no light;
The lights will diminish.

7 It shall be one day
Which is known to the LORD—
Neither day nor night.
But at evening time it shall happen
That it will be light.

8 And in that day it shall be
That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem,
Half of them toward the eastern sea
And half of them toward the western sea;
In both summer and winter it shall occur.

Jesus told us when this was fulfilled. This can be the only Scripture he is referring to when he says below, "as the Scripture has said"; it's the only place that mentions living water, especially rivers of it:

- *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."* JOH 7:38

Notice also the following related Scriptures. They all together seem to indicate that water flows from Jerusalem. "Jerusalem" is the spiritual place where his people live. It's obvious from reading the verses that they aren't speaking of literal Jerusalem, but just so we can be sure, when the second verse below mentions "the Valley of Acacias" (or valley of Shittim as in other versions), that valley is on the other side of the Jordan river from Jerusalem. Since one river cannot cross over another (the fountain cannot flow from Jerusalem to Shittim), it is symbolic:

- *"Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar."* EZE 47:1

- *“And it will come to pass in that day that the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; A fountain shall flow from the house of the LORD And water the Valley of Acacias.” JOE 3:18*
- *“But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.” AMO 5:24*

...

12 And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem:

Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet,
Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets,
And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.

13 It shall come to pass in that day

That a great panic from the LORD will be among them.
Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor,
And raise his hand against his neighbor's hand;

14 Judah also will fight at Jerusalem.

And the wealth of all the surrounding nations
Shall be gathered together:
Gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance.

15 Such also shall be the plague

On the horse and the mule,
On the camel and the donkey,
And on all the cattle that will be in those camps.
So shall this plague be.

The Nations Worship the King

Reasons why the remainder of this chapter can't be future:

- Places are discussed which no longer exist.
- It speaks of localized worship (as in going to the temple) which has been done away with: *“Jesus said 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 the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.” JOH 4: 21-22*
- Feast of tabernacles: such feasts no longer apply: *“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.” COL 2:16-17*
- Sacrifices have been terminated:
 - *“It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered*

which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience” HEB 9:9-10

- *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.” HEB10:4-6*
- *“then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God” HEB 10:9-12*
- Unsaved survivors (verses 12-15 above into the next section below). There are no surviving unbelievers of the 2nd coming. *“...in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes...” 2TH 1:8-10*

16 And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

Earlier we had the remnant of Israel coming in; here we see the remnant of the nations coming in. The feast of tabernacles is the last feast celebrating the harvest - this is God's harvest.

17 And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. 18 If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 20 In that day “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar.

In the old order, only some things were holy; in the new even mundane things (like bells on a horse) are holy. IOW, we are the temple & all of life is holy to the Lord.

21 Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

“... no longer a Canaanite:” The true church is comprised of believers; national Israel was comprised of the remnant and lots of people who didn’t serve God.

Malachi

Chapter 3

1 "Behold, I send My messenger,
And he will prepare the way before Me.
And the Lord, whom you seek,
Will suddenly come to His temple,
Even the Messenger of the covenant,
In whom you delight.
Behold, He is coming,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

We very clearly have Christ's first advent.

2 "But who can endure the day of His coming?
And who can stand when He appears?
For He is like a refiner's fire
And like launderers' soap.

We have the same thing mentioned in REV 6:17, "*For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?*" Is there some huge gap in time between these 2 verses? As I will attempt to demonstrate in the section on Revelation, I think not.

3 He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver;
He will purify the sons of Levi,
And purge them as gold and silver,
That they may offer to the LORD
An offering in righteousness.

4 "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem
Will be pleasant to the LORD,
As in the days of old,
As in former years.

Sounds just like ISA 66:20, "*as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.*" This offering is the offering we, the Gentiles, bring in the church age (see comments in ISA 66 above).

Chapter 4

1 "For behold, the day is coming,
Burning like an oven,
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"That will leave them neither root nor branch.

2 But to you who fear My name

The Sun of Righteousness shall arise
With healing in His wings;
And you shall go out
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.

3 You shall trample the wicked,
For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet
On the day that I do this,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

...

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Notice how this coming of the Lord is described. It is a coming of judgment:

- The wicked will be burned up
- It's dreadful

But yet it also describes Christ's first coming:

- "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise" is alluded to in several places. One is when Zecharias prophesies concerning John the Baptist, *"Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us"* ("Dayspring" means sunrise) LUK 1:78
- John the Baptist is the "Elijah" spoken of in vs. 5: *"But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.* MAT 17:12-13.
- The "Sun" of righteousness doles out healing (as in the many references to healing in ISA).

There isn't any reason to see giant gaps of time in between these verses of prophecy. Both passages (from chapter 3 & 4) speak of the time of John the Baptist and Jesus' first coming: The judgment of A.D. 70 comes directly afterward.

New Testament

Matthew

Chapter 5

17 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

We know that at least part (the sacrificial system) of the law has passed away (unless, possibly, it’s still in force in a spiritual sense, but that seems less likely). Thus, in some sense, heaven and earth must have passed away. In a spiritual sense, he has created a new heavens and earth:

- *“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.” ISA 65:17 (See notes there).*

Note the similarity to:

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

That generation (and the temple, and the sacrificial system) did pass away. “This generation,” and “heaven and earth” may be equated here. “Heaven and earth” would refer to God’s economy – himself and his relation to his people under the old covenant. In any case, there’s no indication of anything being suspended (as if it would be resurrected in the future); either it did pass away in a spiritual sense, or it’s still in effect in a spiritual sense.

Chapter 8

8 The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

10 When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! 11 And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Jesus marvels over the faith of a *Gentile* while prophesying that the ersatz sons of the kingdom will be cast out. The following verse from Isaiah matches Jesus’ words here. Thus, this prophecy of a gathering in of Israel actually describes the coming in of the Gentiles and sitting down with Abraham et al (becoming the “Israel of God”).

- “Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west” ISA 43:5.

Chapter 16

28 ...Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

This refers to Jesus’ coming to Jerusalem in judgment in 70 AD:

- This can't refer to the transfiguration because Jesus repeats this prediction later (see MAT 24:34 below) & because nobody died between this point & the transfiguration which occurred only 6 days later ("some shall not taste death").
- Pentecost might be more likely because Judas died in the interim, but it fits much more logically with the coming described in chapter 24 below. Besides this, it's "the Son of Man" coming, not the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus said the same thing to Caiaphas during his trial after the transfiguration:
 - “But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!” Jesus said to him, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”
- MAT 24 speaks of Jesus’ coming and the fact that “this generation” won’t pass away until it takes place (see notes at vs. 34). This is the same thing as we have here.
- “... your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.” LUK 19: 43-44. Speaks of a visitation in concert with the destruction of Jerusalem.
- “... when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?” They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons... Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.” MAT 21:40,41,43. Jesus tells a parable, and then turns it into a prophecy about the judgment of the unbelieving Jews. He tells them what’s going to happen when he comes.

More references to Jesus’ coming that can’t refer to the Second Advent:

- “When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.” MAT 10:23
- 3 comings of Jesus are mentioned in REV 2, e.g., “else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place”. Those churches/cities are long gone, so these comings were in the past.

- Jesus said to him, *"If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?"* JOH 21:22 Jesus says here that John will remain alive until his coming.
- *"Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."* JAM 5:7-8. This is a book written to the Jews and it says that the coming of the Lord is at hand (near). The second coming 2000+ years in the future wasn't near, and they need not be patient for *that* coming.

Chapter 21

18 Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. 19 And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away.

Virtually all interpreters agree that the fig tree represents Israel. Matthew and Mark both record this, and Luke in the same spot (directly after the triumphal entry) has Jesus lamenting over Israel. Note how it reads: "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Not after the church age, not after a millennium, never again.

20 And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?"

21 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. 22 And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

See notes @ REV 8:9

...

33 "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. 34 Now when vintage- time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. 35 And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. 37 Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 38 But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ' This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' 39 So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 " Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?"

41 They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons..."43 Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

Which nation?

- *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"* 1PE 2:9
- *"and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."* REV 1:6
- *"And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."* REV 5: 10
- *"And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."* EXO 19:6. This was the first offer of a kingdom.
- But the (Sinaitic) covenant has been made void:
 - *"And I took my staff, Beauty, and cut it in two, that I might break the covenant which I had made with all the peoples."* ZEC 11:10
 - *"Give them, O LORD—What will You give? Give them a miscarrying womb And dry breasts! "All their wickedness is in Gilgal, For there I hated them. Because of the evil of their deeds I will drive them from My house; I will love them no more. All their princes are rebellious. Ephraim is stricken, Their root is dried up; They shall bear no fruit. Yes, were they to bear children, I would kill the darlings of their womb." My God will cast them away, Because they did not obey Him; And they shall be wanderers among the nations."* HOS 9:14-17
- The new nation that will bear fruit:
 - *"Ephraim shall say, 'What have I to do anymore with idols?' I have heard and observed him. I am like a green cypress tree; Your fruit is found in Me."* HOS 14:8. Entire chapter speaks of restoration of Israel (the new Israel).
- See also notes at
 - Hebrews 8:13
 - ACTS 4:25
- The kingdom will never be given back:
 - *"And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.""* MAR 11:13-14. Jesus isn't pronouncing a curse on an innocent tree because it didn't bear fruit; he's speaking of Israel.
 - Jesus here (in MAT 21:43) predicts that the kingdom will be given to a nation that will bear fruit. He's making a prophecy. The only reason it would be given back to Israel would be if his prophecy wasn't fulfilled. If that wasn't unlikely enough, why would God give it back to a nation that failed so many times before (the nation had hearts of stone and as such could never bear fruit) and expect a different outcome?

- Note that he says, “last of all.” This was the last chance for Israel.
- See notes @ HEB 8.

Chapter 24

Nobody disputes the fact that this chapter discusses both events that happened in A.D. 70 and Christ's second coming. What I want to show, however, is that the portions that most assume speak of the second coming much more likely speak of his coming in judgment in A.D. 70 (the same coming referenced in MAL 4 & other places).

This chapter combines 2 separate discourses apparently given at different times (as is Matthew's practice throughout – he seems to combine similar discourses). The same discourses are found separately in LUK 17 (which I believe concerns Christ's second coming) & LUK 21 (which I believe concerns A.D. 70).

As for the events of AD 70 discussed, consider that Jesus' audience would be more likely to understand his language as concerning *their* nation and *their* time. They probably knew nothing of a *second* coming as we do.

Following is an outline of which passages (here and in LUK) refer to which time periods (with supporting evidence below). “Parousia” refers to Christ's second coming:

Passage	Time Period
LUK 21:5-30	A.D.70
LUK 17:22-37	Parousia
MAT 24:2-22	A.D.70
MAT 24:23-28	Parousia
MAT 24:29-31	A.D.70
MAT 24:36-51	Parousia

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple:

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

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age:

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

Dispensationalism would break this down into 3 separate questions:

- These things: the destruction of Jerusalem.

- The sign of your coming: Jesus' second advent.
- The end of the age: The end of the world.

By comparing scriptures which describe this same incident, we can see that this is not the case; they (Peter, James, John, and Andrew as we see in MAR 13: 3) asked a question about one event (the event of the destruction of the temple as described above). We see this question in LUK phrased, "*when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?*" In MAR it reads, "*when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?*" Notice that there is no mention of an end of an age in either of the parallel passages; it's only a question about "these things." This is probably because Matthew quoted Jesus exactly whereas Mark & Luke dumbed it down for a Gentile audience. Matthew's audience knew that "coming" refers to judgment & "age" speaks of Jewish age (their age; the only one they knew). They would not think of "coming" as we do (his second coming); they had no idea that he would ascend to heaven and return to the earth at a much later date. Even after his resurrection they asked him if he would set up his permanent kingdom at that time (ACT 1:6), they had no idea he was about to ascend.

See MAT 16 above for more on this type of "coming." Also note that Jesus' second coming will be like a thief (1TH 5:2, 2PE 3:10); it's not something preceded by signs.

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

- "Wars and rumors of wars:" Prior to A.D. 70, after the suicide of Nero, all hell broke loose in the Roman Empire. The Jewish people were involved in countless battles in places like Alexandria, Samaria, and Caesarea²⁷. Rumors of even more wars were prevalent such that no Jew could feel at peace.
- "Nation against nation" describes the rest of the empire in turmoil.
- Earthquakes: see footnotes 24 & 28. Many earthquakes took place between the time Jesus uttered these words and A.D. 70.
- Famines: ACT 11 records a famine, and other famines were no doubt caused by the sieges of various cities (which nearly always resulted in famines in ancient times). See also footnote 28.

Note that he told them about all these things, but said "the end is not yet." He is telling them not to worry; they will know exactly when to flee (Vs. 15).

8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

NASB renders this, "*these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.*" It's not the end – it's the beginning! See notes @ ISA 66.

9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all

nations for My name's sake.

Mark's version renders this, "*they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings...*" This makes it pretty clear that what he's referring to is the early persecution of the Christians by the Jews.

10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

"Many false prophets:" Many church fathers testified that Simon Maggus (the man referenced in ACT 8) became a false prophet, and Josephus recorded that there were many⁵⁰. John also later confirmed this:

- "*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*" 1JO 4:1

12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

- "*... you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place...*" REV 2:4,5. These are Christ's words to the church at Ephesus during that time.
- "*Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world... At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me...*" 2TI 4:10,16

The intense persecution of the time caused many to defect.

13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

This probably indicates enduring to the end of one's life (holding the faith unto death) because he's describing a time when many will be martyred (and would not be able to endure to the end of that tribulation).

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

He may be looking forward to the end of the world much later here, but more likely "in all the world" is hyperbole as it is in COL 1:5-6, "*...of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world...*" (and Paul knew that the Gospel hadn't yet gone out to all the world because he indicated desire to take it to Spain and certainly was aware that there were many other places it hadn't yet reached). If hyperbole is employed, then he may be referring to the end of the Jewish age.

The Great Tribulation:

There is really no doubt that this is speaking of the events of AD 70; not future events.

15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

This "abomination of desolation" was the armies surrounding Jerusalem. We know this⁵¹ because Luke explains the statement in his account of this same verse:

- "*But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is*

near." (LUK 21:20)

Note that both MAT & MAR tell the reader to understand, but LUK (writing to a Greek audience who wouldn't be expected to understand) interprets what were no doubt Jesus' actual words.

The temple was left desolate leaving behind an abomination:

- *"Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt... that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth... Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation... "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! ... See! Your house is left to you desolate..." (MAT 23:31-38)*

16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

When the Christians saw this, they in fact fled Judea as Jesus instructed them.

Concerning this flight of the Jewish believers prior to the siege of the Jerusalem by the Romans, the 3rd century historian Eusibius wrote, *"the members of the Jerusalem church, by means of an oracle given by revelation to acceptable personas there, were ordered to leave the City before the war began and settle in a town called Pella"*.²⁰

The believers who heeded this prophecy were able to flee *after* seeing Jerusalem surrounded by armies because the city was initially surrounded by Vespasian. But Vespasian had to return to Rome to claim his seat. Thus he sent his son, Titus to finish what he intended to do. In the brief interim between the two events, the Jewish Christians had opportunity to flee, whereas the proud unbelieving Jews foolishly stayed.⁴⁵

17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

Pray that nothing hinders your exit (winter would make travel difficult, city gates would be closed on Sabbath, provisions would be difficult to obtain since no merchants would be selling goods, etc.). This is further evidence that this prediction is for that generation, not a future one (see vs. 34); a future generation of Gentile believers would not have the same concern about the Sabbath.

21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

This is describing the destruction of Jerusalem; not a global event. The parallel verse in Luke (LUK 21:23) reads, *"For there will be great distress in the land (of Israel) and wrath upon this people. 24 And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations."*

This event was indeed horrific, and the above description (great tribulation unlike any other) may be literal. The historical accounts of what happened to Jerusalem are

beyond imagination. Josephus wrote, “To speak in brief, no other city ever suffered such things, as no other generation from the beginning of the world was even more fruitful of wickedness.”²⁵) Yet to say that something is the “worst ever” is a common form of hyperbole in Scripture. For example, compare what is said in each row below on the left with what is said on the right. In each case, if you only read the description on the left, you may be inclined to accept it strictly literally, however, after reading the description on the right, you must decide whether to conclude that either the writers of Scripture don't know of what they speak, or that they're employing hyperbole for effect.

<i>And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. EXO 10:14</i>	<i>A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations. JOE 2:2 (“people” here are locusts)</i>
<i>He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. 2KI 18:5 (speaking of Hezekiah)</i>	<i>Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him. 2KI 23:25 (speaking of Josiah)</i>
<i>And He [God] has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. DAN 9:12</i>	<i>Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Indeed I, even I, am against you and will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations. And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations. EZE 5:8-9 (speaking of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem which is very similar to the Roman one referred to here in MAT)</i>
<i>And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations. EZE 5:9 (speaking about a previous judgment against Jerusalem)</i>	<i>For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. Vs. 21 above.</i>

This tribulation may extend further than just the destruction of Jerusalem when compared to parallel passage in Luke, “For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

This may explain continued persecution of Jews through church age. Alternatively, the above wording could indicate that God will punish Israel, but there is also a future /subsequent time of punishment for the Gentiles.

22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

"no flesh would be saved" doesn't indicate a global event; rather a regional one (no flesh in a given area). For example, these passages sound similarly global, but don't mean it literally:

- *"The plunderers have come On all the desolate heights in the wilderness, For the sword of the LORD shall devour From one end of the land to the other end of the land; No flesh shall have peace."* JER 12:12. This speaks of Israel (the land) only.
- *"And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven."* ACT 2:5. There weren't *literally* Jews from *every* nation in the world.
- *"And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered."* LUK 2:1. "All the world" isn't literal. It means the Roman world.
- *"the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister."* COL 1:23. The gospel wasn't literally preached to *every* creature.
- *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh..."* ACT 2:17. This event (like the one here in MAT), was regional, but the language sounds global.
- *"Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins."* MAT 3:5-6. This speaks of the people that John the Baptist baptized, but not literally every person in Judea was baptized. We know this for sure because LUK 7:30 reads, *"the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by [John]"*
- *"So the Lord did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died..."* EXO 9:6. This verse tells us that all the livestock of Egypt died, but we know it's not literal since later on in verse 20 another plague was about to strike, and it reads, *"He who feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses."*

As further (incontrovertible) evidence that this is speaking of Jerusalem this same passage in LUK reads, *"there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled"*

"Days were shortened:" As mentioned above, Vespasian originally surrounded Jerusalem, but was distracted by the death of Nero and left to become emperor. Titus was then given the task of finishing the city²⁹. The initial act of Vespasian probably provided the Christians with their cue to leave (vs. 15) before total destruction. Thus it

could be that the days were shortened, as it were, in the middle.

23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.

Here I believe we transition to a different sermon of Jesus on the 2nd coming (through vs. 27). In Matthew's combination of Jesus' sermons, this chunk seems as if it should go with the verses after vs. 35 where the other verses that correspond to LUK 17 are found. He may simply be making the point that this isn't the final coming.

24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand.

26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

The carcass is the spiritually dead Israel; the eagles who gather may refer to the fact that the Roman armies had an eagle as their emblem (on their banners).

The Coming of the Son of Man:

29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Jesus coming in judgment is accompanied by celestial signs: First note that Jesus is speaking privately to 4 Jewish disciples who would understand this Scriptural manner of speaking. Considering stars and clouds in Scripture: star = earthly authority (sometimes referring to righteous people in authority), clouds = storm clouds of judgment. Evidence the following passages. The general point of all these passages is that these great nations seemed as sure as the stars or sun, but they were cut down; they had their lights put out.

- "All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree. "For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; Indeed it shall come down on Edom, And on the people of My curse" ISA 34: 4-5a
- "How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion With a cloud in His anger! He cast down from heaven to the earth The beauty of Israel, And did not remember His footstool In the day of His anger." LAM 2:1
- "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! " ISA 14:12. "Lucifer" simply means, "day star."
- "The kings came and fought, Then the kings of Canaan fought In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; They took no spoils of silver. They fought from the heavens; The stars from

their courses fought against Sisera.” JDG 5:19-20 Kings = stars.

- *“For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.” ISA 13:10. Spoken against Babylon.*
- *“When I put out your light, I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, And the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you, And bring darkness upon your land,’ Says the Lord GOD.” EZE 32:7-8. Spoken against Egypt.*
- *“Though you ascend as high as the eagle, And though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down,” says the LORD.” OBA 1:4. Spoken against Edom.*
- *“And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.” JOE 2:30-31 Though this language sounds like the end of the world, Peter said this was fulfilled at Pentecost: “this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel...” (ACT 2:14-21)*
- *“Jesus said to him, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” MAT 26:64*
- *“Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for a light by day, The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, And its waves roar (The LORD of hosts is His name): “If those ordinances depart From before Me, says the LORD, Then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever.” Thus says the LORD: “If heaven above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel For all that they have done, says the LORD.” JER 31:35-37. Israel shall cease when the stars are cast down.*
- *“And out of one of them came a little horn ... And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. He even exalted himself ... Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, “How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?”” DAN 8:10-11 (speaking of Antiochus Epiphanes who persecuted Godly Jews). Hosts / stars = Godly men / leaders.*

Vs. 30: Concerning this sign, Josephus wrote the following during the Jewish wars:

- *"A star hung over the city like a sword, and the comet continued for a whole year"²¹*
- *"A supernatural apparition was seen, too amazing to be believed. What I am now to relate would, I imagine, be dismissed as imaginary, had this not been vouched for by eyewitnesses, then followed by subsequent disasters that deserved to be thus signaled. For before sunset chariots were seen in the air over the whole country, and armed battalions speeding through the clouds and encircling the cities."²²*

As for the fact that this speaks of Jesus' coming in judgment, see notes at MAT 16. Concerning "tribes of the land," we've already discussed the issue of the oft used word "land." If this did indicate the whole world, one would expect him to say, "Nations" instead of "tribes." Also consider how similar vs. 30 above is to this prophecy of a previous destruction of Jerusalem (by the Babylonians):

- *"The whole land shall be desolate... For this shall the earth mourn, And the heavens above be black" JER 4:27-28*

31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

"Angels" simply means messengers, end of heaven can mean the horizon; four winds means four compass points (as in LUK 14:29). Thus, this would refer to Christians spreading the Gospel around the world gathering the elect into the church after the end of the Jewish age.

This corresponds with the parable of the wedding feast (MAT 22:1-14):

- The king sends out servants (representing prophets or messengers) repeatedly. The people don't respond and even kill the servants.
- The king finally destroys them and burns their city (destruction of Jerusalem).
- The king then sends out servants to a much wider group of people to bring people into the wedding (corresponding to these angels above).

The Parable of the Fig Tree:

32 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

This fig tree doesn't symbolize Israel; it's simply speaking of reading signs of times. The parallel vs. in Luke 21:29 reads, "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees..."

33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!

James, in his epistle, was no doubt making reference to this when he warned his fellow Jews (the epistle was directed primarily to Jews reference the opening verse) about impending judgment:

- *"Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!" JAM 5:9*

34 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

"This generation" is mentioned several times in the gospels and it always means what it says:

- *"... on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation." MAT 23:35-36* (note that this is the end of the previous chapter. He tells the scribes & Pharisees directly what will come upon them, which then flows directly into this

chapter).

- “But He answered and said to them, *“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”* MAT 12:39. This speaks of his resurrection which certainly happened in their generation.
- “The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with *this generation* and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah” MAT 12:41
- If he was speaking of a future generation, he would’ve said *that* generation, and if he were speaking of the Jewish people in general, there are numerous phrases that were used such as “children of Israel.”
- If this were speaking of a 7-year future tribulation, a generation would be too big a time span. He would more likely say something like “this week,” as Scripture often does in referring to 7 years.
- Since he is answering the portion of the original question in vs. 3, “*when will these things be?*” it only makes sense if it means this generation (the time span of a generation). If he meant it in the sense of “this race,” then he wouldn’t be answering the question since that’s more of a condition than a time span. Further, there is no other reference to race elsewhere in the passage.
- Up to this point in the chapter, he directs everything to his listeners. Note how many times he does this:
 - “Take heed that no one deceives you”
 - “you will hear of wars and rumors of wars”
 - “they will deliver you up”
 - Etc...
- And of course, the best reason that he really meant “this generation” is that... it did happen in that generation!
- See also MAT 16 above (refers to same event).

35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

This is probably where we transition to second coming in Matthew's combination of the treatises of Luke 17 & 21. Vs. 34 wraps up the discussion of “*these things*” which began in vs. 2. From this point he no longer says “you” as when he's speaking to what the disciples would experience.

Luke

Chapter 17:22-37

Then He said to the disciples, “The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. 23 And they will say to you, ‘Look here!’ or ‘Look there!’ Do not go after them or follow them. 24 For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the

Son of Man will be in His day. 25 But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26 And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

31 "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 who is in the field, let him not turn back. 32 Remember Lot's wife. 33 Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. 34 I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. 35 Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. 36 Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left."

37 And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?"

So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

This passage speaks of the second coming whereas Luke 21 speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem (see comments @ MAT above 24).

The order at the parousia is that the righteous are taken up, the wicked are destroyed, & Christ establishes the new earth (see notes @ 1TH). The people left are unharmed; the people taken are the wicked (opposite what most Christians think of when they think "left behind"):

- Jesus says look to the eagles/vultures to find out where they're taken.
- *Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."* (MAT 13:30) – tares are taken.
- *"So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."* (MAT 13:49-50) – taken to the furnace.
- *"For the upright will dwell in the land, And the blameless will remain in it; But the wicked will be cut off from the earth, And the unfaithful will be uprooted from it."* (PRO 2:21-22) – wicked cut off / taken.
- *"For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth."* (PSA 37:9) – cut off / taken.
- *"For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."* MAT 24:38-39: the parallel passage to this one. Both passages compare this event to the flood.

The wicked are taken so that Christ can reign on the earth:

- *"The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'" PSA 2:7-9*
- *"You were slain... And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." REV 5:9-10*

Note also that in this passage, the flood and the destruction of Sodom is compared to the actual judgment, not to some 7-year tribulation prior to.

John

6:15

Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

Dispensationalists say that Jesus offered a political kingdom, but Israel refused it, so he had to delay his plans. Nowhere in the Gospels do we see this; we see the reverse: Israel wants to force him to establish a political kingdom.

8:37-41

37 *"I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."*

39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father."

Jesus said to them, *"If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. 41 You do the deeds of your father."*

Jesus acknowledges and denies that they are Abraham's descendants at the same time. What does he mean? They are physically Abraham's descendants, but not spiritually.

Abraham's descendants are people of faith:

- *"When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" MAT 8:10-12*
- *"Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham." GAL 3:7*

10:14-16

I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15 As the

Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

There is one flock (Jew & Gentile). He is not (as dispensationalism would have it) temporarily setting aside national Israel from the flock:

- *“For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.”* ROM 10:12

11:49-52

And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” 51 Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, 52 and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

This has been mentioned before (ISA, JER), but it bears repeating: Jesus died for Israel & also for all the other children of God (from other nations other than Israel – *“not for that nation only”*) who were scattered abroad. This fulfills prophecies about God gathering his people. His people come from all nations.

Chapter 15

1 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

The vine is an established metaphor for Israel. God desired fruit from his vine:

- *“My Well-beloved has a vineyard On a very fruitful hill. He dug it up and cleared out its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, And also made a winepress in it; So He expected it to bring forth good grapes, But it brought forth wild grapes.” ... “And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; And break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.” ... “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel”* ISA 5:1-2,5,7

Jesus is redefining Israel as himself (the body of Christ; the church). The seed of the church was right here – his apostles (the believing remnant of national Israel), and it grew from there. National Israel didn’t bear fruit, so the kingdom was given to another nation as the Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers tells us:

- *“They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.”” ... “Therefore I*

say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.” MAT 21:43

Note that Jesus (typified by David in the following passage) tells the apostles that they are clean:

- *“They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. “David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them.” EZE 37:23-24*

Acts

1:6-8

Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The disciples were still thinking in natural terms. Though Jesus was probably still reluctant in revealing all the implications of fulfillment of prophecy before the Spirit came upon them (“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth” JOH 16:12-13), yet he virtually answers their question. The kingdom will start right then and continue as Jesus said and as was foretold:

- *“I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.” PSA 2:7-9. Jesus “breaks them” by conquering them with the Gospel (see notes @ REV 19:11).*

2:14-21

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. 15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 ‘ And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams.
18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;
And they shall prophesy.
19 I will show wonders in heaven above
And signs in the earth beneath:
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.
20 The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.
21 And it shall come to pass
That whoever calls on the name of the LORD
Shall be saved.'

Peter says that this day of Pentecost fulfills the prophecy from Joel. Notice the kinds of things the prophecy contains;

- *Wonders in heaven*
- *Signs in the earth*
- *Blood and fire and vapor of smoke*

First, we must acknowledge that this apocalyptic language need not necessarily be taken literally. On the other hand, Josephus does record all of those things taking place shortly thereafter in the destruction of Jerusalem (as it reads, this is "before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD" – the soon to come Day of Judgment on Israel). Josephus records such signs in heaven and on earth during the Jewish wars:

- Troops going through sky³⁰
- Voices heard everywhere³⁰
- Pillars of smoke³¹
- Rivers of blood³²
- Many others...

Note also that the moon turning to blood (appearing blood red) does occur when a smoke filled sky covers a full or partially full moon.

Chapter 3

19 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, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 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. 22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that

Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ 24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.

The only thing all of the prophets spoke of is the millennial reign of Christ. This reign had begun; it wasn’t future, it began then (“these days”).

4:23-25 (After Peter & John threatened by Sanhedrin)

And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said:

Why did the nations rage,
And the people plot vain things?

The reference in context is “*Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, “Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.” He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: “Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.”* PSA 2:1-6. Note that the king is on God’s holy hill of Zion. That is where Jesus was at that time and still is now.

Chapter 7 (During Stephen’s Address to the Jewish Council)

37 “This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.’

38 “This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, 39 whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected.

Congregation (Ekklesia) is literally, “called out ones,” church. This was always God’s people: the church.

...

44 “Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, 45 which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, 46 who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. 47 But Solomon built Him a house.

48 “However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says:

49 ‘ Heaven is My throne,
And earth is My footstool.

What house will you build for Me? says the LORD,
Or what is the place of My rest?
50 Has My hand not made all these things?’

God is not tied to Israel; the land or the temple. It’s not a Jewish thing. This is one of the main reasons they stoned him. Israelites thought that they had God’s favor frequently in their history just because they had the temple et al. Here is an example of that attitude (they layer sin on sin and challenge God to respond):

- *“Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of vanity, And sin as if with a cart rope; That say, “Let Him make speed and hasten His work, That we may see it; And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come, That we may know it.””* ISA 5:18-19

15:12-17 (During the Jerusalem Council)

12 Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. 13 And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, “Men and brethren, listen to me: 14 Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. 15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

16 ‘After this I will return
And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down;
I will rebuild its ruins,
And I will set it up;
17 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.’

This is one of the most poignant kingdom prophecies pointing to the times of the apostles as the fulfillment. The “tabernacle of David” (or “booth” in some translations) was so called because it was in such a state of moral decay. This is a reference to the “house of David” – the Davidic dynasty which lay in ruins. It was now being rebuilt in Christ – its fulfillment. The house that God promised to build is being built:

- *“Also the Lord tells you that He will make you a house.”* 2SA 7:11 (see notes there for more on the building of this house and its fulfillment in the church).

James’ quote (AMO 9:11-12) contains the phrase, “after this.” “After this” is translated “on that day” in any current translation of Amos (James’ quote is different because he was quoting the Septuagint), but in any case “after this” cannot possibly refer to a time *after* the times of the book of Acts because James cites this as being fulfilled by what was currently happening. It says that “James answered.” Being the authority in Jerusalem, he gave the verdict in the matter. The matter being discussed was what God was doing with the Gentiles *at that time*. He notes Peter’s experience indicating that Gentiles are

full members of the church, and then says that the prophecy in Amos is fulfilled: the tabernacle of David is being rebuilt as the Gentiles (*"the rest of mankind"*) seek the Lord. To think that James would refer to things that would happen thousands of years in the future in this context is absurd. You would only get that idea if you imposed a pre-determined theology on the text. This is respecting a tradition of men over truth.

Romans

Chapter 2

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

Paul explains "Jewishness" in this epistle and these verses are the summary of chapters 1-4. Being an "Israelite" is independent of race/ethnicity:

- *"Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!'"* JOH 1:47. Here he emphasizes that a true Israelite is one in whom there is no deceit (as is prophesied in ZEP 3:13). Note that he doesn't say, "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no Gentile blood."
- *"...For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed."* (ROM 9:6-8)
- *"I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."* REV 2:9. The people referenced aren't true Jews as the New Testament defines them.
- *"Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham."* GAL 3:7
- *"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."* PHI 3:2-3. The first sentence is saying to beware of unbelieving Jews ("dogs" is something the Jews called the Gentiles, and the mutilation refers to circumcision of the flesh – he's using unflattering terms to describe them). The second sentence says that "Jewishness" ("the circumcision") is not an ethnic or religious thing.
- *"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God."* GAL 6:16
- "Israel" in ISA 49:3 actually means Christ (see notes in ISA & JOH 15).
- See notes @ JOH 8.
- *"Truly God is good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart."* PSA 73:1. The second clause, "such as are pure in heart" is an explanation of the first, "Israel."

- “...do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.” MAT 3:9. Jesus explains that one’s ethnic makeup doesn’t make him a child of Abraham. Not even God could raise up *physical* descendants of Abraham from stones.
- In the parable of the wicked vinedressers (MAT 21), Israel is the vine. At the end of the parable, Jesus says the vineyard would be given to other vinedressers (the Gentiles/church) who will render the fruit desired. Jesus is the true vine (JOH 15:1). The church is his body; we are that vine (as we abide in the vine). The church has become Israel.
- Psalm 50 shows the distinction (entire chapter speaking of Israel):
 - “Gather My saints together to Me, Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.” (Vs. 5)
 - “But to the wicked God says: “What right have you to declare My statutes, Or take My covenant in your mouth...” (Vs. 16)
- More in chapter 4 below.

Chapter 4

9 Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised. 13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, 15 because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.

It has never been about Israel, the promise is to those of faith irrespective of Jewishness.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9-11 is not a chronological/eschatological discussion of Israel's salvation (not when will Israel be saved); it's a soteriological discussion of how Israel will be saved and who they are.

4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; 5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

These are the advantages of the (physical) Israelites. As I point out in chapter 11, there is nothing future here. If there were some exceeding glory for the nation in the future, don't you think he'd mention it here? Not only doesn't he, but he transitions (just as the body of Christ was doing at that time) to the spiritual Israel.

6 But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, 7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." 8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.

First note that he writes, "...it's not that the word has taken no effect." He doesn't say "it's not that the word has not yet taken effect." Thus, God's promises to Israel already have taken effect. He isn't discussing something that will happen in the distant future. He continues the thought from chapter 4, that it's not about the *nation* of Israel (they are not children just because they are the seed of Abraham, just as Jesus said, "God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones"). He goes further to *redefine* what "Israel" is; who the children really are (the children of the promise). Israel is not physical:

- "For we are the circumcision (Israel), who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" PHI 3:3
- "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise." GAL 4:28. Same thought.

24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

25 As He says also in Hosea:

"I will call them My people, who were not My people,
And her beloved, who was not beloved."

26 "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,
'You are not My people,'
There they shall be called sons of the living God."

27 Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel:

"Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea,
The remnant will be saved.

The promises apply to the remnant, not the entire nation.

28 For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness,
Because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth."

He explains the thought in verse 6 above, "they are not all Israel who are of Israel." Israel is comprised of the people who were not his people (the Gentiles, as shown in the reference to

Hosea), and the remnant of national Israel (believing Jewish apostles & disciples as shown in the reference to Isaiah).

Chapter 11

In light of previous chapters which were so harsh on the nation Israel, the question for this chapter is really, "can a Jew even be saved?"

1 I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

The question is "has God cast away His people?" The dispensationalist answers, "yes" (temporarily – they view the church age as the age of the Gentiles, and believe that God will turn his attention back to national Israel later), but Paul answers "no." Note that this question is for the time Paul is writing (the church age), not future (nothing in this chapter indicates he is speaking of a future time except the one word "until" in vs. 25, but that is addressed there). In any case, why would God *ever* cast away his people?

Sucks to be born a Jew now, but glorious to be one later?

Note that *national* Israel *has indeed* been cast away. This is the casting away mentioned in vs. 15. The people described in this chapter are the *remnant* (vs 5).

2 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3 "LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"? 4 But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

"This present time:" again, he's not speaking of future things.

7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

National Israel is blinded; the elect (spiritual Israel) has obtained the promises.

...

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. 12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

The last "their" above may refer to its immediate antecedent (the Gentiles). This would make it mean, "If God reaped so much from an unbelieving people, how much more a believing." This is the most likely way to understand it because in just a few more verses (vs. 25) he speaks of "fullness" as "the fullness of the Gentiles." Even if both "theirs" refer to Israel, there's no reason to think that the fullness he speaks of is thousands of years in the future (a putative future restoration of national Israel). In that case, he would simply be contrasting the fall of the unbelieving Jews to the fullness of

the believing. In any case, it's the same pattern for vs. 15 below.

13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. 15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

In Greek "will their" is not there; it's just "what their acceptance." No indication of future acceptance.

16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

Now we begin talking about the tree. Note that the tree has remained the same; it always consisted of some Jews (the believing remnant) and some Gentiles. The only difference between OT and NT is the proportion of each. The tree never contained, nor will it ever (as is made clear in this chapter) be made up of anything but the faithful. Even early in Israel's history, it wasn't about ethnicity. Some Egyptians went with the Israelites in the exodus; people such as Rahab joined them, etc. Israel included those people in solidarity:

- *"Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel."* JOS 8:33

17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree,

This isn't the first time branches have been broken off:

- *"Go up on her walls and destroy, But do not make a complete end. Take away her branches, For they are not the LORD's. For the house of Israel and the house of Judah Have dealt very treacherously with Me," says the Lord."* JER 5:10-11. Notice that even those branches (Jews) weren't the Lord's.

18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

There's no reason to take this as some prediction of a future restoration of Israel; he's

merely saying that yes, those unbelieving Jews can be grafted in if they repent (answering the question posed in vs. 1 again).

24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

Ethnic Jews are now being grafted in through faith (not in some future millennium).

25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

The mystery is that Gentiles and Jews make up the same body:

- *"He made known to me the mystery ... that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power."* EPH 3:3-6

Note that this doesn't read, "blindness for a time has happened to Israel" as dispensational theology supposes (Israel has been set aside until a future restoration); it reads, "blindness in part." Unbelieving Jews are blinded; believing Jews are part of the body. Verse 7 says this exact thing.

26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

"The Deliverer will come out of Zion,

And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

This is the most telling verse: "and so" or "and thus" or "in this way" Israel will be saved. Dispensationalism teaches that all national Israel will be saved en masse in the future. If that were true, it would have to read "and then" - after all the Gentiles come in. As it reads, all spiritual Israel - the Israel of God - the remnant - will be saved; "*The remnant will be saved*" (ROM 9:27). The rest were cut off (see ISA 48). As for "turning away", the referenced verse indicates that the redeemer comes to those who turn from sin, not that he will turn them from their sin as dispensational doctrine teaches; "*The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,*" Says the LORD" ISA 59:20. And if it did refer to some future Israel, why would he cause a future generation to turn while leaving all the generations prior to be damned?

27 For this is My covenant with them,

When I take away their sins."

28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.

29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Jews can still be saved; the call and gifts are still available - again, the chapter answers

the question of whether Jews still have any chance with God.

30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.

1 Corinthians

Chapter 15

The verses below address the eschatological order of events. Here it is:

- Christ's coming (which includes the rapture and the destruction of the world as we know it as we shall see in other passages).
- One resurrection:
 - *"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."* (JOH 5:28-29) There is one hour where all rise. They rise to life or condemnation (as we see here and in LUK 14:14), but they all rise at once.
 - *"...there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."* (ACT 24:15). A single resurrection.
 - Compare the following verses. The just and unjust are judged / raised up on the last day. Note that there can only be one **last** day. In eternity there is no such thing as day/night (REV 21). Christians won't be raised 1000 years (prior to a millennium) or 1007 years (prior to a tribulation before a millennium) before the last day; they will be raised on the last day.
 - *This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."* JOH 6:39-40. The just.
 - *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."* JOH 12:48. The unjust.
 - See also notes @ REV 20:5
- One judgment resulting in the wicked being taken away and the righteous entering eternity:
 - *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another... And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."* MAT 25:31,32,46.

There is one judgment here. It's eternity in both directions (for the righteous and unrighteous). The righteous don't go into some millennial age while the unrighteous are judged at some other judgment. "All nations" doesn't mean he's not judging individuals (for those who attempt to make a separate judgment for each); it simply means he's judging people from all nations.

- *"Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."* MAT 13:40-42 Again, both the righteous and unrighteous involved.
- *"So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire."* MAT 13:49-50
- See also notes @ LUK 17

- The end.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming.

Christ (and those who rose with him [MAT 27:52-53]) was the first resurrection; the next will take place at his coming. Note that no other resurrection (such as one after a literal millennium) is mentioned.

24 Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy *that* will be destroyed *is* death.

The last enemy; death, is destroyed. There is no millennium with a final rebellion (ref. REV 20) in between. This same order (rapture followed by conquering of death) is repeated below.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

Galatians

Chapter 3

16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to

seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.

The promises to Abraham were made to Christ, not to all the children of Abraham / Jews (seeds).

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The promise doesn't apply to Jews (unless they're in Christ); it applies to Christians. Christians are Abraham's seed.

Chapter 4

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar — 25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children — 26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

He is speaking of the church in contrast to the Jewish system.

27 For it is written:

"Rejoice, O barren,
You who do not bear!
Break forth and shout,
You who are not in labor!
For the desolate has many more children
Than she who has a husband."

He is speaking of the birth and fruitfulness of the church (see notes @ ISA 51).

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. 29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

We are the children of the promise. The children according to the flesh (Jews) are persecuting the children of the promise. These should be cast out (they have no part in the promise). Note: they have no part. It's not as if the Jews get the land and Christians get the spiritual goods.

Ephesians

Chapter 2

11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—

Note – by what “is called the Circumcision.” Ethnic Jews aren’t really the circumcision; the church is: *“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”* PHI 3:3.

12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

If dispensationalism were true, in the future being ethnically Jewish would again have some kind of significance. In the church, God has broken down the wall between Jew and non-Jew. To revert back to the way things were in the O.T., the wall would have to be erected again.

15 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, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

We are no longer strangers - strangers of what? What is written above, that we were once “aliens” of the commonwealth of Israel. “Commonwealth” is like saying “the actual Israel.” We are “citizens” of Israel; we compose the nation of Israel.

20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

Chapter 3

3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 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: 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,

The mystery is not that Gentiles would be a part of the action, that they would become proselytes of Judaism; anyone reading the O.T. can see that. The mystery is that the Gentiles would be of the same body. The mystery is that the Gentiles would become the “Israel of God,” not mere proselytes.

This mystery is somewhat like reading a surprise ending in a mystery novel. If you only read the O.T., you will get one picture of the future of Israel (it looks simply like Israel would become more of what it could’ve been in that time). But when you read the N.T., you see what really becomes of Israel – something you wouldn’t know if not revealed. This illustrates an important point – that we must read the O.T. in light of the N.T., not the reverse. We don’t impose an O.T. view on the N.T. (as dispensationalism does) because here in the N.T. is where we find the outcome of the story.

8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Here we have the purpose of the mystery. The church, the body of Christ, the one new man from the previous chapter, is the “*eternal purpose which God accomplished*.” This flies in the face of dispensationalist theology which teaches that the church is a mere “parenthesis” in the plan or timeline of God. Far from it, the church is the ultimate fulfillment of the plan of God (not yet fully actualized, of course).

1 Thessalonians

Chapter 4

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Rapture is the thing that happens at the second coming, at the resurrection:

- This is a passage primarily about the 2nd coming.

- It talks about the dead in Christ, but doesn't preclude other dead (single resurrection). The passage happens to be about their Christian loved ones, so it focuses on the dead in Christ.
- Meet: this word means to go out & greet someone of importance (as a leader returning from battle or a bridegroom) to escort them back in⁴². We who are alive shall rise so we don't get burned up with the wicked (*"... when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God..."* [2TH 1:7-8]). The same word "meet" is used with same meaning in these places:
 - *"And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'"* MAT 25:6
 - *"And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage."* ACT 28:15
- Coming (parousia – vs. 15) always means coming to earth (not a gathering or rapture).
- The dead will rise; this is the resurrection. 4 times in JOH 6, Jesus says this happens on the last day, e.g., *"And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day"* (vs. 40). The last day, not at some time when there are many more days, or a tribulation or a millennium of days yet remaining.
- See notes @ 1CO 15.

Chapter 5:1-5

1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

It comes like a thief because it's unexpected, not because it won't be noticed. It won't be some secret rapture.

- *"But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."* (MAT 24:37-44).

The coming is as with the flood of Noah; unexpected, but they sure knew once it

happened.

3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

Sudden destruction; not destruction 3 ½ to 7 years later (after a supposed future tribulation).

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

2 Thessalonians

Chapter 1

6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

This is consistent with all other depictions of the second coming; destruction of the enemies of Christ; no reference to a following "millennium."

Chapter 2

A plain reading of this passage details a falling away (apostasy) followed by the rapture (our gathering to him [vs. 1]) & his coming (vs. 8); not a rapture followed by a falling away (or tribulation). See introductory section, "Difficulties with Dispensationalism" for a review of dispensational teachings.

1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

Note the difference between this passage and the passages describing Christ's coming in judgment against Jerusalem. Here Paul writes that we should not be "soon shaken." This is not something that is going to happen soon (as all the references to his judgment indicate). He then prophesies a major development within the church that will happen between the time he's writing and the second coming.

The following verses show how this "man of sin" parallels the "little horn" of DAN 7 who emanates from Rome (as all expositors agree). The apostasy then would be what

happened to the church in the dark ages with the papacy being the “man of sin.” The first person to espouse the view that the man of sin was someone *other* than the papacy (after the papacy was established) was a Franciscan monk trying to defend the Catholic Church against the reformers⁴⁹. For Paul to call multiple men (papacy) a “man” is no different than him calling the body of Christ (many people) “one new man” (EPH 2:15).
 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Paul *never* uses “temple” to mean the Jewish temple; it is the church:

- “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1CO 3:16)
- “For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.” (2CO 6:16)
- “...but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are...” (HEB 3:6)
- “For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building.” 1CO 3:9

Reasons to see the pope as the man of sin:

- He sits in the temple: We see above that the temple is the church; the pope rose from within the church. It began with a leader in the church in Rome (a bishop) who slowly gained power and became corrupt.
- The man of sin here “exalts himself”; in DAN he “speaks pompous words.”
- He “sits as God:” It is still, but was more so in the dark ages the opinion of the Catholic Church that the pope was as God on earth & that salvation came only through him. Consider the quotes below (among many) from popes.
 - “We hold the place of Almighty GOD on earth.” —Pope Leo XIII, Apostolic Letter, June 20, 1894.
 - “The Pope...is Jesus Christ himself, hidden under the veil of flesh.” - Pope Pius IX¹⁵.
 - “You know that I am the holy father, the representative of God on earth, the vicar of Christ, which means that I am God on earth” - Pope Pius XI¹⁶.
 - “The Roman Pontiff judges all men, but is judged by no-one . . . we declare, assert, define, and pronounce that to be subject to the Roman Pontiff is to every creature altogether necessary for salvation . . . that which was spoken of Christ “Thou hast subdued all things under his feet” may well seem verified in me . . . I have the authority of the King of kings. I am all in all and above all, so that God Himself and I, the Vicar of God, have but one consistory, and I am able to do almost all that God can do. What therefore can you make of me but God?” Pope Boniface VIII¹⁷
- DAN 7:25 says the beast from Rome “*shall intend to change times and law.*”

- “Wherefore no marvel, if it be in my power to change time and times, to alter and abrogate laws, to dispense with all things, yea, with the precepts of Christ.” - Pope Nicolaus¹⁸
- DAN 7:25 also says he *“shall persecute the saints of the most high”*
 - It is estimated that 50 million Christians were executed by the Holy Roman Empire in the dark ages.³³
 - Foxe’s Book of Martyrs contains many accounts of the terrible tortures inflicted on Christians during the reign of the popes.
- The pope's title is "Vicar of Christ". Vicar means literally "instead of"; very close to anti-Christ:
 - *“... and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.”* 1JO 4:3

5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.

All church fathers & reformers believed that Paul was thinking of the Roman Empire as the restrainer³⁵. The reformers all agreed that the papacy was the "man of sin." Paul would be reluctant to mention Rome because Roman authorities would view him predicting their downfall as treason. The restrainer can't be the church because he just said that the falling away comes first (while the saints would still be here) & then the rapture & coming happen together.

7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

This destruction with the brightness of his coming and the breath of his mouth I believe corresponds to the fiery stream issued forth in DAN 7 which is given in the context of the discussion of the little horn.

- *“A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.”* DAN 7:10

This would then indicate that the papacy (and whatever forms anti-Christ may take) will continue until Christ’s return. Note that this doesn’t necessarily mean that every pope is a fully demonic person intent on luring the world from Christ. It’s just speaking of the level of depravity that exists (or has existed) within the church.

9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders

The signs could refer to the long history of appearances of Mary, stigmata, statues coming alive, healings at the Lady of Lourdes, etc. These signs may not be real; they’re called “lying wonders.” Note that these aren’t the worst things that happen in the world; they are the bad things that happen in the church (the temple of God).

Hebrews

Chapter 4

1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. 3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said:

“So I swore in My wrath,
“They shall not enter My rest,”

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; 5 and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.” 6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said:

“Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts.”

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

When Joshua brought the children into the land, he didn't really give them what God really intended to give his people. Christ represents the fullness of what God has for his people.

Chapter 11

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

The remnant of Israel (the “Israel of God”) never saw their inheritance as a plot of land. They knew there was a heavenly parallel.

Chapter 8

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming,

says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— 9 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

13 In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

The old covenant has been abolished (made obsolete); Israel has been divorced:

- *“Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.” JER 3:8*
- *“Thus says the LORD: “Where is the certificate of your mother’s divorce, Whom I have put away? Or which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you? For your iniquities you have sold yourselves, And for your transgressions your mother has been put away.” ISA 50:1*

God is not a polygamist; he hasn’t taken on a new bride in the church while retaining his old wife. Further, God forbids a husband from taking back a wife from a previous marriage:

- *“then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.” DEU 24:4*

Note that the old covenant is becoming obsolete and is ready to vanish away. It’s going to **vanish**; it won’t be reinstated at some point in the future. There’s no future “millennium” for it.

1 Peter

4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”

The prophecy quoted here (ISA 28:16) is fulfilled in the church. This description here of living stones assembled into a spiritual house is a description of the church (the same illustration is in used in several other places in the New Testament; 1CO 3:16, 1TI 3:15,

HEB 3:6).

Notice that this prophecy spoke of **Zion** – Israel, but yet it's fulfilled in the church.

2 Peter

3:10-12

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

Notice that there isn't any indication of a millennium associated with the second coming. See also:

- Note at 2TH 1.
- *"For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," Says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves."* MAL 4:1 – Note that his coming and judgment happen at once.
- *"A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened."* DAN 7:10 – same thing.

Notice also that "the day of the Lord" and "the day of God" are used interchangeably here. They both must mean the same thing because they're in the same passage and they both refer to elements melting with heat. Dispensational theology requires these two references to mean different things, but that's not in the passage at all; it's *read into* the passage.

Revelation

The interpretation of Revelation outlined here assumes an early date of its writing (circa 69 AD). A discussion of the arguments in favor of an early date of the book is beyond the scope of this treatise. Let me simply say that the evidence for an early date is very convincing to me; the evidence for a late date is not.

As with the date, the arguments that John is in fact the author (perhaps widely

questioned) is beyond my scope. Again, suffice to say I'm firmly convinced he is in fact the author. John's gospel doesn't include the Olivet discourse as the synoptic gospels do; Revelation may be seen as John's extended version of the Olivet discourse.

The opening chapter says the words of the book are to be kept and that the things it contains must shortly take place / the time is near. Revelation is an epistle - a letter directed to specific people. This means they are the primary audience (with secondary application to the church of subsequent ages), not people thousands of years hence. If the prophecies are distant future, they're not to take place shortly, and the people of his time can't keep them. There are distant future prophecies; mixing short term with long term prophecies is quite common in Scripture.

When interpreting this book, we would be highly remiss if we didn't take into account the fact that this is a book written in an apocalyptic style; a style that was common at the time. Such writing contained vivid, fanciful, allegorical descriptions of events which represent truths. As a separate example of the writing of that time, consider these snippets from an apocalyptic vision that commonly accompanied ancient copies of the book of Esther and which described the events of that book:

- *"A little fountain became a river, and there was light, and the sun, and much water..."*
- *"Behold a noise of a tumult, with thunder, and earthquakes, and uproar in the land: And, behold, two great dragons came forth ready to fight, and their cry was great. And at their cry all nations were prepared to battle, that they might fight against the righteous people."*

This writing depicts the events of the book of Esther, but yet it sounds *nothing* like the *literal* events of that book. We have the same form of writing here in Revelation.

One interesting thing about Revelation is that it makes no direct references to other Scriptures, but the allusions to Scripture (especially O.T. prophecy) are contained throughout. This would be consistent with its nature as an apocalyptic writing.

If you skipped over the introductory section titled, "The Land," you should read it before continuing; it's most pertinent in this book.

My simplified outline of the book (so you know what direction I'm going when I give all the evidence) goes like this:

- Chapters 1-4: Intro & letters to early churches. My interpretation of this section is not too controversial; most interpreters agree about the time frame of the writing of this section.
- Chapters 5-9: The final judgment of Israel. The section starts out with a sort of legal case against the nation and continues into its terrible destruction as the remnant escapes it.
- Chapters 10-11: The final judgment of Israel as starting point, but continues through to coming of Christ.
- Chapters 12-18: Basically repeat of chapters 5-9: final judgment of Israel. Chapter 12 starts all over with first coming of Christ.

- Chapter 19-20: Basically repeat of chapters 10-11: church age through second coming of Christ. The notes for chapter 20 are the most thorough and definitive (and perhaps the most disputed).
- Chapters 21-22: The eternal age (beginning with perhaps some re-hashing of the church age).

Chapter 1:

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

The things written must shortly take place. Unlike Daniel where it reads, “*Therefore seal up the vision, For it refers to many days in the future*” (DAN 8:26), references to events that are to happen soon is the case in most of this book. Examples:

- This verse.
- *And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.”* 22:10
- *“Then 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 would be killed as they were, was completed.”* 6:11
- Behold, I am coming quickly! 3:11 (his coming in judgment).
- See comments at vs. 19 below.
- See comments at 14:20.
- See comments at 16:18.

In addition to this the words are to be kept (vs. 3). If the prophesies are distant future, the people of that time couldn't keep them. Note, however, that this means primarily shortly. The book does of course contain far future prophecies.

2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Greeting the Seven Churches

4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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

Verse 7 is a combination of the following verses:

- *"I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him."* DAN 7:13
- *"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."* ZEC 12:10

"Tribes of the earth" here surely should be translated "tribes of the land." The earth is divided into nations, not tribes. I believe this can be taken as an interpretational key for the book. See introductory section, "The Land".

8 *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."*

Vision of the Son of Man

.... 18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. 19 Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

Greek literally is "which are about to occur" after this.

20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

Chapter 3:

10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

The hour of tribulation probably refers to the unrest in the Roman Empire after the death of Nero. "The whole world" probably isn't meant literally; see note @ MAT 24:22.

This is not speaking of removing the Christians before a supposed future tribulation.

The phrase, "keep you from" is found 2 times in Scripture. The other time is by the same writer. There it has the opposite meaning of taking them away from some threat, but keeping them in the midst of a threat but protecting them:

- *"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one."* JOH 17:15

It clearly seems to have the same meaning here in REV; they will be kept safe in the midst of the danger around them.

11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

Chapter 6 (the judgments are beginning to be meted out):

We begin a series of sevens all forms of judgement. God had already foretold of these sevens upon his people if they disobeyed. Here is a sample from LEV 26; it's repeated many times in that chapter:

- *"And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins."* LEV 26:18

These seals need not be seen as successive; rather they probably describe different aspects of the same phenomenon.

First Seal: The Conqueror

1 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." 2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

Compare to:

- *"Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, With Your glory and Your majesty. And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness; And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; The peoples fall under You."* PSA 45:3-5
- *"O LORD, were You displeased with the rivers, Was Your anger against the rivers, Was Your wrath against the sea, That You rode on Your horses, Your chariots of salvation? Your bow was made quite ready; Oaths were sworn over Your arrows. Selah You divided the earth with rivers. The mountains saw You and trembled; The overflowing of the water passed by. The deep uttered its voice, And lifted its hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; At the light of Your arrows they went, At the shining of Your glittering spear. You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled the nations in anger."* HAB 3:8-12 (concerning the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar)

The judgment of Israel has begun.

Second Seal: Conflict on Earth

3 When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." 4 Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

Again, "earth" may be translated "land" as in the land of Israel. Jews were killing one another in every city during the Jewish wars prior to AD70, not just in Jerusalem.

Fourth Seal: Widespread Death on Earth

7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." 8 So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a

fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

Note the similarity to this verse; a judgment on Jerusalem:

- *“For thus says the Lord GOD: “How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem—the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence—to cut off man and beast from it?” (EZE 14:21).*

Concerning “a fourth were killed,” the Jewish war started in Galilee and progressed from there.

Sixth Seal: Cosmic Disturbances

12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

God is putting out their lights as in this verse about a judgment against Egypt:

- *“When I put out your light, I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, And the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you, And bring darkness upon your land,’ Says the Lord GOD.” EZE 32:7-8.*

14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

- *“All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree.” (ISA 34:4)*

See notes @ MAT 24:29-30.

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

- *“They shall go into the holes of the rocks, And into the caves of the earth, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily.” ISA 2:19.*

16 and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

- *“Also the high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, Shall be destroyed. The thorn and thistle shall grow on their altars; They shall say to the mountains, “Cover us!” And to the hills, “Fall on us!”” HOS 10:8*
- *“But Jesus, turning to them, 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 say, ‘Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never*

nursed!’ Then they will begin ‘to say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!”’ For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?’” LUK 23:28-31. Note that the “they” Jesus refers to are the Romans who were doing “these things” (the crucifixion) to him (the green wood that has life). The dry wood speaks of Jerusalem devoid of the obedient Christians who obeyed his instructions to flee. Yet more evidence this speaks of AD 70.

17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

The 144 thousand (the remnant spoken of so many times) are able to stand. See more about them in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. 2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”

- *“...and the LORD said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.” To the others He said in my hearing, “Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.”” EZE 9:4-6. He marks his remnant here in Revelation as he did then.*

4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed:

There’s no reason to take this number literally; it indicates a remnant (12,000) from each tribe of Israel. See note at 14:4 for more on the 144 thousand.

...

15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. 16 They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Hunger, thirst, & heat aren’t literal; Christ shepherds them to pasture where they are filled:

- *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled” MAT 5:6.*

Concerning the heat:

- *“They shall neither hunger nor thirst, Neither heat nor sun shall strike them; For He who*

has mercy on them will lead them, Even by the springs of water He will guide them.” ISA 49:10

This section (the innumerable multitude) follows directly after the 144 thousand coming out of the tribulation. It could be that the tribulation of AD70 is the main event of the tribulation, but that it continues through the church age since the Jews have experienced persecution ever since. This would comport with LUK 21:24:

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

Chapter 8

Seventh Seal: Prelude to the Seven Trumpets

1 When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand. 5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

6 So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

These 7 trumpets are like those blown against Jericho:

- *“And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.” (JOS 6:4).*

First Trumpet: Vegetation Struck

7 The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

Third of trees: in preparation of the siege of Jerusalem, the Romans chopped down a great many trees (for siege works & crosses to execute defectors). Also, it was common to chop down an enemy’s trees out of sheer malice and the Romans probably did much of that. As recently as the Korean War, the communists chopped down trees out of malice. Note that God had to specifically instruct Israel not to do this when they wage war:

- *“When you besiege a city for a long time, while making war against it to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them; if you can eat of them, do not cut them down to use in the siege, for the tree of the field is man’s food.” DEU 20:19*

When REV speaks of the “third” of a thing being destroyed, this is usually in the context of the earlier stages of a judgment. This probably speaks of the fact that the

earlier stages of the Jewish War involved the destruction of the outlying areas (like Galilee). Thus the third is the minority of the Israelites. The largest portion perished with the destruction of Jerusalem itself.

Second Trumpet: The Seas Struck

8 Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.

9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

In MAT 21, Jesus tells the disciples that they can pray to cast a mountain into the sea. This is in the context of cursing the fig tree. Virtually everyone agrees that the cursed fig tree represents cursing the nation of Israel; the mountain is probably mount Zion - the mount Jerusalem was on (Jesus says "*this mountain*" – not just any mountain). Here in Revelation (back in chapter 6), we have the souls under the altar praying for vengeance (also mentioned in LUK 18:7). I believe this is the answer to that prayer - the destruction of Jerusalem; vengeance on those greatly persecuting the church at that time. As for a third of sea turning to blood, a third of living creatures in the sea dying, and a third of ships being destroyed, many Jews took to the sea of Galilee fleeing the Romans. They were pursued and destroyed in a terrible battle. Josephus gives details of the sea red with blood and boats strewn along the shore.

Third Trumpet: The Waters Struck

10 Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11 The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

A torch turned these waters bitter in contrast to when God turned water sweet with a piece of wood:

- *"And the people complained against Moses, saying, 'What shall we drink?' So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet." EXO 15:24-25*

He is now putting them under the judgments of Egypt. Note how the following verses relate that he won't do such a thing if they heed the voice of the Lord, but now their time of not heeding the voice of the Lord has come to an end; their cup is full.

- *"There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, and said, 'If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians.'" EXO 15:25-26*

Chapter 9

Continuing with the notion that God is bringing on Israel the plagues that he brought on Egypt, here we have locusts. The locusts sent against Egypt were literal, but these are not. We know this because:

- They harm nothing green; real locusts harm every green thing (plants).
- They have a king over them; real locusts are specifically said to have no king:
 - *"The locusts have no king, Yet they all advance in ranks"* PRO 30:27

Much has been made about these locusts representing some form of future war craft; it's abundantly clear to me that they are demons:

- They arise from the pit.
- They are compared to scorpions; something else that is compared to demons (see comments below).
- They don't have authority to kill, but to torment as with tormenting Spirits.
- Satan is their king.

I think in this chapter we are seeing the worst portion of the Jewish war: the actual siege of Jerusalem.

[Fifth Trumpet: The Locusts from the Bottomless Pit](#)

[1 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.](#)

The locusts mentioned below represent the demons; and the horses mentioned further below represent the Roman legions.

[2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.](#)

The siege of Jerusalem lasted 5 months (4 and a part of the 5th which would equate to 5 as is common in Jewish reckoning). Read these words of Jesus:

- *"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds 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 in 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."* MAT 12:43-45. Note the end of the illustration: "so shall it be with this generation". It is a prediction for that generation. After Jesus cleanses them of their demons, they will return in much greater force as a part of God's judgment.

[6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.](#)

7 The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.

“Crowns like gold:” they have authority, but it’s not real gold. It’s not like the authority of the King of Kings.

8 They had hair like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ teeth.

Faces of men; hair like women: reference to man may indicate that they are beings of intelligence; reference to women’s hair may indicate that they are seducing Spirits (as if they had hair worn down like an immodest prostitute of that day).

9 And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. 10 They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months.

Serpents/scorpions: Referencing the verses below; in the desert, God sent serpents on the Israelites as punishment. Later, he mentions that he brought them through the desert protecting them from such. Still later, Jesus says we will have authority over them (speaking of them as if they are something from the enemy). Thus, we see that they represent demons or something else from the enemy.

- *“So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.”* NUM 21:6
- *“...who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock”* DEU 8:15
- *“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”* LUK 10:19

Chariots, breastplates, and horses make a comparison of these “locusts” to an overwhelming army that nobody can stop just as in this verse:

- *“So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The crawling locust, The consuming locust, And the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you.”* JOE 2:25

11 And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

12 One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things. 13 Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” 15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.

Here we see a “third” again. In this case, the third (indicating a significant minority) may indicate the people who attempted to escape the siege of Jerusalem who perhaps faced an even worse fate when met by the Romans and other peoples outside.

16 Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the

number of them.

Here we see a reference to literal troops:

- Their origin is earthly (from the area of the Euphrates – the troops used in the Jewish war were drawn from the eastern borders of the Roman Empire).
- Horses indicate physical warfare as opposed to the spiritual warfare of the previous section.

Much has been made of the 200 million number; many people say China must be the future fulfillment of this prophecy because they are the only nation with an army that large, but it is probably a fulfillment of the following prophecy. In any case, the army need not literally be 200 million strong, but the number pictures something vast & unstoppable (as was the Roman army). Again, all these terrible things in the following prophecy are described in detail by Josephus as happening during the siege of Jerusalem in AD 70.

- *“The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you. “They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you. You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you. The sensitive and very refined man among you will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind, so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter, her placenta which comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.” DEU 28:49-57*
 - A nation coming from “the end of the earth:” The Roman armies drew from places far from Palestine which were considered the end of the earth at the time.
 - “As swift as the eagle flies:” The animal on the Roman standard was the eagle.

- “Whose language you will not understand:” *“The Latin language, then which none was more foreign to the structure and idiom of the Hebrew”*⁴⁴

Chapter 10

Chapters 10 & 11 are an interlude between 6th & 7th trumpets I believe they describe the destruction of Jerusalem and continue through the church age. See also note @ REV 11:15.

Reasons to interpret it this way include:

- Chapter 5 opened a book; in this chapter we open another book.
- This prophecy is sealed up (see notes below).
- One foot is on land (representing Israel); the other is on the sea (representing the Gentiles). This suggests that the prophecy straddles both periods.
- This prophecy is about *“many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings”* suggesting it’s about more than just Israel.
- *“...the mystery of God would be finished...”* The mystery of God in Paul’s writings is the church.

The Mighty Angel with the Little Book

1 I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head; his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. 2 He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, 3 and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.”

“Seal up:” as with other sealings; the time was not yet at hand. Contrast to the time when the prophecy is un-sealed:

- *“And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand...”* REV 22:10

5 The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, 7 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.

The mystery of God is the church as Paul says many times, especially:

- *“He made known to me the mystery...that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ...”* EPH 3:3-6

John Eats the Little Book

8 Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, “Go, take the

little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.”

9 So I went to the angel and said to him, “Give me the little book.”

And he said to me, “Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.”

10 Then I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. 11 And he said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.”

Many peoples, tongues, and kings contrast to Israel alone in prior chapters.

Chapter 11

The Two Witnesses

1 Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there.

2 But 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.

3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

The temple of God represents the church:

- *“For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.” 1CO 3:17*

They are measured out apparently for preservation. The outer court represents the unbelieving Jews who are to be trampled by the Gentiles.

The holy city tread underfoot is unquestionably a parallel to what Jesus said:

- *“And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” LUK 21:24*

They both surely speak of the same time. That time is the church age. Following are some reasons the church age may be indicated by the length of 3.5 years (42 months):

- 3.5 years relates to Christ’s ministry. The church is the extension of his ministry. This also comports with the first half of Daniel’s 70th week:
 - *“Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.” DAN 9:27a* (see notes there).
- 3.5 days relates to Christ’s death.
- 3.5 years is the length of the Maccabean revolution. This parallels the church age because it was a time when God’s remnant was given favor over their enemies and overcame great odds to secure victory.

Next we have our first exposure to the 2 witnesses. This is continuing with the church age, and I believe they also represent the church:

- *“By the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses every word will be established.”* MAT 18:16
- In verse 7 below, the beast will make war with them. You don't make war with 2 individuals. They represent the church, as in spiritual warfare.
- In verse 8 below, a reference to their "dead bodies" is "body" in the Greek (as in the "body of Christ").

4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

The 2 witnesses (the church) have the same miraculous powers that Moses and Elijah had (beginning with the miracles of the apostles).

The Witnesses Killed

7 When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.

The beast comes out of the pit here just as the beast is described as being released at the end of the church age in chapter 20:

- *“Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison”*
REV 20:7

8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9 Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves.

3.5 days is held in contrast to their overall time frame of 3.5 years. The days make up a short period at the end of the years. I think this corresponds to the short time that Satan will be released at the end of the thousand years in REV 20 (as noted below vs. 7 above). This represents the short time that Satan will overcome the church temporarily before the coming of Christ. Prior to that time, the church overcame Satan (see notes @ REV 20:3).

10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

They had tormented them by tormenting their consciences.

The Witnesses Resurrected

11 Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.

The second coming is approaching (see notes @ REV 20:7-10).

12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they

ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.

“Come up here” (to heaven) certainly sounds like the rapture...

Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom Proclaimed

The seventh trumpet is the last. That’s why I think this points to the second coming (as in the last trumpet of 1CO 15).

15 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 of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”

Here we have the judgment (we read the “time of the dead”, judgments, and rewards mentioned). The seventh angel sounds the last trumpet (rapture of previous section; second coming / judgment here):

- *“We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” 1CO 15:51-53*

16 And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying:

“We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,
The One who is and who was and who is to come,
Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.

18 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 the saints,
And those who fear Your name, small and great,
And should destroy those who destroy the earth.”

The judgment here is probably the final judgment at the coming of Christ.

19 Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

The final destruction of Jerusalem is past, though it will be described again. Chapter 12 starts the story over at Christ's birth.

Chapter 12

The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon

1 Now 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.

Here we start the prophecy over again at the beginning.

Sign = symbol as when Joseph dreamed his dream:

- *“Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, “Look, I*

have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.” GEN 37:9

The woman with 12 stars is Israel with the 12 apostles (as we’ve seen, stars speak of spiritual authorities – reference notes @ MAT 24).

2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

- *“As a woman with child is in pain and cries out in her pangs, When she draws near the time of her delivery, So have we been in Your sight, O LORD. We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind; We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.” ISA 26:17-18.* This is the description of Israel when they failed to give birth. The remnant of Israel (the apostles and disciples) gave birth to the church.
- *“Before she was in labor, she gave birth; Before her pain came, She delivered a male child. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children. Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?” says the LORD. “Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?” says your God.” ISA 66:7-9*

3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

This is the persecution of the saints. Note similarity to this passage from DAN 8 which all eschatological systems agree is about Antiochus Epiphanes and his persecution of Godly Israelites. The “stars” represent the bright lights (Godly people) in God’s economy. Note that there’s nothing about this verse to commend the traditional interpretation that Satan took demons when he supposedly fell from heaven.

- *“Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.” DAN 8:8-11*

5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. 6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

They flee to wilderness as the true Jewish believers did before the destruction of Jerusalem. This typifies the exodus from Egypt who is likened to a dragon (monster)

like the dragon of the next verse:

- *“Speak, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I am against you, O Pharaoh king of Egypt, O great monster who lies in the midst of his rivers, Who has said, ‘My River is my own; I have made it for myself.’” EZE 29:3*

Aside from the probable meaning outlined in chapter 11, verse 2, the serpent persecuting the church for 3.5 years (1260 days here, “time and times and half a time” in vs. 14, and “42 months” in chapter 13 vs. 5) probably speaks of the 3.5 year persecution of the church by Nero and typifies persecution of the church throughout the age. There could be 2 different literal periods spoken of that match that length:

- The time of Nero's persecution
- The length of the Jewish war.

Both periods in this chapter would probably only equate to Nero's persecution; the period in the next chapter doesn't seem to fit either one.

Satan Thrown Out of Heaven

7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Jesus said Satan was cast out at the cross (Note that this comes from John, the same writer as Revelation):

- *“Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” JOH 12:31-32*

10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

“Now salvation?” That came at the cross. “Strength?” *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” MAT 28:19.* This tells us what time frame is still in view.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

“Inhabitants of the earth” here may be those who are of this world - unbelievers.

The Woman Persecuted

13 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. 14 But the woman was given two wings of a

great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

15 So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

Water out of the serpent's mouth speaks of words of deception. The earth (the people of this world) swallowed the deception, but the woman (the church – believing remnant) was not deceived. Next in chapter 13 verse 1, we have the serpent (some translations have the serpent standing on the sea) after being enraged that the flood did not take the woman calling the beast out of the sea to help in overcoming the woman (church).

16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 13

The Beast from the Sea

Of the beast / dragon / serpent in Revelation:

- The serpent / dragon is Satan (12:9 above, 20:2)
- The dragon has 7 heads / 10 horns (12:3 above)
- The beast has the same description (this verse, 17:7)
- The beast in this chapter has some features of all 4 beasts of DAN 7 (which all represent kingdoms):
 - Lion, bear, horns, leopard, etc...
- The beast of chapter 17 certainly speaks of Rome:
 - City on 7 hills. (17:9)
 - Reigns over kings of earth. (17:18)
 - Ten horns (17:12) speak of 10 ethnic groups which made up Rome, which groups shall become their own kingdoms subsequently.
 - These ten horns parallel the ten horns of the fourth beast of DAN 7 which is (all would agree) the Roman Empire:
 - *"The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom."* DAN 7:24
- 666 (vs. 18) is Nero's name numerically. The letters of the Hebrew alphabet doubled as numbers, and this would easily be interpreted by the Jews of the time.

Thus the beast speaks of the world system (political forces hostile to the church who are influenced by Satan) generally, and Rome specifically (in their day).

1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a

blasphemous name. 2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

"Mouth of a lion:" Nero was referred to as a lion³⁷. Paul may be referring to Nero (who he is probably speaking of in the context) when he uses the same description:

- *"But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."* 2TI 4:17

3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.

After Nero's suicide, three different leaders took over in rapid succession & civil wars ensued. The fact that the empire stabilized under Vespasian is seen by historians as remarkable.

If the beast is the empire, certainly the heads are the Ceasars.

4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

The Beast from the Earth

11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.

2nd Beast may speak of Domitian under whom emperor worship started in earnest³⁴, though I think more likely it speaks of Nero since vs. 18 below almost certainly does.

- 2 horns like a lamb: he has some of the same type of power of the lamb – spiritual.
- Vs. 12 below: he mixes religion with politics (emperor worship).

12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell

on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. 15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,

This mark stands in contrasts with the mark of chapter 7, *"Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads"* – it's a spiritual mark of the opposite sort; one is either marked for God or for the world system. Note also the similarity to the following mark:

- *"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes."* DEU 6:8

"Binding" to the hand or forehead is not to be taken literally despite the fact that some Jews did just that (they were probably the same Jews who lived the law outwardly, but not inwardly as Jesus demonstrated).

17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

Nero

- As has been noted from the earliest Christian writings, Nero's name written in Hebrew has this numeric equivalent; transforming Hebrew letters to numbers was common.
- Even in other cultures near the time this was done. Graffiti on a wall in Pompeii reads, "I love her whose name is 545."⁵²
- If his name is put into Hebrew from Latin it gives the number 616, which is how it read in some early manuscripts.
- Nero was known to have been called the beast or lion³⁷.

Consider also this description of Pharaoh:

- *"You are like a young lion among the nations, And you are like a monster in the seas..."* EZE 32:2

As mentioned, a full discussion of the date of Revelation's writing is not something I care to take up here, but a few quick things to note:

- There are many Jewish words and references in the book which accord more with an early date than a late date.
- The persecution under Nero was as great as or greater than that under Domitian despite what late date proponents (who say the book was written under Domitian) say. See reference in note 36 for more info.
- This book is an epistle; it has primary relevance to the recipients. They, not us at

some unknown future date, would be the ones able to make use of this information.

Chapter 14

The Lamb and the 144,000

1 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. Revelation is a repetitious book; it starts the story over again several times; we're now back to A.D. 70. We're again talking about the 144K as we were in chapter 7.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. 3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. 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 firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

Here we have the early Jewish believers (the remnant):

- In ancient Israel, virgin friends of the bride followed her in the wedding ceremony. This points to the "virgins" being Jewish.
- Firstfruits = early Jewish believers: *"James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: ... Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."* JAM 1:1,18

5 And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

"In their mouth was no deceit." They are genuine, and they are true Israelites; just as Jesus said of Nathanael:

- *"Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"* JOH 1:47

Thus, they are the true believers (see notes ROM 2).

The Proclamations of Three Angels

6 Then 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, tongue, and people—
7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

The angel of these verses – angel means messenger – is the church. God never uses an actual angel to speak the gospel. Even when Cornelius was to be preached to, God sent an angel to Peter who then went to him. In O.T. times, God had a very specific method

of relating his message whereby the Israelites were to carry the Ark of the Covenant. He didn't have angels speak messages across the sky; he had his people bear it on their backs.

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." MAT 24:14

...

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16 So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

17 Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." 19 So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

Verses 14-20 speak of 2 harvests (likened to the feasts of Pentecost & tabernacles). This passage from MAT speaks of a harvest as well:

- *"And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."* MAT 3:10-12

I think these both speak of the judgment of Israel. Notice the nearness of the harvest in Matthew (it was going to happen in their time):

- The ax is laid to the root of the trees: this is what you do when you're preparing to take a swing.
- His winnowing fan is in His hand; he's fixing to get the fire stoked.

Concerning the 1600 furlongs, this is the length from northern to southern end of Jerusalem (Dan to Beersheba).

Concerning the winepress, again, Israel is the vine that bore no fruit:

- *"The Lord has trampled underfoot all my mighty men in my midst; He has called an assembly against me to crush my young men; The Lord trampled as in a winepress The virgin daughter of Judah."* LAM 1:15
- *"For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help."* ISA 5:7

Chapter 16

1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."

The plagues mirror those against Egypt; at this point Jerusalem is Egypt (as well as Sodom & Babylon – represented by any sinful city): *"And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."* 11:8

Note that the trumpet plagues also mirror Egyptian plagues.

First Bowl: Loathsome Sores

2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

Note that the Jews had joined themselves to the beast of Rome (something they would normally be loath to do, but they went to any length to oppose Jesus): *"Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him."* MAR 3:6.

...

Third Bowl: The Waters Turn to Blood

4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 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.
6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
And You have given them blood to drink.
For it is their just due."

"Shed the blood of saints & prophets:" Many cities shed the blood of saints, but Jerusalem is the one who kills the prophets:

- *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood*

under her wings, but you were not willing!" LUK 13:34

- *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation."* MAT 23:29-36

7 And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

Fourth Bowl: Men Are Scorched

8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.

The scorching is in direct contrast with the lack of scorching in 7:16 (see notes there).

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

Fifth Bowl: Darkness and Pain

10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain.

Bowl thrown on beast may indicate turmoil in Rome after the suicide of Nero.

11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

Sixth Bowl: Euphrates Dried Up

12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.

The drying of the Euphrates pictures the destruction of the first (literal) Babylon; we're now viewing the destruction of the second Babylon (Jerusalem).

Concerning the Euphrates & the kings of east:

- Harkens the judgment of Babylon where the Euphrates was dried and the leaders of Persia invaded.
- Many of the Roman legions who came against Jerusalem were from the eastern area of Roman Empire near valley of Euphrates.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out

of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Battle of that great day (the day of God's great judgment):

- *"The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD."* JOE 2:31
 - Peter says this is fulfilled in his time (ACT 2:16). Thus, the day of Pentecost comes just before the destruction of Jerusalem.
- *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD."* MAL 4:5
 - Jesus says this is fulfilled in his time; that John the Baptist is Elijah (MAT 17:12). Thus, John the Baptist comes just before the destruction of Jerusalem.

15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo." ZEC 12:10-11.

- As noted in the section on ZEC, the Spirit of grace speaks of Pentecost. In that same day (during the same time), there will be mourning in Jerusalem as in Megiddo (where Josiah was defeated). This "Megiddo" is the same valley as mentioned above, "Armageddon."³⁸

Seventh Bowl: The Earth Utterly Shaken

17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" 18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.

"See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain." HEB 12:25-27

- This passage from Hebrews speaks of a great shaking in order to remove the old system. This earthquake spells the end of Jerusalem.
- Note that the things are being shaken. It was happening as the writer of

Hebrews was writing.

19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

“Divided in 3 parts:”

- Josephus recorded that the city divided into 3 warring camps during the Jewish wars.³⁹
- This passage from Ezekiel speaks of another dividing of Jerusalem into thirds in the context of judgment:
 - *“And you, son of man, take a sharp sword, take it as a barber’s razor, and pass it over your head and your beard; then take scales to weigh and divide the hair. You shall burn with fire one-third in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are finished; then you shall take one-third and strike around it with the sword, and one-third you shall scatter in the wind: I will draw out a sword after them. You shall also take a small number of them and bind them in the edge of your garment. Then take some of them again and throw them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire. From there a fire will go out into all the house of Israel. Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations and the countries all around her. She has rebelled against My judgments by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against My statutes more than the countries that are all around her; for they have refused My judgments, and they have not walked in My statutes.’” EZE 5:1-6*

20 Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

Hail the weight of talent: A talent is heavy (something like 100 lbs.). During the siege of Jerusalem, Josephus records that stones "the weight of a talent" were hurled into the city. The stones were white (like hail) until later the Romans used black ones so they couldn't be seen as easily. When the white stones were hurled into the city, he records that they called out "the Son is coming." Josephus indicates no reason for this strange call, but some speculate that they were mocking the Christians who told them that the Son was going to come and exact vengeance because when they were white they could be seen and avoided.⁴⁰

Chapter 17

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast

1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the

inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

Kings of the earth = rulers of the land (rulers in Israel), as we can read from a portion of Peter’s sermon in ACT 4:26-27: *“The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.” “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together”*

3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

Thus, the harlot is Jerusalem who rides the beast who is Rome because Jerusalem is in the Roman Empire. The rulers in Israel were in harmony with wicked Rome; they were doing business with the Romans and were compromised by Roman culture having no longer any concern with the God of Abraham after dispensing with his son.

4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. 5 And on her forehead a name was written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

The Meaning of the Woman and the Beast

7 But the angel said to me, “Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. 8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 “Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.

Just about everyone believes that the city on seven mountains is the “city on seven hills” or Rome. The disagreement comes as to the time period. Of course I believe it takes place in the past.

10 There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.

The first Roman emperor was Julius Ceasar, the sixth was Ceasar Nero. The seventh, Galba, (after Nero committed suicide) lasted only a few months before he was assassinated. This would indicate that the ruler at the time of writing was Nero (see note @ 13:18).

11 The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is

going to perdition.

12 "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. 13 These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. 14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."

15 Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. 16 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. 17 For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. 18 And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

What city is the woman/harlot/city (in the entire book of Revelation)? It could be Rome, but more likely Jerusalem. It must be either Jerusalem or Rome because she *currently* reigns.

In favor of Rome:

- Vs. 16: the city destroys the harlot via the 10 horns/kings (see note vs. 12). This would mean that those future groups would turn on and destroy Rome (5th, 6th centuries).
- Vs. 18: the city rules over the kings of the earth.
- Vs. 3: the harlot sits on the beast (Rome is the head of the empire).
- Ch. 18:3,9 may fit more with Rome since they seem to address a large commercial enterprise:
 - Merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.
 - Kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her.

In favor of Jerusalem (much greater evidence):

- Vs. 3 could mean (in contrast to above) that Jerusalem is supported by Rome. The beast (Rome) having 7 heads / 10 horns, is explained in the note @ 13:1.
- See notes @ 14:8 & 16:19.
- Cities in above verses are referred to as "great". 11:8 & 21:10 identify the "great city" as Jerusalem.
- Vs. 16: the beast (which should be fairly easily identified as Rome) destroys the harlot: sounds like the destruction of Jerusalem.
- Jerusalem is said to be figuratively Sodom and Egypt (11:8). Add in Babylon: Jews were rescued from Egypt and Babylon. This is like another exodus whereby the remnant escapes the persecutors in Jerusalem. See notes @ chapter 12.
- A harlot speaks of violation of covenant as that between Jerusalem & God:

- *“How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers.” ISA 1:21*
- *“But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it.” EZE 16:15*
- *“You built your high places at the head of every road, and made your beauty to be abhorred. You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of harlotry. You also committed harlotry with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of harlotry to provoke Me to anger.” EZE 16:25-26*
 - Note that she whored with several other nations as in vs. 2 here.
- Contrast the following verses from chapter 18 (which continues the same topic – Babylon) with other verses which speak of the destruction of Jerusalem:

<i>“The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all.” 18:14</i>	<i>“And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, “Let no fruit grow on you ever again.” Immediately the fig tree withered away.” MAT 21:19</i>
<i>“...and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls!’ 18:16</i>	<i>“Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said,” LUK 21:5</i>
<i>“The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.” 18:22-23</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>“Then I will cause to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. For the land shall be desolate.” JER 7:34</i> ○ <i>“Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp.” JER 25:10</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!” 18:20</i> ○ <i>“And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.” 18:24</i> 	<i>“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets...” MAT 23:37</i>

- Reference “kings of the earth”, here are similar references to Jerusalem (and Bethlehem):

- See note at verse 2 above.
- *"How lonely sits the city That was full of people! How like a widow is she, Who was great among the nations! The princess among the provinces Has become a slave!"* LAM 1:1 (speaking of Jerusalem)
- *"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel."* MAT 2:6
- Josephus describes Jerusalem as a royal city that was supreme & speaks of all the goods she gets from her ties to sea ports.⁴¹

Chapter 18

The Fall of Babylon the Great

This chapter is a dirge mostly reminiscent of JER 51 & EZE 28, but every verse has some parallel in the laments over Sodom, Egypt, & Babylon (every sinful city that has been judged).

The references to merchants/ships (vs. 11-13) recalls the laments against Tyre (EZE 27 - another sinful city to which Jerusalem is compared). It's as if God is seeing all his judgments as one. Also (again), Josephus describes Jerusalem as a royal city that was supreme & speaks of all the goods she gets from her ties to sea ports.

1 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"

Compare to this spoken against Babylon; *"But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, And their houses will be full of owls; Ostriches will dwell there, And wild goats will caper there. The hyenas will howl in their citadels, And jackals in their pleasant palaces. Her time is near to come, And her days will not be prolonged."* ISA 13:21-22

3 For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

- Compare to: *"Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD's hand, That made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; Therefore the nations are deranged."* JER 51:7
- "kings of the earth" - see note @ 17:2

4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

This is calling the true church to come out:

- *"Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! With a voice of singing, Declare, proclaim this, Utter it to the end of the earth; Say, "The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob!"* ISA 48:20

- *“Move from the midst of Babylon, Go out of the land of the Chaldeans; And be like the rams before the flocks.” JER 50:8*
- *“Flee from the midst of Babylon, And every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, For this is the time of the LORD’s vengeance; He shall recompense her.” JER 51:6*

5 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

“And the LORD said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave...” GEN 18:20

6 Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.

“O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed, Happy the one who repays you as you have served us!” PSA 137:8

7 In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’

“And you said, ‘I shall be a lady forever,’ So that you did not take these things to heart, Nor remember the latter end of them. “Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, Who dwell securely, Who say in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, Nor shall I know the loss of children’” ISA 47:7-8 (spoken against Babylon)

8 Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.

“Their Redeemer is strong; The LORD of hosts is His name. He will thoroughly plead their case, That He may give rest to the land, And disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.” JER 50:34

The World Mourns Babylon’s Fall

9 “The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning,

Similarities to other judgments:

- All the inhabitants of the isles will be astonished at you; their kings will be greatly afraid, and their countenance will be troubled. EZE 27:35 (spoken against Tyre)
- At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth trembles, and the cry is heard among the nations. JER 50:46
- “kings of the earth” - see note @ 17:2.

10 standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’

11 “And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: 12 merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; 13 and

cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. 14 The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! 17 For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance 18 and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?'

19 "They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.' 20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

Again, this points to Jerusalem as the city being judged; God is avenging the apostles and prophets (MAT 23:29-36, as has been referenced several times). The "blood of prophets" is mentioned again at the end of the chapter.

Finality of Babylon's Fall

21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.

Compare to:

"Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, that you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates. Then you shall say, 'Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her. And they shall be weary.'" Thus far are the words of Jeremiah." JER 51:63-64

22 The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. 23 The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.

Compare to:

"Who has taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traders are the honorable of the earth?" ISA 23:8

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."

Chapter 19

Heaven Exults over Babylon

5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

Wedding supper of the lamb is come:

- The wedding is ready after the destruction of Jerusalem: *"But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.'" MAT 22:7-8*
- *"Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?' And Jesus said to them, 'Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.'" MAT 9:14-15*
- *"He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled." JOH 3:29 (John the Baptist is introducing the bride to the groom).*

8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." 10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Christ on a White Horse

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

The sword that comes out of his mouth is the word: *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit,*

and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." HEB 4:12
16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

11-16: Could be conquest of the church through spiritual warfare, or 2nd coming. More likely it's talking about the church age:

- *"My anger is kindled against the shepherds, and I will punish the goatherds. For the LORD of hosts will visit His flock, the house of Judah And will make them as His royal horse in the battle."* ZEC 10:3: He rides in conquest with Israel (his church), and wages war (spiritual warfare).
- *"Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand, To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples; To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute on them the written judgment — This honor have all His saints."* PSA 149: 6-9
- *"...who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."* Since he didn't leave on a horse riding in battle, he won't return in that way.

The Beast and His Armies Defeated

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,

I think the rest of the chapter definitely talks about the 2nd coming.

17-21: These verses describe the final rebellion followed by the 2nd coming just as chapter 20 verses 7-10. See comments at those verses for reasons why I think those verses describe the 2nd coming. Some of the same reasoning applies here.

18 that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."

"And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together." LUK 17:37

19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

The church is his royal army on horses: *"My anger is kindled against the shepherds, And I will punish the goatherds. For the LORD of hosts will visit His flock, The house of Judah, And will make them as His royal horse in the battle."* ZEC 10:3

20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth

of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Chapter 20

Here we have the most poignant chapter concerning eschatology in the Bible. To me, this one seals the deal. After having it explained to me from an amillennial viewpoint, it become **crystal clear** and it doesn't seem to make any sense from other viewpoints. I believe this chapter starts over again (as is done several times in REV) from the beginning of the church age.

Here is the outline:

- Verses 1 - 3: Satan is bound. This happens at the cross.
- Verses 4 - 6: Saints reign with Christ for some time. This describes the church age (the age we live in).
- Verses 7 - 10: Satan's final rebellion and the 2nd coming.
- Verses 11 - 14: Final judgment.

Note that there are 2 "deaths" and 2 "resurrections." We know this because vs. 5 mentions the "first resurrections," and vs. 6 mentions the "second death." If there is a second death, there must be a first; if there is first resurrection, the second is implied. The comments below will explain that the first death is physical (death as everyone knows it); the second eternal separation from God, and the first resurrection is spiritual (becoming born again); the second physical (the resurrection of the dead).

Satan Bound 1000 Years

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

The "angel" represents Christ - no literal angel is powerful enough to do to Satan what's described. Michael, the most powerful angel we know of, dared not even to bring accusation against Satan (JUD 1:9) let alone chain him and toss him into a pit. Note that Jesus is the angel ("messenger" - same word) in this passage:

- *"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts. "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire..." MAL 3:1-2*

2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

Concerning Binding:

- Christ had bound the Devil. The nations were in complete darkness before Christ bound Satan. *"But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his*

goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house." MAT 12:28-29. The parallel in LUK 11 reads "takes from him all his armor." Jesus paints an image that depicts a spiritual reality just as here in REV. This same disarming is mentioned in COL in the next bullet below.

- Christ disarmed the enemy. This is part of what you do when you bind a scofflaw. *"Having disarmed principalities and powers, He [Christ] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."* COL 2:15
- Just as David slew the giant and had to mop up, so this is our situation now. Note that binding is what the saints do in his name: *"Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand, To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples; To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute on them the written judgment — This honor have all His saints."* PSA 149: 6-9
- "Destroy" in the following verse means literally "reduce to inactivity" (like binding). *"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil"* HEB 2:14

3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more

Satan could no longer deceive the nations: before the cross, there was just one nation (Israel) that had light; all others were deceived in darkness.

till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

The "thousand years" is not literal. The number 1000 is never used literally in Scripture (and thus becomes an interpretational key). What's more, this book is the most likely place to find symbolic numbers. The number always means many in Scripture. In this verse it is used in contrast with *a little while*. Other examples:

- *"For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it is past, And like a watch in the night."* PSA 90:4
- *"But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."* 2PE 3:8
- *"For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills."* PSA 50:10
Obviously, the cow on the 1001th hill is also his.
- *"For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness."* PSA 84:10
- *"May the LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you as He has promised you!"* DEU 1:11
- *"Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments"* DEU 7:9

The Saints Reign with Christ 1000 Years

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Souls - disembodied in heaven – first indication that the first resurrection (continuing into next vs) isn't physical, but rather spiritual (see comments next vs.). If this were speaking of the final (physical) resurrection after Christ's return, they would have their glorified bodies. As it is they await the physical resurrection @ the end of the chapter. The real reigning may take place in heaven.

Beast = world system as has been discussed. The mark: See comments at 7:3 & 13:16 (marked for this world system).

The reign of those "souls" is taking place right now (whether in heaven or on earth); the "millennium" of the church age.

5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

"First resurrection" refers to regeneration as in the following verses:

- "... buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses" COL 2:12-13
- "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins" EPH 2:1
- "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live." JOH 5:24-25 (speaking of both the spiritual and the physical resurrections)

Also compare the following passages which do speak of the literal resurrection:

- "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." JOH 6:40
 - "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day" JOH 6:44
 - "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" JOH 6: 54
- Compare to --
- "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." JOH 12:48

All speak of "the last day" as the literal last day of the current earth as is spoken of in the

following verse. This is not a day in which a millennium is begun; it's literally the last day:

- *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."* 2PE 3:10

6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

The second death is described in vs. 14 as the lake of fire. Thus, the first death is physical; the second spiritual. Those who take part in the first resurrection (the regenerate) won't suffer that death because it has *no power* over them. Note that it speaks of 2 *types* of deaths/resurrections rather than 2 *groups* as premillennialists say. The souls reign with Christ in heaven and we as priests reign "on earth as it is in heaven."

- *"... you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."* 1PE 2:5

Satanic Rebellion Crushed

7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison

If this rebellion were to happen *after* the return of Christ (whereby dispensationalists believe Christ will be on earth with glorified saints), what possible threat would Satan pose which would require fire from heaven (in vs. 9 below)? We would have *Christ himself* here on earth.

8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. 9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

If it can be established that vs. 9-15 speak of second coming, then 1-8 cannot speak of things that take place after the second coming (literal millennium). There is no doubt that the chapter (in itself) is chronological (and the next chapter seems to follow chronologically as well).

Here is the chronology:

- Fire from heaven (vs. 9): second coming
 - *"... and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."* 2TH 1:6-9
 - *"And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming."* 2TH 2:8
 - The earth is destroyed / renewed at his coming / brightness. If he already

came prior to literal millennium, why didn't the earth flee/dissolve/melt then?

- Fire from heaven would not be necessary if this is after the second coming and Christ with his glorified saints are threatened by Satan and mere mortals.
- Satan is destroyed (vs. 10 below)
 - *"And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming."* 2TH 2:8
- Heaven and earth flee (vs. 11 below). The elements melt / dissolve in fire and the heavens pass away. This is followed by a new heavens & earth (next chapter), not a millennium.
 - *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."* 2PE 3:10-13
- The physical resurrection (vs. 12-13 below). There is one resurrection (see notes @ vs. 13 below).
 - Since there is one physical resurrection, the resurrection of vs. 5 is spiritual (see note there).
- Judgment (vs. 13)

The "beloved city" is the church:

- *"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."* REV 21:2 (the bride of Christ is the church).

10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The Great White Throne Judgment

11 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. 12 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. 13 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.

The one physical resurrection:

- See notes for single resurrection @ 1CO 15.
- *“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.”* DAN 12:2. “Many” often refers to all when all are many. This seems to be the case here because it includes both those bound for everlasting life and for everlasting contempt.
- See note next vs.

14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

The victory over death as outlined below. Note that this happens in concert with rapture. Rapture/Resurrection/Judgment: one event.

- *“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”* 1CO 15:50-55. Notice again that this is one event – it describes the rapture, resurrection, and end to death. There is no mention of a millennium where death still exists.

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Chapter 21

I see these last 2 chapters as bridging the gap between the glorious church age and the everlasting age. Verses 1-6 provide an outline for the 2 chapters.

All Things Made New

1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

Sea = Gentiles or non-believers.

2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

The New Jerusalem / city seem to be spiritual mixed with literal:

- Spiritual:
 - *“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels...”* HEB 12:22. It’s a heavenly city.
 - *“...for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children — but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.”* GAL 4:25-26. It’s above.

- *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden."*
MAT 5:14. His people are a city (Spiritually speaking).
- Physical:
 - At that time, it's actually coming down from heaven.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

The abode of God meets with the abode of men. This is true in the church and eternal ages.

...

The New Jerusalem

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. 12 Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. 16 The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal.

It's a large cube. The original holy of holies was 15 feet squared; this one is 1500 miles squared. The original only allowed one person in; after the veil of the temple was torn, this one allows all to come in. Again, pertains to both the church (berthed on the foundation of the apostles) and eternal ages.

17 Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. 18 The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

It's made of clear/pure gold; its occupants have been purified:

- *"...that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ..."* 1PE 1:7
- *"But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold."*
JOB 23:10
- *"Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, Neither wasting nor destruction within*

your borders; But you shall call your walls Salvation, And your gates Praise.” ISA 60:18. This is the kind of stuff the walls and gates of the new Jerusalem are made of.

- *“Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.” MAT 5:8*
- *“Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart” 1TI 1:5*
- *“Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.” DAN 12:10*

19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald,

The walls are made of jewels:

- *“Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name. “They shall be Mine,” says the LORD of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him.”” MAL 3:16-17. God’s people are his jewels.*
- *“...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1PE 2:5. His people are the stones that make up his church.*

20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

The gates are symbolized by the 12 tribes of Israel:

- *“Jesus said 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.” JOH 4:21-22. Salvation is of the Jews.*
- *Jews were the firstfruits (see note @ 14:4).*
- *“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” EPH 2:19-20. We are of this same house.*

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