

Biblical Prophecy

The Unity of Prophetic Terminology



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FOREWORD

The study of eschatology is a subject that takes up a large portion of the entire Bible. The first and second comings of Christ are really almost 1A and 1B, being closely intertwined and dependent on each other so as to fulfill *"the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Ephesians 3:11). Note this verse is worded as if already all done, for it was guaranteed by Christ's death and resurrection, yet will not take place fully until the future.

The first portion of our eschatology studies will focus on "The History of Prophecy."

Afterward, we will then step back and take what we have learned from prophecy's historical standpoint to focus on particular terminology that is introduced in the Old Testament books and brought over into the New Testament writings that helps form a "unity of terminology" from start to finish. Below are a few passages to show what I mean;

"...saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come..." (Acts 26:22)

"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:27)

"...all things must be fulfilled which were written the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." (Luke 24:44)

It is vital to understand that so much of common terminology the New Testament writers used is terminology brought directly from the Old Testament prophets. Thus, as in any subject of study, an apprehension of the meaning and the consistency of terms is important.

INTRODUCTION

Genesis 3:15 is the “proto-evangel” – the first great prophecy of Christ and redemption. Other important Messianic prophecies follow, such as

- Genesis 49:9 of Messiah from Judah as Great Lawgiver and Ruler;
- Numbers 24:17-19 of the same;
- Deuteronomy 18:15 of Moses and the Great Prophet to come.
- Such as Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6,7; Isaiah 53;
- Micah 5:2-4 and many more;
- The Messianic Psalms - Psalm 22 and Psalm 110 and many more.

All these stem from Genesis 3:15 and are an outgrowth of it.

Daniel 2, along with Daniel 7, form the foundation-prophecies of Gentile kingdoms – their rise, their rule and their destruction.

The other prophetic books, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and many of the smaller books, go into great detail about God’s dealings with the Gentile nations.

Daniel 9:24-27 is the famous prophecy of Daniel’s 70 weeks, which due to Israel’s neglect of 70 Sabbath years, turned into a 490 year period of their history (which covered the time of them having earthly kings and the need for extra finances to support them) as the reason for their 70 year captivity in Babylon.

The prophecy of 490 years represents segments of time including both historical and future events — sixty-nine of the “70 weeks” being history while the final 70th week being yet future.

The final “seventieth week” is known as the 7 year tribulation period leading to the return of Christ. John in Revelation draws from this with time phrases such as:

- 42 months
- 1260 days
- times, time and half a time

Isaiah 65 & 66 form the foundation of the "age to come" that John draws heavily from in the closing chapters of the Revelation. Peter draws from Isaiah also in 2 Peter 3.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 is the famous prophecy of the "new covenant" that Paul grabs hold of in 2 Corinthians 3:6 as a current reality.

Christ speaks of the "blood of the new covenant" as the cup portion of the Lord's Supper: Luke 22:20, with Paul repeating it in 1 Corinthians 11:25.

Hebrews 8:8-12 is a quote of Jeremiah 31:31-34 and is the longest direct quote brought from the Old Testament Scriptures into the New Testament Scriptures.

Jeremiah's foundational prophecy is a core part of the whole of Hebrews, mentioned often, such as Hebrews 9:15; Hebrews 10:16,17; Hebrews 12:24 and others that clearly refer to Jeremiah's prophecy without calling it "new covenant."

Hebrews 13:20 speaks of the "blood of the everlasting covenant" connecting it to the same "blood of the new covenant" Christ mentions at the Lord's Supper. □



Chapter 1

"The Mystery" Element"

The mystery aspect of eschatology is very important for the Bible student to grasp. Even though truth was there all along, especially the mystery of Christ's two comings, it was almost totally missed and misunderstood when He arrived and began His ministry.

"...saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come - that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles." Acts 26:22, 23

A large part of the mystery that was somewhat veiled in the Old Testament and fully revealed in the New Testament was that Christ had to suffer first, before His glory, and that it would take two comings to accomplish all this; and that Gentiles would be the recipients of His grace and truth, not only the Jews - and not when Israel is elevated but in exile, in rebellion against God.

Consider the following passages:

Deuteronomy 32:34 "Is this not laid up in store with Me, sealed among My treasures?"

Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

Romans 16:25, 26 "... According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now has been made

manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations..."

Ephesians 3:4, 5 "the mystery...by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets."

The Word 'Mystery'

As a word, "mystery" is not used in the Old Testament, but the principle of it is, since the 27 times "mystery" is used in the New Testament, they are speaking about subjects partially introduced in the Old Testament. The "mysteries" of the New Testament Scriptures are embedded in the Old Testament prophets and revealed in the New Testament - veiled then unveiled.

The question before us is, "How we get back to the Garden now that sin has been introduced?" (see: Genesis 1:26-28).

The answer is found in the mysterious verse of Genesis 3:15 —

"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

In this verse we note especially interesting elements:

- *a "bruised heel" of the "seed of the woman"*
- *the "crushed head" of the "seed of the serpent"*

These conflicts would come upon the corporate "seed" in both cases, but also upon the ultimate expression of both "seeds" in the form of a representative individual with incarnation qualities - what we later know to be Christ and antichrist.

But, not enough detail is given to understand the "bruised heel" of the serpent toward Christ and then the "crushed head" of the serpent by Christ. Such, as it turns out, would require two comings separated by a long gap of time. This is Christ talking directly to the serpent saying in effect,

"You will not know when or how, but I will crush your head some time in the future and the ultimate victory will be Mine."

How will this be possible now that mankind has fallen? The hint is seen in Genesis 3:21.

"Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them."

The identity of the "He" in Genesis 3:15 who would crush the head of the serpent was a mystery, yet is expanded upon in Genesis 49:10 & Numbers 24:17 where it is said, that "he" will be a king, a ruler.

Who was this "Head Crusher?"

Eve may have thought Cain was this one to "crush the head" of the serpent, since the Hebrew word for 'Cain' can mean, "I have gotten a man - the LORD" (Genesis 4:1).

But, Eve's hope was quickly squelched by Cain whose character was more like that of the serpent than of a deliverer, killing the godly "seed."

But, now the idea of the death of a beloved and godly son (Abel) is introduced in Scripture.

We now have entering the picture, the notion of the "*mystery of iniquity*" and the "*mystery of godliness*" operating alongside each other within the same space and time framework. This principle will replay many, many times onward from here.

Another mysterious clue is witnessed in the birth of Seth whereby is added the idea of *substitution* (Genesis 4:25);

"For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel"

Compare with Genesis 22:8, where it says, "*God will provide.*"

The Holy and the 'Corporate' Seed

We now turn our attention to another important layer to God's plan — that of a corporate Seed — a holy collective from a holy individual

which was later developed into Christ as THE holy "Seed" and His holy corporate "seed" (Genesis 13:16; Genesis 15:5).

It was through the individual of Abraham that the corporate Seed was introduced along with blessings and promises attached to them (Genesis 17:8).

Now, add the promise of a particular Son coming at a particular timing of God's choosing and being born by miracle (the birth and Incarnation of Christ).

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," (compare Galatians 4:4; Genesis 17:21)

The Death of the Elect Son

These blessings all come through an elect Son of promise, yet must likewise include a sacrificial death -- but one of God's grace;

"God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering" (Genesis 22:8)

In due time did the *elect Son* die as the "Lamb of God."

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5:6)

Thus, the literal ram provided to Abraham, is symbolic and merely a substitute for the real sacrifice of the beloved son (Genesis 22:16).

"By faith Abraham...offered up Isaac." (Hebrews 11:17)

The Resurrection of the Elect Son

Consider the necessary faith element that this sacrificed son must now live on somehow for the promises to endure (Hebrews 11:17-19). So now we have the added understanding of a resurrection (along with the earlier resurrection truth of bringing life from death of their old bodies (Hebrews 11:11,12).

The Mysteries beginning to Unfold

The pieces of this mysterious puzzle are falling into place. New Testament mysteries are being understood.

This all helps us understand why Christ rebuked His disciples regarding their lack of faith (see: Luke 24:25). All this truth (these mysteries) were hidden to most, but such was to be understood by His disciples to be, *"all that the prophets have spoken."*

He then showed them the many, many multiplied places where He was revealed, but in mystery form (yet open to true disciples) through the entirety of Old Testament Scriptures (Luke 24:27). It was important that His disciples sew the Scriptures together, thus He said to them,

"Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:27)

This truth of suffering before glory lost its place in the thinking of Israel through the centuries. They knew well of Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, but they emphasized so much the "glory" aspect of Messiah, that their various sufferings in captivity in Babylon, then control of them by the Persians, Greeks and now Romans, caused them to apply this suffering aspect to them as a nation. They desired so much the "Lion" aspect of Messiah and His defeat of their enemies and setting them up as the "head of the nations" (Deuteronomy 28:1-14), they left off His need to suffer for sins as "Lamb."

"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." (1 Peter 1:11)

This key passage teaches us that the prophets themselves searched each other's writings, hoping to learn more about the subjects they were writing about. This tells us they had to study as we do - their inspiration of writing in their own book did not mean they were given special revelation to understand the other prophets.

The 'Suffering before Glory' Principle

And, a central subject of all of them was this "suffering before glory" truth of Luke 24:26 above - but the understanding of it being two comings separated by a long period of time was still elusive to them - and to the nation as a whole. It was veiled truth.

Why wasn't this "mystery" becoming clearer - a revelation? It was not just...

- 1) ...their desire for Messiah to come and rescue them from the Gentile powers that caused them to miss His coming as "the Lamb of God" as a Suffering Servant, but...
- 2) ...the spiritual condition of their heart put "blindness" on their understanding:

"For the LORD will judge His people and have compassion on His servants - when He sees their power is gone..." (Deuteronomy 32:36)

He "came to His own and His own received Him not" (John 1:11) because their heart was not ready for their Messiah - they were operating in religious pride instead of humble faith.

"Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed." (Isaiah 6:9,10)

Christ quotes this in explaining why He spoke in parables (Matthew 13:14,15).

Likewise, we see three different apostles quoting Isaiah 8:14,15 —

"He will be a sanctuary, but (also) a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and as a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble; they shall fall and be broken, be snared and taken."

(see: Luke 20:18; Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:8).

This is an amazing verse of Christ's first coming - He was both things - a "sanctuary" to the wheat and a "stone of stumbling" to the chaff. Christ came to separate and divide (Matthew 10:34-39).

In doing so, the elect remnant is identified as the "wheat" among Israel. and is formed into the church so that the promises could continue in a "holy nation" (while still of the "same olive tree").

The "mystery" of Ephesians 3:5, *"that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body..."* 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"* - is made up of three key elements — the *time*, the *means* and the *recipients*.

The Sealing & Revealing of 'the Mystery'

Isaiah 8:16 — *"Bind the testimony, seal up the law among My disciples."* (a Hebrew term meaning to "keep under wraps"). This is similar to what God told Daniel — *"for the words are closed and sealed up until the time of the end"* (Daniel 12:9).

Those words would remain much that way until the proper time -- some revealed at Christ's death and resurrection and the pouring out of the Spirit of truth, and some revealed at His return - when "the wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:10).

"And those of the people who understand shall instruct many" (Daniel 11:33).

"In the latter days you will understand it perfectly" (Jeremiah 23:20). Again, the timing; the means; the recipients - all key elements of "mystery."

Both the Old and the New Testaments speak of a "cornerstone" (Psalm 118:22; Matthew 21:42; Acts 4:11). Below, the apostle Peter quotes the above passage in Psalm 118:22 —

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." (1 Peter 2:7)

The question is, "Cornerstone of what?" Such is in reference to the "building" He is building upon Himself, with "living stones." It is His house — the house of God, the body of Christ, the temple of the Spirit.

Such is what Jesus was referring to when He said, *"Upon this rock I will build My church..."* (Matthew 16:18; for additional passages see: Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Corinthians 3:16).

Paul understood this mystery of how the chaff of Israel did not understand or accept the Messiah as He came in humility and this caused them to be corporately hardened "until" a particular time.

"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that hardening in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in." (Romans 11:25)

Jesus likewise saw Israel as blinded;

"for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD.'" (Matthew 23:39)

Israel had said it in the flesh;

"Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: 'Hosanna to the Son of David! 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!'" (Matthew 21:9)

They will yet again say it in spirit and truth at His return and it will be their regeneration;

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. 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, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by them-*

selves; 13 the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; 14 all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves." (Zechariah 12:10-14).

Sin Concealed the Mystery

The "mystery of God" (Revelation 10:6) conceals itself to pride and reveals itself only to true humility.

"At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes." (Matthew 11:25)

Matthew revealed the truth of how *"these people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me"* (Matthew 21:9; Matthew 15:8,9; see also: Isaiah 29:15).

This is why Christ refused them trying to *"make Him King by force"* (John 6:15). Christ came in a way (a humble birth and life - mysterious) that tested them. Luke bears this same truth out, with added details;

"And He turned to His disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see: for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it." (see: Luke 10:21-24).

One large purpose of this all being delivered in mystery form was to hide it from the powers of the evil spirit world;

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Corinthians 2:7, 8)

These "rulers of this age" were not just Herod and Pilate and the Jewish leaders - but also represented the spirit power behind them (Ephesians 6:12).

'The Mystery' Concealed even to the Elect

The idea of a crucified Savior was a hidden truth, even if a general understanding of a physical death was seen. The Old Testament prophets spoke of His death, but not revealing it as being crucifixion, at least in a way that was clear.

This is what is behind Peter rebuking Him for speaking of His death and His return rebuke of Peter (Matthew 16:21-23).

So, even among the *elect remnant of faith*, this truth was unclear and may give us a clue to John's question of, "*Are You the Coming One or do we look for another?*" (Matthew 11:3). This was not asked out of a lack of faith or out of doubt, but the evidence did not seem to point to the kind of Messiah they all expected.

Many Jews thought the prophecies of Messiah were so different, it would require two different personages. So Jesus told the messengers to tell John that His miracles were a first fruit fulfillment of the great Kingdom Age prophecy, quoting Isaiah 35:4-6.

This would let John know this One Messiah could and would...

- ...be both: "*The Lamb of God*" sacrifice and the "*Coming King*" in great power and vengeance
- ...be both Isaiah 53 and Psalm 2
- ...be both Psalm 22 and Psalm 110

It was just going to take a long separation of time and two "parousias" (comings; body presence) to fulfill both.

Prophetic 'Gaps' in Scripture

Psalm 110 became the most quoted Old Testament passage in New Testament Scriptures -- especially 110:1 and 110:4.

Psalm 110:1 — takes up with Jesus' ascension and includes one of the famous "until's" of prophecy;

"A Psalm of David. The LORD said to my Lord, " Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

The "till" (or until) here in verse 1 shows a prophetic "gap" of time. From other Scripture we know then Jesus shall return to set up His earthly (but spiritual) kingdom.

Thus, the "he" of Genesis 3:15 that will crush the head of the serpent is the one being spoken to in 110:1 — the One sitting at the right hand of very God Himself.

Micah 5:1-4 — clearly shows both comings but still a long separation of time between them. Again, the understanding is not so clear as it is a 'mystery' (a veiled truth). Thus, we note that the "gap" truth is a key to understanding, with yet another "until."

Isaiah 61:1-3 — is the text Christ uses in His early sermon in Luke 4:18,19, stopping just short of "And the day of vengeance of your God..." and then saying in Luke 4:21 the parts before that, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Many Old Testament prophecies of Christ's two comings are weaved together within one passage, often with an "until" as part of it all.

Christ said several times to His disciples He would be "killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matthew 16:21);

"...and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up..." (Matthew 17:23)

But then adding the means of death would be by crucifixion:

"...and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again." (Matthew 20:19)

Thus, His death being by crucifixion remained somewhat veiled unto very close to the actual event.

Note the exchange of John 12:32-34;

"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." 33 This He said, signifying by what death He would die. 34 The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

The idea of their Messiah becoming "a curse" (Deuteronomy 21:23) was unimaginable being a late revelation piece of information applied by the apostle Paul (Galatians 3:13). They simply could not fathom their Messiah becoming a "curse!"

His own disciples were still unclear about a long delay between His two comings as indicated with the question of Acts 1:6. Maybe they were thinking His three days and His resurrection had fulfilled Luke 19:12;

"Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return."

But after Acts 2:1-4 they were now clear and preached His return as some time in the future — yet another "until" (see: Acts 3:19-21).

Their question of Acts 1:6 — *"Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"* — was about "when" (similar to the curiosity of today), but His answer dealt with the "what" and the "Who" being more important than the "when."

When Faith becomes Sight

It will be in the revealing of the *"Mystery of the resurrection"* — both Christ's and then ours — that faith will become sight (1 Corinthians 15:51).

It will be when the blinders of our understanding (partly due to God's timing and partly due to blindness of our own doing), are removed that *"the Mystery of God"* would be finished (Revelation 10:7).

Daniel likewise pointed to such a time as to when the blinders would be removed, stating, *"...but the wise shall understand"* (Daniel 12:10).

As too, the apostle Paul — *"the mystery which has been hidden in ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints."* (Colossians 1:26).

The unity of terminology items we will look at will bear out this "mystery" component of prophecy - progressive revelation of truth, like pieces of a puzzle. □



Chapter 2

"The Prophetic Role of the Covenants"

The role of the Covenants — including the pouring out of the Spirit — play a vital role in light of prophetic events. Here is what the prophet Isaiah understood in relation to the Spirit and the covenants;

Isaiah 59:21 – "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."

Isaiah 32:15 – "Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest."

Isaiah 44:3 - "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:"

And then there is the prophet Ezekiel weighing in on God's Spirit and the keeping of His promises (under the contracts, or covenants made with Israel);

Ezekiel 37:14 - "And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD."

Ezekiel 36:27 - "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

Ezekiel 39:29 - "Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD."

This "house of Israel" to whom were the recipients of the afore-mentioned pouring out of God's Spirit was the New Testament church founded by Christ during His ministry.

10 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." (Hebrews 8:10-13)

That selfsame Holy Spirit was in fact poured out upon the disciples in the upper room on day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17, 18).

The same Holy Spirit was then likewise poured out upon the household of Cornelius to demonstrate God's acceptance of Gentiles (Acts 10:45).

Gentiles were now being folded into the "commonwealth of Israel" thus giving them the same hopeful promises of the New Covenant;

"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:" (Ephesians 2:12)

There will be yet another 'pouring' upon national Israel when Jesus returns — the Spirit of grace and supplications. Such will be the salvation (deliverance) of national Israel when they see Jesus returning in

glory to rescue them from antichrist.

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." (Zechariah 12:10)

The nation will receive its inheritance under the Abrahamic covenant, the land flowing with milk and honey. Such will have been at long last! But God is faithful— One Who keeps covenant and mercy for those who love Him (see: Deuteronomy 7:6-10). □



Chapter 3

A Holy Nation And Kingdom of Priests

In this chapter we will be dealing with two key descriptions:

- 1) A Holy Nation
- 2) A Kingdom of Priests

However, we will actually tie in a third description:

- 3) A Special People

These all have a future fullness to them, but they also have an “in time” application to both Israel and the church.

We are to operate in these capacities now, knowing we will do so to a greater degree in His Millennial kingdom in glorified bodies in fullness of Spirit.

A Natural Progression

This is a natural progression from the previous chapter on the role of the Spirit in the New Covenant and His anointing to special callings.

Israel:

Exodus 19:5,6 - "...then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people...And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." This was conditioned on "if you will obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be..."

Church:

1 Peter 2:9 - *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood (kingdom of priests), a holy nation, His own special people..."*

Clearly the church is in view here and not just scattered individuals since —

- they had baptism (1 Peter 3:21);
- they had discipline judgment (1 Peter 4:17);
- they had elders (1 Peter 5:1);
- they had pastors-shepherds-bishops-overseers (1 Peter 5:2);

Thus we are speaking of a corporate anointing unto these positions, just as the term "nation" requires.

Notice the contrast:

Of Israel it says, ("you shall be")

And of the church it says, ("you are");

Why? because the church, to be the church, has already entered into the New Covenant. In the future when Israel likewise enters into the New Covenant as a nation, they too shall be "you are" in reality (Ezekiel 36:24-29).

Israel as a whole nation never met this standard - but they will one day, at their national regeneration: *"But you shall be named the Priests of the LORD"* (Isaiah 61:6).

When is this? *"And I will make with them an everlasting covenant"* which ties it in to the Abrahamic and new covenants, both being everlasting (see: Isaiah 61:8).

The full expression of both will be enjoyed. Israel will finally be all circumcised in heart when they are anointed by the Spirit — meaning full entrance into the new covenant (Isaiah 59:21).

One very early basis for Israel regarding the concept of "king and king-

dom” goes back to Genesis 17:6 and God’s covenant promise to Abraham of *“and kings shall come from you.”*

The Future Theocracy

This would be kings both physical and spiritual in a coming Theocracy — David in the past Theocracy and then Christ in the future Theocracy being prime examples (see: Matthew 1:1; Matthew 1:6; Luke 1:31-33; John 19:19-22).

A Theocracy, by its very nature, is a combined priesthood and royalty. And, all this goes way back to the original “kingdom” mandate given to humans: *“...fill the earth and subdue it; ...have dominion over every living thing.”* (Genesis 1:26-28)

The first Adam lost it; the “last Adam” regained it.

Part of being created in the image of God was to possess kingly and priestly qualities. The Garden of Eden was *a garden-temple setting* (where God met with humans in fellowship; face to face in a holy place. Such, we could say, was kind of a “holy of holies” of the earth, much like the New Jerusalem will be (Revelation 21:22).

Eden’s arboreal and floral design was used in the tabernacle (Exodus 25:31-35) and in the temple (1 Kings 6:18-35; 1 Kings 7:15-22).

Entrances to all are from the east (Genesis 2:8; Genesis 3:24; Exodus 26:22; Numbers 2:3; Numbers 3:38; Ezekiel 47:1).

God’s glory dwells there (Exodus 40:34,35; Acts 2:1-4; Ephesians 3:21; Revelation 21:23).

A Holy People

All such planning on God’s part is to procure a “holy People” unto Himself for all eternity;

“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples of the earth.” (Deuteronomy 7:6)

Israel had a tabernacle/temple in their midst, with a priesthood set apart to function on behalf of the entire nation; the church does not just contain a temple and priesthood but is the temple and priesthood;

"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, (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, (22) in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:19-22)

Israel will one day be a holy, royal priesthood, shown in these two verses;

"And they shall call them The Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD..." (Isaiah 62:12)

"They shall be Mine" says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels" (Malachi 3:17)

The word "jewels" here is the same word as "special treasure" in Deuteronomy 7:6; and in Titus 2:14 as "*peculiar people*" (KJV) or "*special people*" (NKJV).

"...who gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." (Titus 2:14)

"...and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father" (Revelation 1:6)

"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." (Revelation 20:6)

Christ in His Priestly Role

Christ was called a high priest after the "order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 1:8,9 from Psalm 45:6,7; also: Hebrews 5:6 from Psalm 110:4).

Zechariah 6:13 - "So He shall be a priest on His throne."

Zechariah 14:9 - "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth."

Isaiah 61:1 - "Christ was "anointed" to this king/priest position."

Psalm 2:2 - "His Anointed (One)"

Christians in their Priestly Role

As "christians" (anointed ones) we are to walk in the anointed callings of our Master, being part of the "holy nation" with Him as Head.

And also as a "royal priesthood" of which He is High Priest, we offer "spiritual sacrifices" (Romans 12:1);

The apostle Peter describes our role as a "holy priesthood:"

"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." (1 Peter 2:4)

The church was "anointed" unto these high callings on Pentecost, being baptized and filled with the poured out promised Spirit of the New Covenant.

The Bible closes with the New Jerusalem being the permanent holy temple-garden dwelling of God with His people in peace and joy.

Christ, as the ultimate expression of human king-priest, has made provision to "bring many sons to glory;"

"For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Hebrews 2:10) □



Chapter 4

The 'At Hand' Expression

The question asked by those who do not believe in the premillennial view (a future literal 1000 year Kingdom) is, "how can so many verses speak about the *nearness* of it all yet 2000 years have passed?" This view that most or all of prophecy is fulfilled is called "preterism" and is usually connected with amillennialism, which spiritualizes and symbolizes most prophecies. They make the claim that most New Testament prophecies are fulfilled soon after given, in the past of our day (esp. fulfilled by 70 AD).

So, to answer their question, let's look at the passages speaking about the *nearness* of the Day of the LORD and the return of Christ.

Deuteronomy 32:35 - "*For the day of their calamity is at hand.*"

This could not be speaking about that current generation, for they were on the verge of conquering Canaan, not on the verge of calamity. By this time, all those who were 20 years of age and older who had experienced the Exodus had already died in the wilderness, this being the end of the 40 years journey (Deuteronomy 1:3).

He is using that current generation as an example of Israel's ongoing rebellious spirit.

Deuteronomy 32:5, 20 - "*perverse generation*" - a description of most of their history;

Matthew 12:39 - *"An evil and adulterous generation..."* (more on this in lesson #5 next);

Jeremiah 30:7 - This situation will eventually culminate in *"the time of Jacob's trouble."*

Jeremiah 31:31 - But then afterward will be brought into their "new covenant" at their national repentance (Zechariah 12:10; Zechariah 13:1; Zechariah 10:6-8).

A Time of Distress

This "calamity" of Deuteronomy 32:35 is likewise described as "distress" (Deuteronomy 4:30) and as "latter days" (Deuteronomy 31:29; Genesis 49:1; Isaiah 2:2; Jeremiah 23:20; Hebrews 1:2). We often refer to it as a time of "tribulation."

All are references to the days leading to the return of Christ, after *"Jacob's trouble"* of "when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice" (Deuteronomy 4:30). So, it hasn't just been 2000 years but more like 3500 years since it was "at hand."

Isaiah 13:6 - *"Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand; it will come as destruction from the Almighty."* This was said 2700 years ago. The Day of the LORD is still future in our day after all these centuries.

Ezekiel 30:3 - *"For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near. It will be a day of clouds, the time of the Gentiles."* This was said over 2500 years ago (cp. Ezekiel 7:7).

Joel 1:15 - *"Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand; it will come as destruction from the Almighty."* This was said over 2500 years ago.

Joel 2:1 - *"For the day of the LORD is coming, for it is at hand."* This was said over 2500 years ago.

Obadiah 15 - *"For the day of the LORD upon all the nations is near."* Yet, many centuries have passed.

Zephaniah 1:7 - *"Be silent in the presence of the Lord God; for the day of the LORD is at hand. For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests."*

Zephaniah 1:14 - *"The great day of the LORD is near; it is near and hastens quickly."* All of the above were said centuries before Christ's first coming.

Matthew 3:2 - John's central message was: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Matthew 4:17 by Christ; Matthew 10:7 by the church - same message by all).

The Kingdom 'at Hand'

The King was there in their midst, thus the kingdom was "at hand," i.e., it was available; within reach -- but only by accepting the King with a repentant heart.

They were, however, not ready as a nation, thus His rejection of their attempt to take Him by force and to make Him their King (John 6:15).

At some point, due to their rejection, He taught the Kingdom as no longer near (no longer at hand);

"Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately." (Luke 19:11)

We should note that the idea of "immediately" and that of being "at hand" are not the same);

In this parable (in which Jesus speaks of Himself) He described the arrival of the kingdom ONLY AFTER His return.

"And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading." (Luke 19:15)

Notice in the passages below that none speak of "the kingdom is at hand" for it can only be at hand if the King is present. At Jesus' return, the kingdom will be more than 'at hand' - it will be a reality as seen in

Luke 19:15 above.

Matthew 24:33 - *"know that it is near, at the very doors."*

Luke 10:9 - *"The kingdom of God has come near to you."* (see also: Luke 10:11);

Luke 21:28 - *"...look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near"* (see also: Luke 21:31);

Romans 13:12 - *"The night is far spent, the day is at hand"* (see also: Romans 13:11);

Philippians 4:5 - *"Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand."*

James 5:8, 9 - *"the coming of the Lord is at hand"* and then *"the Judge is standing at the door."*

1 Peter 4:7 - *"But the end of all things is at hand"* (note: New Testament uses of the idiom "at hand" are from Greek engus = near);

Revelation 1:3 - *"for the time is near"* - Revelation 1:1 *"things which must shortly take place"* (see also: Revelation 22:6);

Revelation 22:7, 10, 12, 20 - *"quickly"* and *"at hand"* - stresses the certainty of it but in God's timetable; □



Chapter 5

The Length of a Generation

Let us now look at the term 'generation' and the history of its use in prophetic scripture. The first thing we note is that it is a dynamic term, not static — one with dimension to it.

One argument says that a generation is 40 or at most 70 years. This confined view of "generation" is at the heart of what is called preterism (that most prophecy is already fulfilled), and is one of their primary arguments.

Thus, in addition to the "at hand" and "near" passages being a challenge to premillennialism, another of the difficult charges for the premillennialist to answer:

The 'Preterist' argument goes something like: "Since it says in Matthew 24:34 - *"this generation shall not pass away till all these things are fulfilled,"* it remains that all had to be fulfilled by 70 AD and the destruction of the temple and city."

Some even call Matthew 24:34 the "Achilles heel" of premillennialism, so it requires diligence to think this through properly.

A Wicked and Perverse Generation

God called Israel of the Old Testament *"a wicked and perverse generation;"*

"They have corrupted themselves; *They are* not His children, because of their blemish: A perverse and crooked *generation*." (Deuteronomy 32:5)

Paul would come along roughly 1500 years later and would assign this label to people he witnessed in his own day — yet not limited to any particular people of a particular time period, but rather to a type of people existing in every age;

"Do all things without complaining and disputing, (15) that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world," (Philippians 2:14, 15)

God often rebuked His own people (the Jewish nation) for their wrong spirit - a spirit of rebellion and pride that was present in every generation of their history. Christ Himself used this very term of Israel in His ministry;

Matthew 12:39 - *"An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign."*

Matthew 16:4 - *"A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah."*

In both cases Jesus' answer to the Pharisees and Sadducees request for signs. The Old Testament prophets often used similar language of rebuke toward Israel.

Deuteronomy 31:29 - Even before Moses wrote the song of Deuteronomy 32, he told them, *"For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt"* - and they often did; never were they the "holy nation" God desired. Most often they were a "wicked and perverse generation", even unto Stephen's description of their history of rebellion (see: Acts 7:51, 52).

Deuteronomy 32:20 - Moses said of them, *"For they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faith."*

And all through the prophets, God spoke of a type of people that, *"all*

day long I have stretched out My hands to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good.” (Isaiah 65:2)

There are many variations of that type of description covering all their generations. These same tendencies have plagued Israel in every “generation” (see: Isaiah 1:2; Isaiah 1:23).

Matthew 24:34 - Thus, Jesus, in referencing *“this generation,”* was primarily speaking about a type of people as just described in Matthew 23:37, *“...how often I wanted to gather you...but you would not.”*

Such was an ongoing national condition; more so of a spirit within them and not necessarily limited to a single generation as we speak of generation.

We note, however, a kind of double application;

Matthew 24:34 - That particular generation to whom Jesus spoke paid the price in 70 AD for previous generations. However, the same spirit that caused that judgment was in them from their beginning and remained in them as a people and still does in our day.

It will only be when *“this [kind of] generation”* passes - which will be when Jesus returns and Israel repents and is regenerated that “all these things shall be fulfilled” (Matthew 24:34).

There is no way *“all these things”* of Matthew 24 were fulfilled by 70 AD, since the actual coming (parousia) of Christ and the gathering together of His saints never occurred (Matthew 24:27-31).

The Generation of Wrath

This ongoing rebellious spirit within Israel was referred to as *“the generation of His wrath.”*

Both Jesus and Jeremiah mention this:

(33) “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, (35) 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. (36) Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation." (Matthew 23:34-36)

"So you shall say to them, 'This is a nation that does not obey the voice of the LORD their God nor receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth. (29) Cut off your hair and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on the desolate heights; for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of His wrath.'" (Jeremiah 7:28, 29)

There will come a *final generation* in space and time who will face the time of "*Jacob's trouble*" prophesied by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 30:7). However, that generation is really a representative of every generation of rebellious Israel. That [kind of] generation has not "*passed away*" but remains to even this our day (Matthew 24:34).

Such is why the apostle Peter could say to the generation of his day, "*Be saved from this perverse generation*" (Acts 2:40).

It is a message that can be preached to any generation, indeed, to every generation for in every generation since, it may be said that Jesus has been, "*rejected by this generation.*" (Luke 17:25)

'Generation' in a Broader Sense

Peter uses the term 'generation' in a broader, more spiritual sense;

"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;" (1 Peter 2:9)

Here it is clearly describing a type of people (chosen generation = an elect race); a godly spirit directing a people over many generations, and not merely a time period of 40 or 70 years.

Psalm 14:5 - Here again we see a broader, more spiritual application to this term, "*For God is with the generation of the righteous.*"

Deuteronomy 31:21 - This same rebellious spirit is described in as, "*I know the inclination of their behavior...*" - Moses is speaking about the generation going in to possess the land. "...*this song will testify against them as a witness*" is an ongoing witness to every generation, not just the ones of when it was written.

Jeremiah 3:17 - Jeremiah describes the end of this entrenched spirit: "...*they shall walk no more after the stubbornness of their evil heart*" - but only after their national conversion, when, "...*Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD*" with "*all the nations gathered to it.*"

'Generation' Viewed as Dynamic & Dimensional

There are two final points I would like to make to show the use of the term "generation" is often dynamic, with dimension, and is not always a static number of years:

In context, the definition for "*generation*" in all of Matthew's gospel is set in Matthew 1:1 -

"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:"

The English terms '*generation*' and '*genealogy*' are from the same Greek root word. The actual Jewish bloodline of Christ from Abraham to Joseph was many generations *in time*, but only *one type of people*, even until now as rejecters of their Messiah. (But, always with an elect remnant).

Jesus told that generation of His day, "*your house is left to you desolate*" (Matthew 23:38).

Yet He spoke to "*this generation*" (Matthew 23:36) as if they would still be the generation alive at His return, saying to them, "*you shall see Me no more till you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord*" (Matthew 23:39) - yet that literal "*generation*" died 2000 years ago. □



Chapter 6

The “Trials and Tribulation” Concept

The events leading to the return of Christ, the rapture of the saints and Israel’s salvation are described in Scripture as *travail*, *labor*, *tribulation*, and are usually followed by the notion of *a deliverance* and/or *a resurrection*.

When described as ‘travail’ it is usually being compared to physical birth of a baby after a time of intense labor pain and the joy of post-delivery time;

John 16:20-22 - and these “labor” events are yet to be fulfilled in our day - at least in their full, “unequaled” form of “the tribulation the great one” (Revelation 7:14).

Some of the passages describing all this:

“When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice” (Deuteronomy 4:30)

“When you are in distress...” - (tribulation); The “distress” mentioned here is the same Hebrew root as “trouble” (see: Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 12:10). So all are tied together and speak of the same time period, which says is immediately followed by a resurrection;

“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. (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.” (Daniel 12:1, 2)

“...and all these things...” - (compare: “all these things” of Matthew 24:34)

“...come upon you...” - (compare: “this generation” of Matthew 24:34)

“...in the latter days...” - (compare: “till all are fulfilled” of Matthew 24:34).

“Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.” (Deuteronomy 32:35)

“...For the day of their calamity...” - (compare: Jeremiah 18:17 - “in the day of their calamity”

Deuteronomy 32:36 - “For the LORD will judge His people and have compassion on His servants, when He sees that their power is gone,” meaning their total humbling at Christ’s return.

Daniel 12:7 - “when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered” - the Biblical principle of travail-humility-deliverance is revealed. Such is true for one’s personal salvation as witnessed in the case of the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:29); it was also true for Israel (Jeremiah 30:7); and finally, for Christ (Luke 24:26);

And no less true will it be for the post-tribulation resurrection of the saints (Revelation 20:4) as the same pattern is consistently applied to them all.

Isaiah 13:8 - “And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them. They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth...” - (in context of Isaiah 13:6; Isaiah 13:9 of the “day of the LORD”) Isaiah 13:6-10 mentions four terms of this terminology study series.

Isaiah 66:8 - *"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 travailed, she gave birth to her children."*

Israel's rebirth as a nation in 1948 may have been a necessary precursor to this, but their *spiritual birth* won't occur until the return of Messiah and their national repentance.

Isaiah 66:7 - speaks of the key birth of "a male child" - *"before she travailed"* - a clue to the two comings of Christ. Thus, we see this constant theme in Scripture of the close relationship of the Personal Son and the Corporate Son.

Jeremiah 30:7 - *"Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble but he shall be saved out of it."* (see: note on Deuteronomy 4:30 above); (for more travail-labor language (see: Deuteronomy 30:6);

Daniel 12:1 - *"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."* - This post tribulation "deliverance" agrees with the "he shall be saved" of Jeremiah 30:7. Daniel 12:2 goes right into the resurrection.

Hosea 13:13 - *"The sorrows of a woman in childbirth shall come upon him. He is an unwise son, for he should not stay long where children are born."*

Hosea 13:14 - *"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death..."* - apostle Paul, in speaking of our own resurrection, quoted this verse (see: 1 Corinthians 15:54, 55); Thus Old Testament saints and New Testament saints will be raised at the same time. Tribulation leading to resurrection.

Micah 5:3 - *"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."* (compare: Micah 4:10 for a near-far prophecy of this);

Matthew 24:8 - "All these are the beginning of sorrows" (birth pangs - odin Greek 5604 Strong's). Labor pangs are building to a dramatic resurrection. Matthew 24:6 "...but the end is not yet." The travail-labor increases in intensity and frequency.

Matthew 24:21 - "for then there will be great tribulation (Greek, thlipsis - Strong's #2347), such has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be." Thus, Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 12:1 and Matthew 24:21 all describe unequaled tribulation, then great deliverance immediately following. This has not happened yet in history.

Romans 8:22 - "for we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together (odin - Greek) until now." 8:23b "... even we ourselves groan (Greek - stenazo, Strong's 4727, same as 2 Cor. 5:2 below and Rom. 8:22 above) within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." Thus, once again - travail leading to resurrection.

2 Corinthians 5:2 - "For in this (body) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven."

1 Thessalonians 5:3 - "For when they say "peace and safety" then sudden destruction comes upon them as labor pains (odin - Greek 5604 Strong's) upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape." The great tribulation affects all - saints and sinner.

Revelation 7:14 - "the tribulation the great one" (definite article in front of both) - a bridal people "out from within" the tribulation.

Isaiah 53:11 - "He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied."

Luke 24:26; 1 Peter 1:11 - the general principle of suffering before glory shown in Christ - our example. We must follow His steps.

Acts 14:22b - "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

The 'great tribulation' is the picture of entering the birth canal to be straitened for a resurrection - a new body, the spirit is already alive. Just when it seems we are close to death (Revelation 13:7-10), new life happens! We cry out in victory and joy (Revelation 19:5, 6). □



Biblical Prophecy

THE UNITY OF PROPHETIC TERMINOLOGY

Chapter 7

The Cosmic Signs

Lights Out

"...and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven." (Luke 21:11)

"Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens...and let them be for signs..." (Genesis 1:14)

"Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light. And the moon will not cause its light to shine." (Isaiah 13:9,10)

Isaiah 13:6-10 - has four of the key terms we are looking at -

- at hand (Isaiah 13:6)
- the day of the LORD (Isaiah 13:9)
- travail-birth pains (Isaiah 13:8)
- cosmic signs (Isaiah 13:10)

Isaiah chapter thirteen is about God's judgment of Babylon, both near and far. The book of Revelation brings out the ultimate fulfillment of judgment against all that is "Babylon" (see: Revelation 17 & 18).

"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 the fruit falling from a fig tree." (Isaiah 34:4)

Regarding the "fig tree," (see: Matthew 24:32; Revelation 6:13).

"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..." (Ezekiel 32:7, 8)

Joel 2:10 - *"The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble. The sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness."* - This is in context of Joel 2:1 and 2:11 of the "day of the LORD" which happens at the sixth seal.

Compare: Joel 2:11, *"For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it?"* with Revelation 6:17, *"For the great day of His wrath has come, and who can endure it?"*

Joel 2:11 - overall = language of 2 Thessalonians 2:8 "voice" and "breath" (quote from Isaiah 11:4) and of Revelation 19:11-15.

"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." (Joel 2:30, 31)

"I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor 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." (Acts 2:19, 20)

Joel 3:14,15 - *"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness." (see also: Joel 3:16, "the heavens and the earth will shake."*

Amos 8:9 - *"And it shall come to pass in that day, says the Lord God, that I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight." - This literally happened during Christ's crucifixion (Matthew 27:45).*

"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." (Matthew 24:29)

"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light." (Mark 13:24)

"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and waves roaring. Men's hearts failing them for fear...for the powers of heaven will be shaken." (Luke 21:25, 26)

Notice similar descriptions of:

- The 6th seal (Revelation 6:12-14)
- The 7th trump (Revelation 11:19)
- The 7th bowl of wrath (Revelation 16:17-21)

Are they the same events and same timing, or different events and different timing?

"I looked and 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. 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. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up and every mountain and island was moved out of its place." (Revelation 6:12-14)

Isaiah 2:17-21 - Includes the inner cosmic signs of people's pride being brought low - *"when He arises to shake the earth mightily"* said twice (Isaiah 2:19; Isaiah 2:21), as quoted in Revelation 6:15.

"Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land. And I will shake all nations..." (Haggai 2:6, 7)

"Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of its place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger." (Isaiah 13:13) □



Chapter 8

The “Trumpets and the Resurrection”

Trumpets to Announce Celebrations

The central role of trumpets that are later incorporated into end time settings are first shown in Leviticus 23:24 in the Feast of Trumpets that introduce the Fall Feast Days of Atonement and Tabernacles.

"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.'" (Leviticus 23:24)

Also, in Leviticus 25:9 to announce the Jubilee year.

"Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land." (Leviticus 25:9)

Numbers 10:1-10 - Then there were two special silver trumpets which were different than the “shofar (ram’s horn) trumpets.” - There was a great variety of uses for the silver trumpets, but even before these, there was the loud and long trumpet blast of God at Mt. Sinai (see: Exodus 19:13; Exodus 19:16-19; Exodus 20:18).

Trumpets and Stormy Times

It is quite interesting that these trumpet sounds from God are also connected to language of “thunderings, lightnings, quaking, smoke”, etc.

Such is later developed into similar language of the cosmic signs in the

heavens and on earth just before the Day of the LORD (Joel 2:2; Joel 2:30, 31).

Revelation 11:19 - Thus, trumpets in end time settings should remind us of God getting our full attention and of our reactions to them, with Revelation 11:19 of the seventh trumpet reading similar to Exodus 19:16-18 and 20:18.

Numbers 31:6 - and the use of seven trumpets (shofar - ram's horns) at Jericho (see: Joshua 6);

Nehemiah 4:18-20 - are examples of trumpets in Israel's history. It was natural then for trumpets to be incorporated in the music worship of God, especially the use of the shofar (Psalm 150:3).

The New Testament trumpet passages highlighted below must be tied to the classic later Old Testament passages where trumpets are connected with "the Day of the LORD"

- Isaiah 27:13 - *"the great trumpet will be blown"*
- Joel 2:1,15,16 - *"gather the people...bridegroom and bride"*
- Zephaniah 1:14-16 - all these are clearly end of tribulation settings.

Trumpets and the Resurrection

There are four main references to trumpets that are combined with resurrection in the New Testament. The first one is in Matthew's gospel;

"And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matthew 24:31)

"And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet..." - (compare: *"...the great trumpet will be blown..."* Isaiah 27:13; *"Blow the trumpet in Zion..."* Joel 2:15);

"...and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." - (compare: *"Gather the people..."* Joel 2:16);

Note this is in a post-tribulation time setting (Matthew 24:29).

This "*gather together His elect*" is from the same Greek root word (episunago) as seen in 2 Thessalonians 2:1 "*our gathering together to Him.*"

This "*gathering*" is at the same time as "*the coming (parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (2 Thessalonians 2:1).

The "*gather together*" of Matthew 24:31 and "*caught up together*" of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 are descriptions of the same event.

The second passage in our list of four is found in Paul's letter to the Corinthians;

"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." (1 Corinthians 15:51, 52)

Our resurrection is at the "*last trump*" of the seven trumpets of Revelation (Revelation 8:7 ~ Revelation 11:15).

The very mention of something as being the "last" necessarily suggests the last of a series — in the case of the trumpets it is a series of seven (Revelation 8:2, 6).

Paul then directly connects this "*last trumpet*" resurrection mentioned in his letter to the Corinthians, with the words of Isaiah 25:8;

"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." (1 Corinthians 15:54)

"So when this corruptible has put on incorruption..." - (the resurrection), "*then shall be brought to pass*" that "*death shall be swallowed up in victory.*"

Now hear what the prophet Isaiah says:

"He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken." (Isaiah 25:8)

Isaiah places the time frame of the 'swallowing of death' as "in that day" (the day of the LORD).

"And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." (Isaiah 25:9)

Thus, the "when" is the "then" of 1 Corinthians 15:54, which is Isaiah 25:8; Isaiah 25:9; Isaiah 26:19; Isaiah 27:13 – or in other words, *the end*.

By quoting Isaiah as the fulfillment of the "last trump" and our resurrection, Paul is equating the "last trump" with the Old Testament prophets trumpet of the Day of the Lord, which day is after the tribulation. These time indicators are falling into place of the trumpets.

Our third passage is found in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians;

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17)

This is clearly the rapture of the saints. Note that with descriptive terms such as "shout, voice, trumpet of God," this will not be a quiet or secret event (compare: Exodus 19:19), "the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder," ; "like the voice of loud thunder" (Revelation 14:2) and "loud voice" (Revelation 14:15) at the harvest of saints).

"the dead in Christ will rise first" - is the same as "God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus," - The already having died saints

will come *"with Him"* (1 Thessalonians 4:14) and those who are still alive, He shall come *"for them"* (1 Thessalonians 4:17); *"we who are alive"* as compared to *"those who sleep,"* so that all the saints will be joined together *"with Him"* in the clouds and He shall then come *"with all His saints"* (1 Thessalonians 3:13).

This resolves the issue of "He must first come for His saints before He can come with His saints." *"This is the first resurrection"* (Revelation 20:5) *after* the tribulation.

Notice there is no language of an ascent back to heaven for seven years.

And now our last of the four passages which combine the trumpets with the resurrection;

(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!" (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." (Revelation 11:15-18)

The Events of the Seventh Trumpet

At the sounding of the seventh trumpet the four "R's" will take place (compare: Joshua's seven trumpets leading to the defeat of Jericho, Joshua 6:4).

1. Return of Christ (Revelation 11:15);
2. Resurrection of the Saints (described in Revelation 14:14-16);
3. Rewarding of the Saints (Revelation 11:18);

4. Reign of Christ on the earth (Revelation 11:17);

This seventh trumpet is when *"the mystery of God would be finished"* (Revelation 10:7).

Revelation 15:1 - These "four R's" will be finalized after the *"wrath of God"* is poured out in full measure in the seven bowls of wrath (see also: Revelation 16:1-21).

Such is the act of a conquering King to subdue His enemies and then usher in the start of His righteous rule.

The 7th Trumpet not a Short Blast

The sounding of the seventh trumpet is not a short, quick blow then stopping, but seems to continue for a period of time, thus a number of events can happen while the trumpet continues to sound, like the seven bowls of wrath.

Revelation 10:7 - This ongoing sound of the seventh trumpet is a key, as described in *"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."* This is very similar language to the long and loud trumpet blast of Exodus 19:19.

Revelation 8:1-6 - The introduction of the seven trumpets in the book of Revelation uses very similar language to that of Exodus 19:16-19 and Exodus 20:18. This reinforces the principle of "unity of terminology" all through the Bible.

Thus, the resurrection of saints can happen at the beginning, middle or end of the sounding of the 7th trumpet.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 - *"the dead in Christ"* mentioned here by Paul would include even the faithful of the Old Testament such as Seth, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Daniel, etc. - Daniel 12:1, 2 describes their resurrection as after a great tribulation.

Paul would have known all these trumpet passages very well and would have known of Christ speaking of a trumpet and gathering *"after the tribulation"* (Matthew 24:29).

Only One 'Last Trump'

Paul could have easily mentioned his "*last trumpet*" (of 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52) as different than the one Christ places "*after the tribulation*" - however, he did not because it is the same trumpet.

So, the real question is, since two of the four main New Testament uses of trumpets in end time settings are clearly post-tribulation (Christ, in Matthew 24:29-31; John, in Revelation 11:11-15), would Paul's two uses (1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17) be the same as Christ and John or different -- and with no added reason as to why they are different?

Paul's inspired description of, "*in the last trump*" (1 Corinthians 15:52) corresponds perfectly with John's inspired description of, "*in the days of*" [the 7th trump] (Revelation 10:7). □



Chapter 9

Clouds and Christ's Return

A Growing Movement

This study seemed like a simple, straightforward one as I put together the various verses on the cloud aspect of His coming.

However, as I sometimes do, after I had put it together, I went on the Internet to see what other have to say about it. There sure are a lot of amillennial, preterist people out there! The amillennial view is growing quickly as part of the general reformed movement that so many are adopting. It is growing partly because of the many premillennial, pretrib book writers, movie makers, etc. who keep insisting on date setting or forcing a single generation of 40 or 70 years from 1948 to fulfill all prophecies.

Now that a full 70 years from that event has passed and so many prophecies have yet to be fulfilled, the temptation to then allegorize or symbolize or spiritualize the prophecies becomes an acceptable alternative (in their minds).

A Literalist View

But, I hold to a literalist view of prophecy when at all possible; only going to symbolic interpretation when necessary. Otherwise, when you head down the path of "everything is symbolic and to be spiritualized" you can make anything mean anything in the Scripture.

The single main thing though in prophecy is to remember it is about Christ and the fulfilling of the eternal purpose of God in Him --

"according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" " (Ephesians 3:11).

"For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Revelation 19:10)

Daniel Sets the Stage

"I was watching in the night visions and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming in the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall never be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13, 14)

It is Daniel who actually sets the stage of Christ's return to that being in the clouds. This "cloud" coming of Christ is the same time as *"the saints of the Most High"* who will *"receive the kingdom"* and *"possess the kingdom, forever, even forever and ever"* (Daniel 7:18).

This is also the same time as the judgment described in Daniel 7:9, 10 and Daniel 7:26, 27.

Many holding the pre-tribulation rapture view ("first of the week") speak of the rapture as Jesus coming only to a 'cloud level,' as it were, as He raptures the saints to Himself to return to heaven for seven years (to supposedly conduct the judgment seat of Christ, the marriage, etc.) to then return all the way to earth seven years later — thus two phases of His return and two phases of the first resurrection.

The 'Cloud' Return

So now, let's take a look at the Scriptures describing the cloud aspect of His return:

Revelation 1:7 - *"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, and they also who pierced Him. And all the tribes of*

the earth shall mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen." - This introduces in short fashion what is developed in detail in Revelation chapter 19. Plus, this language of the tribes "mourning because of Him" Whom they pierced is connected to Zechariah 12:10 and Matthew 24:30 which are clearly in a post-tribulation time frame when Israel is regenerated instantly and a "gathering together of the elect" happens - Matthew 24:31.

Does John's Experience Point to a Rapture?

The "cloud" coming is quite visible to all and is part of a single-event return of Christ – this is said right at the beginning of the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:7) and is the description all the way through this book.

No first-phase secret rapture event in a pretribulation setting is described in Revelation. That being said, some do, however, try to make John in Revelation 4:1 to represent the entire group of saints.

Upon a close examination of Revelation 4:2, John is said to be taken up "*in the spirit*" not in a new body (or even his current physical body) as the actual resurrection will be (with glorified bodies). This is very similar to Paul's experience in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4, most likely an "out of body" experience in the form of a vision.

Then, in Revelation 13:1 John is back on earth during the tribulation, as he is in Revelation 18:1. If John himself is personally representative of all the saints in Revelation 4:1 as many would like to believe, then should he not also be personally represented in Revelation 13:1 and Revelation 18:1 as well?

It is very important to distinguish between primary proofs that are unambiguous, and secondary proofs that are often symbolic and should only be used to reinforce primary proofs, and not elevated to primary proofs (such as inferences and not direct statements).

Example: The use of Noah or Lot to try to prove either a pre-trib or post-trib position should never be seen as primary proof, but as secondary.

Some things we Know for Sure

First, there is an open, visible return of Christ that is quite obviously a post-trib event (Revelation 1:7; Matthew 24:29-31);

Secondly, there is a post-trib resurrection of saints (Revelation 20:4-6; Daniel 12:1,2; 3).

Then there is a post-trib marriage (Revelation 19:7). If there is an earlier manifestation of all three in a pre-trib setting, it becomes the challenge of the one believing that to show it clearly in Scripture.

Revelation 14:14-16 - This too is at the end of the seven years and is clearly a reaping of saints, yet is in a "cloud" setting.

Revelation 14:17-20 - is the reaping of the wicked – at the same time setting as the reaping of the saints. Cp. also Matthew 13:24-30 for this dual "reaping" idea - one group to "burn" as tares and the other to "gather into my barn" as wheat. The separation happens in the same time frame.

Matthew 24:30 - "they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" in a post-trib time setting and is connected in 24:31 with "a great sound of a trumpet" to "gather together" His elect.

Christ's return will be visible to all (Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Revelation 1:7), even to the wicked as represented by the audience He is speaking to (the Sanhedrin).

His cloud coming is for both judgment of the wicked and rescue of the saints, as 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 reinforces.

Mark 13:26 - again, this "coming in the clouds" is in a setting of "great power and glory" and is said to be "after that tribulation" in 13:24. It is at this point He send His angels to "gather together His elect" in Mark 13:27. Nothing of His cloud coming aspect is described as secret or quiet - just the opposite, the "after that tribulation" of Mark 13:24 triggers the time indicator of "then" of Mark 13:26.

Luke 21:27 - it is at this point of Him "*coming in a cloud with power and great glory*" after the cosmic signs of Luke 21:25, that we are

told to "look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near" (Luke 21:28), with another time indicator of "then" of Luke 21:27.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 - "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air..." - to remain with the Lord, not return to heaven.

Meeting one another in the Air

We meet Him and He meets us as He is in the process of returning to earth; only a descent is mentioned, no ascent back to heaven. "meet" is ἀπάντησις (apantesis) and the other two times it is used (Matthew 25:6; Acts 28:15) shows its meaning - it was a word used to describe the people of the town who would go out to meet a returning king or conqueror and then escort him back into the town. It would be like when we "meet" people at their car when they arrive at our house.

The triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:8,9 "those who followed") was an apantesis event, so too will be His return with His saints - "*caught up to meet Him in the air*" then continuing with Him as Conquering King to the earth)Revelation 19:11-16).

Acts 1:9-11 - Christ was taken up in a cloud and shall return "in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" - in the clouds.

All these are in context of Daniel 7:13,14. □



Chapter 10

The "Terror of Antichrist"

Rise and Reign: the Two Seeds

Just as the woman has one of her seed arise to become the "hero" (Christ), so too does the seed of the serpent have one of his group arise to be an arch enemy "villain" (antichrist) – these two representatives of these two seeds will collide at the end (Genesis 3:15).

Daniel 9:26 - called "the prince to come"

Daniel 8:23 - "king of fierce countenance"

Daniel 11:36 - "the willful king"

2 Thessalonians 2:3 - "man of sin"

2 Thessalonians 2:3 - "son of perdition"

2 Thessalonians 2:8 - "lawless one"

Revelation 13:1 - "beast"

1 John 2:18 - "antichrist"

Daniel 7:8; 8:9 - "little horn"

Revelation 17:11 - "the eighth"

Other Old Testament references to him could be:

Isaiah 11:4 - "the wicked (one)" – quoted by Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:8);

Ezekiel 38:17 - *he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servant the prophets...*

Jeremiah 30:14 - "an enemy...a cruel one"

Micah 5:5, 6 - *the Assyrian*"

Possibly even "*the heads of the leaders of the enemy*" (Deuteronomy 32:42) of "the latter days" (Deuteronomy 31:29);

Daniel 9:27 - he confirms a covenant with "many" meaning Israel and her enemies, for 7 years "one week" probably as a trial period for further negotiations. From a human standpoint, it is a peace treaty – a "league" Daniel 11:23 – but the means of the peace will be the key items of the - "holy covenant" Daniel 11:28,30 – meaning their right to exist, to the land, to the temple mount.

Daniel 11:21 - a new person here – he rises up and it is the same man through the rest of this chapter - he is a vile person but not of noble blood and feels he is above normal means of power. Follow the "he" from here on in chapter 11 – it is the same person

Daniel 11:21 - he rises to power not by war but through the treaty bringing peace;

Daniel 11:21 - he is a crafty, deceitful person – not what he appears at first;

Daniel 11:23 - his rise is as leader of a small country as his home base, maybe Syria;

Daniel 11:23 - he hates the covenant of peace because he hates Israel (Ezekiel 35:5);

Daniel 11:23 - he shall begin to find ways to break the treaty (Daniel 8:11-13; 12:11);

Daniel 11:24 - he shall do this under the disguise of a peacemaker, but really is plotting the destruction of Israel, while being hailed as a generous person;

Daniel 11:25 - his rise to greater power is swift, using his fame as peacemaker;

Daniel 11:25 - he rises from the area around Israel as "king of the north" and will go to war against the "king of the south" – Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Libya, etc. The Persians against the Arabs once again, as so often in history.

Daniel 11:28 - close to the middle of the 7 years treaty;

Daniel 11:29, 30 - his confederacy of 10 nations is ready to break the covenant with Israel, so he works with them to find a way and time to do so;

Daniel 11:31 - at the mid-point of the 7 years treaty, he breaks the covenant, stops the daily sacrifices Israel recently started in some form, and sits in the temple of Jerusalem to declare this fact and sets up the "abomination of desolation" that is yet future from Jesus' day – Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:13-15;

Daniel 11:31 - this "abomination of desolation" is connected with the taking away of the daily sacrifices – 8:11-13; 12:11 an evil prince, thus 9:26 "the prince to come" is not Christ;

The 'Death Wound' is Healed

Revelation 13:2-4 - about the same time he breaks the covenant with Israel, he has a "death wound" that is healed, causing great awe among the nations – this is at least to some large degree his "Christ" experience of death and resurrection.

This also happens at the same time Satan is cast out of heaven permanently to the earth, which brings great rejoicing in heaven (Revelation 12:9) but great fear on earth, *"having great wrath because he knows he has a short time"* (Revelation 12:12; Revelation 17:10). This is kind of the "incarnation" of the antichrist by Satan.

At this point, with all these things converging at once (death wound healed, Satan cast down, breaking of the covenant, abomination of desolation) he changes from being an antichrist to becoming The Antichrist, full of great demonic power, Satan empowering him (2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:2, 4), possibly by indwelling him. Thus, once again a copy to a large degree of Christ.

The evil 'trinity' is at work (Revelation 16:13).

Thus he is described as “ascending from the bottomless pit” (Revelation 11:7; Revelation 17:8);

Daniel 7:23-27 - at this point, he (along with his “father” Satan – Revelation 12:13-16) turns on Israel with the goal of destroying her – antisemitism at its fullest (see also: Daniel 8:9-12; Daniel 11:31-39);

Daniel 8:9 - his movement is north to south and west to east, thus possibly Syria is his base country – “the Assyrian” of Micah 5:5, 6;

Revelation 12:17 - This war against God’s elect includes “the rest of her offspring who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ;”

Revelation 11:7 - he is so powerful that he is able to kill the two witnesses;

Revelation 11:7 - this is the first mention of him in Revelation – he is described as one who “ascends out of the bottomless pit” adding to the idea of death wound healed and rising in full power of resurrection;

Revelation 13:1 - he rises and rules with a confederacy of 10 nations, the same as Daniel 2:41-43 the 10-toed kingdom of the end times, see also Daniel 7:6-8 to show how he overcomes three nations, thus only 7 horns but 10 heads as Daniel 7:23, 24 confirms – he is the “little horn.”

This is also the description of his “father” the dragon – Revelation 12:3; see also Revelation 17:12, 13. Satan has ever wanted to be “like God” and in this man, he creates one in his own image.

Revelation 17:7-11 - again shows him ascending out of the bottomless pit after his death wound is healed and his kingdom is the “seventh” yet after his “death and resurrection” experience and Satan coming to earth to indwell him, he is the risen “eighth” kingdom and believes himself invincible, full of Satan’s power.

As the seventh, he is as one of the seven; as the eighth, he is the fullness of all seven – fully emptied of any vestige of the image of God and fully full of the image of Satan.

Daniel 7:25 - his arrogance, the fullness of man's pride come to fruition – a human manifestation of the pride of his "father" described in Isaiah 14:12-15 and the "I will's" of presumption in man's darkened heart.

Daniel 8:23-25 - further shows his arrogance and deceitfulness (also: 2 Thessalonians 2:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:11);

His reign of full power after his death and resurrection experience, being fully empowered by Satan, is 3 ½ years (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 13:5);

From Rise to Ruin

As great and mysterious is his rise and reign, his ruin is even swifter and a full display of the power of Christ.

Daniel 7:11 - an early description of Revelation 19:20 (see also: Daniel 8:25) for graphic language of his ruin, also Daniel 7:26; Daniel 11:45; 2 Thessalonians 2:8 (from Isaiah 11:4)

Further notes

Mentions in Old Testament other than Daniel: Ezekiel 38:17 from 38:2,3 Gog = ruler of Magog; Jeremiah 30:14; Isaiah 11:4 (quoted in 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

Also, Micah 5:5, 6 and possibly Deuteronomy 32:42 as a veiled reference to the end of days leader (31:29). □



Chapter 11

The “Titles of the Antichrist”

A Complexity of Evil

Below is a list of names (we do not yet know his personal name) and descriptive titles for antichrist throughout Scripture. More will be brought out about him in lessons in Daniel and 2 Thessalonians 2.

It might seem odd to include antichrist in “The Unity of Terminology” lesson because of a lack of a consistent name or title in the Scriptures. Even though this man does have a large variety of names and titles, he does have a unity of spirit as the ultimate human representative of the “seed of the serpent” of Genesis 3:15. His spirit is the “way of Cain” (Jude 11) and of Nimrod, and Absalom, and Haman - a rebel against God and His people. It is the spirit of 1 John 4:3, thus he may officially outlaw Christianity.

The large variety of names and titles shows the complexity of this evil man. It is not as extensive a list as the names and titles of Christ but is enough to show his desire, like that of his father Lucifer, to “be like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:14).

“Antichrist” is never used in the Old Testament and rarely in the New Testament, but all of these are him:

“Are you he of whom I have spoken of in the former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them?” (Ezekiel 38:17)

This is almost said in disbelief, as if he was not prominent at all before his sudden rise to power - and he was not: Daniel 11:23 "...for he shall come up and become strong with a small people" - so he rises not from a major power and is possibly an unknown figure rising suddenly from obscurity - using his deceitful nature, adding to the mystery surrounding him (See below title: "a little horn").

Deuteronomy 32:42 - "the head(s) of the enemy" (a head of the latter days - Deut.31:29); this is said just before the clear description of Christ's return of Deut. 32:43.

Isaiah 11:4 - (quoted in 2 Thessalonians 2:8) "the wicked one" (2 Thessalonians 2:8 KJV "that Wicked"; NKJV "the lawless one"). Paul quoting this makes it a direct reference to antichrist.

Isaiah 16:4 - "the spoiler...the extortioner" (spoiler = devastator; ravager)

Jeremiah 30:14 - "an enemy, a cruel one" (in context of 30:7 "time of Jacob's trouble")

Ezekiel 38:3 - "Gog" (chief or head prince) of Magog - the area north of Israel (Ezekiel 38:16; Ezekiel 38:18; Ezekiel 38:21; Ezekiel 39:1; Ezekiel 39:11); Compare: Ezekiel 39:4 and Ezekiel 39:17-20 with Revelation 19:17-21).

Hosea 11:5 - "the Assyrian" Christ will be "peace" - He delivers them (see also: Hosea 12:1; Micah 5:5, 6).

Daniel 7:8 - "a little horn" (from the north - Syria, Assyria) see #1 - not a significant global person at first, but will take over by the power of Satan (see also: Daniel 8:9; Daniel 8:24; Revelation 13:2).

Daniel 8:23 - "a king of fierce countenance, who understands sinister schemes"

Daniel 9:26 - "the prince who is to come"

Daniel 9:27 - "the one who brings an abomination of desolation" - "the desolator"

Daniel 11:21 - "a vile person" - but "he shall come in peaceably" using "intrigue"

Daniel 11:36 - "the king who does according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods..." (a willful king) "till the wrath has been accomplished" (compare: Daniel 7:11 and Daniel 8:25);

2 Thessalonians 2:3 - "the man of sin"

2 Thessalonians 2:3 - "the son of perdition"

2 Thessalonians 2:8 - "the lawless one" (KJV "that Wicked") Greek - anomos (without law);

The Beast

"The Beast" appears to one of apostle John's favorite titles of anti-christ, appearing numerous times throughout the book of Revelation; (Revelation 11:7; Revelation 13:1; Revelation 14:9; Revelation 15:2; Revelation 16:2; Revelation 17:3, 11, 13; Revelation 19:20).

Revelation 16:13 - "the beast" as part of the evil trinity (see also: Revelation 20:10);

Revelation 17:11 - "the eighth" (but also of "the seven");

1 John 2:18 - "the Antichrist" (see also: 1 John 2:22; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7;

The Personification of the Purest Form of Evil

This evil man as the personification of the deepest rebellion against God, is revealed progressively, first as the seed of the serpent, then as progressive opponents of the Jewish people, like Haman, etc. - especially those who would desecrate the temple and the city of Jerusalem, like Antiochus Epiphanes (Macabees) and Titus in 70 AD. Then, after Christ's first coming and the establishing of His church, opposition against "the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" Revelation 12:17. □



Chapter 12

“Daniel’s Great Prayer”

One day while reading the Word of God, Daniel was suddenly prompted to utter a deep prayer of repentance (Daniel 9:3-15) and petition (Daniel 9:16-19).

In this particular case, he read what is in our Bibles Jeremiah 29, which was Jeremiah’s letter to the captives in Babylon. (as a side note, Jeremiah 25 is basically the same truth, but written to those in the land of Judah and Jerusalem where Jeremiah still resided).

With the many government obligations throughout his life, there was always time for reading the Word and for prayer - he had his priorities straight!

And Oh, what a Prayer!

If you haven’t as yet, please take a moment to stop and read this prayer (Daniel 9:3-19). Oh, what a prayer it was — Maybe second only to Christ’s prayers in intensity and depth!

We see how that Daniel becomes intercessor for his people Israel, identifying with their sins, with the use of “we have sinned” (Daniel 9:5), “we have rebelled” (Daniel 9:9) etc., yet he was innocent of most of it. Although in Daniel 9:20 he writes, “confessing my sin” (he was not sinless).

His heart was bursting on behalf of his people and it was this long and

deep prayer that broke through the heavens and resulted in the quick and very personal response of Gabriel in 9:20-23 and the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27. Prayer opens heaven (Luke 3:21).

The Time Setting

The chapters in Daniel are not in strict time order.

- Chapters 7 & 8 come before (in time) chapters 5 & 6.
- Chapter 9 is closely connected with chapter 6 in time (either Daniel had the lion's den experience just before the revelation in chapter 9 or the other way), but it seems best to have the revelation of chapter 9 right after the great test of faith of chapter 6.
- So what we see is God revealing to Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27) *after* Daniel had passed the test of chapter 6.
- However, some may view the sequence a little different, which way is good too - they may see that the prayer of Daniel ch. 9 prepared him for the lions.
- Either way, it is quite interesting to note that while these two major personal events took place in Daniel's life, at the same time God was moving on the heart of Cyrus to allow a group of Jews to return to their land (with Daniel's influence on Cyrus). Recall how God did "stir his spirit" (Ezra 1:1) when Daniel showed him Isaiah 44:28 and Isaiah 45:1.

Overlapping Periods of the '70 year Captivity'

In general, there are two separate periods of 70 years captivity which are in effect layered one on top of the other.

1. Physical from 605 BC when Daniel and others were taken in the first wave of captivity to Babylon (Daniel 1:1, 2) until 535 BC when the decree for them to return (Ezra 1);
2. Spiritual from 585 BC when the temple was destroyed until 515 BC

when the rebuilt temple was dedicated. Dates are rounded off to show this truth, due to many historians disputing by a few years the exact dates of the events. The central truth remains.

Daniel was probably in his mid-80's at this time and had faithfully served two Gentile empires while not compromising his faith in the true God of Israel. His combined secular and spiritual leadership is a good picture of the saints ruling in the Millennial age, dealing with secular duties in a spiritual manner.

Daniel 9:11 - "*all Israel*" - there is something about God's election of Israel (Romans 11:28 the "beloved enemy") that is an "*all Israel*" proposition (compare: Romans 11:26; Zechariah 10:6; Isaiah 66:8 and many others). There are numerous passages where it confirms Israel's future corporate salvation. There was always an elect remnant and in Christ's day that elect remnant was the "wheat" He formed the church with. But in the mystery of God, He plans to have a literal "holy nation" in the literal "holy land" distinct from the resurrected bride but still a bridal people (to be unraveled and covered in a separate lesson). A principle of continuity with some discontinuity.

Daniel 9:23 - "the vision" is somewhat difficult to unravel because strictly speaking, the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 is not in the form of a vision, but a direct prophecy spoken by Gabriel.

Daniel 9:21 - "*the man Gabriel whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning*" is probably referring back to Daniel 8:16 and the vision of that chapter. If so, about 10-15 years have passed since that vision and chapter 8 ends with no complete answer given, "*I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it*" (Daniel 8:27).

Is the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 the start of giving the answer beyond Daniel 8:15-26, with chapters 10-12 the fuller explanation, with Gabriel doing most of the talking Daniel 10:19 - and Daniel 10:14 being the main purpose "what will happen to your people in the latter days"?

If so, how many hundreds, thousands of times had Daniel prayed for the full answer? Daniel 6:10 three times of prayer a day was not a new practice for Daniel, so if he had done this say even just 10 years from Daniel 8:27 till Daniel 9:3, he had prayed over 10,000 times from the time of the vision in chapter 8 until the added (to Daniel 8:15-26) an-

swer in Daniel 9:21-23. There is a amazing truth about the need for us to never stop praying (Luke 18:1).

Daniel 9:23 - "*understand the vision*" means Gabriel is ready to give a fuller explanation of an earlier vision, not of a new vision here. The answer includes new visions over the next few years (Daniel 10:1).

Daniel 9:24 - The "seventy sevens" are easily 70 Sabbath years for a total of 490 years, in context of how this chapter starts with Jeremiah's writings (Jeremiah 25:11,12; Jeremiah 29:10) and in context of 2 Chronicles 36:21.

The 70 missed Sabbath years, covering 490 years of their past, is now the setting for a future 70 Sabbath years covering 490 years for Israel. No other conclusion fits when context is considered. □



Chapter 13

The “Abomination of Desolation”

And now we come to perhaps one of the most intriguing titles of the future antichrist- the *“Abomination of Desolation.”*

Many perhaps do not realize that Christ stopped His whole discourse to emphasize the importance, the necessity, of going to Daniel with this particular subject in mind (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14) — with Jesus’ own emphasis on this future event, saying, *“let the reader understand.”*

Daniel 8:11-13 - (see also: Daniel 9:27; with even clearer language in Daniel 11:31 and Daniel 12:11; (compare: Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:13-15).

Why make such a big deal out of this subject? Because, as previously noted, our Lord does! It is not a suggestion, but a command - if we want to understand New Testament eschatology passages, we must use Daniel as a primary resource - and the *“abomination of desolation”* is presented as a pivotal event, maybe the key event, for it starts a steady and sure time clock leading to the return of Christ (Daniel 12:11).

Recall what I mentioned earlier, that the “then” of Matthew 24:21 (of the start of the “great tribulation”) goes back to the “when” of Matthew 24:15! This key event “triggers” the last 3 1/2 year “great tribulation” and leads to Christ’s return (Matthew 24:29-31).

What Jesus gives us is a clear time order from Matthew 24:15 to Matthew 24:31.

The Key is in Daniel Chapter 2

The parenthesis ("whoever reads, let him understand") is not an added commentary by Matthew (or Mark), but an emphasis by Christ, with Daniel 9:22, 23 in view "consider the matter and understand the vision" - He wants us to pause and to understand that Daniel holds the key to this subject. Go to Daniel! is His cry, for Daniel gives us the details.

The whole idea of an abomination of desolation is drawn from Daniel 2 and the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. We especially note that Nebuchadnezzar was not content with just being the "head of gold" (Daniel 2:38), but wanted to be the whole image of all gold (Daniel 3:1).

The king ordered a "dedication" of the image being set up (Daniel 3:2); not just to look at, but to bow down to and worship (Daniel 3:5). A death sentence was proposed for refusal (Daniel 3:6).

This is viewed as a type of some future final ruler and his image to be worshipped — both him and the image will be worshipped (Daniel 3:7; see also: Revelation 13:12, 15). those who refuse will be killed (Daniel 3:6; compare: Revelation 13:15; Revelation 20:4).

The saints will recognize this event and proclaim it (Daniel 11:33-35; Daniel 12:10). Thus, Daniel chapters 2 & 3 form a key foundation to the understanding of the abomination of desolation of 70 years later when Daniel is then under Persian rule. It is literal, as shown by:

- This abomination of desolation is "placed" Daniel 11:31;
- it is "set up" Daniel 12:11;
- it can "stand" Matthew 24:15, in a "place it ought not" Mark 13:14;
- it includes the antichrist "sitting in the temple" 2 Thessalonians 2:4;
- it can be "seen and heard" Revelation 13:15;
- it can be "worshipped" Revelation 16:2.
- Its importance cannot be overstated. And, it will be "seen" by His people -- Matthew 24:15, "*when you see...*"

Thus, this event is literal, visible and dramatic in its results. It should not be spiritualized or symbolized into the church as temple and as some vague event.

A 3rd Jewish Temple Must be Rebuilt

For several years I resisted the idea of a literal rebuilt temple and renewed sacrifices, trying to spiritualize it in some way to refer to the church as being the temple mentioned in Paul's epistle to the Thessalonians (2 Thessalonians 2:4). But as I see it, there must be a rebuilt temple on the temple mount and renewed Jewish religious practice on it.

A covenant approach to Scriptures (albeit the correct approach), if not careful, can become '*Replacement Theology*,' with no future for literal Israel, completely replaced by the church. That takes things too far on the pendulum swing of things.

Daniel mentions it four times (Daniel 9:27; Daniel 8:11-13; Daniel 11:31; Daniel 12:11) — with Daniel 11:31 and Daniel 12:11 clarifying Daniel 9:27.

The Abomination of Desolation - a Literal Event

The events throughout Daniel 11 are literal in nature, not symbolic or figurative — thus Daniel 11:31, "*the abomination of desolation*," is also literal, not figurative.

These verses also point out that it is this evil prince who "*and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away*" (Daniel 8:11). We note then both Daniel 11:31 and Daniel 12:11 clearly connect the "*abomination*" with the "*daily sacrifices taken away*," adding proof to the view that the prince who "*shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering*" is the evil prince, "*exalts himself*" (Daniel 9:27) — and is not Messiah Prince (Daniel 8:11). What Christ fulfilled in spiritual reality at the cross, the antichrist tries to duplicate by carnal means.

What do we glean from 2 Thessalonians 2:4?

1. He "opposes" God
2. "exalts himself" (Daniel 11:36)

It is so important in Paul's mind he reminds them of his verbal teaching of it while there. It is "the" abomination, not "an" as in something unclear. It is as clear as "the" apostasy, not "an" apostasy (2 Thessalonians 2:3) - very specific events at very specific times.

Revelation 13:14, 15 - it is his image (Colossians 1:15 - counterfeit imitator) - it can talk and seems alive - maybe some sort of advanced artificial intelligence - a modern version of the Daniel chapter 3 image.

His image is the "thing"; the holy place is the "location";

We see two important facts: a forced conversion, and beheadings (Revelation 20:4) — all such perhaps adding to the *Islamic element* of the *ten nations*.

When comparing Revelation 12:12 & Revelation 13:3, 4, we see a similar time; while comparing Daniel 11:36 & 2 Thessalonians 2:4 we note a similar person.

The Final 3 ½ Year Stretch

What is referred to as the 'middle of the week,' covers the last 3½ years of the Great Tribulation period, also measured by: 1260 days; 42 months; times, times and half a time. (Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:31; Daniel 12:11 & Matthew 24:15, 21).

It will continue until "the wrath has been accomplished" (Daniel 11:36; Daniel 7:11).

From *PGS Watson's The Key To Prophecy* pg. 9, dated 1871 (he was called the "father of Arkansas Baptist History"): Where then is "the holy place" to which the Lord refers in Matthew xx iv, 15? The following considerations may enable us to find the intended spot:

When Jesus spoke these words he was on mount Olivet, with the Jewish temple in full view;

He had just been speaking of the temple;

In the temple was one room called "the holy place," and another "the most holy place;" Jesus and the disciples whom He was addressing

knew well that those rooms were so named; There is no just cause for rejecting the known, literal holy place, and hunting an unknown, figurative one.

There can be a place called "*the holy place*" without it actually being holy in God's eyes - it is a literal, historic place, just as the "temple" is still called the temple in Acts, long after it became "desolate" (Matthew 23:38). After all, the primary prophecy of Daniel 9:24 calls Jerusalem "*the holy city*" in prospect, for she was a "harlot city" (Isaiah 1:21; Revelation 11:8).

Since it is yet future in Christ's day, it cannot have been by Antiochus (or of Titus, due to futurity of Revelation 13:15).

The abomination of desolation being literal and yet future places us in a definite premillennial framework of prophecy. □

About The Author



Elder Rick Louis Howard was born on October 11, 1954, in Ada, Oklahoma, to parents, Louis and Darlene Howard.

At the age of 13 he received the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, and was baptized by the authority of the Airport Missionary Baptist Church in Modesto, CA.

At the age of 18 he answered the call to preach the gospel, married Jolene Purdue in 1975, and by the age of 23 was ordained in 1978 to begin his many years in the ministry. He attended two seminaries in California, and has pastored 3 Missionary Baptist churches over the past 40 years - and over 30 of those years where he currently pastors at Liberty Landmark Missionary Baptist church.

He and Jolene have two daughters, Tara and Taylor.

