

Daniel Chapter 12
Daniel 12:1-12 – AD 66-70
The Jewish War

These are the major topics in chapter 12.

The Messiah appears from
AD 27 to 30

The Time of Trouble from
AD 67 to 70

**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,
Every one who is found written in the book.**

The difficulty in interpreting Daniel 12 comes because it is so often wrenched out of the context of chapter 11. It is a problem for liberals who late date Daniel based on the “impossibility” of predictive prophecy. It is a problem for the historicists who attempt to apply this passage to events occurring in the Middle Ages, and to futurists who attempt to apply it to a distant future end-times scenario. But in fact, it is a part of the story of chapter 11.

The preterist view of Daniel 12 is straightforward. First-century Jews thought this passage referred to the Romans. Jesus Christ was referring to Daniel 12:11 when He spoke of the “*abomination that causes desolation*” (Matthew 24:15), which occurred in the 1st century A.D. Josephus believed it had its fulfillment in the destruction of the Temple by Vespasian’s troops as well.

The context of Daniel 12 is the conquest of Judea by the Fourth Kingdom—Rome. At the end of this time, the “*abomination of desolation*” (12:11) occurs. Daniel 12 is

a recapitulation of the Third Vision of Daniel 9. In Daniel 9, the angel Gabriel appears to Daniel and gives him the prophecy of the seventy weeks leading to the time of the Messiah and the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem.

Those who make Daniel out to be an end-times prophecy miss the vital context of *audience relevance*, which was to describe the *second* coming of the Messiah to the Jews who were still waiting for his *first* coming makes absolutely no sense at all.

At that time Michael shall stand up.... The Hebrew name *Mikha'el* means “who is like God?” Michael shall “stand up” at the time of Christ. To “stand up” throughout the Book of Daniel is an idiom meaning “to make war as a conqueror.”

there shall be a time of trouble.... “This refers to the Great Tribulation from the Roman-Jewish War of AD 67 to 70. Numerous Church Fathers, beginning with Clement of Alexandria, commented that this verse, as alluded to in Matthew 24:21 and that it had its fulfillment in the Roman siege of Jerusalem.”¹

Such as never was since there was a nation.... Even to that time.... In Matthew 24, Jesus links his comments on the great tribulation to Daniel.

“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor shall ever be” (Matthew 24:21).

“One of the objections often heard to the preterist interpretation of this verse is from dispensationalists who point to the Nazi holocaust in which the best estimates indicate that about six-and-a-half million Jews were slaughtered in concentration camps.

¹ Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 473.

Two points should be made to counter this. First, the fact that Jesus includes the phrase “*nor shall ever be*” (Matthew 24:21) indicates that *history will continue* on for a time after the Great Tribulation. In other words, if the Great Tribulation occurs in the last seven years of human history, “*nor shall ever be*” should not be a consideration. Second, the magnitude of the “*time of trouble*” refers not only to the number of people killed and their suffering but, very importantly, to the destruction of the Temple of God as well, which was the manifest presence of God, his *Shekinah* glory.”²

So, this period cannot be measured only in terms of the number of people killed; in fact, what the Jews suffered qualitatively in the destruction of the Temple, can be understood to surpass that of any period of nation’s history.

This was what Josephus had in mind when he described this Great Tribulation in words similar to Daniel 12: “...it had so come to pass, that our city Jerusalem had arrived at a higher degree of felicity than any other city under the Roman government, and yet, at last, fell into the sorest of calamities again. Accordingly, it appears to me that the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world if they be compared to these of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were....”³

Josephus also describes the Jewish rebellion against Rome and their factions as being deserving of God’s wrath on their nation: “It is therefore impossible to go distinctly over every instance of these men’s iniquity. I shall, therefore, speak my mind here at once briefly:— That neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in

² Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 474.

³ Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 544.

wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world.”⁴

And at that time your people shall be delivered....

Early Christians did not go through that Great Tribulation in Jerusalem, but they did suffer horribly at the hands of Nero in A.D. 64 after the burning of Rome, and this suffering of the Church continued for 250 years.

In Luke 21:20-22, Jesus warned His disciples to flee Jerusalem.

“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.”
(Luke 21:20–22, NKJV)

Eusebius writes in *Ecclesiastical History* III:5:

“But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed⁵ to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. And when those that believed in Christ had come thither from Jerusalem, then, as if the royal city of the Jews and the whole land of Judea were entirely destitute of holy men, the judgment of God at length overtook those who had committed such outrages against Christ and his apostles, and totally destroyed that generation of impious men.

...

⁴ Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 720.

⁵ “...to grant or furnish often in a gracious or condescending manner.” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vouchsafe>

But the number of calamities which everywhere fell upon the nation at that time, the extreme misfortunes to which the inhabitants of Judea were especially subjected, the thousands of men, as well as women and children, that perished by the sword, by famine, and by other forms of death innumerable,—all these things, as well as the many great sieges which were carried on against the cities of Judea, and the excessive sufferings endured by those that fled to Jerusalem itself, as to a city of perfect safety, and finally the general course of the whole war, as well as its particular occurrences in detail, and how at last the abomination of desolation, proclaimed by the prophets, [Daniel 9:27] stood in the very temple of God, so celebrated of old, the temple which was now awaiting its total and final destruction by fire,—all these things anyone that wishes may find accurately described in the history written by Josephus....”⁶

“There is no exact chronology of when this flight to Pella occurred. However, if the disciples of Jesus living in Jerusalem would have heeded the exact words contained in Luke 21:20-22, then they would have fled to the mountains of Judea once they saw Roman armies approaching the city with their ensigns. Some preterist writers have hypothesized that the early Christians left Jerusalem after an unexpected retreat by the Roman general Cestius Gallus’ troops, and that is also possible.

....

The Jewish revolt began in early AD 66. The crisis escalated due to antitaxation protests and attacks upon Roman citizens. The Roman procurator, Gessius Florus,

⁶ Eusebius of Caesaria, “The Church History of Eusebius,” in *Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, and Oration in Praise of Constantine*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, vol. 1, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1890), 138.

responded by plundering the Jewish Temple, claiming the money was for the emperor, and the next day launching a raid on the city, arresting numerous senior Jewish figures. This then resulted in further riots in Judea. The Roman military garrison was over-run, and the Roman governor, Agrippa II, was forced to flee the city. This then brought in the Roman general Cestius Gallus to quell the revolt.”⁷

“Cestius began by fighting the war in Galilee and lands north of Judea in the spring of AD 66. By the summer, many Jews retreated to within the walls of Jerusalem to the south. Cestius decided to wait and take advantage of a strategy that would have a large number of Jews in Jerusalem on the Feast of Tabernacles. According to Josephus, the attack took place on the Sabbath during the Feast of Tabernacles. Then several strange things happened.”⁸

“It is thought by many historians that during this, a temporary retreat of the Romans gave the Christians within the city ample opportunity to flee to the Judea hill country to the east and then travel along the Jordan River until they reached Pella.”⁹

Every one who is found written in the book. Those that are delivered are not biological Israel, Israel by race, but Israel by grace; those “***found written in the book.***” This is the Book of Life, the elect of God. “His book is that eternal counsel which predestinates us to himself, and elects us to the hope of eternal salvation.”¹⁰

⁷ Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 475.

⁸ Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 476.

⁹ Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 476-477.

¹⁰ John Calvin and Thomas Myers, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, vol. 2 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 373.

In first-century Israel, these are the people that God would provide for; when Rome attacked Israel, these fled to Pella. They were identified by Jesus before the event as those that God would deliver.

“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matthew 24:15–21, NKJV)

And this is exactly how the early church understood this passage: Eusebius, Archbishop of Cæsarea, A.D. 315, says of this incident, “Now our Lord, foreseeing that there would be a famine in the city, warned His disciples in the siege that was coming, not to betake themselves to the city as a place of refuge, and under God’s protection, but rather to depart from thence, and flee to the mountains.”¹¹

Notes on Josephus’ *Wars of the Jews*

Although the Temple was not destroyed until AD 70, there were several years in which numerous signs that demonstrated that the presence of God had departed from the Temple, according to Josephus in *Wars of the Jews* (VI.289-309).

¹¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected out of the Works of the Fathers: St. Luke* (ed. John Henry Newman; vol. 3; Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1843), 681.

Fall AD 62 to AD 70	Joshua (Jesus the son of Ananus) begins his prophesying
Late AD 65, early 66	Star like a sword and comet appear in the night sky
March 20th, AD 66	Brilliant light on altar and sanctuary of the Temple
March 20th, AD 66 on their own	Doors of Eastern Gate open
May 2nd, AD 66	Chariots, and armies were seen in the sky throughout Judea
May 16th, AD 66	Voice from Inner Court, "We are leaving from here."
September AD 66	Judea invaded by troops under the Roman general Cestius Gallus
Spring AD 67 to AD 70	The war resumes under Vespasian, Jerusalem and Temple destroyed

A Revelation of the Last Day (12:2-3)

From the period of the destruction of Israel and its Temple, we now see the consequence of these behaviors at the end of time.

***12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,
Some to everlasting life,
Some to shame and everlasting contempt.***

Many reading the Book of Daniel are looking for the second coming of Jesus. But they confuse his first

coming with his second and are led astray. It is right here! Jesus is coming again, and there will be a great resurrection at his coming. A resurrection of **many to everlasting life** and a resurrection of **some to shame and everlasting contempt**.

“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.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16, NKJV)

“...the prophets do not contain any clearer testimony than this to the last resurrection, particularly as the angel distinctly asserts the future rising again of both the righteous and the wicked.”¹²

many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.... This is not a promise of immediate resurrection, but of a resurrection at the end of time.

The phrase “**sleep in the dust of the earth**” appears to be decisive in answering the question of whether this is a spiritual or physical resurrection. It is a statement that jumps to the end of time to give us and Daniel comfort—we “*shall awake*.”

Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. The Old Testament, like the New, teaches a resurrection to life and a resurrection to death. “...our author can be seen to be thinking of a general resurrection prior to judgment.”¹³ Jesus will soon teach the very same thing.

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and

¹² John Calvin and Thomas Myers, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, vol. 2 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 375.

¹³ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 226.

there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” (Matthew 7:13–14, NKJV)

“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”” (Matthew 25:46, NKJV)

“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” (John 5:28–29, NKJV)

“It is not unusual for prophecy in the Old Testament to present events separated by a considerable span of time as if they occurred in immediate relationship to each other....”¹⁴

**12:3 *Those who are wise shall shine
Like the brightness of the firmament,
And those who turn many to righteousness
Like the stars forever and ever.***

Those who are wise¹⁵ ***shall shine....*** This word *wise* is used for *understanding* and is found in a similar context in the last chapter.

“And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. ... And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.” (Daniel 11:33, 35, NKJV)

¹⁴ Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House, *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997), Da 12:2.

¹⁵ Wise שָׂכַל (*śākal*) *wise(ly), understand, prosper*.¹⁵

We can see by this that 12:2-3 is a part of a greater context found in chapter 11.

Like the brightness of the firmament.... “...meaning, they shall be heirs of the kingdom of heaven, where they shall enjoy that glory which surpasses all the splendor of the world.”¹⁶

The wise make their choice for obedience to the God of Israel. Peter also speaks of suffering and martyrdom, saying something similar.

“But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.” (1 Peter 5:10, NKJV)

And those who turn [lead] many to righteousness...
It is the wise who do this.

righteousness....¹⁷ This word “refers to an ethical, moral standard, and of course, in the OT, that standard is the nature and will of God.”¹⁸ In their many trials with the Greeks, Romans, and Hellenizers of their own country, these faithful found an opportunity to lead lives of righteousness; as a result, many turned in faith to the God of their fathers.

Like the stars forever and ever. Jesus appears to have been thinking of Daniel when he said:

¹⁶ John Calvin and Thomas Myers, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, vol. 2 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 376.

¹⁷ *righteousness* רַדָּיָה (*šādēq*) *be just, righteous*. Harold G. Stigers, “1879 רַדָּיָה,” ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 752.

¹⁸ Harold G. Stigers, “1879 רַדָּיָה,” ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 752.

“Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (Matthew 13:43, NKJV)

“The sons of God, who being devoted entirely to God and ruled by the spirit of prudence, point out the way of life to others, shall not only be saved themselves, but shall possess surpassing glory far beyond anything which exists in this world. This is the complete explanation.”¹⁹

Final Instructions to Daniel (12:4-12)

Now we return to Daniel writing in the 6th century BC.

12:4 “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

But you, Daniel.... Take note that it is the 6th-century prophet Daniel who is addressed here. It is he that is instructed to shut up the words. We here have the testimony of the book itself as to its author. It “is the book’s own claim to have been written by Daniel (cf. 7:1; 12:4), to be an account of a historical individual who experienced the exile and lived in Babylon, and to predict future events....”²⁰

shut up the words, and seal the book.... “The seals were intended to vouchsafe the integrity of the contents. They warned against tampering and, if intact, attested to the authenticity of the document.”²¹

“Daniel is commanded to seal the book of his prophecy until the time when it will be fulfilled. Compare this

¹⁹ John Calvin and Thomas Myers, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, vol. 2 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 377.

²⁰ Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, vol. 18, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 36.

²¹ Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Da 12:4.

commandment with the commandment of the angel in Revelation: “And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand” (Revelation 22:10).”²²

“And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.””
(Revelation 22:10, NKJV)

The prophecy of the Book of Revelation is the unveiling of the same events described in Daniel’s vision of the Fourth Kingdom and the coming of the Kingdom of God. When the angel says, “The time is at hand,” it is taken quite literally to mean the first century AD.

In the 6th century, when Daniel wrote, there were nearly six centuries yet before the time would be at hand. However, when John wrote the Revelation, it would only be less than five years before the events he spoke of began to be fulfilled. At that point, the time truly was—at hand.

the time of the end.... *The time of the end* is the time when these prophecies shall be fulfilled. This is a phrase found in Daniel 11:27, 35, 40, and 12:4 and 9. The default position of many readers and authors has been to read this as “the end of the world.” However, that is not justified by the context of Daniel. It is the end to which Daniel has been writing all along—the seventy weeks of Daniel (9:24-27)! Specifically, the two great events of this “*time of the end,*” 1) the crucifixion of Christ “*Messiah shall be cut off,*” and 2) the destruction of Jerusalem, “*Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary*” Daniel 9:24. This is the fulcrum of human history to which Daniel has been directing us.

many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase....

²² Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 478.

*“They shall wander from sea to sea,
And from north to east;
They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the
Lord,
But shall not find it.” (Amos 8:12, NKJV)*

Amos explains what “**run to and fro**” means. At the “**time of the end**,” the time in which Jesus comes to this earth, at that time, Israel will be a nation of religious professionals, running “to and fro” in an attempt to find **the word of the Lord**. But they **shall not find it**, although **the word** stands before them in bodily form.

12:5 Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank.

there stood two others... “The identity of the angels is not given. But it appears that the purpose here may be to seal the prophecy with two or more witnesses.”²³

one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. The river referred to here is the Tigris River (Hebrew: *Hiddekel*) – the place where the Fifth Vision occurs (Daniel 10:4).

12:6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?”

How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be? The answer given suggests that he is not asking, “how long till these things happen?” That was 490 years; Daniel already knew that. But Daniel is asking how long will these things last till they are fulfilled?

12:7 Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by

²³ Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 483.

Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.

he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever.... This angel is taking an oath, guaranteeing the time when these events will take place.

it shall be for a time, times, and half a time... “For a year, [two] years and half-a-year – or three-and-a-half years, the Roman legions made up of troops from the Gentile nations made war on Judea from spring AD 67 to September 70.”²⁴ This was three and a half years.

12:8 Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, “My lord, what shall be the end of these things?”

What shall be the end of these things? Daniel is asking how long the time of testing will last.

12:9 And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Go your way, Daniel.... This is a Hebrew idiom, which is a command to not inquire any further.

for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

“Daniel is told not to inquire any further because the interpretation of the prophecy will be sealed or veiled for a later time. The prophecy would be unsealed or revealed at “*the time of the end.*”²⁵ That is, until the time to which Daniel had been addressing all along, specifically, the two great events of this “*time of the end,*”

²⁴ Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 484.

²⁵ Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 484.

- 1) the crucifixion of Christ "*Messiah shall be cut off,*" and
- 2) the destruction of Jerusalem, "*Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary*" Daniel 9:24.

In his first letter, Peter, the most memorable of our Lord's twelve disciples, commented on the frustration experienced by Daniel, other prophets, and even the angels who delivered prophecies without immediate answers.

"Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into." (1 Peter 1:10–12, NKJV)

12:10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

but the wise shall understand. Are Christians wise today? If so, we will rightly understand that Daniel 12 predicts the coming of Christ and the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.

12:11 "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.

And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up....

Please note that this is a prophecy of the future, not a record of the past; it is what Daniel prophesies for Israel's future in Matthew 24 and Luke 19, not of Israel's history during Antiochus IV Epiphanies terrors of Daniel 8. Once you get the timing right, future not past, the story is easier to address.

The first part of 12:11 was essentially stated earlier:

“And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.” (Daniel 11:31, NKJV)

There are two events mentioned here: 1) “*the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away*” and 2) “*the abomination of desolation is set up.*” The text concludes by saying, “*there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.*”

The first event, “the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away,” does not address Jesus' death forth years earlier but the then-current “daily” sacrifices of the temple. This occurred on the last week of the destruction of the Temple, when the priest ran out of sacrificial lambs, just as Roman soldiers broke into the Temple.

The second event is more problematic; ***the abomination of desolation is set up.*** Roman soldiers did set up their pagan symbols within a few days of the last daily sacrifice, not ***one thousand two hundred and ninety days*** later.

But, the problem is lessened if these two events, with are but days apart, are viewed as one event. Lessened or reduced but not eliminated for it would then appear that the 1290 day would then begin at that time—not end.

“Rome is the Iron Beast of Daniel 7. Rome is the “willful king” (Daniel 11:36) who worships the “god of fortresses” described in Daniel 11. Rome is the military power that

threatens Jerusalem as the Beast from the sea in Revelation 13 and 17.”²⁶

“When the daily sacrifices cease, the Temple is called “desolate.” It is desolate of God’s atoning work. The abomination of desolation occurred when the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. Josephus referred to Daniel 12:11 or Daniel 9:27 as having been fulfilled by the Romans.”²⁷ “Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made **desolate** by them” (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews X.11.7)

there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. One thousand two hundred ninety days is three-and-a-half-years. This refers to the Roman-Jewish War from February of AD 67 to the fall of the Temple in August of 70.

“Many commentators throughout history, beginning with several of the early Church Fathers, saw Vespasian’s war against Judea, which began during the reign of Nero, as the fulfillment of the “abomination that causes desolation” described in Daniel 9, 12 and Matthew 24.”²⁸

12:12 Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. “1335 days is another 45 days beyond the “time of trouble.” This is an extension of the time period, not a separate time from the previous verse. Those who survived the holocaust were Christians living in Jerusalem who had been forewarned by Jesus and John’s prophecy to flee the city to the hills of Judea in

²⁶ Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 493.

²⁷ Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 486.

²⁸ Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 121.

order to wait out the siege. This indicates that God’s people living in Judea would survive the tribulation that ended in the destruction of the Temple in September AD 70.²⁹

The Angel’s Promise to Daniel

12:13 “But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.

But you, go your way till the end.... Daniel will not understand, and the vision will not be revealed until ***the end*** or, the days in which all this occurs. This does not refer to the “end times” in an eschatological sense as many have supposed.

A Summary of Daniels Fifth Vision in 535 B.C.

Daniel’s fifth vision is found in Daniel 10-12 — in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia.

In chapter 10, an angel came to Daniel while he was fasting for three weeks. The angel shows Daniel the wars and succession of kings in the Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires (Daniel 11) and the time from the coming of the Messiah to the reign of Vespasian and the Great Tribulation from AD 67 to 70 (Daniel 12).

Chapter 10-11

Medo-Persian Empire from 539
to 330 B.C.
Macedonia-Greece from 330
to 64 B.C.
Roman Empire from 64 B.C.
to AD 70
Pompey invades Jerusalem
..... 63 B.C.

²⁹ Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings*, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 486-487.

Death of Julius Caesar 44 B.C.

Chapter 12

The Messiah appears from
AD 27 to 30

The Time of Trouble from
AD 67 to 70

A Summary of All the Visions in Daniel

“The prophecy of Daniel is a series of five visions occurring over a period of about 70 years. The visions move from general to specific. They point to several key events in the future history of the Jews: the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes and its restoration from 167 to 165 BC; the exact time of the coming of the Messiah in AD 27; Nero’s persecution from AD 64 to 68; and the Roman-Jewish War from AD 67 to 70.

The First Vision is a dream of the king that is interpreted by Daniel. The second is Daniel’s dream. The next three are waking visions seen in the presence of angels, followed by an appearance of the Messiah – the Son of Man – to interpret the vision for Daniel. The timeline reads as follows:

FIRST VISION — Daniel 2 — 603 BC in the second year of the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Daniel interprets the king’s dream. The dream described four kingdoms that would rule over a vast empire. Note that the dates are from the perspective of these empires’ domination over Judah/Judea.

Babylonian-Chaldean Empire	from 605 to 539 BC
Medo-Persian Empire	from 539 to 330 BC
Macedonia-Greece	from 330 to 64 BC
Roman Empire	from 64 BC to AD 70

SECOND VISION — Daniel 7 — 555 BC in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar, the son of Nabonidus and successor of Nebuchadnezzar. This is Daniel’s dream. The interpretation by angels is part of the dream. The four kingdoms are described in more detail and special

attention is given by Daniel to the fourth kingdom which has ten kings.

Babylonian-Chaldean Empire from 605 to 539 BC
Medo-Persian Empire from 539 to 330 BC
Macedonia-Greece from 330 to 64 BC
Roman Empire from 64 BC to AD 70

THIRD VISION — Daniel 8 — 553 BC in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar. This vision of Daniel is interpreted by two angels. It describes the Medo-Persian Empire; the conquest of the world by Alexander the Great; the Seleucid and Ptolemaic succession; and the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanies in Syria.

Medo-Persian Empire from 539 to 330 BC
Alexander's invasions from 330 to 323 BC
Ptolemies rule Egypt & Seleucids rule Syria from 323 to 167 BC
Antiochus Epiphanes from 167 to 164 BC

FOURTH VISION — Daniel 9 — 539 BC in the first year of Darius, king of the Medes. The angel Gabriel appears to Daniel while he was fasting and inquiring of God the meaning of Jeremiah's "seventy years." Later the Messiah, the "Son of Man," appears. The vision describes the 483 year time period from the seventh year of King Artaxerxes, in 457 BC, when by his commandment Ezra began the work of completing the restoration of the Temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 7) – to the baptism of Jesus Christ in AD 27, when He first began to preach and execute the office of the Messiah.

Medo-Persian Empire ... from 457 BC
Roman Empire to AD 27... 483 years

FIFTH VISION — Daniel 10,11,12 — 535 BC in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia. In chapter 10, an angel came to Daniel while he was fasting for three weeks. The angel shows Daniel the wars and succession of kings in the Persian, Greek and Roman Empires (Daniel 11) and the time period from the coming of Messiah to the reign of Vespasian and the Great Tribulation from AD 67 to 70 (Daniel 12).

Chapter 11

Medo-Persian Empire from 539
to 330 BC
Macedonia-Greece from 330
to 64 BC
Roman Empire from 64
BC to AD 70
Pompey invades Jerusalem
63 BC
Death of Julius Caesar
44 BC

Chapter 12

The Messiah appears from
AD 27 to 30
The Time of Trouble from AD
67 to 70”³⁰

³⁰ Jay Rogers, In the Days of These Kings, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 47-49.

Three Choices for Interpreting Daniel 11:31 to 12:12

An article by John Evans, “The 1,290 and 1,335 Days of Daniel 12,” hosted at PlanetPreterist.com, does a good job of thoroughly refuting the liberal view that Daniel 12 refers to the Maccabean period and the struggle against Antiochus IV Epiphanes. I will here summarize the three views.

Scholars are divided on how to interpret the end of the Fifth Vision of Daniel. What is at stake here is not only the status of Daniel as a book of supernatural prophecy but also Jesus’ authority as the embodiment of Truth. As the “Introduction” of this book claims, since fragments representing the full text of Daniel were found among Dead Sea Scrolls manuscripts that have been dated to the late second century B.C., it is highly improbable that the original manuscript of Daniel 11 and 12 can be dated to *after* 165 B.C. The choice of interpretation of Daniel 11, 12 will lead us down one of three paths.

1. The liberal modernist approach, or in ancient times known as the **pagan skeptical approach**, puts all of the Fifth Vision of Daniel as being fulfilled by the second century B.C.. The earliest writer who attempted to interpret Daniel in this way was Porphyry, a second century pagan critic of Judaism and Christianity. Porphyry believed that the Book of Daniel was a forgery – more politely put, *vaticinium ex eventu*, or a “prophecy after the fact” – that was written around the year 164 B.C. by an eyewitness to the Maccabean revolt in Judea.

Porphyry’s work, *Against the Christians*, does not survive in its entirety, but major portions are quoted in Jerome’s *Preface to Daniel*. According to Porphyry, all the prophecy from Daniel 11:31 to 12:12 was fulfilled during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. I refer you to Jerome for the full treatment of Daniel given by Porphyry, but here are just a few examples.

Daniel 12:7 — Porphyry interpreted “a time, times and half a time” as three-and a half years, the time period in which the temple was abandoned during Antiochus’ reign of terror.

Daniel 12:11 — Porphyry said that the “1,290 days,” or approximately three-and-a-half years, were fulfilled in the time of Antiochus through the desolation of the Temple. The actual desolation lasted exactly two years – from Kislev 25th, 167 B.C., the date when Antiochus slaughtered a pig on the altar of the Temple – to Kislev 25th, 165 B.C., when Judas Maccabeus purified and rededicated the Temple. But some have pointed to an earlier desecration that occurred in 168 B.C.

Daniel 12:12 — The “45 days which are in addition to the 1,290 days” refer to the length of time of the victory over the generals of Antiochus, when Judas Maccabeus fought bravely against them, cleansed the Temple of God, cast down the idol of Jupiter, and offered sacrifices in the Temple.

This is a “liberal preterist” interpretation of Daniel that proposes “Daniel” was a pseudonymous scribe living shortly after 165 B.C.. This is a plausible interpretation, although it poses some difficulties in interpreting the text, which I noted above. It also robs Daniel of the status of being an inspired prophetic book.

Other liberal modernists interpret Daniel as being a “prophecy after the fact,” the difference being that they view the final portion of Daniel’s Fifth Vision – Daniel 11:34-12:12 – as a prediction of victory that ultimately failed. Nevertheless, they are correct in seeing that it is a stretched interpretation to say that Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the Maccabeans of the second century B.C. are being described in these verses.

The predominant liberal position on Daniel holds that what lay behind the publication of this pseudo-prophecy (c. 164 B.C.) was the desire to inspire resistance to the

oppression of Antiochus IV by convincing the faithful that God was about to intervene decisively on their side. Those who try to fit the prophecies of Daniel 11:34-12:12 into a second century B.C. framework propose that the author of Daniel was allied with the rebel forces led by Judas Maccabeus. Collins and other leading critical scholars assure us, however, that the group to which the author belonged, the “wise” of 11:32 and 11:35, pinned their hopes on direct divine intervention and considered the Maccabees to be only “a little help” (11:34) (John Evans, *The 1,290 and 1,335 Days of Daniel 12*, PlanetPreterist.com).

Daniel 12 describes a vision of victory for the people of God that is too overstated to fit the events of 165 B.C. and beyond. Instead, the liberal critics assume that the author of Daniel greatly exaggerated the resulting state of affairs during the Hasmonean Dynasty.

2. The futurist and historicist approaches

correctly note that there is a break in the narrative evident in the language of Daniel 11:33-36. There is an extension of time between verses 33 and 35 – the time when “the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits” (v. 32) “many days” (v. 33) are to transpire until the “time of the end ... a time appointed” (v. 35).

The historicists apply this to be some figure of late Antiquity or the Middle Ages, usually a later Roman emperor or the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church. The futurists interpret the “king [who] shall do according to his will” (v. 36) to be a future Antichrist in a revived Roman Empire. They interpret the “time of the end” (v. 35) to be the end-times.

3. The preterist approach sees the Fifth Vision of Daniel to be a recapitulation of the previous visions. With the exception of the Third Vision of Daniel 8, which focuses on the conflict between Medo-Persia and Greece until the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, each of the previous

visions extends to the time of the Roman Empire and the coming of the Messiah. So too the Fifth Vision extends into the time of the Romans and points to the events of AD 70, which include the destruction of the Temple, as Jesus himself taught, when he used the language of Daniel 12:11, “the abomination of desolation,” to describe an event of His future, not the past. Daniel 12 can be understood as a more detailed recapitulation of Daniel 9:24-27. In fact, Jesus’ statement about the “abomination of desolation” in Matthew 24 and Luke 19 closely parallel Daniel 9 and 12.

And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
**And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary**
The end of it *shall be* with a flood,
And till the end of the war **desolations** are
determined.
Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for
one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
**And on the wing of abominations shall be one
who
makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is
determined,
Is poured out on the desolate** (Daniel 9:26,27).

**And there shall be a time of trouble,
Such as never was since there was a nation,
Even to that time** (Daniel 12:1).

And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* is taken away, and the **abomination of desolation** is set up, *there shall be* one thousand two hundred and ninety days (Daniel 12:11).

“Therefore when you see the ‘**abomination of desolation,**’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet,

standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains ... **For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time**, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:15,16,21).

“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its **desolation** is near.... **For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people**. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 19:20,23,24).

If we first establish that “the king who exalts himself” of Daniel 11:36-45 must be a king that would come *after* the death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 164 B.C. – which is the inescapable conclusion of both the liberal and conservative views – then this “king” must belong to either the Hasmonean Dynasty from 163 to 63 B.C., or the period of Roman subjugation from 63 B.C. to AD 70.

If the conservative, early date view is correct, then the Book of Daniel is a prophecy of the sixth century B.C.. The prophet Daniel correctly predicted the desecration of the Temple from 167 to 165 B.C., the “abomination of desolation” (Daniel 11:31). Then he extended the prophecy to speak further of a “time of trouble, such as never was a nation even to that time” (Daniel 12:1), the “time of the end” (Daniel 12:4,9) and another “abomination of desolation” (Daniel 12:11). Jesus himself referred to this as that which would be fulfilled by the Roman armies surrounding Jerusalem (Luke 21:20), which occurred in AD 70.

In the preterist perspective, Rome is the Iron Beast of Daniel 7. Rome is the “willful king” who worships the “god of fortresses” described in Daniel 11. Rome is the

military power that threatens Jerusalem as the Beast from the sea in Revelation 13 and 17

Daniels Fifth Vision

Daniel's fifth vision covering chapter 10, 11, 12 was in 535 B.C. in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia.

"In chapter 10, an angel came to Daniel while he was fasting for three weeks. The angel shows Daniel the wars and succession of kings in the Persian, Greek and Roman Empires (Daniel 11) and the time period from the coming of Messiah to the reign of Vespasian and the Great Tribulation from AD 67 to 70 (Daniel 12)."³¹

A Summary of Daniels Visions

"Daniel lived from approximately 620 to 534 B.C., making him over 85-years-old when he died. He was elevated to be the prime minister of the Babylonian province and retained important positions of great power and prestige in the kingdom into the time of Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, Belshazzar, and then into the reigns of Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian.

- Daniel's first prophecy (Daniel 2) was given in 603 B.C. when he was still a youth of about 17-years-old, in the second year of the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.
- His second prophecy (Daniel 7) was given in 555 B.C. when he was about 65-years-old in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar.
- His third prophecy (Daniel 8) was in 553 B.C. when he was about 68-years-old in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar.

³¹ Jay Rogers, In the Days of These Kings, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 48.

- His fourth prophecy (Daniel 9) was in 539 B.C. when he was about 81-years-old, in the first year of Darius, king of the Medes.
- His fifth prophecy (Daniel 10,11,12) was in 535 B.C. when he was about 85-years-old in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia.”³²

³² Jay Rogers, In the Days of These Kings, (Clermont, FL: Media House International, 2017), 158-159.

But What About These Events?

Many eschatological events have not received much attention in our study of Daniel. To get a clear picture of the whole, we will ask when and where these other events occur and what role they play in the storyline of prophecy.

The Book of Daniel

The role of Daniel has been to introduce us to the world empires that would arise after Israel's deportation to Babylon and then take us down to the pivotal points of human history. This point has been laid out with his prophecy of—the seventy weeks of Daniel (9:24-27). Specifically, the two great events of this “*time of the end*,” ***One***, the crucifixion of Christ “*Messiah shall be cut off*,” and ***Two***, the destruction of Jerusalem, “*Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary*.” In this story, we are drawn to the fulcrum of human history to which Daniel has been directing us all along—the birth of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple. From this, the other elements of prophecy follow.

The Great Tribulation

Everyone knows that there will soon be a Great Tribulation in this world. How do we know this? It is because Dispensationalism tells us that the Great Tribulation discussed in the Olivet Discourse and the Book of Revelation is soon to occur in history. Are they right?

The Olivet Discourse

First, let's look at the Olivet Discourse, for here is the Bible's major teachings on this topic.

“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.” (Matthew 24:9, NKJV)

“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matthew 24:21, NKJV)

“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, NKJV)

Now, doesn’t that settle it? Clearly, these things are yet in our future. But before we go further, take note that every one of these passages—that we are told are clearly in our future, come between these two significant verses:

“Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.” (Matthew 23:36, NKJV)

“Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.” (Matthew 24:34, NKJV)

Why are these verses so significant? It is because these two verses serve as inclusios³³ around the section in the Olivet Discourse in which Christ addresses the destruction of the Temple, which we are told occurs during the Great Tribulation. These statements were the result of the disciple’s question, “*Tell us, when will these things be?*” (Matthew 24:3, NKJV). That should be helpful.

³³ “In biblical studies, inclusio is a literary device based on a concentric principle, also known as bracketing or an envelope structure, which consists of creating a frame by placing similar material at the beginning and end of a section....”

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inclusio>

The Great Tribulation, mentioned in the Olivet Discourse, lasted for a 3 ½ year period and culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple. It took place between A.D. 67-70 during the period Jesus called “this generation.” So, from a strictly historical point of view, and one firmly based on Scripture, the Great Tribulation occurred some 2000 years ago. It is now in our past.

The Book of Revelation

In the Book of Revelation, we see the word “tribulation” used 5 times. The first four times, they speak of the tribulation that the Church was then experiencing: Revelation 1:9; 2:9-10; 2:22. And in fact, this tribulation of the Church was a significant part of the Great Tribulation—and that also occurred in the first century A.D.

The word, tribulation, is used one other time in Revelation:

“Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?” And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:13–14, NKJV)

The Book of Revelation, covering the same material as the Olivet Discourse but in fuller detail, is here speaking of this same 3 ½ year period of persecution and tribulation discussed in Matthew 24. But the Jewish Church in Jerusalem was spared much of that persecution by fleeing to Pella; however, the Gentile Church in the rest of the world did experience it as Revelation 1:9; 2:9-10; 2:22 demonstrate.

Thousands of Christians were killed by Nero in Rome when he nailed their bodies to crosses, covered them with pitch, and lit them on fire as torches for his parties.

So, contrary to pop-eschatology, the Great Tribulation is now 2000 years behind us. As a result, a pre-tribulation rapture did not happen then, nor will it occur in our future—for that particular Tribulation is now past. But note, this is not the same thing as saying the rapture will not ensue in our future for it certainly will. Nor are we saying that tribulation has not occurred all through the history of the Church; it has, and it will continue to do so until Jesus comes. All we are saying is that the “Great Tribulation” of the Olivet Discourse and the Book of Revelation has seen fulfillment in the first century in God’s judgment of Israel for murdering the Lord of Glory.

The Antichrist

The word antichrist is mentioned five times in the New Testament, all in John’s epistles.

“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.” (1 John 2:18, NKJV)

“Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.” (1 John 2:22, NKJV)

“and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.” (1 John 4:3, NKJV)

“For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.” (2 John 7, NKJV)

The word is found nowhere else in the New Testament. However, two other terms are often thought to address the same person, “*man of sin*,” and “*the lawless one*.” Both of these terms are spoken of within five verses of each other in 2 Thessalonians.

“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, NKJV)

“And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.” (2 Thessalonians 2:8, NKJV)

Dispensationalists tell us that the Antichrist (man of sin or lawless one) will appear on the scene during the Great Tribulation. And he did, he was Emperor Nero who ravished the Church in Rome and ordered the destruction of Jerusalem. After all, John does say, “*by which we know that it is the last hour.*” (1 John 2:18, NKJV) and “*and is now already in the world.*” (1 John 4:3, NKJV). Clearly, John understood that this antichrist was coming in his *near* future. This is an important point; the Great Tribulation, along with the antichrist, did indeed come at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in the first century. But beyond that event, there is nothing in the Bible that would project this mysterious person into our future at the end-of-time.

The Beast

Sometimes “the antichrist,” “man of sin,” and “the lawless one” are associated with “the beast” found in the Book of Revelation. That is probably a correct association. The term *beast* is found 37 times in Revelation addressing a demonic figure during the period referred to in the Book of Revelation. An excellent place to start in a study of the

beast would be in the “*Beast of Revelation*” by Ken Gentry and “*Last Days Madness*” by Gary DeMar.

The period when the *beast* is mentioned in the Book of Revelation is the same period that is addressed in the Olivet Discourse. The *beast* was active during the persecutions of both Israel and the Church during the first century. Therefore, this *beast* will not be a factor in the last coming of Jesus at the end-of-time.

Battle of Armageddon

The battle of Armageddon is a central doctrine in the dispensational theology of “last things.” It is mentioned in Revelation, chapter 16.

“Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.” (Revelation 16:12–16, NKJV)

This verse is the only reference to Har-Magedon (16:16), or Armageddon found in the entire Bible. Let us look at the historical context of the passage.

Armageddon is here described as the rallying place of the kings of the whole world who, led by unclean spirits issuing from the mouth of the dragon, the *beast*, and the false prophet, assemble here for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty (Revelation 16:14).

The word **har** means mountain (or mountains), and **magedon** refers to Megiddo, the biblical city near which many notable battles were fought. Here the armies of Israel defeated Sisera and his host (Jgs. 5:19), and later it was the scene of the fatal struggle between Josiah and Pharaoh Neco (2 Kings 23:29f; 2 Ch. 35:22). There was unique appropriateness in the choice of this geographic place as the arena of this mighty struggle between the powers of good and evil.

Two things of importance should be noted of this location. *First*, Megiddo was a place associated with terrible grief to the Jew. It was here that one of their greatest and most godly kings died.

However, Josiah would not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to make war with him; nor did he listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God but came to make war on the plain of Megiddo. The archers shot King Josiah, and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am badly wounded." So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in the second chariot which he had, and brought him to Jerusalem where he died and was buried in the tombs of his fathers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. Then Jeremiah chanted a lament for Josiah. And all the male and female singers speak about Josiah in their lamentations to this day. And they made them an ordinance in Israel; behold, they are also written in the Lamentations. (2 Chronicles 35:22-25)

This event made a lasting mark on the conscience of Israel. Associating grief and sorrow with Megiddo, the Biblical writers used this site to note that there would come another time in which mourning like this would again strike Israel. Revelation 1:7 references Zechariah 12:10, which refers to Christ's crucifixion. Revelation 16 continues with that thought but taking us to the

conclusion of that mourning, to those people who did not respond in repentance and faith.

*I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, **like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo**. The land will mourn, every family by itself....*
(Zechariah 12:10-12)

Reference is made to “Hadadrimmon.” “The term refers to a place near Megiddo at which mourning for Josiah took place after his death in battle against Pharaoh Neco....”³⁴ Notice the phrase “*like the mourning of Hadadrimmon*.” Revelation picks up this theme of mourning, speaking of this gathering at a place called Har-Magedon (16:16), mourning like Israel’s for King Josiah when he died. However, in this mourning, the Jews mourn for the death of Israel itself.

Second, Megiddo was a fortress town on one edge of the valley of Jezreel. It overlooked a valley where armies often gathered to fight. Because it was so strategically located, it was a military necessity to take this fortress town if one wanted to dominate the battlefield. An army never gives the high ground to the enemy. As a result, Megiddo could be a precarious place to live; there was not a lot of security in being an inhabitant of Megiddo. It was often the object of an invading army’s attention.

That being the case, if you wanted to create a picture of a great army gathering to attack and destroy a city set on a hill or mountain, could you pick a better one than by referring to Har-Magedon (16:16) or “Mount of Megiddo?”

³⁴ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2, Page 591.

As a result, “this figure in the text of the apocalypse was employed not for the physical location but for the battle imagery.”³⁵ The Mount of Megiddo was not and is not the geographic center of our study here; it is Jerusalem. However, Har-Magedon (16:16) had one considerable contribution to make. It lent its significant history to the crises Jerusalem was then facing. Jerusalem is set on a mountain; God is saying that it too is facing destruction by gathering armies. The image of Har-Magedon (16:16), as a city facing attack and destruction, makes that point. Jerusalem is the city set on a hill. Jerusalem, like Har-Magedon (16:16) so often before it, will now suffer attack and defeat.

The unholy trinity, dragon (16:13), the beast (16:13), and the false prophet (16:13), are determined to destroy what they envision as “the apple of His eye” (Zechariah 2:8), not realizing it is He who has given Jerusalem up to destruction. This unholy trinity has succeeded in gathering the kings of the world to do this evil deed. But it is instead the war of the great day of God, the Almighty (Revelation 16:14).

Please take note: the battle of Har-Magedon (16:16) has already occurred; it was the same as the battle of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Chapter 18 of the Book of Revelation recounts the fall of Babylon—a codeword for Jerusalem. Whereas chapter 18 of Revelation reads like a mournful dirge for the destruction of Jerusalem, Chapter 19:1-6 has a tone of rejoicing in it, and indeed we hear a fourfold Hallelujah, which comes from heaven.

In chapter 18, the unfaithful wife, Israel, had been judged and put to death for her spiritual adultery. And now, in 19:7-10, a new marriage takes place, replacing the old

³⁵ Foy E. Wallace **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Jr., *The Book of Revelation*, 335.

adulterous wife, Israel, with a new bride, the Church. “It is naturally the thesis of the Revelation that the Christian churches form the true Israel. The Harlot has disappeared, and the Bride is taking her place. ...the antithesis must lie between the old Israel and the new, the false Israel and the true, the Israel that is to appear....”³⁶

19:7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. The topic is *the marriage (19:7) of Christ to His Church*. “In the O.T., God is the Bridegroom of Israel....”³⁷ We see that clearly in these verses:

Thus says the Lord, “where is the certificate of divorce by which I have sent your mother away? Or to whom of My creditors did I sell you? Behold, you were sold for your iniquities, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away.” (Isaiah 50:1)

“For your husband is your Maker, whose name is the Lord of hosts; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, who is called the God of all the earth. For the Lord has called you, like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even like a wife of one’s youth when she is rejected,” says your God. (Isaiah 54:5-6)

I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion, and I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord. (Hosea 2:19-20)

However, God first divorced Israel, and now he divorces Judah and takes a new bride. Most Dispensationalists

³⁶ Philip Carrington, *The Meaning of the Revelation*, 294.

³⁷ Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. VI, 449.

hold that the marriage of the Lamb is to be at the very end of time. However, there are problems with this position. *First*, the marriage supper is supposed to take place when the marriage takes place; for the Church, that began at Pentecost and continues with each new soul added to the Kingdom.

Second, Israel was also wedded to Yahweh. The celebration of that wedding did not take place at the *end* of the relationship, but at the beginning, through the various feasts set aside by God for worship, especially Passover, which was adapted by Jesus for our Lord's Supper. And this is the marriage supper spoken of here.

Third, our passage in the Book of Revelation brings us to the end of Yahweh's marriage to Israel through these divorce proceedings and the judgment on the unfaithful wife found in the Book of Revelation. The next step is God taking a new bride, his marriage to the Church. The New Covenant and the Church age has been coming as the Mosaic Covenant and Judaic age has been passing away. The culmination has arrived. The Church has now, with the destruction of Jerusalem, become the Bride of Christ—not will someday become the Bride of Christ at the end of time.

The destruction of the harlot and the marriage supper of the Lamb, the divorce, and the wedding—are correlative events. The existence of the Church as the congregation of the New Covenant marks an entirely new epoch in the history of redemption. God was not now merely taking Gentile believers into the Old Covenant. Instead, He has brought in "*the age to come*" (Heb. 2:5; 6:5), the age of fulfillment, these Last Days; and Passover was the inception of his New Covenant. With the final divorce and destruction of the unfaithful wife in A.D. 70, the marriage of the Church to her Lord was firmly established; the Eucharistic celebration of the Church was fully revealed in its true nature as "the Marriage Supper of the Lamb"(v.9).³⁸

³⁸ David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance*, 473.

“The marriage union of Christ and the church is not a single act or thing. Every union of a believer with Christ in baptism is a marriage to Christ, and is representative of the whole relationship.”³⁹ So, the marriage supper of the lamb is not something that will happen at the end of time at the coming of the Lord. That is not where this passage fits in the Book of Revelation. It is found right after the destruction of Jerusalem; Israel, the wife of Jehovah, is dead. She was the object of God’s righteous judgment for her many sins, especially for murdering Christ and rejecting His call for forty years following His resurrection. It is here that the marriage supper of the lamb is mentioned. The Church takes the place of Old Testament Israel and becomes the new Israel of God, and God’s people continue to be married to Him.

“The marriage supper is a metaphor for the final repudiation of the harlot and the introduction of the bride. This is the covenant meal, now called a marriage supper, which seals the new relationship. It is accomplished when the Bridegroom overthrows the unfaithful wife and punishes her lovers, the kings of the land with whom she has committed adultery.”⁴⁰ Christ predicted this moment.

I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 8:11-12)

The marriage of the Lamb is the union of Christ with believers and is, therefore, necessarily a fact of spiritual life. The marriage of the Lamb is a process continually occurring as long as such unions of Christ, and his beloved continue to be consummated.

³⁹ Foy E. Wallace **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Jr., *The Book of Revelation*, 388.

⁴⁰ J. E. Leonard, *Come Out of Her My People*, 139.

Jesus discusses this wedding banquet and His relationship to Israel in some detail in Matthew.

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying:
“The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’ But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.” (Matthew 22:1-7)

The banquet takes place nevertheless. Only Israel is not there, having been destroyed by God. But the wedding goes on with anyone who would hear the call of the master with the result that *“the wedding hall was filled with guests”* (Matthew 22:10).

19:8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. The meaning of 19:8 is considerably impacted by one’s understanding of the words **righteous acts (19:8)**. Perhaps a better translation is found in the King James Version.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (Revelation 19:8, KJV)

Every "modern" version, including even the NKJV, reads this as *“the righteous acts or deeds of the saints.”* It sounds like a works salvation. As Moses Stuart says, “This plainly does not designate the good deeds and

virtuous actions, simply or principally, of the saints; for it is something given to them.”⁴¹ It is a grace, not of works.

...and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.... (Philippians 3:9)

And what are the results of deeds, acts, or works? Is it that the saints of God, the totality of the elect, appear in heaven before the Almighty clothed with their own righteous deeds! No! This suggests that the righteousness that covers the believer will be their deeds, which is a works righteousness. Indeed this is precisely what the Roman Catholic Church teaches. “Catholic scholars appeal to Revelation 19:8 to support the idea of a storehouse or collection of the good deeds of the saints. This Treasury of Merit is supposedly based on the idea that the white robes of the saints mean, “the righteous acts of the saints.”⁴² It does not. Instead, John is teaching the imputed righteousness of Christ, without the works or the merits of the saints.

19:9 Then he said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God.’”

Here the speaker changes the symbol. In the last verse, the Church was the Bride of Christ. In this verse, these are guests **invited (19:9)** to the **marriage supper (19:9)**. “The idea of a feast, as an image of the happiness of heaven, was a familiar one with the Jews....”⁴³ Christ gave a parable of a wedding and, although all were invited to the marriage, many were unwilling to come.

⁴¹ Moses Stuart, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 343.

⁴² Norman L. Geisler, and Ron Rhodes, *When Cultists Ask: A Popular Handbook on Cultic Misinterpretations*, 310.

⁴³ Moses Stuart, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 344.

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come." (Matthew 22:1-3)

Those who were unwilling to come were, of course, the Jews who had rejected Christ. Paul and Barnabas had a similar experience.

Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46)

As Paul said of their unwillingness, *you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life.*

The Millennium

What is the Millennium? It is a thousand-year period mentioned six times in the Book of Revelation: Revelation 20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, but also alluded to in the Old Testament using other terms. But this word is found nowhere else in scripture other than in Revelation 20.

It has proven itself to be a mystifying doctrine with little agreement among believers as to what it is, how it arrives, and what it looks like in practice.

To begin: There are three positions on the millennium common to the Christian Church as to when the millennium appears. *One*, Jesus will come before the millennium or the Pre-Millennial view; *two*, the Millennium is unfolding now during the Church Age or the Amillennial view; and *three*, Jesus will come after the Millennium or the Post-Millennial view.

In the context of the Book of Revelation, the millennium is presented to the reader:

- 1) After the destruction of Jerusalem, and Jesus' divorce of the harlot, Israel, which concludes at 18:24.
- 2) This event is followed by Jesus' marriage to a new bride, the Church, in 19:1-10.
- 3) In 19:11-21, we have a picture of Jesus' coming in judgment to judge the beast and false prophet after this war against Israel. All of this occurs by A.D. 70.
- 4) In chapter 20:1-3, we see an angel coming down from heaven who binds Satan in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. But we are told that after this millennium, he must be released for a little while. This is our introduction to the term millennium or thousand.
- 5) Next, in 20:4-6, we are presented with a judgment scene—but not the Great White Throne judgment mentioned later in 20:11-15. At this judgment scene, we see those who were “beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God.” These we are told, “*lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*” Of others, who were not beheaded, we read, “*But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*” V. 20:5. We are then told of these, “*Over such the second death [hell] has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*” V. 20:6.
- 6) In 20:7, we are told that “*when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison.*”
- 7) And in 20:8-9, Satan will “*deceive the nations*” worldwide and gather them to the great battle of Gog and Magog, and there they are defeated.
- 8) Lastly, in 20:10, we read, “*The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And*

they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” (Revelation 20:10, NKJV)

This is followed by the Great White Throne judgment.

One of the interesting points that strike the reader is this; most of what we have heard about the Millennium does not fit anywhere in this picture.

Gog and Magog

Another passage is often used to discuss a great battle at the end of time, similar to the Battle of Armageddon, and it is also found in Revelation. If anything, it is more mysterious than the Battle of Armageddon.

“Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.” (Revelation 20:7–11, NKJV)

The first thing we notice about this battle is that it occurs when the thousand years have expired, which makes it a post-millennial battle, not a pre-millennial battle. So, this event cannot reasonably be used to teach a premillennial doctrine.

We read of this battle in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 as well. In keeping with the extended time element in Revelation, Ezekiel says, “*After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come....*” [Ezekiel 38:8]. As the story develops, we learn that the armies of the world gather to destroy Israel. But at a critical time, God intervenes and destroys this enemy.

We go on to learn that for seven months, Israel will bury the dead of the enemy [39:14], and for seven years [39:9], they will make fires of the collected weapons. From these statements, we discover that the conclusion of war did not result in a rapture, for Israel is still present in the land seven years later.

Now, this has been a very literal retelling of the story of this war. It has not contemplated the many symbolic or cyclic possibilities for interpretation. They will need to be considered at a later time.

The Rapture

Although the word rapture is not found in the Bible, the concept is taught using other words. Two main proofs of the rapture, or of Jesus end-of-the-world coming, are the passages:

“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, NKJV)

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive

and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17, NKJV)

This passage in Thessalonians uses a word that is helpful in figuring out how this rapture takes place; it is the word *meet*. This word *meet*, ἀπάντησις, *apántēsis*, is used four times in the New Testament in three verses.

Our first usage is in I Thessalonians 4, and it is in the study of its use in the other three locations that we can get some idea on what it means here.

Our second usage is in the story of the ten virgins *meeting* the bridegroom.

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.” (Matthew 25:1, NKJV)
“And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’” (Matthew 25:6, NKJV)

You will notice that when they meet him, they turn around and follow him back to the place of the wedding. And that is the point, the meaning is meet and return, not just meet.

Our next usage is in Acts chapter 28, when Paul is being brought to Rome as a prisoner. The church in Rome hears that Paul is coming and goes out to *meet* him and return with him to Rome.

“And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.” (Acts 28:15, NKJV)

So again, we see that the word means not only to meet but, to return with as well. How does that impact our story in I Thessalonians?

“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 4:17, NKJV)

If the meaning is the same in all four passages, then at the rapture, we also will meet Jesus in the air and then return to this earth, which will presumably be our eternal habitation. Of course, Dispensationalism teaches us that the rapture takes place before the Tribulation from which we are transported to heaven for seven years. After these seven years of tribulation, we return to earth to enter the Millennium. But this delay appears to be foreign to the word we are discussing, *meet*. The return seems to be immediate. This, among many other reasons, would invalidate the Premillennial Dispensationalist view of a rapture, a seven-year tribulation, and then a Millennium.

But the Book of Revelation does not speak of a rapture; therefore, we must ask the question, just when does this occur?

Looking at the flow of material in Revelation, we note that the Great White Throne Judgment appears at 20:11-15, and after that, there is a new heaven and earth. So, presumably, it would have to be before the great judgment of God and after the great battle of God and Magog. This event mentioned in Revelation was a great war that resulted in the Devil cast into the lake of fire forever. Therefore, the rapture would, by necessity, have to occur between these two events: the great war of Satan in Revelation 20:7-10 and the Great White Throne Judgment, Revelation 20:11-15. But you will remember there was a minimum of seven years that followed that battle in which people continued to live in the land of Israel. So, how many years later is this rapture? We

simply do not know how much additional time passes before the world comes to an end.

In summary: We note that the last coming of Christ, the rapture, is embraced by all orthodox Christians and is not a doctrine championed only by Dispensationalists. So for this point, we are not in conflict with them, but in agreement, in essence, although with a question about timing.

The Dispensationalists' explanation of the rapture with a seven-year delay followed by his return for a Millennium has become the measure of orthodoxy in evangelical Christianity today. Failure to adhere to it will get you suspicious looks by those that have heard nothing but this one teaching all their lives.

If one believes in what is called a pre-tribulation pre-millennial rapture, then for Dispensationalists, you are orthodox. Still, if you adhere to a post-tribulation rapture, or no tribulation before the rapture, then you are clearly in error, perhaps something less than orthodox, in fact, probably heretical, and one that many Dispensationalists would not care to “fellowship” with.

Now what makes this so strange is that the term “pre-tribulation pre-millennial rapture” is not in the Bible and did not appear on the scene of Christian theology until 1830, having been invented by a layman and deacon in the Church of England by the name of John Nelson Darby. Darby went on to found the Brethren Movement in England. C. I. Scofield, in the early 20th century—a high school graduate without formal theological training, who gave himself a doctor’s degree—published a study Bible adhering strictly to Darby’s notes and thereby popularized his theology. Before these dates, nearly all of Christendom adhered to what is called a post-millennial rapture, with little or no mention of a tribulation anywhere in the mix.

Nevertheless, most Christians today embrace this Dispensational theology. However, the placement of the rapture before the, or a, Great Tribulation should not be viewed as an undisputed point of orthodoxy. It is disputed and was not the common understanding of the coming of Christ in the history of the Church.

Great White Throne Judgment

In chapter Revelation 20:1-6, we read of a Millennium, which is followed by the Battle of Gog and Magog with the Devil, at its conclusion, thrown into the lake of fire, Revelation 20:7-10. Presumably, some years after this, there is a rapture of all of God's people from this earth.

And now we come to 20:11: ***Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.***

The scene experiences a dramatic shift. We are no longer on earth; we are now in heaven. John sees a *great white throne (20:11)*. This is the only place in the Bible where this phrase is used.

Who is sitting upon this throne, the Father or the Son? In the gospel, John says of Christ, "*He gave Him authority to execute judgment*" (John 5:27). Matthew says, "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, *then He will sit on His glorious throne*" (Matthew 25:31). Paul says to Timothy, "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of *Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead*, and by His appearing and His kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:1). The answer is Jesus Christ.

The phrase *from whose presence earth and heaven fled away (20:11)* suggests that heaven and earth at this point no longer exist. "The fleeing away of heaven and earth is poetic portraiture of the effects of the divine presence.

Even the natural creation shrinks back with awe and seeks to hide itself....⁴⁴

20:12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

We are presented with a picture of *the dead, the great and the small (20:12)* who are now before the throne of God. No one is missing, no one is able to hide, all are there.

Punishment of the lost is not all of the same quality or quantity but is *according to their deeds (20:12)*. It is based on the nature of a person's behavior or life.

"...there is an implication here, that different degrees of punishment and of reward will be the consequence of final judgment."⁴⁵

And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more. (Luke 12:47-48)

Christ speaks of two resurrections, but both occur in one hour; at that time, "all" who are in the tombs come forth.

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

⁴⁴ Moses. Stuart **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 370.

⁴⁵ Moses **Error! Bookmark not defined.** Stuart, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 371.

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

In Matthew, Jesus talks of the tares and wheat. The slave wants to separate one from the other now, but the master forbids it and says that both are to be allowed to grow till the harvest when both are reaped at one time.

But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.' (Matthew 13:26-30)

Again, in Matthew, Jesus speaks of the end of the age when the good and bad fish are separated out *at one time*.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13:47-50)

In a discussion of the nations, Jesus says that the sheep and the goats will be separated at the same time, one on His right and the other on His left.

All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. (Matthew 25:32-33)

The books, containing the record of human deeds, were opened (20:12). "The representation is, that all that men have done is recorded and that it will be exhibited on the final trial and will constitute the basis of the last judgment."⁴⁶

Daniel says this about the opening of the books.

A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat, and the books were opened. (Daniel 7:10)

How sad that day will be and how moving are the words of the unnamed poet.

The moving finger writes, and having writ
Moves on; nor all thy piety or wit
Can lure it back to cancel half a line,
Or all thy tears wash out a word of it.⁴⁷

Fortunately, we read that *another book was opened, which is the book of life (20:12)*. Without this other book, and with only our works to be judged, all would be lost. However, there is a *book of life (20:12)*, the book in which God has listed the names of His redeemed from the foundation of the world.

⁴⁶ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament, Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1951), 439.

⁴⁷ Philip Carrington, *The Meaning of the Revelation*, 328.

...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. (Ephesians 1:4)

20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

So here we have before us the resurrection on the last day. The world has come to an end. Now the works of men will be judged, and an eternal destiny assigned to the saved and the lost.

These comments about *the sea (20:13)*, *death (20:13)*, and *Hades (20:13)* giving up their *dead (20:13)* is another indicator that both believers and the lost are resurrected at this time. "The Bible everywhere affirms that the righteous and the wicked will be resurrected at the same time...and the same is taught here."⁴⁸

20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

Finally, *death (20:14)* and *Hades (20:14)*, (that is, the grave) are cast into *the lake of fire (20:14)*, signaling the end of the mortal era.⁴⁹

The last enemy that will be abolished is death. (I Corinthians 15:26)

"...death and Hades are ultimately as powerless as the other forces of evil. Finally, there is no power but that of God. All else is completely impotent."⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Steve Gregg, *Revelation – Four Views*, 481.

⁴⁹ J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, 359.

⁵⁰ Leon Morris, *The Revelation of St. John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), 241f.

The first death is, of course, the death of our flesh. *The second death (20:14)* is the damnation of the lost in the lake of fire.

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power.... (Revelation 20:6)

20:15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Earlier we read,

“The books” refer to the record of all human deeds and all sin that must be assigned a punishment in the lake of fire. However, if one has his or her name written in *the book of life (20:15)*, then those sins are punished already in the person of Christ.

“In this short sentence, the doom is told of all who are out of Christ, for they too follow the devil and the two beasts into the lake of fire.... There is no room here for soul sleeping, for an intermediate state, for a second chance....”⁵¹ “The sufferings of those who undergo the second death cannot be alleviated by expiring, for there is no expiring. Pardon, moreover, is now too late.”⁵²

Earth's history, as we know it, has now come to an end. The eternal state now begins.

The Conclusion of the Matter

In conclusion, we note that Preterists agree in principle with all Evangelicals, including Dispensational Premillennialists, on the significant events of Biblical prophecy. But from time to time, they do disagree on the timing on when these things occur.

⁵¹ Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. VI, 465.

⁵² Moses Stuart, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 373.

