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“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #1: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Our Primary Focus

Our primary focus will be to identify the **antichrist** and show how Christ will **overcome** him. At this point, several **questions** emerge:

- **Who** is this end time antichrist?
- At **what stage** of history does he appear?
- What is he **like** and how does he **act**?

In the course of Christian history, **many candidates** have been proposed as the fulfillment of the **little horn** and **beast** prophecies of Daniel and Revelation:

- Benito **Mussolini** (Premier of Italy 1922-1943)
- Adolph **Hitler** (Fuhrer of Germany 1934-1945)
- Ayatollah **Khomeini** (Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and led the 1979 revolution that overthrew the Shah in 1979)
- Yasser **Arafat** (Chairman of the PLO and President of the Palestinian Authority)
- Henry **Kissinger** (Secretary of State during the presidency of Richard Nixon)
- Saddam **Hussein** (dictator of Iraq who was hung in the gallows)
- **Barack Obama** (president of the United States)
- A future **nasty individual** who will rebuild the **Jewish temple**, build an **image of himself**, impose a **tattoo** on the forehead and right hand of his followers, and **persecute the Jews** for **three and a half years**
- Some say it is **Donald Trump**

It is obvious that all of these proposed candidates were just **guesses**. However, we do **not need** to guess because the Bible tells:

- **When** this power would arise
- **Where** it would arise
- **What** it would be like

A Systematic, Disciplined, Careful, Contextual Approach

In this presentation, we shall use a **careful, disciplined, systematic** and **logical** approach. Our study will use no **guesswork**, no **unfounded assumptions** and no **conjecturing**. We will use a method that springs from the **Bible text itself**. I have called it the **historical flow** method. This method gives us the **starting point** of the great prophetic chain, its **ending point** and everything **in between**.

In my favorite book on the philosophy of **Education**, we find the following words:

*“The history which the great I AM has marked out in His word, uniting **link after link** in the **prophetic chain**, from eternity in the **past** to eternity in the **future**, tells us where we are **today** in the procession of the ages, and what may be expected in the **time to come**. All that prophecy **has foretold** as coming to pass, until the **present time**, has been traced on the **pages of history**, and we may be assured that all which is **yet to come** will be fulfilled **in its order**.” Education, p. 178)*

Prophecy’s Method

- Begins in the day when the prophet wrote
- Concludes when God sets up His everlasting kingdom
- The middle portion flows without any interruptions or parentheses
- You know exactly where you are in the flow of history and where things are leading

A Symbolic Portrayal

It is important to realize that in prophecy, we are dealing with **symbols** and we cannot take these symbols **literally**. In real life, there are no such things as lions with eagle’s wings, leopards with four heads and dragons with iron teeth and

ten horns. Daniel 7 the antichrist as a **little horn** and in Revelation 13 as the beast. It is obvious that the antichrist is neither a horn nor a beast, **literally speaking!**

In Bible prophecy, a symbol represents **something far greater** than the mere symbol. Symbols must be decoded to determine their meaning. Sometimes the **immediate context** provides the meaning of a symbol but other times we must go to **other parts** of the Bible to determine its meaning. So let's **begin our study** of the great prophetic chain in Daniel 7.

The Date of Daniel 7

The **first year** of King Belshazzar is **550 BC**. The kingdom of Babylon was still going to rule for 11 more years. This means that everything in Daniel 7 was future in Daniel's day. We shall find that Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 announce events, with mathematical precision, that were as far away as two thousand five hundred years in Daniel's day.

Winds and Sea

Daniel 7:1, 2: Winds represent **military wars** and **conflicts**

*"In the **first year** of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. ² Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the **four winds** of heaven were stirring up the **Great Sea**."*

Isaiah 17:12: The churning **waters** of the Great Sea represent multitudes of **nations and peoples**

*"Woe to the multitude of **many people** who make a noise like the **roar of the seas**, and to the **rushing of nations** that make a rushing like the **rushing of mighty waters!**"*

"Winds are a symbol of strife. The four winds of heaven striving upon the great sea represent the terrible scenes of conquest and revolution by which kingdoms have attained to power." GC, p. 440

Four Great Beasts

Daniel 7:3: Four Beasts

*“And **four great beasts** came up from the sea, each different from the other.”*

Daniel 7:17: The very **same chapter** provides the meaning of the four beasts:

*“Those great beasts, which are four, are **four kings** which arise out of the earth.”*

These beasts represent a succession of **kings** that rule over a **succession** of **four kingdoms**. In the book of Daniel, the words ‘kings’ and ‘kingdoms’ are used **interchangeably**.

- This can be seen clearly in **Daniel 2:38** where Daniel tells King Nebuchadnezzar that **he was** the head of gold but after him **another kingdom** would arise.
- It is also seen in **Daniel 7:23** where the fourth beast is **explicitly** referred to as a ‘*fourth kingdom*’ that shall arise in the earth.
- **Daniel 8:20:** *“The ram which you saw, having two horns—they are **the kings** of Media and Persia.”*

It should not surprise us that beasts represent nations, for even today, nations frequently have a **mascot**:

- The United States: **Eagle**
- Russia: **Bear**
- England: **Lion**
- China: **Dragon**
- Australia: Red **Kangaroo**
- Bangladesh: The **Bengal Tiger**
- Canada: The North American **Beaver**
- Colombia: The **Andean Condor**
- France: The **Gallic Rooster**

The Lion

One important point to notice: The **passive voice** of many of the verbs of Daniel 7 clearly points to **someone** who is directing **historical events from behind** the scenes. In the book of Daniel, the '**watchers**' or angels are **the agents** through which God directs the wheels of history.

Daniel 7:4: The LION

*"The first was like a **lion**, and had **eagle's wings**. I watched till its **wings were plucked off**; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and **a man's heart** was given to it."*

- The prophetic **chain begins** with Babylon, the kingdom in which **Daniel lived** and thus we have a **definite starting point** to the chain!
- When King Nebuchadnezzar **built the ancient city** of Babylon, he placed **lion sphinxes** at many of the **main entrances** to the city.
- In **Jeremiah**, Babylon is described as a lion:

Jeremiah 4:7: *"**The lion** has come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of nations is on his way. He has gone forth from his place to make your land desolate. Your cities will be laid waste, without inhabitant."*

- The **swiftness** of Babylon's conquest is compared to the **flight of an eagle**:

Ezekiel 17:2, 3, 12: *"Son of man, pose a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel, ³ and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD : "A **great eagle** with **large wings** and long pinions, full of **feathers** of various colors, came to Lebanon and took from the cedar the highest branch. . . ¹² Say now to the rebellious house: 'Do you not know what these things mean?' Tell them, 'Indeed the **king of Babylon went to Jerusalem** and took its king and princes, and led them with him to **Babylon**."*

- When Babylon ceased to be a conquering power, its **wings were plucked** and the **lion's heart** removed and replaced with the heart of a man (for example, **Richard the Lion Heart**, King of England, was so called because he was known as a great military **leader and warrior**).

The Bear

Daniel 7:5: The BEAR

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

- The bear in chapter 8 was **higher** on **one side** than the other but **no reason** is given.
- **Daniel 8:3, 4** describes a ram with two horns, **one horn was taller** than the other and the tallest one **came out last**.
- The two horns are identified as the kingdoms of the **Medes and Persians (Daniel 8:20)**.
- History proves that the **first three kings** of the Medo-Persian dynasty were Medes but all the **rest were Persians**. Thus, the **tallest kingdom** came out last!
- 1) Media conquered **Lydia** (ancient Turkey/Anatolia) in **547**, 2) **Babylon**, in **539** and 3) **Egypt**, surrendered in **525**.
- It bears noting that the book of **Daniel itself** identifies the second kingdom as Medo-Persia (**Daniel 5**).

The Leopard

Daniel 7:6: The LEOPARD

*"After this I looked, and there was another, like a **leopard**, which had on its back **four wings** of a bird. The beast also had **four heads**, and dominion was given to it.*

- The leopard represents the **third kingdom** in the prophetic chain.
- A leopard is **swift** but a **flying leopard** with four wings is even **swifter**.
- The **four heads** receive no explanation in Daniel 7.

What was left **unexplained** in Daniel 7 is **fully explained** in **Daniel 8:5-8** where Daniel sees a **he-goat** that **flies through the air** without touching the ground and finishes off the ram. The goat has a **notable horn** on its head and when the horn is **broken, four others arise** in its place:

- Daniel 8:21, 22 fully explains the vision of Daniel 8:5-8.

- The notable horn was the **first king. Alexander** the Great moved with **great velocity** over the earth and conquered the known world in only **9 years**. He died in a drunken stupor when he was only **31 years** of age.
- When Alexander the Great **died** he left no successor so his kingdom **was divided** into four kingdoms:
 - The **Antigonids** (Macedonia)
 - The **Ptolomies** (Egypt)
 - The **Seleucids** (Greece)
 - The **Attalids** (Pergamum)
- The book of **Daniel itself** identifies the he-goat as the kingdom of **Greece** (**Daniel 8:21**).

The Dragon Beast

Daniel 7:7: The **DRAGON** with **ten horns**

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

- The fourth beast represents a **fourth kingdom** that ruled after Greece, that was as strong as iron, and **more violent** than the previous beasts.
- As we shall see, the **ten horns** were **not on the head** of the fourth beast when it rose to power. The ten horns came up **after** the fourth beast had ruled for a **period of time**.
- We do not even have to go **outside the Bible** to know what the fourth beast represents. This **dragon beast with ten horns** attempted to kill the **male child** as soon as he was born and it was Herod, a ruler of the Roman Empire, who attempted to do this.

The Little Horn

Daniel 7:8: The little horn rose **after** and among the **ten horns** and uprooted three of them:

*“I was considering the horns, and there was **another horn**, a little one, coming up **among them**, before whom **three of the first horns** were plucked out by the*

*roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and **a mouth speaking pompous words.***"

I want to share **seven characteristics** that will help us **identify the little horn:**

#1: The little horn arose **after the ten** horns were in place so it must have risen **after the division of the Roman Empire.**

#2: Because the little horn arose **among** the ten horns, it must have risen in **western Europe.** More specifically, it rose from the head of the **fourth beast** so it must be in some sense **Roman.**

#3: When the little horn rose to power it uprooted **three** of the ten kingdoms into which western Europe was divided.

Daniel 7:25 gives us **four additional** characteristics:

Daniel 7:25:

*"He shall speak **[#4] pompous words** against the Most High, shall **[#5] persecute the saints** of the Most High, and shall intend to **[#6] change times and law.** Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a **[#7] time and times and half a time.***

#4: The horn spoke great words and **blasphemies** against the Most High.

#5: The horn **persecuted** the saints of the Most High.

#6: The horn even had the audacity to attempt to **change God's holy Law.**

#7: The little horn ruled for **time, times** and the dividing of time.

Three Stages of the Fourth Beast

Daniel 7:23, 24: The fourth beast has **three** consecutive stages and each of them **is ROMAN:**

*"Thus he said: The fourth beast shall be a **[1] fourth kingdom** on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces.²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings who **[2] shall arise from** this kingdom and **[3] another shall rise after them;** he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings."*

Three stages:

1. THE DRAGON
2. THE TEN HORNS
3. THE LITTLE HORN

Future Links in the Chain

Revelation 13 amplifies Daniel 7 and adds another link to the chain.

The beast is the **same** as the little horn and the **beast ruled 42 months**

At the end of the 42 months the beast received a **deadly wound**

The deadly wound will be **healed** and the whole world will **follow the beast**

Another beast rises from the **earth** to **restore the sword**:

- Exercises **all the authority** of the first beast
- Commands everyone to **worship** the first beast
- Acts **in the presence** or on behalf of the first beast
- Makes an **image** of the first beast
- Imposes by force the **mark** of the beast

This will lead to the **great tribulation** such as has never been seen in the history of the world and the tribulation will be **cut short** by the coming of Jesus to rescue His saints.

An Apostate System, not a Person

In our next lecture we will identify the **little horn**. We shall find that contrary to what most Protestants believe, the little horn is **not an individual** person but rather an **apostate religious system**.

There is one thing that I want to make clear **from the start**. There are scores of **sincere persons** within this apostate religious system who **love the Lord** and serve Him to the best of their knowledge and ability. But the system as an **organization** is **corrupt** and its condition is **irreversible**. The Bible describes this system with different names:

- The king of the **north** (Daniel 11)
- The **harlot** (Revelation 17)
- The **man of sin** (2 Thessalonians 2)

- The **little horn** (Daniel 7, 8)
- The **abomination** of desolation (Matthew 24)
- The **beast** (Revelation 13:1-10)
- The **antichrist** (1 John 2)

You might wonder how it is possible to **distinguish** individuals from the system when the individuals are within the system.

Perhaps we find the best answer to this question in the history of the **apostate Jewish Church** when Christ was on earth. The leadership of the **corporate church** composed of **Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees** was incorrigibly corrupt. In fact, the governing **Sanhedrin** on several occasions gathered in council to pronounce the death sentence against Jesus.

Jesus, in a **scathing but loving** rebuke of these leaders, pronounced **woes** upon them (see Matthew 23) calling them:

- Blind **guides**
- Whited **sepulchers**
- **Hypocrites**
- **Murderers**
- Generation of **vipers**
- **Serpents**

Then, Jesus asked them how they would be able to escape the **condemnation of hell** and told them that the kingdom would be **taken from them** and given to the Gentiles (Matthew 23:43).

But there were **faithful leaders** and **members** within this apostate church:

- The **apostles**
- **Nicodemus** (a member of the ruling body)
- **Joseph of Arimatea** (who provided Jesus a tomb)
- The wise **Gamaliel** (who spared Peter and John the sentence of death)
- **Saul of Tarsus** (the persecutor of the church)
- The **3,000** that were baptized on the Day of Pentecost

Acts 6:7 tells us that shortly after the day of Pentecost, large numbers of **priests** and **members** of the apostate church became followers of Jesus and joined His church:

*“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the **disciples** multiplied **greatly** in Jerusalem, and a **great many** of the **priests** were obedient to the faith.”*

So in the following lecture I will be speaking about **a system**, not all of the **individuals** who are within the system. All that I ask is that you carefully **weigh** the evidence and then decide for yourself if what we have studied is **true!**

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Lecture #2: Who Changed God’s Times?

Who is the little horn?

The ‘historical flow method’ helps us see how God announced the uninterrupted flow of history from the times of Daniel until the setting up of His everlasting kingdom.

- Lion = Babylon (605-539 B. C.)
- Bear = Medo-Persia (539-331 B. C.)
- Leopard = Greece (331-168 B. C.)
- Dragon = Rome (168-476 A. D.)
- 10 Horns = Divisions of Rome (476 A. D.)
- Little Horn = Roman Catholic Papacy (538-1798 A. D.)

Identifying Characteristics

#1: The little horn arose **after the ten** horns were in place so it must have risen after the division of the Roman Empire.

#2: Because the little horn arose **among** the ten horns, it must have risen in western Europe. More specifically, it rose from the head of the **fourth beast** so it must be in some sense **Roman**.

#3: When the little horn rose to power it uprooted **three** of the ten kingdoms into which western Europe was divided.

#4: The horn spoke great words and **blasphemies** against the Most High.

#5: The horn **persecuted** the saints of the Most High.

#6: The horn even had the audacity to attempt to **change God's holy Law**.

#7: The little horn ruled for **time, times** and the dividing of **time**.

We will **focus** on the **change of the law** and of the times.

The Change in the Law

Daniel 7:25:

*“He shall speak [#4] **pompous words** against the Most High, shall [#5] **persecute the saints** of the Most High, and shall intend to [#6] **change times and law**. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a [#7] **time and times and half a time**.”*

Refer to change in the Law briefly with quotations from Roman Catholics. Some Adventist scholars have revised the text to say ‘he shall change the times **in** the law’ but the text clearly says ‘times **and** law’. The change in the times and the change in the law are two distinct things. The papacy attempted to change God’s law in two ways:

- The removal of the **second commandment** from catechisms
- The change of **Sabbath to Sunday** as the day of rest

What does changing the Times Mean?

Daniel 2:21: God is in **control**, He does **three things**:

*“And He changes the **times and the seasons**; He **removes kings and raises up kings**; He **gives wisdom** to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.”*

- God **changes** the times and the seasons
- God **places** king and removes kings
- God gives **wisdom** to those who are of understanding

Illustrations of the Three Things

Daniel 2 and 3 illustrates **all three** of these qualities of God:

- **Daniel 2:27, 30:** God gave Daniel **wisdom** to tell and explain the dream

- **Daniel 2:37-38**: God placed Nebuchadnezzar on the **throne**
- **Daniel 3:1, 28**: The king **attempted to change** God's prophetic scenario but God changed the king's prophetic scenario

An Idiomatic Expression

Our text tells us that God changes **both** the times and the seasons. Are we to understand that changing the times and changing the seasons are two different things or is the coupling of these two words an idiomatic expression meaning that God is in control of future prophetic events as a whole?

Our present study will reveal that the expression 'changes the times and the seasons' is an **idiomatic expression** that means that God has **absolute sovereignty and control** over the flow of future prophetic events. We will also see that these two Aramaic words in Daniel 2:21, *iddan* ['times'] and *zeman* ['seasons'], are used **synonymously** elsewhere in the book of Daniel.

Similarities and Differences

Let's turn now again to Daniel 7:25 where we find a description of the little horn that persecuted the saints of the Most High and spoke great words against Him. In the middle portion of the verse, we find that the horn would intend to change the **times** [*zeman*].

There appears to be a **close link** between Daniel 2:21 and 7:25 as indicated by the common use of the words '**change**' and '**times**'. However, there is also one significant difference between the two texts. **Both describe** a change in the times but while the first states that God **actually** changes the times and the seasons the second explains the little horn could only **intend** to change them. When the little horn claims to have the power to change the times, it actually claims a power and prerogative that belongs to God alone.

The Word 'Times'

The **Hebrew** Old Testament, the **Aramaic** portions of Daniel and the **Greek** New Testament use the word "times" to describe **fixed times for events to occur**. The word frequently refers to the **precise timing** for events on **God's calendar to occur**.

- In **Aramaic** we have the word *zeman*
- In **Hebrew** the word *iddan*
- In Greek we have the words ***chronos*** and ***kairós***

Synonymous Words

A comparison of **Daniel 2:8, 9** with **Daniel 2:16** reveals, as we have noted before, that the words *iddan* and *zeman* are sometimes **virtually synonymous**.

A Time Period

The word *iddan* can refer to a **time period**:

- In **Daniel 2:8** Nebuchadnezzar accused the wise men of trying to **buy time** or **stalling** [*iddan*]
- Similarly, in **Daniel 2:9** the king accused the wise men of hoping that with the passing of **time** [*iddan*] the king would become less demanding.

The word *zeman* can also mean a **time period**:

- In **Daniel 2:16** we find the prophet asking the king for an additional **period of time** [*zeman*] to tell him his dream.
- Significantly, the word *zeman* is used in this verse for a **period of time** while in Daniel 2:8, 9 a **period of time** was described with the word *iddan*.

Although Daniel uses two different Aramaic words, it cannot be doubted that the word ‘time’ in all these verses means basically the same thing—**a period of time**.

A Point of Time

Daniel 3, once again uses the words synonymously to denote a **specific point of time**:

Daniel 3:5 tells us that the king commanded the multitude in the Valley of Dura that **at the time** [*iddan*] they heard the sound of the musical instruments they should bow down and worship the image.

Daniel 3:7 tells us that when **that time** [*zeman*] arrived all except three obeyed.

How can one miss the fact that two different Aramaic words describe the **identical point of time**? Clearly, Daniel 3:5 and 3:7 use the words synonymously.

Let's notice other places where the words appear:

Esther 9:29-31: The post-exilic feast of Purim took place at a fixed time:

*"Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim. ³⁰ And Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth, ³¹ to confirm **these days of Purim** at their **appointed time**, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had prescribed for them. . ."*

Daniel 4:32:

*"And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and **seven times [iddan]** shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses." (repeated in verses 16, 23, 25, 32)*

In Daniel 4 Nebuchadnezzar was told by the heavenly Watcher that a **span** of seven **times [iddan]** would pass over him (4:16, 23, 25, 32) before he regained his sanity. Notably, God fulfilled this prophetic prediction **at the precise time** He deposed the king from his throne and then restored him to it **precisely seven years later**.

Daniel 4:36 explains that at the **very point of time [zeman]** when the seven years expired Nebuchadnezzar gave glory to God and his reason returned to him. While **Nebuchadnezzar was boasting** about the greatness and **eternity of his kingdom** and was planning for years of **future prosperity**, God exhibited his sovereignty and **changed** the king's plans. The king **could not change God's plans** but God could certainly **change the king's plans!**

Daniel 7:12, 22

We find a very interesting use of the words *zeman* and *iddan* in **Daniel 7:12**:

*"As for the rest of the beasts, they **had [passive voice]** their dominion taken away, yet their lives **were [passive voice]** prolonged for a season **[zeman]** and a time **[iddan]**."*

The use of the passive voice in this verse indicates that **God Himself** would **take away** the dominion from these kingdoms and that **He would prolong** their lives for a season and a time. God revealed this in advance because He wanted to display His **foreknowledge and sovereignty** over the flow of future prophetic events. Once again, the words 'season' and 'time' are linked together and are used to denote 'a period of time.'

Daniel 7:22 makes reference to the 'time' [*zeman*] when the saints possessed the kingdom. The emphasis here seems to fall upon the **point of time** at which God will give the saints the kingdom.

In the light of our word analysis, what is the meaning of the words 'times' and 'seasons' when they appear in prophetic contexts? They refer to **prophetic periods** and/or points of time that God has **set apart beforehand** for certain events to occur. In announcing these events **in advance**, God reveals His sovereign ability both to **preannounce** and to **mold** the future flow of prophetic events. An examination of the context of Daniel 2:21 will confirm this conclusion.

An Illustration from Daniel 2 and 3

Let us go back in our minds once again to Daniel 2. We all remember the story. God gave the king a dream and when he woke up, he could not remember it. Therefore, he did what any king of antiquity would have done: He called the wise men and ordered them to tell him the dream and its interpretation and of course, they were unable. Finally, through Daniel, God not only reminded the king of his dream but also provided the correct interpretation.

However, before Daniel shared the meaning of the dream with the king, he informed him about **who directs and controls** the flow of human history:

Daniel 2:37-38

*"You, O king, are a king of kings for the **God** of heaven **has given you** a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven. **He has given** them into your hand, and [He] **has made you** ruler over them all."*

God then proceeded to tell Nebuchadnezzar **how** the future history of the world would unfold. The Medes and Persians would conquer Babylon, Greece would

conquer the Medes and Persians and then Rome would overcome the Greeks. Rome would then fragment into ten kingdoms followed by the rise of Antichrist. Finally, God would set up His everlasting and indestructible kingdom. So to speak, God was informing Nebuchadnezzar:

*"I **am the sovereign** over human history. I enthrone rulers and I depose them. I am able to predict precisely how the flow of historical events will unfold because I know the end from the beginning. World history will unfold precisely **when and how** I have announced."*

This is what Daniel meant when he said that God "*changes the times and the seasons, removes kings and sets up kings.*" God **reveals** and **guides** the calendar of prophetic events to their preannounced fulfillment!

As we read Daniel 3 we discover that **Nebuchadnezzar was unhappy** with God's prophetic scenario so he built an image **just like the one** he had seen in his dream only it was made **entirely of gold**. Nebuchadnezzar's rebellious act involved far more than false worship and idolatry. The preceding context of Daniel 2 indicates that the core **issue in the Valley of Dura** was this: Who **dictates and determines** how prophetic history will unfold? Expressed another way, who is in **control of human history**? Would history unfold as God had already announced in Daniel 2 or would it develop in harmony with the king's own scenario? By his rebellious act, **the king was saying**:

"Daniel's God has announced that history will be composed of several kingdoms but I say that my kingdom will last forever and woe to whomever dares question my perspective!"

Ellen White's statement regarding this rebellious act is enlightening:

*"Instead of reproducing the image as he had seen it, he would **excel the original**. His image should not deteriorate in value from the head to the feet, but should be entirely of gold--symbolic throughout of Babylon as an **eternal, indestructible, all-powerful** kingdom, which should break in pieces all other kingdoms and **stand forever**." PP, p. 504*

In this way, Nebuchadnezzar announced that it was his intention to preempt the prophetic word of God and thus **change** the times and seasons that God had already preannounced. That is to say, **Nebuchadnezzar** intended to **change God's calendar** of prophetic events and **replace it** with his own!!

However, the story does not end here. Three young men refused to accept the king's **changed** scenario of future prophetic events. Yes, they did refuse to disobey God and practice false worship but they also **refused to recognize the supposed eternity** and indestructibility of Babylon. We all know how the story ended. According to **Daniel 3:28** God delivered the three young men from the fiery furnace and thus **changed** or overturned the king's plans:

*"Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent his Angel, and delivered his servants who trusted in Him, and have **frustrated** [**'changed'** in the KJV] the king's word. . ."*

In the end, not only was Nebuchadnezzar unable to change God's prophetic calendar, but God personally intervened and interrupted and **changed the king's plans!** In this way, God showed His **absolute sovereignty** over present events and also over the flow of future prophetic events.

Daniel 2:21 contains **three basic ideas**:

- A. God **changes** the times and the seasons
- B. God **enthrones** and dethrones kings
- C. God gives **wisdom** and understanding to the wise

Daniel 2 and 3 then develop these ideas in **reverse or chiastic order** in the rest of chapter 2 and in chapter 3:

- C. God **gave Daniel wisdom** and understanding to tell the king the dream and its meaning (2:22, 23)
- B. God **enthroned Nebuchadnezzar** (Daniel 2:37, 38)
- A. God's calendar of **prophetic events** will be fulfilled as He has previously announced them (Daniel 2:38-44) and not as the king attempted to change them (Daniel 3)

New Testament Words

There are two words for 'time' in the New Testament that concern us in this study—**kairós** and **chronos**. Though these two words appear with many different nuances, our concern here is with how the Bible uses them in texts that deal specifically with **prophetic events**.

Galatians 4:4:

*“When the fullness of the **time [chronos]** had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.”*

Mark 1:15:

At the very beginning of His ministry, Jesus said:

*“The **time [kairós]** is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel.”*

The time Jesus spoke of here was the **conclusion of the 69th week** of Daniel’s 70-week prophecy. John baptized Jesus at the **precise moment** when the 69th week concluded. Thus, the word ‘time’ here refers to an event that God had **previously incorporated** (in the prophecy of the seventy weeks) into His prophetic calendar that occurred at the **precise time** that He had stipulated. Concerning the meaning of the word “time” as it appears in this verse Ellen White remarks:

“The ‘time’ which He declared to be fulfilled was the period made known by the angel Gabriel to Daniel: ‘Seventy weeks,’ said the angel, ‘are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.’ Dan. 9:24.” DA, p. 232

Acts 1:7, 8

In Acts 1:6, we find **a question** that the disciples asked Jesus immediately before His ascension:

*“Lord, will You at this **time [kairós]**, restore the kingdom to Israel?”*

The disciples were asking a question about **the timing** of a prophetic event—the **restoration** of the kingdom to Israel. In the Old Testament God had promised that someday He would restore the kingdom to Israel and now the disciples **wanted to know** if that moment in God’s prophetic calendar had arrived:

*“And He said to them, “It is not for you to know **times [chronos] or seasons [kairós]** which the Father has put **in His own authority**.⁸ But you shall receive*

power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Notice the answer that Jesus gave:

The similarity between this verse and **Daniel 2:21** is striking.

- The words *chronos* and *kairós* are used much like *iddan* and *zeman* were in Daniel 2:21.
- The times and seasons are **under God's authority** and control and that they will be fulfilled in harmony with **His** prophetic calendar.

In effect, Jesus was saying to his disciples

*"Prophetic events [**times and seasons**] are under the **control and authority** of my Father. **He has determined** if and when the kingdom will be restored to Israel."*

1 Thessalonians 5:1, 2

In I Thessalonians 5:1 the Apostle Paul also used the expression 'times and seasons':

*"But concerning the **times [chronos]** and the **seasons [kairós]**, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you."*

In the **succeeding context** (verses 2-6) Paul goes on to speak about **future events**, particularly the close of probation and the second coming of Jesus. Once again, we see that the expression 'times and seasons' is descriptive of **God's calendar** of future prophetic events.

Arndt and Gingrich's **Greek Lexicon** explains that the word *kairós* can mean, "*definite, fixed time, determined or allotted time.*" (William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 394, 395)

The same Lexicon explains that *kairós* is "**one of the chief eschatological terms.**" (p. 395). Quite frequently, in the New Testament *kairós* and *chronos* **depict future events** in God's prophetic calendar.

Luke 21:24

*“And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until **the times of the Gentiles** are fulfilled.” (the times of the Gentiles are 1260 years, a specific time prophecy)*

Luke 21:24

In this text Jesus spoke about a **prophetic time period** that had been **allotted to the Gentiles**. He said that Jerusalem would be **trodden under foot** “*until **the times [kairós] of the Gentiles** are fulfilled.*”

The use of the word ‘times’ here is significant because **Revelation 11:2** describes the same time period as **42 months**. **Revelation 12:6** describes this period as “*one thousand two hundred and sixty days*” and **verse 14** describes it as “*time, times and half a time,*” the same expression that is used in **Daniel 7:25**.

2 Thessalonians 2:6:

Here the apostle Paul explained that the man of sin would rise “*in his **time [kairós]**.” The time spoken of here is identical to the one referred to in **Daniel 7:25**. God allocated **three and a half times** for the work of the man of sin and He announced it to the apostle Paul ahead of time.*

Revelation 12:14

This text, (which is clearly parallel to Daniel 7:25) explains that the woman would flee to the wilderness for “*a **time [kairós]**, and **times [kairoi]** and half a **time [kairós]**.” We see once more that God announces events on His prophetic calendar with the word “times.”*

I Timothy 6:15-16

*“... that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, ¹⁵ which He will manifest **in His own time**, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.”*

Revelation 11:18

This text refers to “*the **time [kairós]** of the dead, that they should be judged.*”

The point is that God **appointed a specific time** in His prophetic calendar in which He would begin the judgment of the dead. Once again, the word “time” in this text refers to a future event that God announced before it took place.

The conclusion is that the **little horn**, in some sense, would attempt to **change God’s scenario** of end time events.

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #3: Protestantism’s Prophetic Principles

Method Linked With Message

When we think of the Protestant Reformation, expressions such as *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone), *sola fide* (faith alone) and *sola gratia* (grace alone) come to mind. However, these “solas” did not appear in a vacuum. Protestants formulated them in reaction to the Roman Catholic system whom the reformers believed had become the predicted Antichrist of Bible prophecy.

You see, the Protestant reformers knew that in the prophetic flow of time, the lion (Babylon), the bear (the Medes and Persians), the leopard (Greece), and the dragon (Rome) had already ruled. They also knew about the division of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms when the barbarians overwhelmed the Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries. They knew all too well that according to Bible prophecy the predicted Antichrist would arise among these ten kingdoms of Western Europe. They saw clearly and distinctly that they were living in the prophetic time-period of the little horn.

The reformers clearly perceived that the chronology and activities of the little horn fit the papacy like a hand in a glove. The historicist hermeneutical method made it quite simple—all they had to do was follow the sequence of powers delineated in Daniel 7.

Thus, a correct understanding of Bible prophecy gave them the unmistakable mandate, at the risk of their own lives, to unmask a system that had usurped the prerogatives of Christ and adulterated the truth of God!

Let us examine the **writings** of several of these **reformers** in order to ascertain their understanding of the Antichrist. I have taken much of this material from volume two of Leroy Edwin Froom's monumental four-volume work, ***The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers***. Froom spent **decades** preparing this work where he traced the historical interpretation of Bible prophecy from **apostolic times** until the **middle of the twentieth century**. Froom **traveled extensively** throughout Europe, examining **original sources** and carefully **documenting** his research. Even today, scholars frequently quote from Froom's work which is considered **the standard** in its field.

Basic tenets of Protestant Prophetic Interpretation

- The **historical method** of interpreting prophecy
- The Antichrist is **not a specific individual** but rather **a system** composed of a **succession of popes** who taken together, constitute an apostate religious system
- The word "**antichrist**" does not denote a **blasphemous individual** who openly denies and defies God but rather one who **opposes Christ by posing as the vicar** of Christ
- The **fourth beast** of Daniel 7 is the Roman Empire
- The **restrainer** of 2 Thessalonians 2 was the Roman Empire
- The "**temple**" in which the Antichrist sits is not the literal Jerusalem temple but rather in a spiritual temple, an **apostate Christian church**
- The **harlot**, the **antichrist**, the **abomination of desolation** and the **man of sin** represent the papacy
- **Israel** is God's people
- The **time periods** in symbolic prophecy are to be understood figuratively, not literally

The Protestant Reformers

John Wycliffe (1324-1384)

In chapter 2 of his book *De Papa*, Wycliffe wrote "*the pope is antichrist here in earth.*" (Froom, The **PFE**, volume 2, p. 52)

In Wycliffe's day **two rival popes** were vying for the throne, and according to Wycliffe, they were *"two halves of Antichrist, making up the perfect Man of Sin between them."* (From, PFE, volume 2, p. 49)

Writing about the papacy, Wycliffe referred to **Daniel 7:25**:

*"Why is it necessary in unbelief to **look for another Antichrist**? In the seventh chapter of Daniel, Antichrist is forcefully described by a horn arising in the time of the fourth kingdom. ... Therefore the ten horns are the whole of our temporal rulers, and the **horn has arisen from the ten horns**, having eyes and a mouth speaking great things against the Lofty One, and wearing out the saints of the most high, and thinking that he is able to change times and laws."* (From, PFE, volume 2, p. 49)

William Tyndale

Tyndale, who was educated at **Oxford and Cambridge**, was the **first to translate** the **New Testament** from Greek into English. The Roman Catholic Church **despised** him. He firmly believed that the papacy was the predicted Antichrist of prophecy. The papacy **burned at the stake** for **translating** the Bible into English. Here are a couple of his statements on the identity of the Antichrist:

*"The pope's forbidding matrimony, and to eat of meats created of God for man's use, which is devilish doctrine by Paul's prophecy . . . are tokens good enough that he is the **right antichrist**, and his doctrine sprung of the devil."* (From, PFE, volume 2, p. 357)

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Famous for nailing his **95 Theses** on the **Cathedral door** in Wittenberg on **October 31, 1517** and founder of the **Lutheran Church**:

*"I am practically cornered, and can hardly doubt any more, that the **Pope is really the Antichrist**, whom the world expects according to a general belief, because everything so **exactly corresponds** to the way of his life, action, words, and commandments."* From, PFE, volume 2, p. 255.

In **1540**, Luther wrote:

*“Oh, Christ, my Lord, look down upon us and bring upon us thy day of judgment, and destroy the brood of Satan in Rome. There sits the Man, of **whom the apostle Paul** wrote (2 Thess. 2:3, 4) that he will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God—that Man of Sin, that Son of Perdition. What else is papal power but sin and corruption?” (Froom, PFE, volume 2, p. 281)*

Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560)

Melanchthon was **Luther’s closest collaborator** who tempered and **calmed** Luther’s impetuous spirit. In his **Disputation on Marriage**, Melanchthon clearly identified the Antichrist as the Roman Catholic papacy:

*“18. Since it is certain that the pontiffs and the monks have **forbidden marriage**, it is most manifest, and true without any doubt, that the Roman Pontiff, with his **whole order and kingdom**, is **very Antichrist**. 19. Likewise in II Thess. II, Paul clearly says that the man of sin will **rule in the church** exalting himself above the worship of God, etc. 20. But it is certain that the popes **do rule in the church**, and under the title of the church in defending idols. 21. Therefore, I affirm that no heresy hath arisen, nor indeed shall be, with which these descriptions of Paul can **more truly and certainly accord** and agree than with this **pontifical kingdom** . . . 25. The prophet Daniel also attributes these two things to Antichrist; namely, that he shall place an idol in the temple, and worship [it] with gold and silver; and that he shall not honor women [**Daniel 11**]. 26. That both of them belong to the Roman Pontiff, who does not clearly see? The idols are clearly the impious masses, the worship of saints, and the statues which are exhibited in gold and silver that they may be worshiped.” (Froom, PFE, volume 2, p. 288)*

John Calvin (1509-1564)

The founder of the **Presbyterian Church**:

*“Some persons think us **too severe** and censorious when we call the **Roman pontiff Antichrist**. However, those who are of this opinion do not consider that they bring the same charge of presumption against **Paul himself**, after whom we speak and whose language we adopt. . . I shall briefly show that Paul’s words in 2 Thessalonians 2 are **not capable of any other interpretation** than that which*

applies them to the **Papacy**.” (Quoted in Ralph Woodrow, Great Prophecies of the Bible, p. 161).

Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)

The founder of the **Reformed Church**:

*“I know that in it [the papacy] works the might and **power of the Devil**, that is, of the **Antichrist**. Yet I cannot approve their [the Anabaptists] proclaiming the Word of God solely because of their hatred against the Pope. I desire much more that the love of God would be their motive in **resisting Antichrist**, and to lessen the burdens of their neighbors.”* (Froom, PFE, volume 2, p. 335)

John Knox (1505-1572)

Knox was the great leader of the Reformation in **Scotland**. He too believed that the papacy was the predicted Antichrist:

*“First, then, not only are all the impious traditions and ceremonies of the papists taken away, but also that tyranny which the pope himself has for so many ages exercised over the church, is altogether abolished; and it is provided that all persons shall in the future acknowledge him to be **the very antichrist**, and **son of perdition**, of whom Paul speaks. The mass is abolished, as being an accursed abomination and a diabolical profanation of the Lord’s Supper; and it is forbidden to all persons in the whole kingdom of Scotland either to celebrate or hear it.”* (John Knox, The Zurich Letters, p. 199)

John Wesley (1703-1791)

Wesley, who was the founder of **Methodism**, had this to say about the Papal system:

*“He is in an **emphatical sense**, the Man of Sin, as he increases all manner of sin above measure. And he is, too, properly styled the **Son of Perdition**, as he has caused the death of numberless multitudes, both of his opposers and followers. . .”* (Quoted in Albert Close, Antichrist and His Ten Kingdoms, p. 110)

Highly Educated

Bear in mind that those who pointed the finger at the Papacy were **highly educated**. Most could read **Hebrew, Greek and Latin**. Many were **clergy** who

had learned in Roman Catholic theological institutions. Many reached **their own conclusions** independently from others. Their works contained references to:

- Daniel 7 (the little horn)
- Revelation 13 (the beast)
- Revelation 17 (the harlot)
- 1 John 2 (the antichrist)
- 2 Thessalonians 2 (the Man of Sin)
- Matthew 24 (the Abomination of Desolation)
- Daniel 11 (the king of the north)

Their testimony that the papacy was the antichrist was **unanimous** and covered the entire **European continent**.

Confessions of Faith

In closing, let us examine several Confessions of Faith of the **great Protestant denominations** that clearly identify the Papacy as the Antichrist:

The **Presbyterian** confession of faith:

*“There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ, nor can the pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but **is that antichrist**, that man of sin and **son of perdition** that exalteth himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God.”* (*The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 25, section #6*)

A homily of the **Church of England**:

*“He ought therefore rather be called **Antichrist**, and the successor of the Scribes and Pharisees, than Christ’s vicar or St. Peter’s successor”* (“Homilies,” part 3, *Homily of Obedience, p. 114*)

The **Lutheran** confession of faith:

*“The **Pope is the very Antichrist**, who exalteth himself above, and opposeth himself against Christ, because he will not permit Christians to be saved without*

his power, which, nevertheless, is nothing, and is neither ordained nor commanded by God.” (Theodore G. Gappert, The Book of Concord, Smalcald Article # 4: “The Papacy”, p. 300)

The **Irish Articles of Religion** of **1615**:

“Since the Bishop of Rome has erected a monarchy in Christendom, claiming for himself dominion over all churches and pastors, **exalting himself** to be called God, **wishing to be adored**, boasting to have all power in heaven and upon earth, to dispose of all ecclesiastical matters, to decide upon articles of faith, to authorize and interpret at his pleasure the Scriptures, to make a traffic of souls, to disregard vows and oaths, to appoint new divine services; and in respect to the civil government, to trample underfoot the lawful authority of magistrates, by taking away, giving, and exchanging kingdoms, we believe and maintain that it is the **very Antichrist** and the **son of perdition**, predicted in the Word of God under the emblem of a **harlot clothed in scarlet**, seated upon the seven hills of the great city, which has dominion over the kings of the earth; and we expect that the Lord will consume it with the spirit of his mouth, and finally destroy it with the brightness of his coming, as he has promised and has already begun to do.” (Article 31 of the Gallican Confession of Faith adopted in 1603 under the leadership of Henry IV of France)

Froom’s Analysis

“In Germany, Switzerland, France, Denmark, Sweden, England, and Scotland there had been simultaneous and impressive declarations by voice and pen that the Papacy was the specified Antichrist of prophecy. The symbols of Daniel, Paul, and John were applied with **tremendous effect**. Hundreds of books and tracts impressed their contention upon the consciousness of Europe. Indeed, it gained so great a hold upon the minds of men that Rome, in alarm, saw that she must **successfully counteract** this identification of Antichrist with the Papacy, or **lose the battle**.” (Froom, PFF, volume 2, p. 484, 485)

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Lecture #4: Protestantism’s Prophetic Apostasy Part 1

The Papacy’s Counter Attack

Within a relatively short period, the Roman Catholic Church **lost thousands** of adherents and **entire countries** in Europe embraced the Protestant cause. **In alarm**, the Papacy came to realize that in order to triumph over the growing Protestant menace it must somehow **turn away** from itself the **incriminating finger** of Bible prophecy. However, **how** could it do this when the **Biblical evidence was so compelling?** The Papacy realized that in order to succeed, it must change the **Protestant method** of interpreting Bible prophecy. The Papacy realized that only by overturning the hermeneutical method of **Historicism** could it **deflect the accusing finger** from itself to another! And soon the Papacy laid out a **carefully devised plan** to do just that!

The Council of Trent and the Jesuit Order

In **1545**, the Roman Catholic Church **called a council** to meet at the **Italian city of Trent** to discuss how to put **a halt** to the growing Protestant movement. The Council lasted until **1563** (the **longest council** in the history of the Roman Catholic Church). The council did not reach any **major decisions** concerning Bible prophecy but the Papacy did categorically **reaffirm the dogmas** of the Church and pronounced an **anathema** against Protestants who taught otherwise.

Just **eleven years before** this Council (in **1534**), **St. Ignatius of Loyola** founded the **Society of Jesus** (known as the Jesuits). Besides providing the papacy with a **formidable secret police** force, the Jesuits also trained an **elite cadre** of theological scholars whose avowed purpose was to **overthrow Protestantism**. In fact, in St. **Peter's Basilica** in Rome, there is a statue of Loyola **trampling** heretics underfoot!

Regarding the **objectives** of the Jesuits, **Ellen White** wrote:

*"Throughout Christendom, **Protestantism was menaced** by formidable foes. The first triumphs of the Reformation past, Rome summoned new forces, hoping to accomplish **its destruction**. At this time, the order of the Jesuits was created, the most cruel, unscrupulous, and powerful of all the champions of popery. . . Vowed to perpetual poverty and humility, it was their studied aim to secure wealth and power, to be devoted to the **overthrow of Protestantism**, and the re-establishment of the papal supremacy. . . The Jesuits rapidly spread themselves over Europe, and wherever they went, there followed a **revival of popery**." GC, pp. 234, 235*

Loyola's Jesuit Order soon **spawned two able scholars** whose writings would do much to **reverse and arrest** the Protestant Reformation.

Luis de Alcazar

From **1569** onward, **Luis de Alcazar** worked with great **theological cunning** to **counteract** the Protestant historicist view of the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. His **900-page commentary** on the book of Revelation was published **posthumously in 1614** (*An Investigation of the Hidden Sense of the Apocalypse*)

In his volume, Alcazar affirmed that the Antichrist prophecies of Daniel and Revelation found their fulfillment **long before his time**, a system of prophetic interpretation that came known as **Preterism**. Alcazar believed that the little horn of Daniel 7 represented **Antiochus Epiphanes**, and that the lion's share of the book of Revelation found its fulfillment in the **first six centuries** of the Christian era. In his view, **Antiochus Epiphanes** fulfilled the little horn

prophecy of Daniel 7 in 164 BC and **Nero** fulfilled the **beast prophecy** of Revelation 13.

The consequences of Alcazar's hermeneutical method were devastating to the Protestant cause. If the fulfillment of the Antichrist prophecies of Daniel and Revelation took place **in the distant past**, then they **could not apply to the Papacy** in the 16th century. In this way, Alcazar's preterist method of prophetic interpretation **removed the incriminating finger** from the Papacy and pointed it instead at **Antiochus** and **Nero**! Thus, Alcazar attempted to **change the order of events in God's prophetic calendar**.

Roman Catholic Preterism

Preterism is **still the prophetic method** of choice in the Roman Catholic Church. Without exception, every commentary and Roman Catholic Bible version that I consulted for this study interprets the little horn of Daniel 7 as **Antiochus Epiphanes** and **Nero** or one of the early Roman emperors as the fulfillment of the sea beast of Revelation 13. The Roman Catholic **New American Bible** translation of the word '**times**' in Daniel 7:25 exemplifies the preterist method:

*"He shall speak against the Most High and oppress the holy ones of the Most High, thinking to change the **feast days** and the law."*

Concerning the 'times and laws' that the little horn attempted to change, the **Jerusalem Bible** explains:

"The Hellenizing policy of Antiochus Epiphanes included a ban on the observance of the sabbath and feast days." (The Jerusalem Bible on Daniel 7:25)

This Bible does not actually translate the word 'times'. Rather it interprets the 'times' as the Jewish 'feast days' because this view fits quite well with the work of **Antiochus Epiphanes** in the second century BC.

A **footnote** in the Roman Catholic **Jerusalem Bible** explains the meaning of the **four beasts** of Daniel 7. It interprets the lion as a symbol of **Babylon**, the bear

as the **Medes**; the leopard as the **Persians** and the dragon as **empire of Alexander** and his successors. It interprets the **ten horns** as the kings of the **Seleucid dynasty** and the **little horn** as:

“Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163) who came to power only after getting rid of several rival claimants.”¹

Moreover, concerning the **three and one half times**, the statement is made:

*“Three and a half years, the **approximate duration** of the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes; but this period of time, also expressed as forty-two months, stands for ‘a temporary time of persecution with a limit set by God’s providence.’”(The Jerusalem Bible on Daniel 7:25)*

The Roman Catholic **Jerome Bible Commentary** explains the meaning of the **three horns** that the little horn uprooted:

“This translation is based on the interpretation supposing that three of Antiochus IV Epiphanes’ predecessors died violent deaths so that he could succeed to the throne.” (The Jerome Bible Commentary, p. 456)

Concerning the **beast’s deadly wound** and its healing, the commentary states:

“This passage may be a reference to some definite event, such as the murder of Caesar and the healing of the empire under Augustus, the legend of Nero redivivus, or any of several imperial misadventures.” (The Jerome Bible Commentary, p. 484)

Thus, the Jerome Bible Commentary sees the little horn as **Antiochus Epiphanes** and the beast of Revelation 13 as **Nero** or one of the other early Roman emperors. If this view is correct then the Roman Catholic **Papacy has nothing to do** with the fulfillment of these prophecies!

Futurism: Francisco Ribera

Now we must now turn to the other Jesuit scholar: **Francisco Ribera** (1537-1591). Ribera was a **brilliant student** who specialized in **Latin, Greek and Hebrew**. He received a doctorate in theology from the **University of Salamanca** and joined the **Jesuit Order in 1570** when he was just **33 years old**.

The Early Church Fathers

Before we analyze Ribera's methods of prophetic interpretation, we must underline the fact that the **Early Church fathers** (not the New Testament writers!) had certain **futuristic elements** in their eschatology. They correctly believed almost unanimously that the "**restrainer**" of 2 Thessalonians 2 was the **Roman Empire** and they also believed that as soon as the Empire fell apart, a **literal evil individual** would arise to rule over the ruins of that Empire for three and a half **literal years**.

In all fairness to these Church fathers, we must remember **two things**:

First, they **did not expect** the history of the world to last another **two thousand years**. They believed that the coming of Christ was imminent.

Second, prophecy is usually not understood in its fullness until the times of fulfillment and the early Church fathers lived before the fragmentation of the Roman Empire. Jesus Himself explained to the disciples:

"And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe." (John 14:29).

We find an illustration of this in the Gospels when the disciples misunderstood and misapplied Bible prophecy before the resurrection. However, when these prophecies **were fulfilled**, their hearts burned within them as Jesus **opened unto them** the Scriptures (Luke 24:32). History proves, beyond any doubt that the meaning of the prophecies becomes **clearer as the time** of their fulfillment draws **near** (2 Peter 1:19)

The Early Church Fathers lived in the time of the **fourth beast** (Rome) when the Empire had **not yet crumbled** into ten kingdoms. The little horn had **not yet arisen** and therefore the best they could do **was guess** about the identity of the Antichrist.

However, the Protestant **Reformers did not need to guess**. They had the benefit of **looking back at over one thousand years** of church history and **hindsight is 20/20**. They saw in **plain sight** what the **Early Church fathers could not**. By the time of the Reformation, the **Roman Empire had crumbled** into ten kingdoms and an **evil spiritual empire** (Papal Rome) had risen among those kingdoms to **rule over them**.

Thus, the Reformers had the benefit of **historical hindsight** to help them identify the little horn, the Man of Sin, the Beast, the Harlot and the Abomination of Desolation.

Now let's get back to Ribera. This Jesuit scholar capitalized on the insufficient understanding of the Early Church fathers. In **1590** he published a **500-page** commentary on the Apocalypse where he expounded upon the prophecies of Revelation using the literalistic hermeneutic of Futurism.²

The main tenets of Ribera's eschatology are ascribed "*to a **literal** three and a half years' reign of an infidel Antichrist, who would bitterly oppose and blaspheme the saints just before the second advent. He taught that Antichrist would be a **single individual**, who would rebuild the **temple** in Jerusalem, abolish the Christian religion, deny Christ, be received by the Jews, pretend to be God, and conquer the world—and all in this brief space of three and one-half literal years!"³*

Ribera was a **brilliant researcher** and **writer** but **not** an outstanding lecturer. Furthermore, he died at the early **age of 54**. Ribera's views therefore needed a **shrewd and articulate champion** to carry his message beyond the realm of *academia* and **Cardinal Robert Bellarmine** (1542-1621) was ready to fulfill the role.

Robert Bellarmine Continues the Roman Catholic Onslaught

Robert Bellarmine was an **Italian Cardinal** and one of the ablest **Jesuit apologists**. He was a **powerful speaker** and lectured to **large audiences**. Bellarmine picked up where Ribera left off making it his life mission to spread the **literalistic hermeneutic** of *Futurism* with unabated passion.

*“He insisted that the prophecies concerning Antichrist in Daniel, Paul, and John, had **no application to the papal power**. This formed the third part of his Polemic Lectures Concerning the Disputed Points of Christian Belief against the Heretics of this Time, published between **1581 and 1593**. This was the most detailed apology of the Catholic faith ever produced, and became the **arsenal for all future defenders and expositors**. It called forth a host of **counter writings** from Protestant leaders, who considered him their greatest adversary.”⁴*

Though the basics of Bellarmine’s prophetic views were identical to Ribera’s, he **fine-tuned and amplified** many of the details and he **crusaded** in favor of the literalistic futurist view and against the Protestants with an **evangelistic zeal** worthy of admiration!

Bellarmino was an expert at turning the Reformers **against themselves**. He wondered, for example, why **Luther**, who claimed that his theology was based on Scripture alone, doubted that the book of Revelation **belonged in the Bible canon**. By way of contrast, Bellarmine came across as the **defender of the book of Revelation** as part of the New Testament canon.⁵

Bellarmino also took painstaking efforts to document the fact that the Reformers could **not even agree among themselves** as to when the prophetic time prophecies **began and ended**. For example, some Protestants dated the beginning of the dominion of the Antichrist from the **fall of Rome (400 AD)** while others dated it to **600 AD** when **Pope Gregory** the Great took the papal throne, and still others dated it to somewhere between **200 and 773, 1,000**, or even **1200 AD**. Bellarmine contended that if the Reformers could not agree on the time period of Antichrist’s dominion, neither could they be trusted to identify who he was.⁶

Bellarmino also made painstaking efforts to document that the **Early Church fathers** (not the New Testament writers!) believed that the Antichrist would be an **individual** who would rule for a **literal three and a half** year period. In this way, he tried to prove that his view was the **original belief** of the Early Church. He also carefully documented that each of the Reformers **interpreted the symbols** of Daniel and Revelation differently. In this way, he worked to undermine their views regarding the identity of the Antichrist.

In **chapter five** of his work, Bellarmine used a **key argument** that Protestant theologians would later repeat. Bellarmine attempted to **rewrite history** by stating that the Roman Empire was never divided according to the specifications of the prophecy of Daniel 7 and therefore Antichrist could not have come yet. According to Bellarmine's view, the **complete desolation** of the Roman Empire must come before the advent of the Antichrist, and this desolation had not yet taken place.⁷

Bellarmino argued that the Papacy could not be the predicted Antichrist of Daniel and Revelation for at least three reasons:

- The Antichrist prophecies call for an **individual** but the papacy is a system.
- The **time periods** must be literal but the papacy has existed for centuries.
- Antichrist will sit in the **Jerusalem Temple**, but the popes are ruling in Rome.

Said **Bellarmino**:

*"For all Catholics think thus that the Antichrist will be **one certain man**; but all heretics teach . . . that Antichrist is expressly declared to be not a single person, but an individual throne or absolute kingdom, and apostate seat of those who rule over the church."⁸*

*"Antichrist will not reign except for **three years and a half**. But the Pope has now reigned spiritually in the church more than 1500 years; nor can anyone be pointed out who has been accepted for Antichrist, who has ruled exactly three and one half years; therefore the Pope is not Antichrist. Then Antichrist has not yet come."*

*“The Pope is not antichrist since indeed **his throne is not in Jerusalem**, nor in the temple of Solomon; surely it is credible that from the year 600, no Roman pontiff has ever been in Jerusalem.”⁹*

Thus it can be seen that Bellarmine applied a **stringent literalistic hermeneutic** to his exposition of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. Later we shall see that this literalistic hermeneutic has been picked up by **conservative Protestants** and taken to **ridiculous extremes**.

For **two hundred years**, the Protestant movement stood like a rock against the onslaught of preterism and futurism. However, in the **early 1800’s** Protestants began to abandon the historical method and embraced preterism and futurism. We will tell the **sad story** in the next lecture.

Through **Preterism and Futurism**, the Roman Catholic Church has **hijacked Protestantism** and most of what **Protestants teach today** comes directly from the **Roman Catholic Counter Reformation**. History proves beyond any doubt that the Papacy has attempted to change God prophetic calendar.

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #5: Protestantism’s Prophetic Apostasy Part 2

The Shift in Britain

Protestantism began its **shift in England** in the **1830’s**. Keep in mind the date and place because we will come **back to it later!**

The apostasy from historicism began in **1826** with an **Anglican scholar, Samuel Maitland**. He **wrote** a series of **pamphlets** titled **Inquiries**. In these pamphlets, he affirmed that the **Papacy does not fulfill** the specifications of the Antichrist prophecies. He wrote that the antichrist would be a future **blasphemous individual** who will sit in the **literal Jerusalem temple** for a **literal three and one half years** and **persecute the literal Jews**. Soon after, many **other members** of the clergy of the Church of England began teaching the same views. Two notable ones are Robert Burgh and James Todd.

Robert Burgh

Robert Burgh (1800-1866)

“First that ‘THE MAN OF SIN’ is not popery appears from the necessity that this chapter be understood of an individual and not of a power or office vested in numbers or held by succession.” William Burgh, Lectures on the Second Advent, p. 63

Robert Burgh

*“I would say that **an individual** is intended—one person whose pretensions live and die with himself.” William Burgh, Lectures on the Second Advent, p. 63.*

Robert Burgh

*“Secondly, the nature of these same acts and pretensions prove that the ‘man of sin’ is **not the Pope**.” William Burgh, Lectures on the Second Advent, p. 63.*

James Todd

James Todd (1805-1869)

His **1838** lectures were published with the title: **Discourses on the Prophecies Relating to Antichrist in the Writings of Daniel and St. Paul**

James Todd’s views **departed** from the historical flow method:

- Antichrist is **an individual** who will appear **shortly** before the second coming
- Antichrist will sit in a **rebuilt Jerusalem temple**
- Antichrist will rule for **1260 literal days**
- The fourth kingdom of Daniel 7 was **not the Roman Empire**

He also stated that the **Roman** church is a **true Christian church**. It bears noting that when there is a shift in our prophetic method, there is also a desire to reunite with Rome. If Rome is not the Antichrist, then **why be separated from her?**

“Romanism [is] not properly an apostasy from the faith.” (Froom, PPF, volume 2, pp. 259-267)

“... the errors of Romanism do not amount to apostasy.” (Froom, PPF, volume 2, pp. 320-321)

“The Church of Rome [is] a true Christian Church.” (Froom, PPF, volume 2, pp. 322-323)

The Oxford Tractarian Movement

1833-1845: The Oxford Tractarian Movement (*90 Tracts of the Times*)

John Henry (Cardinal) Newman

- He was a **prolific writer**
- Wrote **29** of the *Tracts for the Times*
- The Protestant Reformation was a **tragic mistake**
- Openly advocated a **return to the Mother Church**
- He **forsook** the Church of England and was **received** into the Roman Catholic Communion in **1845**
- Given the Cardinal's hat in **1879**

Manuel Lacunza

We must go back a few years in time **Manuel de Lacunza y Diaz** (1731-1801)

- Born in **Chile**
- Member of the **Jesuit Order**
- He wrote the book, *La Venida del Mesías en Gloria y Majestad*
- A **copy** of this book **made it to England** in the early **1830's**

Lacunza's **basic views**:

- **Revelation 4-22** is future
- The **three and one half times** are literal
- Christ will literally reign **on earth for 1000 years**
- The 144,000 are **literal Jews**
- The **literal temple** will be rebuilt
- Literal **animal sacrifices** will be reestablished during the Millennium
- Literal Jews will be **regathered and converted** during the Millennium
- God will **literally fulfill His covenant** with the Literal Jews

The Plymouth Brethren

Now back to Great Britain. **The Plymouth Brethren**

- Established in **Great Britain** around **1825** (England, Ireland, Scotland)

- The Church of England had become **dry, formalistic and stagnant**
- Purpose was to **bring revival** to the Church of England
- Notable members: **Edward Irving** and **John Nelson Darby**
- **Edward Irving** enthusiastically **translated Lacunza's book** and in the process imbibed his futuristic ideas.

Edward Irving

As Irving read Lacunza's book he faced a big problem. If **Revelation 4-19** applies only to the **Jews**, then where is the **church** during this period? He asked why **Revelation 4-19** does not mention the church, **even once**. He found the **answer**, not in the Bible, but rather from an ecstatic utterance in a worship service his church.

An Ecstatic Utterance in Edward Irving's Church (S. P. Tregelles)

S. P. Tregelles, who once belonged to the Plymouth Brethren but forsook the movement explained:

"I am not aware that there was any definite teaching that there would be a secret rapture of the Church at a secret coming, until this was given forth as an utterance in Mr. Irving's church. From what was there received as being the Voice of the Spirit. But whether anyone ever asserted such a thing or not, it was from that supposed revelation that the modern doctrine and modern phraseology arose. . . . It came not from Holy Scripture, but from that which falsely pretended to be the Spirit of God." S. P. Tregelles, The Hope of Christ's Second Coming, first published in 1864, and now available at Ambassadors for Christ, Los Angeles, California.

Hal Lindsey, a **staunch futurist** similar experience when he was **writing his book** on the rapture of the church:

*"There were times. . . . that I experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in such power that I went into an **ecstatic state**" Hal Lindsey, Vanished Into Thin Air, p. 51.*

Lindsey, in his book, *Vanished into Thin Air* says that he earnestly prayed that God would **show him** if his views of prophecy **were wrong**. He states that **God showed him** that his views are correct. The abundance of prayer does not necessarily mean that a person is teaching the truth. **John Paul II** prayed for hours a day and yet he wrote **Dies Domini** where he attempts to prove that

Sunday is God's day of rest. He also **prayed to Mary** and believed that she **protected him** from an assassination attempt.

John Nelson Darby

Described by John Henry Cardinal **Newman's brother**:

“. . . a most remarkable man, who rapidly gained an immense sway over me. His bodily presence was indeed 'weak'. A fallen cheek, a blood-shot eye. . . . crippled limbs resting on crutches, a seldom shaven beard, a shabby suit of clothes, and a generally neglected person, drew at first pity, with wonder to see such a figure in a drawing room.” Quoted in McDougall, The Rapture of the Saints, p. 45.

Darby's view of history

“I do not admit history to be, in any sense, necessary to the understanding of prophecy.” Quoted in Oswald T. Allis, Prophecy and the Church), p. 26.

History is of **critical importance** for those who believe in the historical flow method. It provides a reference point for where the prophetic chain begins, where we are now and what is yet to come. However, for those who see a gap of over 1500 years between the fourth kingdom and the rise of the ten horns and the Antichrist, history is unnecessary.

Darby dichotomized Israel and the church. Revelation 12 does not dichotomize. Note what Hal Lindsey says:

*“I believe that God's purpose for Israel and His purpose for the Church are **so distinct** and **mutually exclusive** that they cannot both be in force on earth at the same time, especially during the seven year tribulation. If this is so, then the **Church must be removed** before God can deal specifically again with Israel as defined in Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27).” Hal Lindsey, Vanished Into Thin Air, p. 179,180*

Darby's travels

- Darby traveled to the United States at least **six times between 1859 and 1874**
- Darby **wrote several books** that he brought to the United States

But Darby's books had little influence in the New World. To continue the legacy of futurism, someone needed to **bring Darby's futurism** to **prominence** in the United States and the man of the hour was **C. I. Scofield**.

Scofield

Cyrus Ingerson Scofield

- Was converted in **1879**
- Became senior pastor of a large **Congregational church in Dallas**
- Discovered one of **Darby's books in the library**
- He became an **avid believer** in **Darby's futurism**
- In **1888** he published **Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth**
- He began a monthly publication, **The Believer**
- Taught at **Dwight Moody's** Bible school
- Organized nationwide **Bible conferences**

The Scofield Reference Bible (1909)

However, Scofield's **greatest contribution to futurism** was the Scofield Reference Bible. **Richard Kyle**, who was once a member of the Plymouth Brethren, wrote about the influence of this Bible:

"Scofield's enduring legacy rests in his Reference Bible--published in 1909, expanded in 1917, and revised in 1967. Sales of this Bible total about 10 million. The Scofield Bible immediately became the standard of dispensationalism, and for ninety years has been the major vehicle for distributing dispensational ideas." Richard Kyle, The Last Days Are Here Again, p. 106.

The Mount Holly Incident

The Phenomenal Growth of Futurism

Factors in the Phenomenal Growth of Futurism:

- The Scofield Reference **Bible**
- **Television** evangelists
- Fiction and non-fiction **books like the Left Behind series**
- **Thriller movies** such as Left Behind, The Omega Code, Armageddon, Tribulation Force
- **Moody** Bible Institute and **Dallas** Theological Seminary

The **12 volume *Left Behind*** Series sold over **80 million** copies. For **months**, they were on the **New York Times Best Seller** list.

Jerry Jenkins explained the reason for the series:

“The purpose was to encourage the church and to persuade unbelievers. We have found that people are reading the Bible again because of it and many have become believers.” Jerry Jenkins, The Costco Connection, “Arts and Entertainment,” March 2000, p. 49.

Tim La Haye commented about the **Left Behind** series:

“I’m hearing from church pastors all over the world [as of this writing, the series has been published in 14 languages] and they’re telling me that the books are the best evangelistic tools they’ve ever seen. It’s gratifying to see so much interest in this story because, of any of the major world religions, Christianity has the most exciting story to tell about the future.” The Costco Connection, “Arts and Entertainment,” March 2000, p. 49.

Futurist preachers and writers

Prominent **ministers**, **writers** and **television evangelists** have spread futurism like the **leaves of autumn**. Among them are John Walvoord, Hal Lindsey, **Tim La Haye**, Jerry Jenkins, **Grant Jeffrey**, **John Hagee**, Benny Hinn, the late **Jack Van Impe**, Jack LeLonde, the late **Dave Hunt**, **David Jeremiah**, Zola Levitt, Arno Froese, Pat Robertson, **Randall Price**, Dwight Pentecost, the late Jerry Falwell, *ad infinitum*.

The concepts of some of these expositors border on the absurd. Take **Grant Jeffries**, for example. In his book, **The Signature of God: The Handwriting of God**, Jeffries claims to have cracked the secret code of Bible prophecy by employing the Hebrew numbering system. He claims to have found, among other things, the following specific predictions in this cryptic code:

- The death of **Princess D**
- The plague of **AIDS**
- The assassination of **Franz Joseph I of Austria**
- The peace process of **Israel and the PLO**
- The assassination of **Yitzhak Rabin**

- The **Gulf War** (including the specific names of **America, George Bush, General Schwarzkopf, Scud-B Missile and Russia**)
- He also claims to have found predictions of the **Oklahoma City** bombing including the specific names of **Timothy McVeigh** and **Oklahoma**.
- Amazingly, he even claims to have found “**day 19, and 9th hour**” the precise day and hour of the explosion!

The Bible is not concerned with **trivialities such as this**, I find it amazing that Jeffrey finds all these **hidden, cryptic, secret, veiled, subliminal** messages but the same time has not been able to figure out something as **clear and simple** as, which is the right day of the week to go to church!

Dave Hunt

Let's examine **one** of these writers. He is **not a run of the mill** futurist. He was right on some counts. He wrote two scathing books: **A Woman Rides the Beast** and **Global Peace** where he identified the Roman Catholic system as the **Babylonian** harlot of Revelation 17.

*“Some suggest that the **Vatican** will move to Babylon in Iraq when it is rebuilt. But why should it? **The Vatican has been fulfilling John’s vision from its location in Rome for the past 15 centuries.** Moreover, we have shown the connection to ancient Babylon which the Vatican has maintained down through history in the **paganized Christianity** it has promulgated. As for ancient Babylon itself, it wasn’t even in existence during the past 2300 years ‘to reign over the kings of the earth.’ Babylon lay in ruins while pagan Rome and later **Catholic Rome, the new Babylon**, was indeed reigning over kings.” Dave Hunt, **A Woman Rides the Beast**, p. 84, bold is mine.*

If Babylon is a spiritual worldwide system then why isn't **Israel**, Babylon's enemy the same? So much for consistent literalism.

The papacy is the end time Babylon.

*“God is foretelling His final judgment upon a great evil which began at the Tower of Babel and which has only grown as politics, religion, and science have become more sophisticated--until finally the whole world is united in the pursuit of Satan’s ancient lie. This is the Babylon, revived and headquartered in Rome, that will be destroyed, never to be inhabited again.” Dave Hunt, **Global Peace**, pp. 72-73.*

Hunt believed in the **four world empires** much like SDA'S:

*"He [Daniel] explained that Nebuchadnezzar, represented by the **head of gold**, was the ruler of the first world empire. The three other parts of the image, made of silver, brass, and iron, foreshadowed three more world empires that would follow Babylon as its successors. In a later vision Daniel would be given the name of the second world empire, **Medo-Persia**, and details concerning the third kingdom which clearly identified it as the **Grecian** empire. The fourth world empire, of course, would be **Rome**. That much is **history**." Dave Hunt, *Global Peace*, p. 68.*

He then said that there is a 2,000 year gap between the fourth metal and the fourth beast and the ten horns. Within that gap is hidden the true Antichrist!!

*"Obviously, what the toes represent has not yet come to pass. God's kingdom was not established 'in the days of these [ten] kings. . . Furthermore, the Antichrist never appeared to take the reins of the ancient Roman Empire.'" Dave Hunt, *Global Peace*, p. 69.*

What the Antichrist will be like according to Dave Hunt:

*"While the Greek prefix 'anti' generally means 'against' or 'opposed to,' it can also mean 'in the place of' or 'a substitute for.' The Antichrist will embody both meanings. He will oppose Christ while pretending to be Christ. Instead of a frontal assault against Christianity, the evil one will pervert the church from within by posing as its founder. He will cunningly misrepresent Christ while pretending to be Christ. And right here is where the plot thickens. If the Antichrist will indeed pretend to be the Christ, then his followers must be 'Christians!'" Dave Hunt, *Global Peace*, p. 7-8*

Hunt says the Reformers were wrong.

*"The **Reformers** and their **creeds** were **unanimous** in identifying each pope as the Antichrist. Scripture, however, does not support that claim. The Antichrist is a unique individual **without predecessors or successors**." Dave Hunt, *Global Peace*, p. 47*

Hunt's bottom line is in **perfect harmony** with the **Roman Catholic view**:

- The church will be removed from earth **at the rapture**
- Antichrist is an **individual**
- He will sit in the **literal Jewish temple**
- He will reign for a **literal three and one half years**
- The fulfillment of **Revelation 4-19** will take place after the rapture of the church
- The **Millennium** will be with **literal Israel on earth**
- There is a **gap** between the **69th** and the **70th** week of Daniel 9
- There is a **gap of 2000 years** between the legs and the toes

Similarity of the Two Systems

Preterism and **Futurism** are actually **quite similar**:

- **Preterism**: Liberal Protestants
- **Futurism**: Conservative Protestants
- Both systems **hide the true identity** of the Antichrist
- Both **literalize** what should be spiritual
- Reading conservative **Protestant books** on prophecy today is **like** reading **Ribera, Bellarmine, Newman and Lacunza**

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #6: Are Protestants and Endangered Species?

Two things that will bring Protestants **back to Mother**:

Protestantism was never able to **sever** her doctrinal connection with Papal Rome. They share the same belief concerning the observance of **Sunday** as the day of rest, an eternally burning **hell**, and the **state of the dead**. Therefore, there is **still a doctrinal link** that connects Protestantism with papal Rome.

Ellen White explained **the glue** that will joint Catholics, Protestants and worldlings (the secular)

*“Through the **two great errors**, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of **sympathy with Rome**. The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to **clasp hands with the Roman power**; and under the influence of this **threefold union**, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience.” GC, p. 588*

John O'Brien, who for years taught theology at the Notre Dame University, described how a **common day of worship** connects Protestants **with the Mother** they ran away from at the Reformation:

“But since Saturday, not Sunday, is specified in the Bible, isn't it curious that non-Catholics who profess to take their religion directly from the Bible and not from

*the Church, observe Sunday instead of Saturday? Yes, of course, it is inconsistent; but this **change** was made about fifteen centuries before Protestantism was born, and by that time, the custom was universally observed. They have continued the custom, even though it rests upon the **authority of the Catholic Church** and not upon an explicit text in the Bible. That observance remains as a reminder of the **Mother Church** from which the non-Catholic sects broke away—like a boy running away from home but still carrying in his pocket a **picture of his mother** or a lock of her hair.” John O’Brien, *The Faith of Millions* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1974) p. 400, 401.*

Protestants have forgotten that for which her **ancestors** were **willing to die**, that is, the **proper method** of interpreting prophecy. Therefore she will come back to her mother.

Protestants have also **forsaken the proper method** of interpreting prophecy. Do you think they **would want to join** the papacy **if they believed** that it is

- The Man of Sin
- The abomination of desolation
- The harlot
- The little horn
- The king of the north
- The beast
- The antichrist

Protestants **no longer fear** the papacy because they do not believe that **she is dangerous** because they have **forgotten their roots**. They believe that the **papacy has changed**. However, the papacy does not change. You cannot change your **DNA**.

*“It is a part of her policy to **assume** the character which will best accomplish her purpose; but beneath the **variable appearance** of the chameleon she conceals the **invariable venom** of the serpent.” GC, p. 571*

Vatican II

Vatican II was the watershed moment where the icy relationship between Protestants and Catholics began to thaw. At Vatican Council II Popes John XXIII

and Paul VI referred to the Catholic Church as the **Mother** and the Protestant churches as her **alienated children**:

Words of **John XXIII** at the opening of **Vatican Council II** (1962-1965):

*“. . . She [the Roman Catholic Church] to be an affectionate, kind and patient **mother**, she is moved by compassion and goodness towards **her alienated children**.” (Ernesto Balducci, John: The Transitional Pope, transl., Dorothy White [New York: Hill Book Company, 1964], p. 269.*

Words of **Pope Paul VI** during the council:

*“Because of their position, separated brethren are the object of deep and tender affection on the part of the **Mother Church**. . . It is a love that feels grief and sadness, the love of a heart wounded by estrangement, because the estrangement prevents our brethren from enjoying so many privileges and rights, and makes them lose so much grace. But perhaps for this very reason its love is all the deeper and more burning. . .” Cardinal Augustin Bea, The Unity of Christians, ed., Bernard Leeming [New York: Herder and Herder, 1963], p. 140*

Chuck Colson

It is an undeniable fact that Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians have drawn ever closer together on what they consider to be the ‘**bare minimums**’ of the Christian faith.

Chuck Colson in the introduction to Roman Catholic **Keith Fournier’s** book, **Evangelical Catholics** (notice that Fournier claims to be both Evangelical and Catholic), makes several remarkable statements:

*“It’s high time that all of us who are Christians **come together regardless of the differences** of our confessions and our traditions and make **common cause** to bring Christian values to bear in our society. When the barbarians are scaling the walls, there is no time for **petty quarreling in the camp**.” p. 1*

*“But at root, those who are called of God, whether Catholic or Protestant, are part of the **same Body**. What they share is a belief in **the basics**: the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, His bodily resurrection, His imminent return, and the authority of His infallible Word. They also share the **same mission**: presenting Christ as Savior and Lord to a needy world” p. vi.*

*“I pray that this [Fournier’s] book will be read by Catholics and Protestant alike, that it will be **a bridge** across many of the historic divisions in the church that have weakened our stand in today’s culture” p. vi.*

Ralph Reed

Ralph Reed who was the **first president** of Pat Robertson’s **Christian Coalition** and now **lobbies** for Christian causes in Congress said the following in a speech that he delivered to the **Catholic Campaign for America**:

*“The truth is, you and I are uniting . . . We are **coming together** because whatever **theological differences** there are, there is far more that **unites us** and **brings us together** than divides us and separates us . . . The good news is the **chasm is being bridged** and that those **walls are crumbling** . . . The truth my friends is this. Catholicism **never has been**, is not today, and **never will be a threat** to American democracy. It was and remains the most colorful and the most vibrant thread running through the tapestry of American democracy.”*

One’s mouth drops wide open when one hears Reed unashamedly and recklessly affirm:

*“Cardinal Gibbons said this: he said, **No constitution is more in harmony with Catholic principles than the American constitution** and no religion is more in accord with that constitution than the Catholic religion.”*

Here Ralph Reed is obviously suffering from **historical amnesia** and Gibbons is knowingly **prevaricating**.

Ralph Reed as reported in *The Amarillo Sunday News Globe*, **December 10, 1995** referred to divisions as a ‘luxury’ that Christians can no longer live with:

*“We can no longer afford to be divided. It is a **luxury** that is no longer ours. The left wants you and I to be divided. Nothing frightens them more than Christians **shattering the barriers of denomination**.”*

He further affirmed:

*“Obviously, some teachings are more important than others, and there has to be an **agreement on** those **essential points**, while leaving considerable latitude on other points that are **less essential** to the faith.” Ralph Reed, *Our Sunday Visitor*, January 14, 1996.*

W. A. Criswell

W. A. Criswell, who for many years was the senior pastor of the **First Baptist Church** in Dallas, one of the largest Baptist churches in the United States, had this to say about the ecumenical union of Protestants and Catholics:

“I don’t know anyone more dedicated to the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity than the Catholics.” W. A. Criswell, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Quoted in, Dave Hunt, A Woman Rides the Beast, p. 388.

Billy Graham

Moreover, what did the late **Billy Graham** (who for over seven decades was the most **admired pastor** in the United States and the dean of all Protestant evangelists) have to say about Roman Catholicism?

*“I’ve found that **my beliefs are essentially the same** as those of orthodox Roman Catholics.” Billy Graham, quoted in Dave Hunt, A Woman Rides the Beast, p. 388.*

In **1981 Billy Graham** hailed the pope as “the greatest moral leader of the world and the world’s greatest evangelist.” Quoted in Michael de Semlyen, All Roads Lead to Rome? p. 170

US News and World Report quoted Graham as saying:

*“World travel and getting to know the clergy of all denominations has helped mold me into **an ecumenical being**. We’re separated by theology and, in some instances by culture and race, but all of that **means nothing to me anymore**.”*
US News and World Report, December 19, 1988.

On the **Good Morning America** program, Billy Graham stated on **August 12, 1993**:

“I admire the pope. We address the same moral issues.”

When the pope visited **Salt Lake City**, **Larry King** interviewed Billy Graham On January 21, 1998 on his program *Larry King Live*. Notice how the dialogue unfolded:

King: *“Do you feel comfortable with Salt Lake City? Do you feel comfortable with the Vatican?”*

Graham: *“Oh, I’m very comfortable with the Vatican. I’ve been to see the pope several times, and, in fact, the day that he was inaugurated, made pope, I was preaching in his Cathedral in Krakow. I was his guest.”*

King: *“You were preaching in his church the day he was made pope?”*

Graham: *“That is correct, in Krakow.” (Graham chuckled)*

King: *“You must have been shocked.”*

Graham: *“Of course I was. There was shouting on the streets, you know, the next day: ‘Polish pope, Polish pope.’”*

King: *“Do you like this pope?”*

Graham: *“I like him very much. He’s very conservative . . . He and I agree on almost everything.”*

Ecumenical Meeting in Manhattan

In the ecumenical meeting that was held at St. Joseph’s Church in Manhattan, New York on Friday, April 18, 2008, we can see an example of this growing intimacy between Protestants and the papacy. No less than 250 leaders from the Protestant denominations and other Christian organizations in the United States participated including United Methodists, Evangelical Lutherans, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, the National Association of Evangelicals, Presbyterians, the Reformed church, the National Baptist Convention, various Pentecostal groups, Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Episcopalian. Even Mormons representatives were there! Fifteen leaders were chosen to personally shake the pope’s hand.

Benedict XVI stood at the front of the church in his white papal robe and cassock as each of these fifteen representatives came forward to cordially shake his hand; some of them inclining their head to him and all of them uttering kind words. This, in spite of the fact that Benedict had explicitly said that Protestant churches are not true Christian Churches. So to speak, Martin Luther must have been rolling over in his grave at such a betrayal of the Protestant Reformation that cost so much sweat, blood and tears!

Tony Palmer and the Pope

Probably most have heard of Tony Palmer. Who was he and what motivated him? He was an **Anglican clergyman** of the Celtic Tradition who belonged to a church that has suffered serious **fragmentation** with **offshoots** everywhere. For this reason, he **yearned for a unity** of Christians driven by a **common subjective experience**.

In February of 2014, Palmer addressed a **charismatic leader's convention** organized by Pentecostal mega-pastor **Kenneth Copland**. Palmer stated that God had brought him to **Kenneth Copland's leaders' convention** (on **February 25, 2014**) *'in the spirit of Elijah'* to bring the hearts of the sons to the fathers and the fathers to the sons—that is to say, to **unite all Christians**.

In his address, Palmer lamented that after 500 years, Martin Luther's Reformation, **had split into 33,000** denominations and sects. This led him to announce that **'diversity is divine'** and **division is 'diabolic'**. He then went on to affirm that God has given charismatics **the glory** so that they **may be one**. Downplaying the importance of doctrine, he stated:

*"It is the glory that glues us together, **not the doctrine**. It's the glory. If you accept that the glory of God is living in me and the presence of God is in you, that's all we need because **God will sort out all our doctrine later upstairs** . . . Christian unity is the basis of **our credibility** because Jesus said that until we are one the world will not believe."*

In **1999** Lutherans and Catholics signed a **joint declaration** on righteousness by faith where they stated that they were on the same page on the doctrine of **righteousness by faith**. **Five years** later the **Methodists** signed the declaration as well. This led Palmer to confidently state that **Luther's protest is over**. In his own words:

*"Brothers and sisters, **Luther's protest is over**. Is yours?"*

After lamenting that to date **no evangelical church** had signed the agreement, Palmer said:

*". . . this must be fixed. . . The protest has been **over for 15 years**. If there is no longer any protest, how can there be a protestant church? **Maybe now we are all Catholics again**."*

Palmer had a close friendship with **Pope Francis I** and before the convention, he visited the pope in the Vatican and taped a video message **on his cell phone** to deliver to the hundreds of leaders gathered at the convention.

The pope passionately pleaded for **the visible unity of all Christians**. He **said**:
“I am yearning that this separation comes to an end and gives us communion. I am yearning for that embrace.”

At the **end of his message** the Pope pleaded with the hundreds of charismatic leaders:

*‘Please **pray for me**, I need your prayers. And I will pray for you, but I need your prayers. And let’s pray to the Lord that **He unites us all**. Come on, we are brothers. Let’s give each other a **spiritual hug** and let God complete the work that He has begun. And this is a miracle; the **miracle of unity has begun**. I ask you to bless me; I bless you. From brother to brother I embrace you.’*

After the pope delivered his message, the delegates **stood, clapped, cheered** and raised their hands as **Kenneth Copland** moved to the stage repeating the word: *“Glory, glory, glory!”*

When he arrived on stage Copland affirmed, *“We do not know how to pray for him [the pope] as we ought”* so he uttered a prayer **in tongues**.

After his prayer, Copland invited Palmer come on stage with his **cell phone** and Copland recorded a message for Palmer to take back to the pope:

*“These leaders represent literally tens of thousands that **love you**, that believe that **God is with you**, and in answer to your request we have just prayed for you and with you, and we did so in the spirit. We do **bless you**; we **receive your blessing**. It is very, very important to us. And we bless you with all of our **hearts**, we bless you with all of our **souls**, we bless you with all of our **might**, and we thank you sir, we thank God for you, and so, all of us declare together: **“Be blessed.”**”*

James Robison

After Copland’s convention, the Vatican invited several influential Protestant leaders to visit the pope. One of these leaders was James Robison. Upon meeting the pope, Robison looked him in the eye and said:

*“Pope Francis, let me just say to you that **I see Jesus in you**; and in Christ we are **brothers**, we are family. Thank you for speaking **the language of love** that all may come to know him and love him and love one another.”*

And then, Robison gave the pope the **first high five** in papal history!

May 5, 2014 Tony Palmer was invited to James Robison’s program ‘Life Today’ and stated:

*“**Diversity** is divine; it is **division** that is diabolic. . . **Jesus’ theology** is that if God is in you and you are in God and God is in me and I am in God, we are one together in God . . . Our sin is that we don’t make our **unity visible** because we allow our **diversities to divide** us and if we elevate anything to divide us we are elevating it above the cross. So, whether it is a **doctrine or a dogma** or an expression, if you use that to divide our unity you have elevated that doctrine or whatever it may be above the cross. Now we are not saying ‘put doctrine aside, certainly not!’ Pope Francis recognizes only **two fundamental doctrines**—love for God and love for your neighbor, end of doctrine!”*

Joel Osteen

Mega-church pastor Joel Osteen was also the **pope’s guest** at the Vatican. After his visit, Osteen exclaimed: “I just felt very **honored and very humbled**.” (Television station *Click 2 Houston*).

He further stated:

*“It was amazing. And even to go back into that part of the Vatican—there’s **so much history** there, the place that they took us through. You feel that deep **respect and reverence for God**.”*

The **Lakewood** leader also met with other **Vatican staff** during his visit, including Cardinal **Pietro Paroli**, **Secretary of State** for the Vatican, and had dinner with an unspecified staff member.

Osteen attended mass in St. Peter’s Square on Wednesday prior to the meeting in the midst of a crowd of **100,000 people**. Osteen reminisced:

*“Afterward, [the pope] spent an hour and a half going through the crowd with the Pope mobile, greeting people,” he recalled to the *Houston Chronicle*. It was very heartwarming to see him **caring for people**. . . I love the fact that’s he’s made the*

Church **more inclusive** . . . Not trying to make it smaller, but to try to make it larger—to take everybody in. So, that just **resonates with me.**”

Rick Warren

Rick Warren, the author of the blockbuster best sellers, **The Purpose Driven Church** and **The Purpose Driven Life** is another Mega Church pastor that the pope invited to meet with him. **Time Magazine** has described Warren as the successor of **Billy Graham** as the most influential evangelical in the world.

Recently Warren has made some **amazing statements** about Pope Francis I referring to him as the ‘**holy father**’ and calling him ‘**our pope**’. He stated in **November of 2014** that Catholics and Protestants ‘*have **far more in common than what divides us.***’ He went on to say:

*“They [**Catholics and Protestants**] would all say: ‘We believe in the Trinity; we believe in the Bible; we believe in the resurrection; we believe in salvation through Jesus Christ. These are the big issues.’”*

Warren then admonished Protestants:

*“Sometimes Protestants think that Catholics worship Mary like she’s another god, but that’s **not exactly Catholic doctrine**. People say: ‘What are the saints all about? Why are you praying to the saints? And when you understand what they mean by what they are saying, there’s a whole lot more **commonality** [that we have with Roman Catholics] . . . There’s still real differences—no doubt about that, but the most important thing is, if you love Jesus, **we’re on the same team.** . . . When it comes to the family, we are co-workers in the field in this for the protection of the sanctity of life, the sanctify of sex and the sanctity of marriage. So, there’s a **great commonality** and there’s no division on any of those three.”*

Ecumenical Documents and Encounters

Ronald Reagan forming a **Holy Alliance** with Pope John Paul II to overthrow the Iron Curtain

The pope speaking before a **joint session** of Congress

The Pope celebrates the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation with Lutherans in **Malmo**

Francis I is the most ecumenical pope in history and he has done his utmost to **unite all Christians.**

Ellen White on Uniting on Common Points of Doctrine

Way back in **1888**, when Protestants were **very suspicious** of Catholics, Ellen White made some remarkable statements that appeared absurd in her day. She sounded **an alarm in words similar** to those of Dave Hunt:

*“Protestants have **tampered with and patronized popery**; they have made **compromises and concessions** which papists themselves are surprised to see and fail to understand. Men are closing their eyes to the real character of Romanism and the dangers to be apprehended from her supremacy. The people need to be aroused to resist the advances of this most dangerous foe to civil and religious liberty.” GC, p. 566*

*“When the leading churches of the United States, **uniting upon such points of doctrine** as are held by them **in common**, shall **influence the state** to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an **image** of the Roman hierarchy, and the **infliction of civil penalties [the state using the sword]** upon dissenters will inevitably result.” GC, p. 445*

*“The **wide diversity of belief** in the Protestant churches is regarded by many as decisive proof that no effort to secure a forced uniformity can ever be made. But there has been for years, in churches of the Protestant faith, a strong and growing sentiment in favor of a union based upon **common points of doctrine**. To secure such a union, the discussion of subjects upon which all were not agreed--however important they might be from a **Bible standpoint**--must necessarily be waived.” GC, p. 444*

*“The Protestant churches **are in great darkness**, or they would discern the signs of the times. The Roman Church is far-reaching in her plans and modes of operation. She is employing **every device** to extend her influence and increase her power in preparation for a fierce and determined conflict to **regain** control of the world, to **re-establish** persecution, and to undo all that Protestantism has done.” GC, pp. 565, 566*

*“Rome is aiming to **re-establish** her power, to **recover** her lost supremacy. Let the principle once be established in the United States that the **church may employ or control the power of the state**; that religious observances may be **enforced by secular laws**; in short, that the **authority of church and state** is to dominate the conscience and the **triumph of Rome** in this country is assured.” GC, p. 581*

*“The people of the United States have been a favored people; but when they **restrict religious liberty, surrender Protestantism, and give countenance to popery**, the measure of their guilt will be **full**, and “national apostasy” will be registered in the books of heaven. The result of this apostasy will be **national ruin**.” Maranatha, p. 216*

Ellen White’s prediction in 1888 appeared **totally absurd** but is now quite believable:

“When the land which the Lord provided as an asylum for His people, that they might worship Him according to the dictates of their own consciences, the land over which for long years the

*shield of Omnipotence has been spread, the land which God has favored by making it the depository of the pure religion of Christ--when that land shall, **through its legislators**, abjure the principles of Protestantism, and give countenance to Romish apostasy in tampering with God's law--it is then that the final work of the man of sin will be revealed. **Protestants will throw their whole influence** and strength on the side of the Papacy; by a **national act** enforcing the false sabbath, they will **give life and vigor** to the corrupt faith of Rome, **reviving** her tyranny and oppression of conscience. Then it will be time for God to work in mighty power for the vindication of His truth." Maranatha, p. 179.*

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #7: Historicism’s Last Stand

Ellen White’s Definition of the Historical Flow Method

The best explanation I have found that describes the historical flow method:

“The history that the great I AM has marked out in His word, uniting link after link in the prophetic chain, from eternity in the past to eternity in the future, tells us where we are today in the procession of the ages, and what may be expected in the time to come. All that prophecy has foretold as coming to pass, until the present time, has been traced on the pages of history, and we may be assured that all which is yet to come will be fulfilled in its order.” Education, pp. 178, 179

Ellen White knew of the dangers of misplacing the fulfillment of prophecy:

“Some will take the truth applicable to their time, and place it in the future. Events in the train of prophecy that had their fulfillment away in the past are made future, and thus by these theories, the faith of some is undermined. . . All that God has in prophetic history specified to be fulfilled in the past has been, and all that is yet to come in its order will be.” Manuscript Releases, volume 17, pp. 1-23 “Testimony Concerning the Views of Prophecy Held by John Bell”

Another Movement in the 1830’s

It is no coincidence that futurism took hold in Protestantism in the late 1820’s and early 1830’s. It is also not a coincidence that this school took root in Great Britain. Most immigrants to the USA in the 1830’s were from Great Britain.

At the time when futurism was taking hold in **Britain** in the **1830's**, on the **other side of the Atlantic**, in **New England**, in the **same decade** there was a great revival known as the **Great Second Advent Movement**. **William Miller** employed the **historical flow method** as the central **governing principle** in his study of Bible Prophecy.

The **Protestant denominations** of the day fought Miller **tooth and nail!** The mainline churches **expelled entire families** for embracing the Millerite message. When Jesus **failed to come** as expected, Protestantism **forsook historicism** and embraced futurism in its place.

Scholars on the Demise of the Historical Method

Protestant scholars have drawn a **direct link** between the **great disappointment** in 1844 and the **abandonment** of the historicist method:

Richard Kyle on the reason for the demise of historicism:

*“Despite its visibility the Millerite movement had little influence on subsequent end-time thinking. It did, however, have three long-term effects: (1) Millerism spawned the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (2) it **discredited historicist premillennialism, causing it to fade out almost entirely after 1844**; and (3) the Millerite fiasco demonstrated the perils of setting definite dates for Christ’s return.”* Richard Kyle, *The Last Days Are Here Again*, p. 91.

A further statement from Richard Kyle.

*“The Great Disappointment of 1844 had **decimated historicist premillennialism**, but a futurist premillennialism called dispensationalism **soon arrived** on the scene.”* Richard Kyle, *The Last Days Are Here Again*, p. 102.

Telling words of Thomas Ice, a Futurist.

*“Historicism, **once the dominant view of Protestants** from the Reformation until the middle of the **last century** [please note that 1844 is almost at the **midpoint of the 19th century**], appears to exert **little attraction** as a system of prophetic interpretation to conservative Christians (outside of Seventh-day Adventist circles). . . **Within evangelicalism during the last one hundred fifty years**, futurism has grown to **dominate and overcome historicism.**”* Thomas Ice and Kenneth L. Gentry Jr. *The Great Tribulation: Past or Future?* p. 6.

Satan an Avid Student

Around the year 1844 many religious movements appeared:

New England during the Second Great Advent Awakening came to be known as "the burned over district" because of the many religious movements that arose during this time. The following are some of the movements and their champions that arose around this period both in the United States and in Europe:

- **Mormonism:** Joseph Smith
- **Christian Science:** Mary Baker Eddy
- **Theosophy, New Age:** Helena Blavatsky
- **Baha'i:** Abdul Baha
- **Spiritualism:** Fox sisters, Andrew Jackson Davis
- **Pentecostalism:** Margaret McDonald
- **Jehovah's Witnesses:** Charles Taze Russell
- **Futurism:** John Nelson Darby, Edward Irving
- **Evolutionism:** Charles Darwin
- **Marxism:** Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Satan no doubt is an avid student of Bible prophecy. Do you think he knew when the prophecy of the 2,300 days would end? He knew all about Daniel 8:14. No doubt, he knew that the 2,300 days began in 457 BC and that they would end in 1844. He knew about the bittersweet experience that Revelation 10 describes so he did his utmost to preempt God's plan by instituting futurism.

Scholars on the Origins of Preterism and Futurism

Regarding the origins of Futurism and Preterism the Roman Catholic theologian, G. S. Hitchcock, states:

*"The Futuristic School, founded by the Jesuit Ribera in 1591, looks for Antichrist, Babylon and a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, at the end of the Christian Dispensation . . . The Preterist School, founded by the Jesuit Alcazar in 1614, explains the Revelation by the Fall of Jerusalem, or by the fall of Pagan Rome in 410 A. D."*¹⁰

Various **Protestant scholars** have gone on the record on where futurism comes from.

Dean Henry Alford in the 'Prolegomena' of his *Greek Testament* described the origins of **Preterism**:

*"The Preterist view found no favor, and was hardly so much as thought of, in the times of primitive Christianity . . . The view is said to have been first promulgated in anything like completeness by the **Jesuit Alcazar** in 1614"*¹¹

Dean Henry Alford in the 'Prolegomena' of his *Greek Testament* described the origins of **Futurism**:

*"The **founder** of this system in modern times . . . appears to have been the **Jesuit Ribera**, about A. D. 1580."*¹²

Richard Kyle, who as we have noted was for some time a member of the Plymouth Brethren, concurs:

*"Among the **Jesuits** who insisted that the Antichrist was still to come, the approach of the Spaniard Franciscus Ribeira had significant implications for future millennial thought. Both Catholics and Protestants who identified the Antichrist as a contemporary pope or leader generally took a **historicist interpretation** of John's Revelation. Ribeira reintroduced a somewhat **literal futuristic** approach to the Apocalypse of John. In doing so he concluded that the Antichrist was a future renegade Jew."*¹³

George Eldon Ladd who was **once a futurist** wrote:

*"It will probably come **as a shock** to many modern futurists to be told that the first scholar in relatively modern times who returned to the **patristic futuristic** interpretation was a Spanish Jesuit named **Ribera**. In 1590 Ribera published a commentary on the Revelation as a **counter-interpretation** to the prevailing view among Protestants which identified the **Papacy with the Antichrist**. Ribera applied all of Revelation but the earliest chapters to the **end time** rather than to the history of the Church. Antichrist would be a **single evil person** who would be*

received by the Jews and would rebuild Jerusalem, abolish Christianity, deny Christ, persecute the Church and rule the world for three and a half years.”¹⁴

The Beast’s False Prophet

We have previously identified the beast as the Roman Catholic papacy. However, Revelation describes **another beast** that rises from the earth and calls it the false prophet.

Revelation 16:13:

*“Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the **false prophet**.”*

This prophet **claims to be God’s prophet** when it is really the **beast’s false prophet**. As we have seen, the false prophet does everything to **please the first beast**:

- It exercises **all the authority** of the first beast
- It commands everyone to **worship** the first beast
- It acts **in the presence** or on behalf of the first beast
- It makes an **image** of the first beast
- It imposes by force the **mark** of the beast

Therefore, here is the point I want to make: Protestants today keep the **same day** that the papacy claims to have changed and Protestants employ the **same prophetic method** that the papal Jesuits established. This means that they are **an image** of the papacy both **doctrinally and hermeneutically**.

Would the Leaders say?

If Protestantism had **not gone astray** from its roots, do you think that **Billy Graham** would have said that pope John Paul II was ‘*the greatest moral leader of the world*’?

Do you think that **Robert Schuller** (founder of the famous Crystal Cathedral) would have said that he hopes the day will come when the entire Christian world will accept the pope as its leader?

Would **Paul Crouch**, the founder of **TBN** have said that he is not protesting anything and that he is deleting the word Protestant from his vocabulary?

Would **Lutherans have signed** a ‘Joint Declaration of Righteousness by Faith’?

Would **influential Protestant clergy** have signed the document ‘*Evangelicals and Catholics Together*’?

Would **Tony Palmer** have said that the protest is over and that now we are all Catholics again?

Would **Kenneth Copland** say to the pope: “*we bless you with all of our **hearts**, we bless you with all of our **souls**, we bless you with all of our **might**, and we thank you sir, we thank God for you, and so, all of us declare together: “**Be blessed.**”*

Would **Ralph Reed** say to Catholics: “*The truth my friends is this. Catholicism **never has been**, is not today, and **never will be a threat** to American democracy. It was and remains the most colorful and the most vibrant thread running through the tapestry of American democracy.”*

Would **Rick Warren** have said, “*We are on the same team*”?

Would **James Robison** say to the pope, “*Pope Francis, let me just say to you that **I see Jesus in you**; and in Christ we are **brothers**, we are family.*”

Having thrown out the **proper method** to identify the Antichrist, these religious leaders **see no danger** in joining forces with the papacy. I know these appear to be harsh words but **they are the truth!**

Daniel 7:25: So the papacy thought it could **change God’s law** and it established a **counterfeit system** of interpreting prophecy:

*“And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a **time and times and the dividing of time.**”*

God’s End Time Response

Revelation 12:17:

*“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the **commandments of God**, and have the **testimony of Jesus** Christ.”*

During the 1260 years, the little horn attempted to do two things:

- It **attempted to change** God’s law

- It attempted to change God **prophetic calendar** of events

At the **end of this period**, God would raise up a **remnant** to **counteract** both attempts at a change. He would raise up a people that ‘*keep the commandments of God*’ and ‘*have the testimony of Jesus*’. What is the testimony of Jesus? The answer is in **Revelation 19:10** and **Revelation 22:8, 9**.

*“And I fell at his feet to worship him. However, he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your **brethren** who **have the testimony of Jesus**. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the **spirit of prophecy**.”*

*“Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ Then he said to me, “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of **your brethren the prophets**, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”*

- Revelation 19:10: The brethren **have the testimony of Jesus** that is the **Spirit of Prophecy**
- Revelation 22:8, 9: The brethren **are prophets**

Can we **legitimately link** the change in the times and the law in Daniel 7:25 with the counter action in Revelation 12:17? Absolutely! During the 1260 years the papacy attempted to change the law and the prophetic times, but at the end of the **same period** God raised up a remnant to counteract that changes that the papacy attempted to make:

Revelation 12:13, 14

*“Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. ¹⁴ But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a **time and times and half a time**, from the presence of the serpent.”*

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is **historicism’s last stand**. Will we give the trumpet a clarion sound?

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #8: Secret Rapture Fallacies

The Futurist Belief

God will **rapture** or snatch away to heaven the faithful in the church **seven years** before the second coming of Jesus. Thus, the faithful will **not go through** the great final tribulation. **After spending** seven years with Jesus in heaven, the saints will **return with Him** to the earth and Jesus will **reign with His saints** on earth for one thousand years. With this in mind, let us examine **seven dispensationalist arguments** in favor of this view.

The Historical Context:

In 1 Thessalonians 4 the Thessalonians **misunderstood Paul** to say that Jesus was going to come in his lifetime. He now writes a second epistle to **correct their misconception**.

2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2

*“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our **gathering together to Him**, we ask you, ² not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by **spirit** or by **word** or by **letter**, as if from us, as though the day of Christ **had come**.”*

#1: The Apostasy

2 Thessalonians 2:3

*“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the **falling away** comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.”*

Hal Lindsay says it should be translated “the departure, the snatching away.” No version of the Bible translates it this way.

- **NIV, ESV:** “*the rebellion*”
- **NASB:** “*Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless **the apostasy** comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.*”
- **KJ, NKJV:** “*falling away*”
- **Bible in Basic English:** “*falling away from the faith*”
- **Darby Bible:** “*the apostasy*”
- **Douay-Rheims:** “*the revolt*”
- **New Century:** “*turning away from God*”
- **New Living:** “*great rebellion against God*”
- **West Translation:** “*because that day shall not come except the aforementioned **departure** [of the Church to heaven] comes first.*”
- **2 Peter 1:20:** “*... knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.*”

Acts 21:21

*“... but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to **forsake** Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.”*

The secular world of the time used the word **apostenai** to describe a boat that was **drifting away** from the port because it was **not firmly anchored**. ‘

#2: Not Appointed to Wrath

1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10

*“For God did not **appoint us to wrath**, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.”*

In the book of Revelation, the seven last **plagues** are the final outpouring of God’s wrath **without mixture** of mercy. The question is, how can God’s people be here during that period and **survive**? The answer is that **God will protect** His people. Israel was in **Egypt** when the plagues fell but God shielded them. The **three Hebrew worthies** went through the furnace but the fire did not burn

them. **Daniel** spent a night in the lion's den but God preserved His life. God's people will go through the time of trouble but **Michael will protect them** (Daniel 12:1: Michael **stands watch** over the children of God's people).

Psalm 91:7-11: The great **tribulation Psalm**

*"A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall **not come near you**.⁸ Only with your eyes shall you look, and **see the reward** of the wicked.⁹ Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place,¹⁰ No evil shall befall you, **nor shall any plague** come near your dwelling;¹¹ For He shall give **His angels charge** over you, to keep you in all your ways".*

Isaiah 26:20, 21

*"Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a **little moment**, until the **indignation is past**.²¹ For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain."*

#3: Keep from Hour of Tribulation

Revelation 3:10: The word means 'test' 'trial'.

*"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will **keep you from the hour of trial** which shall come upon the whole world, to **test** those who dwell on the earth."*

John 17:15

*"I do not pray that You should **take them out** of the world, but that You should **keep them** from the evil one."*

Galatians 1:3-5

*"Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,⁴ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might **deliver us from this present evil age [does He deliver us by snatching us out of the world?]**, according to the will of our God and Father,⁵ to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."*

#4: Be able to escape

Luke 21:36

*"Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted **worthy to escape** all these things that will come to pass and **to stand** before the Son of Man."*

1 Thessalonians 5:3

*"For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall **not escape**."*

Revelation 6:16, 17

*"And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"¹⁷ For the **great day of His wrath** has come, and **who is able to stand?**"*

#5: Come up hither

Revelation 4:1

*"After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "**Come up here**, and I will show you things which must take place after this."*

Why does John see angels **coming from** heaven? (**Revelation 14:6; 10:1, 2; 18:1**)

The fact is that prophets were able to visit distant places while they were **in vision** but they were **physically on earth!** **Revelation 17:3** (caught away in the spirit to the wilderness) **Revelation 21:9, 10** (caught away to the New Jerusalem).

#6: Coming with his saints

1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13

"And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,¹³ so that He may establish your hearts blameless in

*holiness before our God and Father at the **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ **with all His saints.***"

Who are the saints that Jesus comes with?

The Bible calls the **angels 'saints'**:

Deuteronomy 33:2

*"The Lord came from Sinai, and dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, and He came with **ten thousands of saints** [*'holy ones' in the NIV*]; from His right hand came a fiery law for them."*

Revelation 5:11: Ten thousand' is a common expression for the **angelic hosts** (see also **Daniel 7:9, 10**)

*"Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was **ten thousand times ten thousand**, and thousands of thousands."*

Mark 8:38

*"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes **in** the glory of His Father [*Hebrews 1:3*] **with** the **holy** angels."*

#7: Bring with Him

Two Promises

Jesus made **two promises** to His people

- To take them to the **Father's house** (John 14:1-3)
- The meek will **inherit the earth** (Matthew 5:5)

How can Jesus **fulfill both**?

The Futurist Scenario:

Rapture to heaven before the tribulation: In **heaven for 7 years**

Glorious coming seven years later: The **meek inherit the earth**

The Biblical Scenario:

Second coming: The saved are in heaven for 1,000 years

Third coming: After the 1,000 years the meek will inherit the earth

The Passage

Let's look at verse 14 in context:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: The central theme is '**died, resurrected** and **caught up**':

*"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus **died and rose again [and the Father caught Him up in a cloud to heaven], even so [in the same way] God [the Father] will bring with Him [with Jesus to heaven]** those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are **alive and remain** until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are **asleep**. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will **descend** from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God and the **dead in Christ will rise** first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord **in the air**. And thus we shall **always be with the Lord**. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words."*

The problem of verse 14

*"For if we believe that Jesus **died and rose again [was caught up to heaven in a cloud], even so [in the same way] God will bring with Him [with Jesus to heaven]** those who sleep in Jesus."*

The **gist** of the argument: Some have argued for a **pre-tribulation rapture** based on 1 Thessalonians 4:14. They say that Jesus **cannot bring** the saints with Him unless he **took them to heaven** beforehand.

The Experience of Jesus at the First Coming

Jesus [1] **died** [2] **resurrected** and [3] **then** was **caught up** in a cloud:

Acts 1:9:

*"Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He **was taken up [passive voice], and a cloud received Him** out of their sight."*

Where did the clouds take Him?

[4] Revelation 12:5-6

*“She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron and her Child was **caught up [passive voice]** to **God** and His throne.”*

1. Jesus **died**
2. Jesus **rose again**
3. A **cloud of angels came** for Jesus
4. Jesus was **caught up** in **the cloud**
5. God **brought Him** to heaven with the clouds

The Experience of Christ’s People at the Second Coming

The same will happen with **His people**:

Christ’s people:

- [1] **Died**
- [2] Will **rise again**
- [3] God will **send the clouds** with Jesus

Revelation 1:7: He will come with **the clouds** to the earth.

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

Acts 1:10, 11: Jesus will come **back with the clouds** to earth again:

*“This same Jesus, who **was taken up [passive voice]** from you into heaven, will so **come in like manner** as you **saw Him go** into heaven.”*

What are the clouds?

Mark 8:38

*“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes **in** the glory of His Father [**Hebrews 1:3**] **with** the **holy** angels.”*

- [4] Will be **caught up** to meet Jesus in the clouds
- [5] God the Father will **bring them** to heaven **with Jesus**

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17: God's people are **caught up in the clouds** like Jesus was:

*“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 [**to heaven**] those who are **asleep**, for the Lord Himself will **descend** from heaven [**where He went**] 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**.”*

Summary and Conclusion

Jesus:

1. **Died**
2. **Resurrected**
3. **Caught** up in a cloud
4. The **Father brought Him** to His house

The righteous:

1. **Died** in Christ
2. **Resurrected**
3. **Caught up** in the clouds
4. The **Father brings them with Jesus** to His house

Jesus does not bring the righteous dead from heaven to earth but rather the Father brings the righteous dead with Jesus to heaven.

God does not come

There is a **myth** that the Father will come with Jesus at the second coming. However, the **Father does not come** to earth at the second coming. A text is used to try and prove this: Jesus comes in the glory of His Father:

*“The sacrifice of our Savior has made ample provision for every repenting, believing soul. We are saved because God loves the purchase of the blood of Christ; and not only will He pardon the repentant sinner, not only will He **permit him to enter heaven**, but He, the Father of mercies, **will wait at the very gates** of*

heaven to **welcome us, to give us an abundant entrance** to the mansions of the blest." *The Review and Herald*, September 21, 1886

Acts 3:20 tells us that He shall **send forth Jesus**

Mark 8:38: Does not the Bible say that Jesus will come in the **glory of the Father**?

*"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes **in** the glory of His Father [Hebrews 1:3] **with** the **holy** angels."*

A Repetition of the First Coming

The last three pages of The Desire of Ages describe the scene:

Revelation 4

The **Father** is **sitting by Himself on His throne**

The **cherubim and seraphim** are in the **midst** of the throne (the four living creatures)

The **representatives** of the heavenly council **surround** the throne (the twenty-four elders)

The **Holy Spirit** stands in **front of the throne** (the seven lampstands)

The **hymns** are in honor of the Father as the **architect of creation**

Absent are Christ and the angelic hosts

Revelation 5

- The **Father sends** a **cloud** to pick up Jesus who **died and resurrected**
- Jesus is **caught up into the cloud**
- The **cloud brings Jesus** to the Father's house in heaven
- With Jesus are the **first-fruits** from the dead that He will present to the Father
- The clouds are singing the **hymn of Psalm 24**
- **Jesus arrives** in heaven with the angelic hosts—**the clouds**
- There is an **explosion of praise** as He **enters the gates** of the city
- He bids the angelic hosts to **keep silence**

- He **presents the first-fruits** from the dead and asks the Father if His **sacrifice is sufficient** to bring His people home
- The Father embraces the Son
- The **angels explode in a hymn of praise** to the Lamb that was slain

The Bottom Line

*“For if we believe that Jesus **died and rose again** [and the Father caught Him up in a cloud to heaven], **even so** [in the same way] God [the Father] will **bring with Him** [with Jesus to heaven] those who sleep in Jesus”.*

The Parable of the **Lost Sheep** and the party in heaven

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #9: One Taken and One Left

The Controversial Text

Matthew 24:40, 41. This text is in the background of the Left Behind series that sold over 80 million copies and was on the New York Times Best Seller List for months.

“Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.”

Different Understandings

Futurist and historicist scholars understand these verses differently:

Most Seventh-day Adventists along with those who believe in the rapture agree on the meaning of the words ‘taken’ and ‘left’. The ‘taken’ are those whom Jesus takes to heaven when He returns and the ‘left’ are the ones He leaves behind on earth.

The difference between futurists and historicists has to do with when Jesus will take righteous to heaven and leave the unrighteous behind on earth.

Historicists teach that the righteous are taken to heaven by Jesus at the second coming and futurists say that it occurs at the rapture seven years before the second coming.

There are texts in Scripture that teach that Jesus will take His people to heaven and leave the wicked behind at His coming. However, the question is whether these specific verses teach such a concept.

What the text does not say:

These verses do not say: “One will be taken with Jesus **to heaven** and the other will be left behind **on earth**.”

The Important Flood Context

The **immediate context** of verses **41, 42** clearly tells us **when** one is taken and the other is left. It is parallel to when Noah **entered** the ark, the **door closed** and **destruction** came.

The word ‘**then**’ (*tote*) **links** Matthew 24:37-39 with verses 40, 41. Matthew 24 uses this word *tote* **several times** to describe events that transpire in **chronological sequence**.

In the **days of Noah**, they **entered** the ark, the **door closed**, seven days passed and then **destruction** for the wicked came. Moreover, Jesus emphasized that **His Parousia** would follow this **same pattern**. The flood story provides the **historical parallel** for those who are ‘taken’ and those who are ‘left’. We shall see that the destiny of the wicked and the righteous before Jesus comes on the clouds of heaven.

Matthew 24:37-39

*“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that **Noah entered** the ark, ³⁹ and **did not know** until the flood came and **took them** all away, **so also** will the coming of the Son of Man be.”*

It is important to remember that when the flood came there were **just two groups**, the saved **in the ark** and the **lost outside**. Those who teach a pre-tribulation rapture see **three groups**:

- The righteous whom Jesus **raptures to heaven**
- The unsaved who **remain alive** on earth
- The unsaved who **are destroyed** on earth by His Parousia

Several words are translated ‘flood’ in the Old Testament. However, the word **mabul** describes exclusively the flood in Noah’s day. Three words are translated ‘flood’ in the New Testament:

- Plemmura
- Pótamos
- Kataklysmos

The New Testament uses the word **kataklysmos exclusively** for the flood in Noah's day. The flood was **no secret event**. It took everyone away except Noah and his family. The flood was a **global catastrophe** that wiped out **everyone outside** the ark.

Luke 17:26, 27: Take them all away is synonymous with destroy

*And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷ They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark and the flood came and **destroyed** [to 'take them all away' is the same as 'destroyed'] **them all**."*

Luke 17:29: Sodom and Gomorrah

*"Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; ²⁹ but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and **destroyed** them **all**. ³⁰ **Even so** [in the same way] will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."*

There were **not three groups** in Lot's day. Who were the **only ones left** after God destroyed the cities? The saved were the **only ones left!**

The Broader Genesis Context

The **broader context of Matthew 24:37-39** and the parallel passage in Luke is the flood story so we must go to Genesis

Genesis 7:22, 23

*"All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. ²³ So He **destroyed** all living things that were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were **destroyed** from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark **remained** alive [shawar]."*

Bible versions of Genesis 7:23 translate the word *shawar* with ‘to wipe out’, ‘to blot out’, and ‘to erase’.

NIV: ‘wiped out . . . left’

NASB: ‘blotted out . . . left’

RSV: ‘blotted out . . . left’

JB: ‘destroyed . . . left’

NEB: ‘wiped out . . . survived.’

‘Left’ in the Old Testament

The word *shawar* is a **remnant** word. Old Testament scholar Gary Cohen explained the meaning of the word “left” in the Old Testament:

*“Shawar seems to be used exclusively to indicate the static action of **surviving after an elimination process**. This process of elimination may have been natural (Ruth 1:3: ‘Naomi’s husband died, and she was left’). It may have been humanly caused (I Samuel 9:24: ‘Behold that which is left!’ Here Samuel is speaking of meat which was intentionally left for Saul to eat). Or the elimination may have been the direct result of a divine intervention. (Ex. 10:19. ‘There remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt,’ when God blew them away). No matter what the cause, however, shawar points to that which **remains or has survived**.” Gary G. Cohen, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, volume 2, p. 894.*

Biblical examples of **shawar** (“left”):

Exodus 14:28 The Egyptians drowned in the **Red Sea** and there were **none left**:

*“Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them **remained [shawar]**.”*

Judges 4:16: The defeat of **Sisera’s army**. Not one of his **troops were left**:

*“But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was **left**.”*

1 Kings 19:14: Elijah feared that he was the only one left:

*“And he said, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am **left**; and they seek to take my life.”*

Isaiah 24:6: At the second coming, **few men are left**:

*“Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are **left**.”*

Isaiah 4:3

*“And it shall come to pass that he who is **left** in Zion and **remains** in Jerusalem will be called **holy** — everyone who is recorded among the **living** in Jerusalem.”*

Haggai 2:3: Who is **still alive** who saw the first temple?

*“Who is **left** among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?”*

‘Left’ in the New Testament

New Testament writers use the word ‘left’ (*aphiemi*) in **two senses** much like we do in English.

- It generally describes leaving from **one place to another**: “He left the house.”
- It also describes what is **left over or remains**: “He ate all the apple pie, none is left.”

Matthew 24:2

*“And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be **left** here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”*

Mark 12:22

*“So the seven had her and **left** no offspring.”*

‘Taken’ in the Old Testament

Old Testament Scholar **Walter C. Kaiser** explained the meaning of the word ‘**taken**’ (*lakad*) in the Old Testament:

*“Most of the 121 uses of lakad deal with men **capturing** or **seizing** towns, men, spoils, and even a kingdom (1 Samuel 14:47). It is used figuratively of the **entrapment** of men who are **caught in snares** of all sorts, laid by their enemies (Jer. 5:26; 18:22; Ps. 35:8). This word serves as a figure of **divine judgment**. The Stone of Stumbling will cause many to stumble, fall, be broken, be ensnared, and be captured (Isa. 8:15). When God shakes the foundations of the earth, just prior to the Millennium (‘many days’ of Isa. 24:22), the **ungodly shall be seized in the trap** (Isa. 24:18) as were those who drunkenly mocked the prophet’s message (Isa. 28:13).” Walter C. Kaiser, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, p. 480.*

Old Testament examples of the word “taken”:

In the book of **Joshua**, we have several instances where Joshua smote cities in Canaan until not a single person was **left alive**. This is true of **Gezer** (Joshua 10:33), Hebron (Joshua 10:37), **Debir** where Joshua ‘*utterly destroyed all souls and **left none remaining***’ (Joshua 10:39), those by the waters of **Merom** (Joshua 11:8), and the inhabitants of **Hazor** and the surrounding cities (Joshua 11:11, 14).

Joshua 8:8, 17, 21, 22: In these verses the words “taken” and “left” are clearly **antonyms**.

⁸ *“And it will be, when you have **taken [lakad]** the city, that you shall set the city **on fire**. According to the commandment of the Lord you shall do. See, I have commanded you . . . ¹⁷ There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel. So they left the city open and pursued Israel. ²¹ Now when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had **taken [lakad]** the city and that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and struck down the men of Ai. ²² Then the others came out of the city against them; so they were caught in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And they struck them down, so that they let none of them **remain** or **escape**.”*

Judges 1:8, KJV

*“Now the children of Judah had **fought** against Jerusalem, and had **taken** it, and **smitten** it with the edge of the sword, and set the city **on fire**.”*

The word is also applies to **individuals** who **are taken in their sins**:

Proverbs 5:22, KJV

*“His own iniquities shall **take** the **wicked** himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.”*

Proverbs 3:26, KJV: God protects His people so that the wicked cannot take them:

*“For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being **taken**.”*

Ecclesiastes 7:26, KJV: Taken here means “**done in**” or **destroyed**.”

*“And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is **snares** and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall **escape** from her; but the sinner shall be **taken** by her.”*

Isaiah 24:6, 17, 18, KJV

*“Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men **left**. . . And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be **taken** in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.”*

Isaiah 8:14, 15, KJV: **Three key words** appear in this verse: **Snares, taken, escape**. Jesus used these three words when he spoke about His **second coming**.

*“And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a **snare** to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be **snared**, and be **taken**.”*

Luke 21:35, 36, KJV

*“For as a **snare** shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to **escape** all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand **before the Son of man**.”*

‘Taken’ in the New Testament

The root word **lambano** is very common in the New Testament and **very versatile**.

One of its basic meanings is “***to take away, to remove, to lay hands on, to seize.***” William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, pp. 464-465

Examples of the word “taken” in the New Testament:

- Jesus was **taken** or seized and crucified (Acts 2:23)
- Jesus was **seized** and cast out of the vineyard by His enemies (Matthew 21:39)
- Paul explains that no temptation has **taken us** which cannot be overcome (I Corinthians 10:13)

2 Corinthians 11:20, KJV

*“For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man **devour** you, if a man **take** of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man **smite** you on the face.”*

In English, many words get their meaning from their **prepositional prefix**. Frequently, the prefix will emphasize **location**. Notice the following examples:

- **Epicenter** (the central place from which the waves of an earthquake radiate)
- **Hypertension** (high blood pressure)
- **Hypoglycemia** (low blood sugar)
- **Catastrophe** (overturn or turn upside down)
- **Perimeter** (outer boundary)
- **Paralegal** (one who works alongside a lawyer)
- **Anachronism** (go back in time)

Likewise, the word **lambano** many times has a **prepositional prefix** and the prefix determines the **specific nuance** of the word. For example:

- **Analambano** = “to take upward”
- **Sunlambano** = “to take with”
- **Katalambano** = to overtake or take away”
- **Paralambano** (the word in Matthew 24:40, 41): “***to take alongside***”

The word **paralambano** the word translated 'taken' in **Matthew 24:40, 41** means, 'to take alongside' or 'next to' someone else.

Arndt and Gingrich's Lexicon explains that when the preposition *para* is used with a noun in the **dative case** it means "*nearness in space at or by (the side of), beside, near, with, according to the standpoint from which the relationship is viewed.*" William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Christian Literature** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 610.

The verses are telling us that the wicked person 'will be taken' while he is '**alongside**' or 'next to' a righteous person.

If Jesus meant that He would take the righteous **to heaven**, He could have used other words that are more precise. He could have used:

- **Harpazo** that appears in I Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 12:5; 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4 and Acts 8:39 to describe a **snatching away heavenward**.
- He could have used **analambano** that appears in Acts 1:11; 10:16; 1:11 and I Timothy 3:16 to describe a receiving **up into heaven**.
- Jesus could also have used **airo** or **apairo** which are frequently translated '**take away**' (Matthew 13:12; 21:43; 24:37; 25:29; Mark 4:25; Matthew 24:39; Mark 2:20).

John 14:1-3: Some have appealed to John 14:1-3 to argue that it is the righteous who will 'be taken' to be **alongside** Jesus because the word that Jesus used was **paralambano**.

*"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and **receive you [paralambano: 'alongside'] to Myself**; that where I am, there you may be also."*

- The emphasis in **John 14:1-3**: The righteous will be received alongside Jesus when He comes

- The emphasis in **Matthew 24:40, 41**: The wicked will be taken when they are alongside the righteous

The Apostle Paul

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17: The righteous are **alive and remain**:

*“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are **alive** and **remain** unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are **alive** and **remain** shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:1-7: The **contrast** to those who are alive and remain:

*“For [continues the argument] yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a **thief** in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden **destruction** cometh upon them, as **travail** upon a woman with child; and they shall not **escape**. However, ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should **overtake [katalambano]** you as a **thief**. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not **sleep**, as do others; but let us **watch** and be **sober**. For they that sleep in the night; and they that be **drunken** are drunken in the night.”*

John 8:3, 4: The word **katalambano** appears in these verses:

*“And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman **taken** in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was **taken** in adultery, in the very act.”*

Jesus and Paul

Several ideas appear in the context of Matthew 24:40-44, Luke 17:26-28 and 21:34-36. Jesus used the word **Parousia**.

In Matthew 24:40, 41 Jesus used the word **paralambano** (‘taken alongside’):

“**left**” (Matthew 24:40, 41)

“**taken**” (Matthew 24:40, 41)

“**watch**” (Matthew 24:42)

“**ready**” lest they be taken unawares (Matthew 24:44; Luke 21:34)

“**thief in the night**” (Matthew 24:43)

“**sober**” (Matthew 24:49; Luke 21:34)

“**destroyed**” (Matthew 24:37; Luke 17:29)

“**pray**” (Luke 21:36)

“**escape**” (Luke 21:36)

“**unexpectedly**” (Matthew 24:44, 50; Luke 21:34)

“**snare**” (Luke 21:36)

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:6 Paul expressed the same ideas as Jesus but used the word *katalambano* (“overtaken”) instead of *paralambano*. Paul also used the word *Parousia*.

“**remain**” (1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17)

“**overtaken**” (1 Thessalonians 5:4: ‘overtake’, *katalambano*)

“**watch**” (1 Thessalonians 5:6)

“**ready**” lest they are caught unawares (5:3, 6, 8)

“**thief in the night**” (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4)

“**sober**” (1 Thessalonians 5:6, 7, 8)

“**destruction**” (1 Thessalonians 5:3)

“**pray**” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

“**not escape**” (1 Thessalonians 5:3)

“**suddenly**” (1 Thessalonians 5:4)

1 Thessalonians 4:14 speaks of the righteous as those who **remain** and they are in contrast with the wicked who are **overtaken** (1 Thessalonians 5:4). Matthew 24:40, 41 likewise speaks of those who are **taken** and those who are **left** or remain.

The **NIV** uses the word ‘left’ instead of ‘remain’: The identical word need not be used. Words for the second coming vary but they refer to the same event. The

words that refer to the second coming are *parousia*, *epiphaneia*, *apocalypsis*, and *erxomai*.

*“According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are **left** till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are **left** will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”*

Matthew, Luke and Paul

Matthew: **“taken”**

Luke: **“come upon” “destroyed”**

Paul: **“overtake”**

Even today, when a devastating flood sweeps away a town people ask:

- Did the flood **take them** all away? Wasn't anyone **left**?
- Did the flood **drown** everyone? Did not anyone **remain**?
- Was everyone **swept** away, was not anyone **preserved**?
- Or even this way: Did the flood **destroy** them all? Wasn't anyone **spared**?

Who would say that **‘take away,’ ‘swept away,’ ‘drown’** and **‘destroy’** are not different ways of describing the same reality? Moreover, who would say that **‘left,’ ‘remain,’ ‘preserved,’** and **‘spared’** are not different ways of expressing the same thought?

Twice used word ‘Until’

Matthew 24:37-39

*“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage **until** the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not **until** the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”*

The careful reader will notice that the word ‘until’ is **used twice** in these verses—the first time to mark off the moment that Noah and his family **entered** the ark and the second to mark off the moment when it **began to rain**. Genesis informs us that a period of **seven days elapsed between** these two points of time (Genesis 7:7-10). During the seven days after the door closed, the wicked and the righteous were living on earth **side by side**. The righteous were inside the ark while the wicked were outside. Jesus underlines the fact that the wicked during this period **‘did not know’** that their fate was sealed, that is, that they were already lost. They continued business as usual—they ate, they drank, they built, they bought, they sold, they planted, they married—planning for **years of peace and prosperity**. They were taken by **surprise**, caught **off guard**, caught totally **unawares** when the door of the ark closed. Yet only when the flood swept them all away did they realize that they were lost. Jesus compared this plight of the wicked with the coming of a thief in the night (Matthew 24:42, 43).

As a Thief in the Night

Let me illustrate the scenario. Imagine a family that has **gone to bed** and is sound asleep at midnight. They did not lock the door of the house because they were sure that the thief would not come on that particular night. However, at midnight the thief comes and finds the **door unlocked**. He steals the jewelry (obviously not a Seventh-day Adventist household!), the video camera, the DVD player, the television, money and other miscellaneous items. The thief has caught the family **unprepared** and off guard. The thief took them **by surprise** and yet they were **unaware** that the thief had visited them because they were sleeping. It is only in the morning when they wake up that they realize that the thief has robbed them but then it is too late.

In a sense, they were **surprised twice**. The first time was when the thief came. They were taken by surprise but at this point, they **did not know it**. The second time they realize that they were taken by surprise when the thief came but they cannot do anything about it.

Close of Probation

The same type of scenario will transpire in conjunction with the **second coming**. The close of probation will catch the inhabitants of the **world by surprise, off guard, unprepared**. However, at this point, the people will be

unaware that the door has closed because they are **spiritually asleep**. The thief came and they were **unaware**. The wicked will only come to a realization that they are lost when they see Jesus coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory but then it will be too late to do anything about it. Too late they will realize that Jesus has **come like a thief** to close the door of probation and they have been found wanting and they will be **taken away by a flood of fire** (see II Peter 3:10-14) while the righteous will be left or will survive.

The Great Controversy

In The Great Controversy, p. 491, **Ellen White** appeals to the flood story and Matthew 24 to describe the climactic moment when the door of human probation will close. She first describes how the righteous and the wicked will live **side by side** on the earth after probation's door has closed:

*"The **righteous and the wicked** will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state--men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, **all unconscious** that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above."*

*"**Before the Flood**, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, **knowing not** that their doom was fixed, continued their careless, pleasure-loving life and mocked the warnings of impending judgment. "So," says the Savior, "shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:39. **Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief**, will come the decisive hour which marks the **fixing of every man's destiny**, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men."*

Testimonies for the Church

In another place, Ellen White offers a **profound analysis** of the words of Jesus in Mark 13:35-37. She first quotes these verses and then explains:

*"We are waiting and watching for the **return of the Master**, who is to bring the morning, lest **coming suddenly** He find us sleeping."*

The question is, what does **Ellen White mean** when she says that we are 'waiting and watching for the **return** of the Master'. Is she saying that God's people are waiting and watching for the **second coming** of Jesus? Absolutely not! She continues:

*“What time is here referred to? **Not** to the revelation of Christ in the clouds of heaven to find a people asleep. **No**; but to His return from His ministration in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, when He lays off His priestly attire and clothes Himself with garments of vengeance, and when the mandate goes forth: ‘He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.’”*

Ellen White then explains the meaning of **Revelation 22:11**:

*“When Jesus **ceases to plead** for man, the cases of all are **forever decided**. This is the time of reckoning with His servants. To those who have neglected the preparation of purity and holiness, which fits them to be waiting ones to welcome their Lord, the sun sets in gloom and darkness, and rises not again. **Probation closes**; Christ’s **intercessions cease** in heaven.”*

She then tells us why many of God’s own people will be taken by surprise when probation closes. Notice the words in bold:

*“This time finally **comes suddenly** upon all, and those who have **neglected** to purify their souls by obeying the truth are found sleeping. They became **weary** of waiting and watching; they became **indifferent** in regard to the coming of their Master. They **longed not** for His appearing, and thought there was no need of such continued, persevering watching. They had been disappointed in their expectations and might be again. They concluded that there **was time enough** yet to arouse. They would be sure not to lose the opportunity of securing an **earthly treasure**. It would be safe to get all of this world they could and in securing this object, they **lost all anxiety and interest** in the appearing of the Master. They became **indifferent** and **careless**, as though His coming were yet in the distance. But while their interest was buried up in their worldly gains, the work closed in the heavenly sanctuary, and they were unprepared.” *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 2, pp. 190, 191*

The William McKinley Episode

*“I am not able to sleep past two o'clock A.M. I am awakened often at one o'clock at night with my heart drawn out in tender sympathy for the bereaved wife of President McKinley. **One is taken and the other left**. The strong one upon whose large affections she could ever lean, **is not [the one who is taken]**. While he was*

in health, fulfilling the duties of his office, an apparently friendly hand was extended, which President McKinley was ready to grasp. That Judas hand held a pistol and shot the President. Amid scenes of pleasant life and enjoyment came sorrow and sadness and suffering and woe. How could he do this terrible murderous action?

*My heart is in deep sympathy for **the one who is left**. I have been repeating over and over, Oh, how short come all words of human sympathy. There are thousands that would speak words to relieve if possible the breaking heart, but they do not understand how feeble are words to comfort **the bereaved one**, who in her febleness ever found a human heart in her husband, full of tenderness and compassion and love. The strong human arm upon which the frail suffering wife leaned, **is not**." Welfare Ministry, p. 338*

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #10: A Review of Israel’s History

Stage #1 (1445 B. C.): From Sinai to the Captivity

Exodus 19:1-6: God made a covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai:

“In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai. ² For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain. ³ And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ⁴ ‘You have seen [God’s goodness should motivate them] what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. ⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

Exodus 19:7, 8: Israel responds by promising to obey God’s voice:

“So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the Lord commanded him. ⁸ Then all the people answered together and said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do.” So Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord.”

Exodus 40:34: The Shekinah enters the tabernacle in the wilderness and God dwells with Israel:

*“Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord **filled the tabernacle.**”*

Solomon’s Temple

Around the year **960 B. C.** a more **permanent house** was built for the Lord. Solomon built the temple in the city of Jerusalem and God **came to dwell** among His people in the Jerusalem Temple.

I Kings 8:10, 11: The **Shekinah enters** the Temple in the days of **Solomon:**

*“And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, ¹¹ so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the **glory of the Lord filled the house** of the Lord.”*

800 Years of Rebellion

2 Chronicles 36:14-16: Israel was **rebellious for a period of 800** years (see Daniel 9:4-6, 8-10) even though God **sent messengers** day and night to them. The messengers were the **prophets** such as **Jeremiah:**

*“Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people **transgressed** more and more, according to all the **abominations [key word]** of the nations, and **defiled** the house of the Lord which He had consecrated in Jerusalem. ¹⁵ And the Lord God of their fathers **sent warnings** to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because **He had compassion** on His people and on His dwelling place. ¹⁶ But **they mocked** the messengers of God, **despised** His words, and **scoffed** at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was **no remedy.**”*

Ezekiel 16:15 is a **graphic description** of the **apostasy of Israel:**

*“But you trusted in your own beauty, played **the harlot** because of your fame, and poured out your **harlotry** on everyone passing by who would have it.”*

Jerusalem Judged

Ezekiel 1:4 592 BC: God comes from the north to **judge Jerusalem** for the **abominations** (key word) that are being committed in the city. Read **Ezekiel 8:16, 17.** These **abominations** would lead to **desolation.** The word

'desolation' means the **end of ordered society** both **politically** and **religiously** as well as the **destruction** of the city.

The **reversal** of the desolation would not only be **to build** the physical city but to **reestablish** its **political** and **religious** institutions:

"Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire."

Ezekiel 9:1-6: The righteous are **separated** from the wicked in the Temple:

*"Then He called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, "Let those who have charge over **the city** draw near, each with a deadly weapon in his hand." ² And suddenly six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his **battle-ax** in his hand. One man among them was **clothed with linen** and had a writer's inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the **bronze altar [in the court]**. ³ Now the **glory of the God of Israel had gone up** from the cherub, where it had been, **to the threshold** of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's inkhorn at his side; ⁴ and the Lord said to him: "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put **a mark on the foreheads** of the men who **sigh and cry** over all the **abominations [a key word]** that are done within it. ⁵ To the others He said in my hearing, "Go **after him** through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. ⁶ Utterly slay **old** and **young men, maidens** and **little children** and **women**; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and **begin at My sanctuary**." So they began with **the elders** who were before the temple."*

The Shekinah Departs

Ezekiel 10:19: When the **judgment separation is finished** the *Shekinah* glory **departs** from the temple and **lingers** at the East Gate of the Temple:

*"And the cherubim lifted their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight. When they went out, **the wheels** were beside them; and they stood at the door of the **east gate of the Lord's house**, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them."*

Ezekiel 11:22, 23: The *Shekinah* then **leaves the Temple** and the city and lingers on the **Mount of Olives** and then leaves. The city and temple are **now desolate because of the abominations**. This is the **abomination of desolation**:

*“So the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was high above them. ²³ And the glory of the Lord **went up from the midst of the city** and **stood on the mountain**, which is on the **east side** of the city.”*

Desolation of Jerusalem

2 Chronicles 36:17-21: The **desolation** of Jerusalem comes when the **temple**, the **city** and the **walls** are **destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar**. Jerusalem has ceased to function as a religious and political entity:

*“Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their **young men** with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on **young man** or **virgin**, on the **aged** or the **weak**; He gave them all into his hand. ¹⁸ And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all these he took to Babylon. ¹⁹ Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions. ²⁰ And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons [**this was not the end of the theocracy. After the seventy years the Jewish nation would receive a second chance**] **until the rule of the kingdom of Persia**, ²¹ to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of **Jeremiah**, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill **seventy years**.”*

Stage #2: this is the Period of the 70-Week Prophecy

2 Chronicles 36:22, 23: After the seventy years God restored the Jews to their land. They rebuilt the Temple, the city and the walls and their political and religious institutions began to function again. God gave the nation a **second chance**:

*“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia [536 B. C.], that the word of the Lord by the mouth of **Jeremiah might be fulfilled**, the **Lord stirred up** the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a **proclamation** throughout all his kingdom, and also put it **in writing**, saying, ²³ Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven **has given me**. In addition, **He has commanded me** to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the Lord his God be with him, and **let him go up!**”*

The Temple Finished

Haggai 2:2, 3: The **post-exilic temple** did not have the glory of the temple that was built by Solomon. In fact, the **Shekinah did not enter this temple** when it was finished:

*“Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying: ³ ‘Who is left among you who **saw this temple in its former glory**? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes **as nothing**?’”*

Haggai 2:6-9: Yet **prophecy predicted** that this latter Temple would far **surpass the glory** of the temple that Solomon built. The Jews today are still **trying to understand** this prophecy because the Temple was **never physically as glorious** as the one built by Solomon:

*“For thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; ⁷ and I will shake all nations, and **[the Desire of all nations will come]** they shall come to the **Desire of All Nations**, and I will **fill this temple with glory**,’ says the Lord of hosts. ⁸ ‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts. ⁹ ‘The glory of this **latter temple** shall be **greater than the former**,’ says the Lord of hosts. ‘And in this place I will give **peace**,’ says the Lord of hosts.”*

During the period of the **seventy weeks**, God sent many **additional messengers** to Israel—men like Haggai, Zechariah, Joshua, Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Malachi and finally John the Baptist. Yet when Jesus came, the leaders of the Jewish nation **were oblivious** to His mission. They did not really understand **why they existed and so they rejected the Messiah**.

Stage #3: This is the last week of the seventy-week prophecy

John 1:14: Fulfills the prophecy of Haggai:

*“And the Word became flesh and **dwelt** [the word means ‘**tabernacled**’ or ‘**dwelt in a tent**’. This brings to mind **Exodus 25:8** where God says that Israel should build Him a **sanctuary** that He may **dwell among them**. There are **three common words** between **Exodus 25:8** and **John 1:14**: **Tent, dwell and among**. And also later the **glory of the Lord** filled the tabernacle (**Exodus 40:35**) **among us**, and we beheld **His glory**, the **glory** as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

Luke 12:27-28: The **Jews loved to reminisce** about how **great Solomon** and his temple were but Jesus said:

*“Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, **even Solomon** in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”*

In the **parallel passage** in Matthew Jesus said about Himself: “one greater than Solomon is here.” (**Matthew 12:42**).

Several times **during His ministry**, Jesus **taught in the temple courts**. However, He was **opposed tooth and nail** by the religious leaders. Now we must move to the end of Jesus’ ministry.

Luke 19:37, 38: Jesus, **the Shekinah, descends** toward the Temple from the **Mt. of Olives** and enters the city by way of the **Golden Gate**:

*“Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the **Mount of Olives**, the whole multitude of the disciples began to **rejoice and praise** God with a **loud voice** for all the mighty works they had seen, ³⁸ saying: “Blessed is **the King** who comes in the name of the Lord!’ **Peace** [the very word that was used in Haggai] in heaven and glory in the highest!”*

Luke 19:47-48: The religious leaders **tried to destroy Him**:

*“And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people **sought to destroy Him**, ⁴⁸ and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.”*

Matthew 21:12, 13: Then Jesus **entered** the 'temple of God' and called the temple 'my house':

*"Then Jesus went **into the temple of God** and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹³ And He said to them, "It is written, **My house** shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves."*

For three chapters (**Matthew 21-23**), Jesus, the *Shekinah* in person **now teaches** in the temple. His **main theme** was to discuss the **history and rebellion of Israel** and its result. He does this through a series of **parables**.

- **John the Baptist** said that God would cut down and throw into the fire **every tree** that did not bear fruit (Matthew 3).
- In **Luke 13:6-9** (by this time **three years have passed** since John the Baptist began his preaching about the tree) the tree has **not yet borne fruit** but God gives the command to allow it to remain for **another year** to see if it would bear fruit.
- A year later, Jesus curses the fig tree because it has **no fruit**.

Matthew 21:18, 19: The **fig tree** episode:

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

Matthew 21:33-43: Jesus tells the parable of the vineyard workers. Notice the **three stages** of Israel's history here. Underline that the message **now goes to the Gentiles**. This is God's **new nation**:

*"Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner [**God the Father**] who planted a vineyard [**the city of Jerusalem**] and set a hedge around it [**the Law**], dug a winepress in it and built a tower [**the temple**]. And he leased it to vinedressers [**Israel**] and went into a far country. ³⁴ Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent **his servants** [**the first chance, the prophets, Amos 3:7**] to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. ³⁵ And the vinedressers took his servants, **beat one, killed one, and stoned another**. ³⁶ Again he sent **other servants** [**the second chance: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, John the Baptist**],*

more than the first, and they did **likewise to them**.³⁷ Then **last of all [the last opportunity, a sense of finality]** he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'³⁸ But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves: '**This is the heir**. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'³⁹ So they took him and **cast him out of the vineyard [Jesus died outside Jerusalem]** and **killed him**.⁴⁰ "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, **what will he do** to those vinedressers?"⁴¹ They said to Him: "He will **destroy those wicked men miserably**, and lease his vineyard to **other vinedressers** who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."⁴² Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the **builders rejected** has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"⁴³ "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God **will be** taken from you and **given to a nation** bearing the fruits of it."

Matthew 22:1-14: Jesus tells the parable of the great banquet **in the Temple** again (get the DVD of this in the **Robe of Life** series).

Matthew 23:29-33: Jesus concludes His teaching in the temple with the **woes** on the Scribes and Pharisees:

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous,³⁰ and say: 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'³¹ "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are **sons of those who murdered the prophets**.³² **Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt [to fill the cup means that mercy has come to an end—see Genesis 15:16; Revelation 15:7]**.³³ **Serpents [serpents are born from serpents], brood of vipers!** How can you escape the condemnation of hell?"

Matthew 23:34-36: Even after the death of Christ, mercy would linger as if longing to save the nation:

"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 23:37, 38: Your house is left onto you **desolate** because you rejected the Messiah:

*"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who **kills the prophets** and stones **those who are sent** to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were **not willing!** ³⁸ See! **Your** house is left to you **desolate** [**critically important word**]."*

Matthew 24:1: Jesus, the *Shekinah* **leaves** the Temple:

*"Then Jesus **went out** and **departed** from the temple [**just like the Shekinah did at the first temple**], and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple."*

Matthew 24:2, 3: Jesus **lingers on the Mt. of Olives, east of Jerusalem** [**just like the Shekinah did at the first temple**] Jesus speaks about the **destruction or desolation** of Jerusalem:

*"And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, **not one stone shall be left here upon another**, that shall not be thrown down."*

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

Matthew 24:15: When the **abomination of desolation** was seen then **desolation was near**. This abomination of desolation is the one spoken of by **Daniel the prophet**. This connects with **Daniel 9**:

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

Luke 21:20: The abomination of desolation was the **Roman armies** surrounding Jerusalem:

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

Luke 19:41-44: This was the last chance for the Hebrew Theocracy:

*"Now as He drew near, He saw the city and **wept over it**, ⁴² saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For days will come upon you when*

*your enemies will **build an embankment around you**, surround you and close you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and **level you**, and your children within you, **to the ground**; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know **the time of your visitation**."*

Review of 3 stages

Stage #1:

Taken out of captivity in Egypt and make a **covenant at Sinai**. **Apostasy for 800 years** (the mingled with the nations and assimilated their evil conduct) and the result was the **Babylonian captivity for 70 years**.

Stage #2:

Taken out of captivity and return to temple, walls, city and government. **Seventy weeks probation** is given to the Jewish nation. This is a **second chance**. They responded by **isolating themselves** and becoming **legalistic**.

Stage #3:

God sends His Son as the **last resort**. The parable says, "**last of all** He sent His Son".

Two sins compared

*"The **great sin of the Jews** was their **rejection of Christ**; the **great sin of the Christian world** would be their **rejection of the law of God**, the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. The precepts of Jehovah would be despised and set at nought." GC, pp. 22, 23*

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #11: Israel and the Church

Multitudes accept the Christian Faith

Acts 6:7: After the Day of Pentecost, multitudes left Judaism and joined the Christian Church:

“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

Acts 6:8: Stephen was one of the instruments of this phenomenal church growth:

“And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.”

A Promising Prospect

Saul of Tarsus was no featherweight. He was an intellectual giant and a promising prospect with a brilliant future in Judaism. He was young, energetic and relentless. He had tunnel vision:

Saul believed that God chose the Jewish nation irrevocably and unconditionally and woe to those who thought otherwise! For Saul, the preservation of the Jewish religion was the top priority. His entire religion was Jewish centered. In his own words:

Acts 22:3:

*"I am indeed **a Jew**, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the **feet of Gamaliel**, taught according to the **strictness of our fathers' law**, and was **zealous toward God** as you all are today."*

John 11:47-50: Saul **persecuted** the church for the **same reason** that the religious leaders persecuted Christ. **Caiaphas** feared that Christianity would grow and the **Romans would take away** his nation:

*"Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said: "What shall we do? For this Man **works many signs**.⁴⁸ If we let Him alone like this, **everyone will believe in Him**, and the Romans will come and **take away both our place and nation**."⁴⁹ And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all,⁵⁰ nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that **one man should die** for the people, and not that the **whole nation should perish**."*

Acts 26:9-11: Like his **tutors**, Saul became a **persecutor of the church**:

*"Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things **contrary to the name of Jesus** of Nazareth. ¹⁰ This I also did in Jerusalem and many of the saints I **shut up in prison**, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were **put to death**, I cast **my vote against them**.¹¹ And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them **to blaspheme**; and being exceedingly **enraged** against them, I **persecuted them** even to foreign cities."*

Stephen's Death

Acts 7:57, 58: Saul was present at **Stephen's death** and for him this was a **life-changing** event:

*"Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord;⁵⁸ and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a **young man named Saul**."*

Acts 22:20: Even more, Saul was **not only present** at Stephen's death; he **was the mastermind** and **ringleader** behind it:

"And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'

Saul's Expedition to Damascus

Acts 9:1, 2: In order to quiet his conscience over Stephen's death, Saul went on an expedition to destroy the followers of Jesus and save the Jewish nation from ruin. The trip was a long one.

He would have gone to northern Israel, across Lebanon and into Syria:

"Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."

Acts 9:3-6: As he approached Damascus from the southwest he had an experience that was to change his life and his theology forever. He had a personal encounter with Jesus!

Saul discovered that by persecuting the body of Christ he was actually persecuting Christ because Christ is the head and the church is His body. He had been kicking against the pricks of his conscience from the time that Stephen had been stoned. He knew deep in his heart that Stephen was in the right and he was in the wrong:

"As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴ Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" ⁵ And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." ⁶ So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

Incorporated into Christ

Acts 22:16-18: God instructed Ananias to go to the house of Judas to baptize Saul into Christ:

*"But the Lord said to him [to Ananias], "Go [to the house of Judas], for he is a **chosen vessel** of Mine to **bear My name** before Gentiles, kings, and the **children of Israel**.¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for **My name's sake**."¹⁷ And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may **receive your sight** and **be filled with the Holy Spirit**."¹⁸ Immediately there fell from his eyes something **like scales**, and he received **his sight at once**; and he arose and **was baptized**."*

Galatians 3:26, 27:

*"All those who have been baptized into Christ, have **put on Christ**."*

Whereas Saul had considered himself a **bona fide son of Abraham** before he accepted Christ, in fact, **he was not**. It was not until his baptism **into Christ** that he became the **seed of Abraham** and an **inheritor** of the **promises** that God made to Abraham:

*"If you are Christ's, **then you are Abraham's seed** and heirs according to the promise."*

The circumcised Saul later taught that **baptism took the place** of circumcision as the rite of incorporation into God's Israel.

Change of Focus

Acts 9:22: The **entire focus** of Saul's theology now changed from **literal Israel to Christ:**

*"But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this **Jesus is the Christ [that is, the Messiah]**."*

Saul's encounter with Jesus on the Road to Damascus had a **deep impact on him**. He told the story **twice** in the book of Acts (Acts 22, 26) and Luke told it **once** (Acts 9).

Philippians 3:3-11: **Later** when Paul wrote to the Philippians, he reminisced about his **conversion experience**. He had thought that his **Jewishness guaranteed** him salvation but now he realized that his ethnicity **counted for nothing** before God:

*“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, **rejoice in Christ Jesus**, and have no confidence in **the flesh**,⁴ though I also might have confidence **in the flesh**. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence **in the flesh**, I more so:⁵ circumcised the **eighth day**, of the stock of **Israel**, of the tribe of **Benjamin**, a **Hebrew** of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a **Pharisee**;⁶ concerning zeal, **persecuting the church**; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, **blameless**.⁷ However, what things **were** gain to me, these I have counted loss **for Christ**.⁸ Yet indeed I also count **all things loss** for the excellence of the **knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as **rubbish**, that I may **gain Christ**⁹ and be found **in Him**, not having my **own righteousness**, which is from the law, but that which is through **faith in Christ**, the righteousness which is from **God by faith**;¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the **resurrection from the dead**.”*

I Corinthians 11:22-28: The shift in Saul’s focus from Israel to Christ now made him **willing to suffer** and **even die** for the cause of his Master:

*“Are they **Hebrews**? So am I. Are they **Israelites**? So am I. Are they the seed of **Abraham**? So am I.²³ Are they **ministers** of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I **am more**: in **labors** more abundant, in **stripes** above measure, in **prisons** more frequently, in **deaths** often.²⁴ From the Jews **five times** I received forty stripes minus one.²⁵ **Three times** I was beaten with rods; **once** I was stoned; **three times** I was shipwrecked; **a night and a day** I have been in the deep;²⁶ in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: **my deep concern for all the churches**.”*

Saul discovered a revolutionary truth. God has **only one true people**—those who have **accepted Jesus Christ** as Savior and Lord. God does not have **two mutually separable** peoples, the **literal Jews** and the **Christian Church**. There is only **one people** of God not defined by **ethnicity, nationality, social status** or **gender**. They are the people of God because of their **relationship to Jesus Christ**. Let’s notice how the **oneness** of God’s people shines in the writings of Paul and the rest of the Scriptures.

One Woman

Dispensationalists believe and teach that God has **two peoples** with a separate plan for each. However, there is only **one woman** that illustrates the church in both the Old and New Testaments.:

Revelation 12:1, 2, 5, 6:

*“Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. ² Then being **with child**, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. ⁵ She bore a **male Child** who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was **caught up to God and His throne**. ⁶ Then the **woman fled into the wilderness [same woman]**, where she has a place prepared by God that they should feed her there **one thousand two hundred and sixty days**.”*

The **number 12** twelve is vitally important because it is the **number of God’s people**—Israel. The story of **Acts 1** reveals the importance of the number 12.

*“As in the Old Testament the **twelve** patriarchs stood as representatives of Israel, so the **twelve** apostles stand as representatives of the gospel church.” AA, p. 19*

One Fold and one Shepherd

John 10:16: Jesus has only **one fold**, not two:

*“And **other sheep** I have which are **not of this fold**; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be **one flock** and **one shepherd**.”*

John 11:51, 52: Jesus gathers **Jews and Gentiles** into one fold:

*“Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and **not for that nation only**, but also that He would gather **together in one** the **children of God** who were **scattered** abroad.”*

One Israel

Romans 2:28, 29: God has only **one Israel**:

*“For he is not a Jew who is one **outwardly**, nor is circumcision that which is **outward** in the flesh; ²⁹ but he is a Jew who is one **inwardly**; and circumcision is that of the **heart**, in the **Spirit**, not in the **letter**; whose praise is not from **men** but from **God**.”*

Romans 9:6-8: God has only **one true Israel** that is defined by its **relationship to Christ**, not by its relationship to Israel, the **son of Isaac**:

*“But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are **not all Israel who are of Israel**, ⁷ **nor are they all children** because they are the **seed of Abraham**; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” ⁸ That is, those who are the **children of the flesh [literal Jews]**, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise [**spiritual Jews**] are counted as the seed.”*

Geography, ethnicity and nationality do not define **who is a Jew**. Jesus is the only faithful Israelite and when we receive Him as our Savior, we become Israelites indeed in Him!

Galatians 3:16, 26-29:

*“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ. ²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have **put on Christ**. ²⁸ There is neither **Jew nor Greek**, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for **you are all one** in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And **if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise.”*

One Body

Christ, the Head, has only **one body** [of Christ] that is composed of both **Jews and Gentiles**:

Ephesians 2:13-18:

*“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were **far off** have been brought **near** by the **blood of Christ**. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has **made both one**, and has broken down the **middle wall** of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself **one new man** from the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in **one body** through the cross, thereby putting*

to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we **both have access** by **one Spirit** to the Father.”

I Corinthians 12:13:

“For by **one Spirit** we were all baptized into **one body**--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into **one Spirit**.”

Ephesians 3:6:

“... that the Gentiles should be **fellow heirs**, of the **same body**, and partakers of His promise **in Christ** through the gospel.”

Colossians 1:18, 24:

“And He is the head of the **body, the church**, Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. ²⁴ I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of **His body, which is the church**.”

One City

God has only **one chosen city** composed of both **Old** and **New Testament** saints. It is the **Lamb's City** and the Lamb is its Light!

Revelation 21:2: The holy city is **Christ's bride**:

“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as **a bride adorned for her husband**.”

Revelation 21:12: The **gates**:

“Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the **twelve tribes of the children of Israel**.”

Revelation 21:14: The foundations of the **wall**:

“Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the **twelve apostles of the Lamb**.”

Hebrews 11:9, 10, 13-16: Even the **Old Testament saints** looked forward to the **heavenly New Jerusalem**. They knew that the earthly Jerusalem was only a **small-scale type** of a far greater heavenly reality just as the **earthly**

sanctuary was an earthly small scale model of the greater and real sanctuary in heaven:

*“By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the **city which has foundations**, whose **builder and maker is God**. ¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were **strangers and pilgrims** on the earth. ¹⁴ For those who say such things declare plainly that they **seek a homeland**. ¹⁵ And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But now they desire **a better, that is, a heavenly country**. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has **prepared a city** for them.”*

Conclusion: The city is composed of the **redeemed of all ages** because the names of the **twelve tribes** are on the gates and the names of the **twelve apostles** are on the foundations. God does not have two separate plans for two mutually exclusive peoples.

One Tree

Paul illustrates the oneness of God’s people with an **olive tree**:

Romans 11:20-23, 25-27:

*“Well said. Because of **unbelief, they were broken off** and **you stand by faith**. Do not be haughty, but fear. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. ²² Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. ²³ And they also, if they do not continue in **unbelief, will be grafted in**, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁵ For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to **Israel** until the fullness of the **Gentiles** has come in. ²⁶ And so all **Israel will be saved**, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; ²⁷ For this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins.”*

In Romans 11, the olive tree has several **different types of branches** but they all belong to the **same tree**:

- Some of the **natural branches remain** attached to the tree (the literal Jews who **believed** in Jesus).
- Some of the **natural branches** are **cut off** (the literal Jews who **rejected** Jesus).
- Some of the **natural branches** are grafted **into the tree once more** (Literal Jews who at first **rejected** Jesus but then **accepted** Him).
- The **wild olive branches** are **grafted into** the tree (**Gentiles** who believe in Jesus).
- Some of the **wild olive branches** can potentially be **cut off** the tree (Gentiles who **abandon** their relationship with Jesus).
- **Verses 20 and 23** make it clear that believers in Jesus are attached to the tree while unbelievers are not. The **root and the trunk** of the tree symbolize Jesus. Those who are connected with the trunk and the root, **will bear fruit**.

One Banquet Table

There will be only **one banquet** table in the kingdom for all of the redeemed and both Jews and Gentiles will sit at it:

Matthew 8:11-12: Immediately before this passage is the story of the **Roman centurion's servant** whom Jesus healed:

*"And I say to you that many will come from **east and west** [Gentiles], and sit down [Jesus says: '**at my table**' in Luke 22:30] with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven [literal Israel]. ¹² But the **sons of the kingdom** [the **unbelieving Jews**] will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

One Spiritual Temple

God has only **one spiritual temple** that is composed of the **apostles** and the **prophets** and Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone:

Ephesians 2:19-22:

*“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 joined 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.”*

This has **profound implications**. The temple in which the antichrist sits is not the literal Jerusalem temple but rather the spiritual temple, the church.

One Song

The redeemed from every nation, kindred, tongue and people will sing only **one song**—the Song of **Moses** and the **Lamb**.

Revelation 15:3-4:

*“They sing the song of **Moses**, the servant of God, and the song of the **Lamb**, saying: “Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! ⁴ Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.”*

One Father

The redeemed have only **one Father**, the Father of Jesus Christ. Those **receive Jesus** as Savior and Lord become **brothers and sisters** of Jesus and because they are brothers and sisters of Jesus they are sons and daughters of God as well (Hebrews 2:11).

Galatians 3:26:

*“For you are all **sons of God** through **faith in Christ Jesus**.”*

John 1:12-13: Because we become **brothers and sisters of Jesus** we are also sons and daughters of God:

*“But as many as **received Him**, to them He gave the right to become **children of God**, to those who **believe in His name**:¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

John 14:6:

*“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father** except **through Me**.”*

John 8:32-44:

*“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”³³ They answered Him, “We are **Abraham's descendants**, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, ‘You will be made free?’”³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.³⁵ And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.³⁶ Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.³⁷ “I know that **you are Abraham's descendants [literally speaking that is]**, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.³⁸ I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with **your father**.”³⁹ They answered and said to Him, “**Abraham is our father**.” Jesus said to them, “**If you were Abraham's children [which means that they were not]**, you would do the works of Abraham.⁴⁰ But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this.⁴¹ You do the deeds of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father-- God.”⁴² Jesus said to them, “**If God were your Father**, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.⁴³ Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.⁴⁴ You are of **your father the devil**, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”*

Galatians 4: According to Paul, the Jews of his day were descendants of Hagar and Ishmael while the **believing Gentiles** were the children of **Sarah and Isaac**. The Jews who rejected Jesus were **slaves** and the Gentiles who accepted Him were **free**!

2 Corinthians 3:13-16: Moses **covered his face** with a veil because the people did not want to **see the glory** of the Lord on his face. In the same way when the writings of Moses were read in the synagogue, the Jews had a veil upon their hearts because they did not want to see the glory of Jesus in the writings of Moses.

One High Priest with one Breastplate

Aaron the high priest in Israel had a **breastplate with twelve stones** that represented the twelve tribes of Israel (Exodus 28:21). Aaron was a type of Jesus who as high priest (Hebrews 8:1, 2) also has a breastplate with twelve stones that represent the twelve apostles. There is **continuity** between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church.

Conclusions

Preachers today believe just **as Saul of Tarsus did** before his conversion. They **jump** from the Old Testament to the **end times** and totally **bypass Jesus**. They say that God chose literal Israel **unconditionally** and **irrevocably** and that all the **promises** that God must **literally fulfill** all the promises He made to literal Israel. They believe in a prophetic scenario will involve **literal Israel** in **literal Jerusalem** in the **literal temple** with reestablished **literal sacrifices**, with a **literal personal antichrist** sitting in **the literal temple** for a **literal three and a half** years. **Literal enemies** will come from the **literal north** and **east** wielding **literal weapons** to wage a **literal war** against **literal Jerusalem** and all of this, **outside of Christ**.

In the process, the **real antichrist in Rome** and his **false prophet in the United States** remain hidden from view!

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #12: The Parable of the Fig Tree

Introduction: The Futurist Theory

Matthew 24:32-35: Toward the end of His discourse on the signs of the second coming:

“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors! ³⁴ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”

Dispensationalists say that the fig tree here is a symbol of Israel and the budding is a prophecy concerning the reestablishment of Israel as a nation in 1948. They teach that this is the greatest sign that the coming of Jesus is imminent, even at the door. The further conquests in 1967, further fuel this concept. So we need to take carefully examine these verses to determine if it their interpretation is correct.

Vine and Fig Tree Symbolize Israel

First, it is true that the fig tree and the vine are associated with literal Israel in the Old Testament. We can see this clearly in the following text:

Hosea 9:10:

*"I found **Israel** like **grapes** [see also **Isaiah 5**] in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the first-fruits on the **fig tree** in its first season. But they went to Baal Peor, and separated themselves to that shame; they became an abomination like the thing they loved."*

As we shall see, in the **New Testament** Israel is also associated with the **fig tree** and the **vineyard**.

Part 1: Israel as a Tree—the message of John the Baptist

Matthew 3:8-10 describes the preaching of **John the Baptist**. John is preaching **six months before** the beginning of Christ's ministry. John's mission was to **prepare the way** for the first coming of Jesus. Several highlighted items in the following passage will be repeated in **parts 2 and 3** below:

*"Therefore bear fruits worthy of **repentance**,⁹ and do not think to say to yourselves: 'We have **Abraham as our father**.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these **stones [the gentiles]**.¹⁰ And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore **every tree** which does not bear **good fruit** is **cut down** and thrown into the **fire**."*

Part 2: Israel as a Tree—the first two and a half years of Christ's ministry

Luke 13:1-9: The parable in these verses was told by Jesus **two and a half years** into His ministry (.5 plus 2.5 = 3). We can immediately discern the **similarity** between this parable and the message of John the Baptist (**see part 1**). I have added some **explanatory notes** in brackets that will us understand the meaning of the parable:

*"There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.² And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?³ I tell you, no; but unless you **repent** you will all likewise **perish**.⁴ Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem?⁵ I tell you, no; but unless you **repent** you will all likewise **perish**."⁶ He also spoke this parable: "A **certain man [God the Father]** had a*

***fig tree [Israel] planted in his vineyard [the world], and he came seeking fruit [the fruit of the Spirit] on it and found none.** ⁷ Then he said to the **keeper of his vineyard [Jesus], 'Look, for three years [John preached six months and Jesus preached two and a half years] I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down [just what John said]; why does it use up the ground?'** ⁸But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone **this year [last year of Jesus' ministry] also, until I dig around it and fertilize it.** ⁹ And if it bears **fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.**'"*

When the parable ends, we **do not know** if the fig tree produced fruit during the last year. The story was **still transpiring** at the time that Jesus told it, just as was the story of the older sibling in the narrative of the **prodigal son**.

Part 3: Israel as a Tree—the last week of Christ's earthly ministry

Matthew 21:17-19: This event is taking place just a **few days before the death of Jesus**. The fig tree of **Luke 13:1-6** had **not yet borne fruit** even though the close of its probation was drawing near:

*"Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there. ¹⁸ Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was **hungry**. ¹⁹ And seeing a **fig tree** by the road, He came to it and found **nothing on it but leaves**, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you **ever again**." And immediately the fig tree **withered away**."*

Mark 11:12-14 has the **parallel passage** to **Matthew 21:17-19**:

*"Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was **hungry**. ¹³ And seeing from afar a fig tree having **leaves**, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. And when He came to it, He found **nothing but leaves**, for it was **not the season** for figs. ¹⁴ In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you **ever again**." And His disciples heard it."*

Mark 11:20-21: The fig tree withered away **by the roots**. Once **the root of a tree dies**, it is finished!

*"Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up **from the roots**. ²¹ And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has **withered away**."*

God cut down and **burnt** in the year **70 AD** because it **bore no fruit**. If the fig tree dried up **by the roots**, how could it have sprouted to new life in **1948**?

Israel as a Vineyard

The **vineyard** is also symbolic of **Israel**. Notice the following parable that is also in **chapter 21 of Matthew**.

Matthew 21:33-46:

*"Hear another parable: There was a certain **landowner [God the Father]** who planted a **vineyard [Israel]** and set a **hedge** around it [**the law**], dug a winepress in it and built a **tower [the temple]**. And he leased it to **vinedressers [the Jewish leaders]** and went into a **far country [heaven]**.³⁴ Now when vintage-time **drew near**, he sent his servants to the vinedressers [**before the Babylonian captivity**], that they might receive its fruit.³⁵ And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another [**what they did to the prophets**].³⁶ Again he sent **other servants [after the captivity until John the Baptist]**, more than the first, and they did likewise to them.³⁷ Then **last of all he sent his son [Jesus]** to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'³⁸ "But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him [**the death of Christ**] and seize his inheritance.'³⁹ "So they took him and cast him **out of the vineyard [Jesus died outside of Jerusalem]** and killed him.⁴⁰ Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?"⁴¹ They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to **other vinedressers [the Gentiles]** who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."⁴² Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"⁴³ "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be **taken from you [the kingdom no longer belongs to literal Israel]** and given to a nation [**ethne**] bearing the **fruits** of it.⁴⁴ And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."⁴⁵ Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was **speaking of them**."*

Matthew 24 and the Fig Tree

Now let's **go back** to **Matthew 24** and determine if the budding of the fig tree represents the **miraculous rebirth** of the Jewish Nation. In Matthew 24:32, 33 **the budding of the fig tree** is only **one of the signs** of the imminent coming of Jesus. The sum total of **all the signs** in Matthew 24 is what shows that the coming of Jesus is even at the door:

Matthew 24:32, 33:

*“As you see the fig tree bud it is a sign that the **summer is near**. In the **same way [he is using an analogy]** when you see **all these things [not only the sprouting of the fig tree]** know that it is near, even at the doors.”*

Jesus is not saying that the budding of the fig tree is **the great sign** of the imminence of His coming. He is saying that the **accumulation** of **all the signs** will help them know that the end is near.

Furthermore, in the parallel passage of **Luke 21:29-31** we have additional details that help us understand what Jesus meant. Interestingly Jesus did **not single out the fig tree** as being particularly important over and above every other sign. He added: **“and all the trees.”** Jesus said, “when you see these **things [plural]** happening.” To paraphrase the words of Jesus: “When you see the fig tree and **all of the trees** bud you know that the summer is near. **Likewise**, when you see **all of these signs** you will know that the end is near:

Luke 21:29-31

*“Then He spoke to them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and **all the trees**. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see **these things** happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.”*

The Nathaniel Experience

John 1:43-48 describes the experience of **Nathanael** in his encounter with Jesus:

*"The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." ⁴⁶ And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an **Israelite indeed**, in whom is **no deceit!**" ⁴⁸ Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the **fig tree**, I saw you."*

If there are **Israelites indeed**, then there must be Israelites **not indeed**. The Greek word for "indeed" really means **genuine or real**. This is why the **NIV** translates the expression, "a **true** Israelite". This translation is further corroborated by the fact that the verse ends by saying that there was in Nathaniel no **pseudos**.

Why did Jesus single out Nathanael **as an Israelite indeed? Verse 49** provides the answer: What made Nathanael an Israelite indeed was that he confessed that Jesus was the Son of God, the King of Israel. What, then, is a true Israelite? One who acknowledges **Jesus Christ as the Messiah!**

Notice that Nathanael was an **Israelite** indeed and he was **under a fig tree** that was a recognized **symbol of Israel**. Thus in this passage we have the **symbol** and what the symbol **represents**. The Israelite indeed is sitting under a tree that represents Israel.

John 8 and True Israel

John 8:37-45: In this passage, Jesus contrasted genuine Israelites with **counterfeit ones:**

*"I know that you are **Abraham's descendants [literally]**, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. ³⁸ I speak what I have seen with **My Father**, and you do what you have seen with **your father**." ³⁹ They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "**If [He is implying that they were not] you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.** ⁴⁰ **But [the combination of "if... but" shows they are not children of Abraham] now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God.***

Abraham did not do this [you claim to be the seed of Abraham but you do not act like Him. He saw my day and rejoiced and you want to kill me]. ⁴¹ You do ***the deeds*** of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father--God." ⁴² Jesus said to them, "***If [once again He denies that they are the children of God because they reject Him] God were your Father [now He is denying that God is their Father], you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.*** ⁴³ Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. ⁴⁴ You are of ***your father the devil***, and the desires of ***your father*** you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it ***[they are Israelite liars unlike Nathanael and therefore they are the devil's children].***

What is notable in this passage is that the Jews were ***literally*** the children of Abraham but ***spiritually*** they were the devil's children. In one sense, they were children of Abraham but in another sense, they were not! The apostle Paul taught the same truth in the following passages:

Paul's Assessment

Romans 2:28, 29: An ***Israelite indeed*** receives Jesus as Messiah:

*"For he is not a Jew who is one ***outwardly***, nor is circumcision that which is ***outward*** in the flesh; ²⁹ but he is a Jew who is one ***inwardly***; and circumcision is that of the ***heart***, in the ***Spirit***, not in the ***letter***; whose ***praise*** is not from men but from God."*

Romans 9:6-8:

*"But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are ***not all Israel who are of Israel***, ⁷ ***nor are they all children*** because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." ⁸ That is, those who are the ***children of the flesh***, these are not the children of God; but the ***children of the promise*** are counted as the ***seed***."*

Galatians 3:26-29:

*“For you are all sons of God through faith in **Christ Jesus**.²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on **Christ**.²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all **one in Christ Jesus**.²⁹ And **if you are Christ's, then** you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*

Philippians 3:3-8 :

*“For **we are the circumcision**, who worship God in the **Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus** and have no **confidence in the flesh**,⁴ though I also **might** have confidence in the **flesh**. **If** anyone else thinks he may have confidence **in the flesh**, I more so:⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷ However, what things **were** gain to me, these **I have counted loss for Christ**.⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the **knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and **count them as rubbish**, that I may **gain Christ**.”*

In **1948**, the Jewish nation was **still rejecting the Messiah** and therefore 1948 could not be a fulfillment of prophecy because the Bible says that God **scattered Israel at the destruction of Jerusalem because they rejected the Messiah**. In 1948, the Jewish nation was **still rejecting** Christ and so no fulfillment of the gathering prophecies could have taken place at that time.

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #13: The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks - Part 1

Far more than we can cover in just two sessions. You can go online to secretsunsealed.org and read my entire notes on Daniel 9.

Daniel 9 is the **greatest** Messianic prophecy of the Old Testament because it not only predicts the **events** of Messiah’s ministry but also provides the **precise timing** of each event in the Messiah’s Ministry.

Three Stages of Israel’s History

Review the **four stages** of Israel’s history in the parable of the vineyard:

- **Sinai to Babylon** (800 years)
- **Babylon to John** (483 years)
- **Christ** (3.5 years)
- **After Christ’s ascension** (3.5 years)

Loss of Governance in 605 BC

Daniel 1:1, 2:

*“In the **third year [605 BC]** of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and **besieged it**. And the Lord **gave Jehoiakim** king of Judah into his hand [**governance is removed**] with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.”*

The Temple, City and Walls destroyed in 586 BC

2 Chronicles 36:15-20

*“And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by **His messengers**, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. ¹⁶ But they **mocked the messengers** of God, **despised** His words, and **scoffed** at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, until there **was no remedy**. ¹⁷ Therefore He brought against them the **king of the Chaldeans**, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand. ¹⁸ And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all these he took to Babylon. ¹⁹ Then they **burned the house of God**, broke down **the wall** of Jerusalem, burned all its **palaces with fire**, and destroyed all its precious possessions. ²⁰ And those who escaped from the sword he **carried away to Babylon**, where they became servants to him and his sons until the **rule of the kingdom of Persia**. ²¹ to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill **seventy years**.”*

Daniel Prays (Do not delay)

Daniel 9:1, 2: Toward the end of the 70 years of captivity, Daniel is **studying about this period**:

*“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—² in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the **number of the years** specified by the word of the Lord through **Jeremiah** the prophet, that He would accomplish **seventy years** in the desolations of Jerusalem.”*

Daniel 9:18, 19

Daniel fears that the **sinfulness of Israel** might lead God to **extend** the captivity **beyond the 70** years so he prays, **confessing** his sins and the sins of Israel pleading with God **not to delay the release**:

“O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications

*before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. ¹⁹ O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! **Do not delay** for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name."*

70 Weeks for the Jewish People and City

Daniel 9:24: God sends **Gabriel to answer** Daniel's prayer. He tells the prophet that Israel will go back to their land and He will give them an additional **70-week grace period:**

God tells Daniel "seventy weeks are **determined** for your people and for your holy city."

- 'to finish the transgression'
- 'to make an end of sins'
- 'to make reconciliation for iniquity'
- 'to bring in everlasting righteousness'
- 'to seal up vision and prophecy'
- 'and to anoint the Most Holy'

The Beginning Point

However, what event marks **the beginning** of these 70 weeks or **490 years?**

Daniel 9:25

*"Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the **command** to **restore** and **build** Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks."*

Restore and build are two different things. Israel lost her **political autonomy** in **605 BC** when Nebuchadnezzar took the **nobility captive** to Babylon. However, the Babylonians actually **destroyed** the city in **586 BC**. The Jews not only needed to **rebuild** the temple, the city and the walls but they needed to reestablish their **civil and religious institutions**.

Four Possible Dates

Four possible dates for the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem:

- **Cyrus:** 536 B. C. (the Temple and way too early to take us to the Messiah. This would take us to 46 BC)

- **Darius the Persian**: 520 B. C. (The Temple: A reaffirmation of the decree to rebuild the temple. This would take us to 30 BC still too early)
- **Artaxerxes**: 457 B. C. (build and restore Jerusalem)
- **Artaxerxes**: 444 B. C. (Jerusalem's walls. This would take us to 46 AD, way too late)

The Decree of Artaxerxes

Ezra 7:13: The **decree**:

*"I issue a **decree** that all those of the people of Israel and the priests and Levites in my realm, who volunteer to go up to Jerusalem, may go with you."*

Ezra 7:7: **Seventh year** of Artaxerxes:

Artaxerxes the Great gave his decree in the fall of his **seventh year**:

*"Some of the children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim came up to Jerusalem in the **seventh year** of King Artaxerxes."*

This is one of the most **firmly established** dates in Biblical history. **Siegfried Horn and Kenneth Wood** wrote **The Chronology of Ezra 7** and examine ancient **archeological, historical and astronomical** records that prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the date is the **fall** of the year **457 BC**

Three Parts of the 70 Weeks (7 weeks, 62 weeks and 1 week)

In Bible prophecy one **day is equal to a year** so we are here speaking about **weeks of years** or **490 years**.

Daniel 9:25, 27

*"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be [1] **weeks** and [2] **sixty-two weeks**. . . then he shall confirm a covenant with many for [3] **one week**; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering."*

The First Seven Weeks

7 Weeks x 7 days = 49 days = 49 years

457BC - 408BC

During the first 49 years, Jerusalem was **restored and built** (during this period the **temple**, the **city**, the **walls** were **rebuilt** and the **civil order** was restored in the midst of **much opposition**.

Daniel 9:25

*"The **street** shall be built again, and the **wall**, even in troublesome times."*

The Next 62 Weeks

7 Weeks x 7 days = 49 days = 49 years (457BC - 408BC)

62 weeks x 7 days = 434 days = 434 years (408BC - 27AD)

Sum total: 49 + 434 = 483 days = 483 years

Deal here briefly with the problem of the **zero year**. You only count the **year one once**.

Messiah Anointed

*"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until **Messiah the Prince**, there shall be **seven weeks** and **sixty-two weeks**. . ."*

The anointing of the Messiah would take place at the **end of the seven and sixty-two weeks** or **483 years**.

The word '**Messiah**' in Hebrew means, "**anointed**". The equivalent Greek word is "**Christ**" from where we get the word "**christened**"

The chronology provided by the Gospel of Luke:

Luke 3:1-3:

*"Now in the **fifteenth year** of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ² while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of*

Zacharias in the wilderness. ³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

The **15th year** of Tiberius Caesar was **27AD**. We know this because according to Roman history Tiberius acceded to the **throne in the year 12AD. 12+15 = 27**

The testimony of the Gospel of Mark:

Mark 1:9-11: The **Spirit fell upon** Jesus at His baptism:

*"It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was **baptized** by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and **the Spirit descending** upon Him like a dove. ¹¹ Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

The words of Jesus immediately after His baptism:

Luke 4:16-19: **After His baptism**, He begins His ministry by announcing that the **Spirit of the Lord is upon Him**:

*"So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ¹⁸ "The **Spirit of the Lord is upon Me**, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."*

Acts 10:36-38: The **Father anointed** Jesus at His **baptism**:

*"The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— ³⁷ that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: ³⁸ how **God anointed Jesus** of Nazareth with the **Holy Spirit** and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."*

The words of Jesus shortly after His baptism:

Mark 1:13, 14

*"Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The **time is fulfilled**, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."*

The testimony of the **Gospel of John**:

John 1:32, 41

*"And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the **Spirit descending** from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. . . ⁴¹ He [**Andrew**] first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "**We have found the Messiah**" (which is translated, **the Christ**)."*

What **season of the year** was Jesus baptized? Clearly, the baptism of Jesus took place in the fall because he died in the middle of the last week in early **spring**.

In Daniel 9, the Messiah is '**the prince**'. In the **prophetic sections** of Daniel, he word '**prince**' **always refers to Jesus** and never to a **secular prince**. Only in the **historical chapters** is the word prince used of **secular rulers**.

The Middle of the Last Week: Messiah Cut Off

Daniel 9:26, first part:

*"And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be **cut off**, but **not for Himself**. . ."*

Isaiah 53:5: He did **for us**, not for Himself

*"But he was wounded for **our** transgressions, he was bruised for **our** iniquities: the chastisement of **our** peace was upon him; and with his stripes **we** are healed."*

Isaiah 53: 8: The Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 53 uses the expression "**cut off**"

*"He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was **cut off** out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken."*

Jerusalem Destroyed Again

The seventy-week prophecy tells us that **after** Messiah was cut off, **Jerusalem** would be **destroyed once more**. It is important to note that there is a **link** between what happened to **Messiah** the prince and what happened **to the city**.

Daniel 9:26, last part

*“... and the **people of the prince** that **shall come** shall **destroy the city and the sanctuary**; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war **desolations** are determined.”*

Further Events in the Last Week: Confirming the Covenant

The Messiah confirms the **covenant** for **one week**. This has to be the **last week**. The two key words are “**covenant**” and “**many**”

Daniel 9:27, first part

*“And He [**the prince who shall come**] shall confirm the **covenant** with **many** for one week...”*

Matthew 26:27, 28: At the Lord’s Supper

*“Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ For this is My blood of the new **covenant**, which is shed for **many** for the remission of sins.”*

Mark 10:45: Jesus gave His life for ‘many’:

*“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for **many**.”*

Isaiah 53:11: A remarkable prophecy by Isaiah

*“Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of **many**, and made intercession for the transgressors.”*

The word “**covenant**” in the book of Daniel always refers to **God’s covenant**. It never describes a **secular political covenant**! (see, Daniel 9:4; 11:22, 28, 30,32)

Sacrifice and Oblation Ceases

The **sacrifice and oblation** (offering) ceases in the **middle** of the last week:

Daniel 9:27

*“Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the **middle of the week** He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.”*

The **temple veil** rips from top to bottom:

Mark 15:38, 39

*“And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. 38 Then the **veil of the temple** was torn in two from top to bottom.”*

Ellen White: The sacrifice and **offering did cease** at the crucifixion of Christ:

*“All is terror and confusion. The priest is about to slay the victim; but the knife drops from his nerveless hand, and the **lamb escapes. Type has met antitype** in the death of God's Son. The great sacrifice has been made. The way into the holiest is laid open. A new and living way is prepared for all. No longer need sinful, sorrowing humanity await the coming of the high priest. Henceforth the Savior was to officiate as priest and advocate in the heaven of heavens. It was as if a living voice had spoken to the worshipers: There is now **an end to all sacrifices and offerings for sin.**” *DA*, p. 757*

Sacrifices no longer have any meaning after the death of Jesus:

Hebrews 7:26, 27

*“For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; ²⁷ who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did **once for all** when He **offered up Himself.**”*

The Prince who is to come destroys the City and Sanctuary

The identity of **the prince who is to come**. Is it some **Roman prince** in the future who will make a **covenant with the Jews** for one week and then to break it?

The identity of the prince in Daniel.

- **Messiah the Prince** (Daniel 9:25)
- The **Prince of the Host** (Daniel 8:11,12)
- The **Prince of the Covenant** (Daniel 11:22)
- **Michael the Great Prince** (Daniel 12:1)

The prince in the book of **Joshua**:

Joshua 5:13-15

*"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand and Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?"¹⁴ So He said, "No, but as Commander [**prince**] of the army of the Lord I have now come and Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"¹⁵ Then the Commander [**prince**] of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so."*

The expression "**who is to come**":

Psalm 118:22, 26

*"The **stone** which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.²³ This was the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.²⁶ Blessed is **he who comes** in the name of the Lord!"*

Matthew 21:42: Jesus is the stone that the **builders rejected**:

*"Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the **builders rejected** has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"*

Matthew 21:9: Blessed is **He who comes** in the name of the Lord:

*"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!"*

Kingdom given to the Gentiles

Jesus then predicts that God will **take away the kingdom** from **national Israel** and give it to the Gentiles:

Matthew 21:43:

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

When Jesus **comes in the name** of the Lord He then talks about the **destruction of Jerusalem:**

Luke 19:37-44: The **city destroyed** by Titus and the Romans:

*"Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, ³⁸ saying: "'Blessed is the King **who comes in the name of the Lord!**' Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" ³⁹ And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." ⁴⁰ But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out." ⁴¹ Now as He drew near, **He saw the city and wept over it** ⁴² saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For days will come upon you when your enemies will **build an embankment** around you, surround you and close you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will **not leave in you one stone upon another**, because you did not know the **time of your visitation.**"*

Order of Events

1) Jesus entered Jerusalem on a colt, and the multitudes sang: "**Blessed** be the King **that cometh** in the name of the Lord. . . ." (Verses 37-38).

2) Jesus then spoke about **his rejection** by the Jewish nation (verses 39-42; see also Matthew 23:29-39).

3) Finally Jesus spoke about the **destruction of Jerusalem** (verses 43-44; see also Matthew 24:1-3)

One cannot help but notice that we find the same threefold sequence in **Daniel 9:26:**

- 1) The **prince comes**
- 2) The prince is **cut off**
- 3) The city and temple are **destroyed**

Relationship of Cutting off Messiah and the Destruction of the City

Twice Daniel 9 links the **death of the Messiah** with the **destruction of the city**:

Daniel 9:26: When the prince is **cut off**, the city is **doomed**:

*"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."*

Daniel 9:26, 27: When sacrifice and **oblation ceases**, the city is **doomed**:

*"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."*

Who Destroyed Jerusalem?

Who destroyed Jerusalem? **Was it God, Jesus or the Jewish nation?**

Matthew 22:7, 8: Jerusalem destroyed and the gospel goes to the Gentiles. We can see the same sequence in Matthew where we have the following order:

*"But when the king [God] heard about it, he was furious and he sent out **his armies** [the Romans], destroyed those murderers [**the nation of Israel**], and **burned up their city**.⁸ Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹ Therefore go into the **highways** [**Gentiles**], and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.'*

- Blessed is He **who comes** in the name of the Lord
- The **stone that the builders rejected**
- Jesus is **cut off**
- The **kingdom is taken** from Israel and given to the Gentiles

- Jerusalem then **destroyed**

*“The Jews had forged **their own fetters**; they had filled for **themselves** the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, they were but reaping the harvest which **their own hands** had sown. Says the prophet: ‘O Israel, **thou hast destroyed thyself**.’ ‘for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.’ Hosea 13:9; 14:1. Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, **the Jews had caused** the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will.” The Great Controversy, pp. 35-36.*

We find the same pattern in the **Old Testament**:

- **God** (Daniel 9:14)
- **Nebuchadnezzar** (II Chronicles 36:17-20)
- The **Jews** (Daniel 9:11, 14, 15; Jer. 38:23)

At the **very center** of the Seventy-Week prophecy is **Jesus Christ**, the Messiah. The precision of the fulfillment is remarkable and is absolute proof that God is able to read the future and that Jesus is truly the Messiah. It is blasphemy to shift the meaning of the prophecy from Christ to the Antichrist!

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #14: The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks - Part 2

The Final Three and One Half Weeks

Probation for the Jewish theocracy did not end in 31 AD

Matthew 10:5, 6: The mission of Jesus was to the Jewish nation because God allotted seventy weeks to them:

“These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Matthew 15:24:

“But He answered and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

This statement sounds calloused. Did not Jesus also want the salvation of the Gentiles? Yes He did and He had contacts with several (the Canaanite woman, the Centurion) of them but the 70-week prophecy required that he focus on literal Israel.

Matthew 21:12, 13 Jesus enters the temple of God:

“Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats

of those who sold doves. 13 And He said to them, "It is written, **'My house shall be called a house of prayer,'** but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

Matthew 23:32-38 Jesus **indicts** the Jewish leadership and even predicted that their house would be **left desolate**. However, after His death He still promised to send **additional messengers** to literal Israel. **Why?** Because the 70 weeks had **not ended**. The door is still open for **3.5 more years** after the crucifixion of the Messiah:

*"**Fill up**, then, the **measure** of your fathers' guilt. ³³ Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? ³⁴ Therefore, indeed, **I send [present] you prophets, wise men, and scribes:** some of them you **will kill [future]** and crucify, and some of them you **will scourge [future]** in your synagogues and persecute **[future]** 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. ³⁷ "O **Jerusalem, Jerusalem**, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁸ See! **Your house** is left to you **desolate [same word as in Daniel 9].**"*

The prophets were **Peter** who read the secret of Ananias and Sapphira and **Stephen** who saw the last vision that God gave to Israel. The wise men are the **seven deacons** (Acts 6:3). The Jewish leaders scourged **Peter and John** in the synagogue (Acts 4-5). **Saul of Tarsus killed** many of God's people, the most notable of whom was **Stephen** (Acts 7). Saul also persecuted Christians from **city to city** (Acts 8:3; 26:11).

Probation did not close for the Jews even though they **cried out** at **His trial**:

- 'We have no king but Cesar'
- 'His blood be upon us and our children'
- 'Release unto us Barabbas'

Daniel 9:26, 27: Twice in Daniel 9 the death of the **Messiah linked** with the **fate of the city**. Notice the **key words**, abomination and desolation:

*"And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be **cut off**, but **not for Himself**; and the people of the prince who is to come shall **destroy the city and the sanctuary**.*

The end of it shall be with **a flood**, and till the end of the **war desolations** are **determined**.”

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

Three and a Half more Years

According to **Daniel 9** there were to be **70 weeks of probation**. Jesus died in the **middle of week #70**. This means that the Jews would have had **at least three and a half more years**. The death of Jesus did **not close the door** of mercy for the Jewish nation.

Concerning the additional probation during those 3.5 years, **Ellen White** wrote:

*“Through the preaching of the **apostles and their associates**, God would cause light to shine upon them; they would be permitted to see how prophecy had been fulfilled, not only in the birth and life of Christ, but in His death and resurrection. The children were not condemned for the sins of the parents; but when, with a knowledge of all the light given to their parents, the children rejected the additional light granted to themselves, they became partakers of the parents' sins, and **filled up the measure** of their iniquity.” GC, p. 28*

Matthew 24:15-16: The words ‘abomination’ and ‘desolation’ refer to the **destruction of Jerusalem**:

*“Therefore when you see the '**abomination of desolation**,' spoken of by **Daniel** the prophet, standing in the **holy place**” (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶ “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”*

*“And the Savior warned his followers: “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by **Daniel the prophet**, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.” [**Matthew 24:15, 16; Luke 21:20**.] When the idolatrous **standards of the Romans** should be set up in the **holy ground**, which extended some furlongs **outside the city walls**, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the warning sign should be seen, those who would escape must make no delay.” GC, p. 26*

Luke 21:20: The **parallel account in Luke** tells us that the abomination of desolation were the **Roman armies** that destroyed Jerusalem

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

Acts 5:31: underlines the fact that repentance was **still available for Israel**
"According to Daniel 9 there were to be **70 weeks of probation**."

*"Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance **to Israel** and forgiveness of sins."*

In the **first seven chapters** of the book of Acts, the gospel goes **only to the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea**.

Matthew 22:1-8:

*"And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: ² "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king [God the Father] who arranged a marriage for his son [**Jesus**], ³ and sent out his servants [**the apostles and the 70**] to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were **not willing** to come. ⁴ Again, he sent out **other servants**, saying, "Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; **my oxen and fatted cattle are killed [after the death of Jesus]**, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'" ⁵ But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. ⁶ And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. ⁷ But when the king heard about it, **he was furious**. And he sent out his armies [Roman armies], destroyed those murderers, and **burned up their city**. ⁸ Then he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹ Therefore go into the highways [**the gospel to the Gentiles**], and as many as you find, invite to the wedding."*

The Ending Date of the Seventy Weeks

Daniel 9:24: **Six accomplishments** during the **final** of the seventy weeks:

- To finish the transgression
- To make an end of sins
- To make reconciliation for iniquity
- To bring in everlasting righteousness
- **To seal up vision and prophecy**

- And to anoint the Most Holy.”

The Ending Date of the Seventy Weeks

The prophecy of the seventy weeks gives us a **starting point**, what will happen during the **first 7 weeks**, what will happen at the **conclusion of the 69th** week—the **anointing** of Messiah, confirming the **covenant cut off** in the middle of the week. Is the prophecy of the seventy weeks **silent on the ending date** of this time-period?

I believe that we find the answer to this question in **Daniel 9:24**:

*“... and to seal up the **vision** and **prophecy**...”*

The same Hebrew word **hatam** is translated “**to make an end**” in **verse 24** [‘**to make an end of sins**’]. This indicates that both prophecy and vision **would end** for the Jewish nation at some point during the 70 weeks.

The question that we need to answer is this, who was the **last prophet** in Israel who had **a vision**? Acts 6-7 indicates that it was **Stephen**.

Stephen’s Long Sermon

Stephen’s sermon to the Sanhedrin was **unusually long**. Why the **long recitation** of God’s **benevolent acts** for Israel in **verses 2-53**? The Jewish leadership already **knew Hebrew history**. Why **bore them** with these details?

We find the answer in the **covenant concept**. The prophets were **God’s lawyers** in **divorce court**.

- They usually described God’s **benevolent acts** toward Israel
- Then **rebuked** them for Israel’s unfaithfulness
- Finally called Israel to **repentance**.
- These lawsuits were **not final and irrevocable**.

Stephen brought God’s **final covenant lawsuit** against Israel. There is a certain **finality** to this entire episode. There is **no call to repentance** or **offer of mercy**.

Stephen is talking before the **supreme court of Judaism**, to religious and political leaders. Their decision would be **the decision of the nation**. In true prophetic fashion, Stephen recites the benevolent acts of God toward Israel.

The Accused became the Accuser

Then the accused became the accuser:

Acts 7:51-53

*"You **stiff-necked and uncircumcised** in heart and ears! You always **resist the Holy Spirit**: as **your fathers did**, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did **your fathers** not persecute? And **they** killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom **you** now have become the betrayers and murderers, ⁵³ who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."*

Up **until these verses** Stephen addresses them by speaking of "**our fathers**" (verses 11, 19, 38, 44, 45) but now he addresses them as "**your fathers**". He is **disconnecting** himself from the **patrimony of literal Israel**. He is **distancing himself** from the history of literal Israel.

Moreover, it is significant that Stephen, **unlike the prophets that preceded him**, made no **call to repentance**. There is a finality about the entire episode.

Verdict of the Sanhedrin

The **verdict of the Sanhedrin** shows their **incurable rejection** of the Messiah.

Acts 7:54-58

*"When they heard these things they were **cut to the heart**, and they **gnashed at him** with their teeth. ⁵⁵ But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and **saw** the glory of God, and **Jesus standing** at the right hand of God, ⁵⁶ and said, "**Look! I see** the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" ⁵⁷ Then they cried out with a **loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord**: ⁵⁸ and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a **young man named Saul**."*

The Last Prophet with a Vision

By stoning Stephen, they **silenced the voice of the last prophet** sent to them.

However, what about the **end of the vision**? Did **Stephen have a vision**? As a matter of fact, he did! It is quite possible that Stephen **saw Jesus in vision as He will come in glory at the right hand** of His Father (**Matthew 26:64**)

It seems that what **particularly enraged** the members of the Sanhedrin was the **vision** Stephen had of Jesus in heaven standing on the right hand of God. This was a vision for there is no evidence that **anyone other than Stephen saw** it!

One Door Closes and another Opens

According to the parable in **Matthew 21:43**, when God rejected the Jewish Theocracy He gave the kingdom to the **Gentiles** (Mt. 21:33-45; 22:1-10; 23:32-39). This episode in Acts 7 not only **closes the door** of probation for the Jewish nation, but also **opens the door** for the gospel to go to the Gentiles.

In fact, the **champion** to the **Gentiles** was the **ringleader** in the stoning of Stephen! At the stoning of Stephen God had already **chosen the one** who would champion the gospel to the Gentiles. By the way, the stoning of Stephen shows that probation did not end for **individual Jews** in the year **34 AD** because **Saul was saved** after the stoning of Stephen.

Acts 22:20-21

*"And when the blood of Your **martyr** Stephen was shed, I also was standing by **consenting** to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'
²¹ Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you far from here to the **Gentiles**.'"*

The Sequence of Acts

Acts 1:6-8: Notice the **sequence**:

*"Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the **kingdom to Israel**?" ⁷ And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in **Jerusalem**, and in all **Judea** and **Samaria**, and to the **end of the earth**."*

- The gospel goes to **Jerusalem and Judea** during the last three and a half years (Acts 1-6)
- The **stoning of Stephen** (Acts 7)
- The gospel goes to **Samaria** (Acts 8:25)
- Saul's **conversion** (Acts 9)

- The gospel goes to the **Gentiles**—End of the earth (Acts 10-28)

Matthew 28:18-20:

*“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of **all the nations, baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*

The Beginning of Paul’s Ministry

- **Acts 13:1, 2** describes the **official beginning** of Paul’s ministry. Paul and Barnabas are **ordained** and then launch out on a **missionary journey**.
- Paul and Barnabas then travel to **Antioch of Pisidia** and preaches a gospel sermon **to the Jews** in the synagogue (**Acts 13:16-41**).
- The **Gentiles begged** Paul to preach to them also the next Sabbath (**Acts 13:42-43**).
- The **next Sabbath** almost the whole city came to hear the word of God (**Acts 13:44**).
- This provoked the Jews to **jealousy** and they **contradicted and blasphemed** (**13:45**).

This led the apostle Paul to say:

Acts 13:46-47:

*“Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, **we turn to the Gentiles.**”*

1948?

How futurists interpret the year **1948**. The re-establishment of the state of Israel is the **greatest sign** of the soon coming **rapture** of the church and God **kick starting** His plan for the Jewish nation. However, the prophecy of the seventy weeks and the New Testament clearly reveal that God’s plan for the Jewish theocracy **ended never to start again**.

Why 9/11 and the war of Al Qaeda and Isis against the west? Why the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict? Satan wants to distract people's attention from where prophecy is being fulfilled.

Would you prepare for a hurricane in California if it was going to hit in Florida?
Satan is an expert at the counter play!

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Lecture #15: The Three Comings of Jesus

The Bible refers to three comings of Jesus from heaven to earth and the **three comings** are centered in the **sanctuary service**.

The First Coming

Jesus came **from heaven** to the **camp** and the **court** of the sanctuary (the earth) to live a **perfect life** and suffer a **vicarious death**.

John 6:38: He **came down** from heaven

*“For I have **come down from heaven**, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”*

I Peter 1:18-19: Came to **live and die** in our place:

*“... knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the **precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb **without blemish and without spot**.”*

John 1:29

*“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said: “Behold! The Lamb of God who **takes away the sin** of the world!”*

Return to the Heavenly Sanctuary

After Jesus finished His work on earth, **He ascended** to the **heavenly sanctuary to apply the benefits**:

John 16:28

*"I came forth from the Father and **have come** into the world. Again, **I leave the world and go** to the Father."*

John 13:33, 36

*"Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where **I am going**, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, **where are You going?**" Jesus answered him, "**Where I am going** you cannot follow Me now, but you shall **follow Me afterward**."*

Why did Jesus go to Heaven?

Jesus went to heaven to **prepare a place** for His people:

John 14:1, 2

*"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. **I go to prepare a place** for you."*

After living a perfect life and dying a perfect sacrifice, Jesus **left the world** and **returned to His Father** in the **holy place** of the sanctuary to perform a **triple work**:

- To **feed** His church (the showbread)
- **Supply the oil** so the church can shine (the candlesticks)
- To **intercede** for individuals (the altar of incense)

Jesus prepares a place for us in the holy place

The apostle John wrote both the **Gospel of John** and the book of **Revelation**. We would therefore expect both books to **complement each other**.

The book of **John** explains **Christ's earthly work** and His **ascension** to heaven to **prepare the place**.

The book of **Revelation** then describes His **heavenly work of preparing the place**.

The book of **Revelation** points to the ministration of Jesus in the **heavenly sanctuary** as the work that He does to **prepare a place**. Jesus did not return to

heaven merely to **build mansions** for His people—the mansions were **already there!** Jesus' work of preparation is described in the book of Revelation. Thus, **Revelation explains John 14:2.**

The book of **Hebrews** also explains **the manner** in which Jesus prepares a place **in heaven** for His people.

In heaven, Jesus **prepares the place** in **heaven** for His people and on earth (**John 14-16**), He prepares the **people for the place**. Though Jesus is personally in heaven, He is also present on earth through the **Holy Spirit** (John 14:16-18). Thus the **Holy Spirit applies on earth** what **Jesus does in heaven.**

The seven candlesticks:

Leviticus 24:1-4

*"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Command the children of Israel that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives **for the light**, to make the **lamps burn continually**. Outside the veil of the Testimony, in the tabernacle of meeting, **Aaron shall be in charge** of it from evening until morning before the LORD **continually**; it shall be a statute forever in your generations. He shall be **in charge of the lamps** on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD **continually**."*

According to it was the role of the high priest to **fill** the lamps with **oil** and to **trim** them so that their light would never cease to burn.

The Symbols:

Lamps = **Seven literal** churches in Asia (Revelation 1:20) = **Seven periods** of church history beginning with the apostolic church and ending with the last church.

The **oil** in the seven lampstands represents the **Holy Spirit** (Zechariah 4:6; Matthew 25:1-3) and the result of the **combination** of the oil and the lamp is **light**.

Meaning of the symbols:

During the successive stages of church history, Jesus is **keeping the light** of the church burning through the **ministration of the Holy Spirit**.

*"Christ is spoken of as **walking** in the midst of the golden candlesticks. Thus is symbolized **His relation to the churches**. He is in constant communication with*

*His people. He knows their true state. He observes their order, their piety and their devotion. Although He is high priest and mediator in the **sanctuary above**, yet He is represented as walking up and down in the midst of His churches **on the earth**. With untiring wakefulness and unremitting vigilance, He watches to see whether the light of any of His sentinels is **burning dim or going out**. If the candlesticks were left to mere human care, the flickering flame would languish and die; but He is the true watchman in the Lord's house, the true warden of the temple courts. His continued care and sustaining grace are the **source of life and light**." AP, p. 586*

During the history of the church, the **light at times** appeared about to go (during the **dark ages**) but it did not because Jesus was making sure that there was sufficient oil.

Whereas **Revelation 1-3** places great emphasis upon the **heavenly work** of Jesus among the candlesticks in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, **John 14-17** places a marked emphasis upon the work of the **Holy Spirit on earth** while Jesus is in heaven.

John 15:26, 27:

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning."

Jesus said that **He is the light** of the world (**John 8:12; 9:5**) but he also stated that the **church is the light** of the world: When the church is **filled with the Holy Spirit**, the light of Jesus **illuminates the world** (**Matthew 5:14-16**). Jesus is like the **sun** and His people are like the **moon** when it reflects the light of the sun to the earth at night.

Each of the seven messages to the church conclude by saying: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the **Spirit says** to the churches." That is to say, the Holy Spirit **speaks to the church** and the church then reveals the message to the world.

The table of the Showbread:

In **Revelation 4-7** (the seals series) Jesus is at the table of showbread in heaven and keeps His church alive on earth by feeding it His **Word**. The **Holy Spirit is inseparable** from the Word (**Ephesians 6:17**)

The gospel of John and the Word: The Gospel of John places a marked emphasis upon the importance of the Word of God in the **sanctification process** (**John 16:13; 14:23, 26; 15:3, 7; 17:14, 17, 19**; see also **Ephesians 5:26**). The word **cleanses the sinner** and the sinner must **proclaim it** (**Hebrews 4:12, 13**)

The golden altar of incense:

In **Revelation 8-11** (the trumpets series) Jesus stands at the **golden altar** of incense interceding for the sins of His people

Luke 1:8-10: As the **incense** was burning in the holy place, the people were **praying** outside:

*“So it was, that while he [Zechariah] was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, ⁹ according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to **burn incense** when he went **into the temple** of the Lord. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the **people was praying** outside at the **hour of incense.**”*

Revelation 8:3, 4: The incense actually represents the merits of Christ’s **perfect righteousness** that makes the prayers of His people **acceptable** before God:

*“Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood **at the altar**. He was given **much incense** that he should offer it **with** the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, **with the prayers** of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand.”*

Ellen White explained beautifully what the incense represents:

*“Christ has pledged Himself to be our substitute and surety, and He neglects no one. There is an inexhaustible fund of perfect obedience accruing from His obedience. In heaven His merits, His self-denial and self-sacrifice, are treasured up as incense to be **offered up with the prayers** of His people. As the sinner’s **sincere, humble prayers** ascend to the throne of God, Christ **mingles with them***

the merits of His life of perfect obedience. Our **prayers are made fragrant** by this incense.” **In Heavenly Places**, p. 69

During the period of **Papal dominion** people prayed to **Mary and the saints** and went to a human priest to receive **absolution** for their sins. The people of God **lost sight of Jesus** as the intercessor

The perfect life of Jesus and His death met the demands of the law. All the sins of the world were paid for at the cross. However, we **must personally claim the benefits** of what Jesus did. We must come to Him in faith and claim Him as our intercessor.

I John 2:1

*“My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”*

Hebrews 7:25

*“Therefore He is also **able to save** to the uttermost **those who come to God through Him**, since He always lives to **make intercession for them**. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens.”*

Summary of the Work in the Holy Place

Thus we see that the **Holy Spirit** is involved in the entire work of Christ in the holy place. The Holy Spirit **applies on earth** what **Jesus does in heaven**. He give oil to the church so that it can serve as the **light of the world**; He **feeds** the church with the Bread of Life and **empowers the church to proclaim** it with power through the Holy Spirit, and He helps us pray so that our prayers will be acceptable to God:

Romans 8:26-27

*“Likewise the **Spirit also helps** in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the **Spirit Himself makes intercession** for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”*

Jesus prepares a place in the most holy place: The Judgment

The final work of Jesus to prepare a place for His people is **the judgment**.

Revelation 14:6, 7 and 11:19 describes Christ's **heavenly work of judgment**. During this judgment, Jesus **examines the cases** of all who professed His name and then **cleanses their sins from the sanctuary** Holy Spirit on earth. At the same time the Holy Spirit cleanses the people from their sins on earth. **Jesus cleanses** the heavenly sanctuary and the **Holy Spirit cleanses** the people on earth.

While Jesus **cleanses the sanctuary** from the sins of the people, the **Holy Spirit on earth convicts** the world of sin, and righteousness and judgment (**John 16:13**)

While Jesus is **cleansing the sanctuary above**, His people on earth should be **cleansing their lives** from sin through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus will **not cleanse in heaven** what the Holy Spirit has not cleansed on earth.

Summary: Jesus prepares a **place in heaven** for His people on earth while the Holy Spirit prepares His **people on earth** for a **place in heaven**. To put it another way: Jesus **prepares heaven** for His people and the Holy Spirit **prepares His people** for heaven.

Jesus concludes the work of judgment:

When Jesus finishes cleansing the sanctuary in heaven and the Holy Spirit finishes cleansing the soul temple on earth, Jesus **will close his ministration** (Revelation 15:5-8; 22:11) and His **wrath** will begin to fall upon the earth (Revelation 16:1-21). This is the period of the **seven last plagues**. God's people will go through this great **tribulation** (Revelation 7:13, 14) but having been sealed they will come forth from it **victorious** over the beast, his image and his mark (Revelation 15:2, 3).

The Church is ready when Jesus finishes His work in the most holy place:

At the conclusion of the judgment, the **church will be ready** for the second coming of Jesus. Jesus will have **prepared the place** for the church and the church will have **prepared herself for the place**.

Ephesians 5-25-27

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”

Revelation 19:7, 8

*“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and **His wife has made herself ready.**” And to her [His wife] it was granted to be arrayed in **fine linen, clean and bright**, for the fine linen is the **righteous acts of the saints.**”*

The tribulation after the Judgment

According to the book of Revelation, the church will go through a severe time of **tribulation** (2:10, 22; 3:10; 7:13, 14) after the judgment closes but will be **kept** by the power of Christ.

The gospel of John and the terrible tribulation:

John 16:28

*“I still have many things to say to you, but you **cannot bear them now.** However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will **tell you things to come [the events in the book of Revelation].**”*

John 16:33

*“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world **you will have tribulation;** but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”*

John 16:2

*“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever **kills you** will think that he offers God service.”*

The Second Coming

John 14:3

*“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again and receive you to Myself**; that where I am, **there you may be also.**”*

Hebrews 9:27, 28

*“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,²⁸ so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear **a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.**”*

Jesus Returns to Heaven with His People

I Thessalonians 4:15-17

*“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.”*

I Thessalonians 5:1, 2

*“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our **gathering together to Him**, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.”*

Matthew 24:31

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

The Millennial Judgment

Jesus will take His people to the **Father's house** for one thousand years. Thus, Jesus will **fulfill the promise** He made to His disciples take them to His Father's house. (John 13:33, 36). It will be a **working vacation!**

Revelation 20:4 (see also I Corinthians 6:1-3)

*"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and **judgment was committed** to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they **lived and reigned** with Christ for a thousand years."*

Revelation 20:12

*And I **saw the dead**, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And **the dead were judged** according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.*

Revelation 20:

*"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 20:5

"But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished."

The Third Coming

After the millennium, Jesus will **return from heaven to earth with** all his saints. His feet will split the **Mount of Olives** in two and the New Jerusalem will lodge in the vast plain.

Zachariah 14:4, 5

"And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the

mountain valley shall reach to Azal; Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my **God will come, and all the saints with You.**

Revelation 21:

*“And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, **coming down** from God out of **heaven**, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”*

Revelation 20: 13: The wicked **dead resurrect** and see the record their lives:

*“The sea **gave up the dead** who were in it, and Death and Hades **delivered up** the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.”*

Revelation 20:7-9

*“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed **the camp of the saints about and the beloved city**: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”*

Revelation 21:1

*“Now I saw a **new heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.”*

Matthew 5:5

*“Blessed are the meek: for they shall **inherit the earth.**”*

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #16: The Millennium: In Heaven or on Earth?

Millennium’s Beginning and Structural Matters

Revelation 19:11-21 describes the second coming of Jesus. By this time, the plagues have **decimated the population** of the planet. What happens at the very culmination of the Second Coming?

*“And the **rest [what remains]** were slain with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse.” (Revelation 19:21)*

We find the millennial passage in Revelation 20:1 - 21:8. The events in these chapters are **not in strict chronological order** but rather run in **four repetitive cycles**. Each repetitive cycle reaches the **same climax**. Although there are four cycles, each repetition has a **different center of focus** or emphasis:

- Revelation 20:1-3. Center of Focus: **Satan and the earth**
- Revelation 20:4-10. Center of Focus: **The Saints in Heaven**
- Revelation 20:1-21:1: Center of Focus: **The Judgment of the Wicked on Earth**.
- Revelation 21:2-8. Center of Focus: **Life in the Holy City**

Cycle #1: Satan and the Earth (20:1-3)

Revelation 20:1: A powerful angel comes down **from heaven** with the key to the **bottomless pit** and a chain in his hand:

*pit [abussos] and a **great chain** in his hand.”*

Genesis 1:2

*“The earth was **without form, and void**; and darkness was on the face of the **deep [abussos in the LXX]** and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”*

The translation ‘bottomless pit’ is **unfortunate**. The Greek word is *abussos* from where we get the English word ‘**abyss**’. The word ‘deep’ (**tehom**) in the Greek Old Testament (**LXX**) is the same as the one that we find in Revelation 20:1.

This word describes a planet in a **chaotic pre-creative state**. It is noteworthy that the **plagues of Revelation 16** actually **reverse creation** and **return** the earth in some degree to pre-creation chaos. The plagues afflict the very things that God made during creation week:

- The planet returns to **darkness**
- The surface of the earth is **broken up**
- The **sun, moon and stars** are moved from their places (EW, p. 41; Matthew 24:29)
- The intense heat of the sun scorches all the **vegetation**
- The **water of the seas** are turned into with blood
- All the **fish die**
- All the **birds die**
- All **human beings** die!
- The earth is **empty, disorderly and lifeless**

Jeremiah 4:19-26

*“O my soul, my soul! I am pained in my very heart! My heart makes a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because you have heard, O my soul, the sound of the **trumpet**, the alarm of **war**.²⁰ **Destruction upon destruction** is cried, for the **whole land is plundered**. Suddenly my tents are plundered, and my curtains in a moment. 21 How long will I see the standard, and hear the sound of the **trumpet**?”*

²² "For My people are foolish, they have not known Me. They are silly children, and they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." ²³ I beheld the earth, and indeed it was **without form, and void**; and the heavens, they had **no light**. ²⁴ I beheld the mountains, and indeed they **trembled**, and all the hills moved back and forth. ²⁵ I beheld, and indeed there was **no man**, and all the **birds** of the heavens had fled. ²⁶ I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a **wilderness [the vegetation]**, and all its cities were broken down at the presence of the Lord, by His fierce anger."

Jeremiah 4:27: Yet the desolation of the earth at the second coming is **not the full end**:

"For thus says the Lord: "The **whole land** shall be **desolate**; yet I will not make a **full end**."

Jeremiah 25:30-38

"Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them: 'The Lord will **roar from on high**, and utter **His voice** from His holy habitation; He will **roar mightily** against His fold. He will give a **shout**, as those who **tread the grapes**, against **all the inhabitants** of the earth. ³¹ A noise will come to the ends of the earth—for the Lord has a **controversy with the nations**; He will plead His case with all flesh. He will give those who are wicked to **the sword**,' says the Lord." ³² Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Behold, disaster shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the farthest parts of the earth. ³³ "And at that day the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. They shall **not be lamented**, or **gathered**, or **buried**; they shall become refuse on the ground."

Isaiah 24:1-6, 20: The description in the '**Little Apocalypse**'

"The land shall be entirely **emptied** and utterly **plundered**, for the Lord has spoken this word. ⁴ The earth mourns and **fades away**, the world languishes and **fades away**; the haughty people of the earth languish. ⁵ The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have **transgressed** the laws, **changed** the ordinance, **broken** the everlasting covenant. ⁶ Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. . . The earth is **violently broken**, the earth is **split open**, the earth is **shaken exceedingly**. ²⁰ The earth shall **reel to and fro**

like a drunkard, and shall **totter** like a hut; its transgression shall be heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again.”

Revelation 20:2-3: The mighty angel **chains Satan** in the abyss and as a result, he **cannot deceive** the nations during the millennium:

*“He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and **bound him** for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the **bottomless pit**, and **shut him up**, and set a **seal on him**, **so that [the reason]** should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.”*

God will bind Satan on an earth that has returned to **pre-creation disorder and emptiness**. How **could human beings live** on the planet when the **seas and the fresh waters** are all blood, the **air** has the stench of the dead, the planet is in **total darkness** because God has moved the **heavenly bodies** out of their places and there is no **plant or animal life**? The binding of Satan means that he **cannot deceive** the nations because there are **no nations left to deceive**. However, after the millennium God will loose Satan **for a little while**.

The punishment of Satan reminds us of the fate of the scapegoat on the **Day of Atonement**. He was bound by a **fit man** and then taken to the **wilderness** where there we **no inhabitants** (see, Leviticus 16:21, 22).

The **first cycle** ran **full circle**. It described events at the **beginning**, **during** and **after** the millennium but **questions remain** after the first outline. Some of them are:

1. What happened to **the righteous** during this period?
2. Were they on **earth or in heaven**?
3. What did the righteous **do during** the thousand years?
4. What does it mean to **“bind” and “unbind”**?
5. What happened to the **wicked persons** who died at the second coming?
6. In **what sense did Satan deceive** the nations after the thousand years?
7. What did Satan do for a **little while after** his release from his prison?

Cycle #2: The Saints (20:4-10)

The **second millennial cycle** focuses on what happens to the righteous before, during and after the millennium.

Revelation 20:4: At the beginning of the thousand years, Jesus **resurrects the righteous dead** and then they **reign with Jesus** for a thousand years:

*“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And **they lived and reigned** with Christ for a thousand years.”*

Revelation 20:6 Revelation 20:6 refers to this resurrection as ‘**the first resurrection**’:

*“**Blessed and holy** is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the **second death has no power**, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”*

I Thessalonians 4:16-17:The apostle Paul explained that the dead in Christ would **rise first** and then those who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord **in the air**:

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

John 14:1-3: Jesus takes His people **to the Father’s house** in heaven:

*“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My **Father’s house** are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. **I go** to prepare a place for you. ³ And if **I go** and prepare a place for you, I will **come again** and **receive you to Myself**; that where I am, there you may be also.”*

Revelation 20:4: The righteous will **reign** with Jesus and perform a **work of judgment**:

*“And I saw thrones, and they **sat on them**, and **judgment was committed** to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to*

*Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they **lived and reigned** with Christ for a thousand years.”*

Note: The question is this: Who are the righteous **going to judge**? It is obvious that they will not judge **the righteous** because they will all be in heaven. Moreover, they will not judge the **holy angels** because holy beings do not need a judgment. This must mean that they will **judge Satan and his angels** and the **wicked** that remained on earth during the millennium!

I Corinthians 6:1-3: The righteous will judge the **world and angels**:

*“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? ² Do you not know that the saints will **judge the world**? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³ Do you not know that **we shall judge angels**? How much more, things that pertain to this life?”*

Revelation 20:6: The righteous who resurrect in the first resurrection will not be subject to the **second death**.

*“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 20:5:

*“(But the **rest of the dead** did not live again until the thousand years were finished.)”*

Note: All beings in this world experienced a **first** birth and life. When the millennium begins, those who died in Christ will resurrect to their **second life never more to die**. The wicked, on the other hand, will resurrect to their **second** life after the thousand years, the saints will judge them and then will suffer **second death**.

There is a **punctuation problem** in Revelation 20:5. The original New Testament manuscripts did not have punctuation marks so the translators placed them where they felt they belonged. **New King James** translators should have placed **parentheses** around the following phrase: ‘But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.’ In effect, the **New International Version** does this very thing. This parenthetical statement

breaks the flow of thought in order to explain what will happen with the wicked who remain on earth at the beginning of the thousand years.

Revelation 20:7, 8:At the end of the millennium God **releases Satan:**

*“Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be **released from his prison**⁸ and will **go out to deceive** the **nations** which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to **gather them together to battle**, whose number is as the sand of the sea.”*

Note: If all the wicked are dead during the thousand years, then Satan will have **no one to deceive**. When the wicked resurrect at the end of the thousand years, Satan will have his **power base back** and will be able to deceive once again. Thus the binding and unbinding of Satan is explained by the condition of the wicked: When **they are dead**, Satan is bound; when **they resurrect**, Satan is unbound! Revelation 20:5 **contains the key** that explains the binding and unbinding of Satan.

Notice that the host of the wicked will be innumerable, like the **sand of the sea**, and they will come from the four corners of the earth! The cards seem to be **stacked in favor** of the wicked and the righteous appear to be **in jeopardy**.

Revelation 20:9, 10:

*“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.”*

Note: What happened to God’s people all over the earth before the millennium (Revelation 14:20) now happens to God’s people **all gathered in one place. Jerusalem before the millennium is worldwide**, where two or three gathered in Christ’s name. However, after the millennium, all God’s people are **together in a literal place**, in the literal New Jerusalem. They were gathered there at the **Second Coming** of Jesus (see Matthew 24:31).

Note: Revelation 20:4-10 has gone **full cycle again** but this time the center of focus is upon **the saints**. Revelation 20:9 reaches the climax of events after the millennium. However, after the first and second cycles, several **questions remain** unanswered:

1. **Why** were those inside the city saved and those outside lost?
2. What is the **name of the city** the wicked surrounded?
3. Did Satan and the wicked actually **attack the city**?
4. Were the wicked **ever convinced** that they were wrong and God was right?
5. When did the **saints enter the city**?
6. What was the **judgment process** during the one thousand years like?

Cycle #3: The Wicked (20:11 - 21:1)

Revelation 20:11-21:1 contains the **third cycle** of millennial events. This passage goes over the **same ground** as the previous two outlines but the central concern is with the judgment of the **wicked after** the millennium.

After the thousand years the **rest of the dead live** again and Satan has his power base back (Revelation 20:5).

Revelation 20:11: The **third cycle** begins with the **second coming** of Jesus right before the millennium begins. Jesus comes sitting on a white throne.

*"Then I saw a great **white throne** and Him who sat on it, from whose face the **heaven and the earth fled away** and there was **found no place** for them."*

Revelation 6:14-17: Throne at the second coming:

*"... then the **sky receded** as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every **mountain and island** was **moved out of its place**.¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him **who sits on the throne** and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

Revelation 20:12: This text describes the **millennial judgment** of the wicked.

[1] Paul has told us that the **saints will judge** the world and also Satan and his angels. [2] Furthermore, in the **second outline** we saw that **judgment was committed** to those who came forth in the first resurrection. We will now find out how the process during the millennium worked:

*"And I saw **the dead**, small and great, **standing before God**, and **books** were opened and **another book** was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the **dead***

were judged according to their **works**, by the things which were **written in the books**.”

Note: It is obvious that **dead people cannot stand** before God personally. The text explicitly states that the **wicked dead stood** before God through **the record** of their lives. In the **fourth outline**, we will see some of the wicked things written in the books that condemned the wicked. Revelation 20:12 is describing the judgment of the wicked dead **during the millennium**.

Revelation 20:13: The **wicked dead resurrect** after the millennium and they will see the record of their lives.

*“The sea **gave up** the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades **delivered up** the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.”*

Isaiah 26:19

*“Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall **cast out** the dead.”*

Note: We know that this judgment is takes place **on earth** because according to verses 7-9 the wicked **surrounded the Holy City** on earth.

Though we are saved by **grace through faith** (Ephesians 2:8-9), our works reveal whether our faith is genuine. In the judgment, the entire universe will see that **many of the wicked** said ‘Lord, Lord’ but their **lives contradicted** their profession.

The Book of Life contains **the names** of all those who will be saved (Revelation 3:5; 13:8; Philippians 4:3; Exodus 32:32; Daniel 12:1).

The Book of Life is brought forth in this judgment to show the wicked that **their names were not found in it** (Revelation 20:15).

The names of the lost will **not be in the Book of Life** because of the record of their lives that was written in the books. At this point, we **do not know what those works were**. It is remarkable that God will not destroy the wicked until they are convinced that God dealt justly with them!

Revelation 20:14-15: After the judgment of the wicked, God will cast them into the lake of fire and will suffer **second death**.

*“Then **Death and Hades** were cast into the lake of fire. This is the **second death**.¹⁵ And anyone **not found** written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”*

Note: Revelation 20:14-15 reaches the **same climax** as had previously been reached in Revelation 20:8-9. After all, there are **not two lakes of fire** where the wicked will be cast!

Revelation 21:1: **After** Satan and his angels, the wicked, death and the grave are consumed in the lake of fire, God will make a new heavens and a new earth because the first heaven and earth had passed away.

*“Now I saw a **new heaven** and a **new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had **passed away**. Also there was no more sea.”*

Note: The **chapter division** at the end of verse 15 is unfortunate. The original writers of Scripture did not include chapters and verses; for our convenience, chapters and verses were added much later. Revelation 21:1 really **belongs to** and is the **climax of chapter 20**. In other words, after the destruction of Satan, his angels, the wicked, the grave and death, God will make a new heaven and a new earth. In short, Revelation 21:1 is really the **conclusion of chapter 20**, not the introduction to chapter 21!

2 Peter 3:10-13: Peter vividly described the **destruction process**:

*“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will **pass away** with a great noise, and the elements will melt with **fervent heat**; both the **earth** and the **works** that are in it will be **burned up**.¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be **dissolved**, what manner of persons ought you to be in **holy conduct and godliness**,¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be **dissolved**, being on **fire**, and the elements will **melt** with fervent heat?¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for **new heavens and a new earth** in which righteousness dwells.”*

After the third millennial cycle, **questions remain**:

1. Why did God **allow the righteous** to enter the city?
2. What did the **books contain** that condemned the wicked?
3. Were the righteous **in heaven** during the one thousand years? (It is obvious that if the saints will judge and reign for 1000 years but the city

does not descend until after the 1000 years then the saints must have been in heaven in the holy city during the 1000 years).

4. What will **life be like** in the holy city after the eradication of Satan, sin and sinners?
5. What will **God be like?**

The **last millennial cycle** will answer these questions.

Cycle #4: God and the Holy City (Revelation 21:2-8)

Revelation 21:2 begins the **final cycle** of post-millennial events. This outline begins when John sees

*“... holy city, New Jerusalem, **coming down out of heaven** from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”*

Note: Revelation 20:7-9 tells us that the New Jerusalem **was on the earth** when the wicked surrounded it. This means that the New Jerusalem descended from heaven to the earth **before the wicked surrounded** it and before their destruction in the lake of fire. This being the case, **Revelation 21:2** takes place chronologically **before Revelation 21:1**. The city is identified by name!

There can be no doubt that the righteous are in the city when it descended. This is true for at least two reasons:

- Texts such as **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; John 14:1-3** explain that Jesus will take His people to heaven when He comes so they must come back with Him when the city descends
- The millennial **condition of the earth** would make it impossible for God's people to live here.

Revelation 21:3, 4: God will be with His people and **wipe away their tears**. Notice that all the **verbs are future** because the point of reference is when the city descends from heaven:

*“And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God **is with men**, and He **will** dwell with them, and they **shall** be His people. God Himself **will** be with them and be their God. ⁴ And God **will** wipe away every tear from their eyes; there **shall** be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There **shall** be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”*

Revelation 21:6: God also promises to give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts:

*“And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I **will give** of the fountain of the **water of life** freely to him who thirsts.”*

Note: We can even **now** spiritually drink of the fountain of the water of life freely (John 4:13-14). God’s people, during the great tribulation **suffered thirst**, however, in the city God will give them **fresh water** to drink from the river of life that flows from His throne.

Revelation 21:7: God’s people will **inherit all things**. **Children inherit** what belongs to their parents. God will ratify an everlasting covenant with his children:

*“He who **overcomes** [this is why the saints are in the city] shall **inherit all things**, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”*

Revelation 21:8: We have a sampling of the **wicked deeds** that condemned the wicked:

“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Revelation 22:14, 15: The contrast between those **inside and outside**. Inside are commandment keepers and outside commandment breakers:

*‘Blessed are those who do his commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life and may **enter** through the gates into the city. But **outside** are the dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.’*

The Importance of this Subject

Bible expositors teach the **rapture doctrine** because they believe that the millennium will be a period of **peace and prosperity on earth**. Their argument goes something like this:

1. Jesus promised to come and take His people **to heaven**.
2. But He also promised that He would set up His **kingdom on earth**.

3. The only way Jesus can fulfill **both promises** is if He comes to **rapture** His church to heaven **seven years** before the millennium and then returns with the church seven years later to set up His millennial kingdom on earth.

However, there is **another way** Jesus can fulfill both promises:

- He can take His people to **heaven** for a **thousand years**
- Then return to earth with them at the end of the thousand years to give his people the earth as their inheritance

By teaching that Jesus will set up His kingdom on earth at the second coming, the church is leaving itself **wide open to accept the counterfeit Christ!** The Bible teaches that when Christ comes the second time, He will **not touch** the earth. But if Christians are expecting **Jesus to come back to earth** to set up His millennial kingdom then Satan could walk up and down the earth, speak many of the things Jesus spoke, perform many of the miracles Jesus performed and thus deceive those who are expecting Jesus **to come in this way!**

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #17: A Judas in the Church - Part 1

A Wrong Impression

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17: When Paul wrote his first epistle to the Thessalonians they misunderstood that the **second coming** of Jesus would take place during **their lifetime**:

*“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that **we who are alive and remain** until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then **we who are alive and remain** shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”*

2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2: In order to **clear up** the misconception the apostle Paul sent them a **second letter** to explain that **certain things must transpire** before the *parousia* (second coming) of Jesus.

*“Now, brethren, concerning the **coming [parousia]** of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together **to Him**, we ask you, ² not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by **spirit [a vision]** or by **word [an oral report]** or by **letter [a written communication]**, as if from us, as though **the day of Christ had come.**”*

“The Apostasy”

2 Thessalonians 2:3: The ‘apostasy’ had to take place **before** the second coming of Jesus:

“Let no one deceive you by any means [if you believe that Jesus will come before the apostasy you will be deceived]; for that Day [the Parousia] will not come unless the [the definite article denotes a specific apostasy] falling away [the word is apostasía with the definite article] comes first . . .”

Note: The apostle Paul assured the Thessalonians that **the** apostasy would take place **before** the *Parousia* of Jesus. The expression ‘falling away’ (apostasía in Greek) is used **classical Greek** to describe a boat that is **not well anchored** at port and is **slowly drifting away**. A boat **cannot drift away** from the port unless it was at the port in the first place. This verse is referring to a drifting away from the **apostolic gospel**. It is notable that the word ‘apostasy’ has the **definite article**. This was not simply **an** apostasy but **the** apostasy—an apostasy that was already predicted in the Old Testament **book of Daniel**.

“The Man of Sin”

2 Thessalonians 2:3:

“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed . . .”

The name of the **leader** of the apostasy is ‘*the man of sin*’ so we must determine the **biblical definition** of sin:

1 John 3:4 NKJV:

“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”

The Bible defines sin as ‘*the transgression of the law*’ (anomías) so the antichrist must in some way **encourage people to transgress God’s law**. This is confirmed by the fact that later on in this chapter the apostasy is called ‘**the mystery of lawlessness**’. The word ‘lawlessness’ is the identical word that is translated in the KJV ‘*transgression of the law*’ (**1 John 3:4**).

Daniel 7:25: One can’t help but think of the **little horn** (the Antichrist) that was to arise after the fragmentation of the **Roman Empire** and would think to **change God’s Law**:

*“He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and **shall intend to change times and law**. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.”*

The Man of Sin is “Revealed”

2 Thessalonians 2:3:

*“Let no one deceive you by any means; for **that Day [of Christ’s coming]** will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin **is revealed** . . .”*

The antonym of the word ‘revealed’ is ‘**concealed**’. In the days of Paul, this Antichrist was **under the radar** or **concealed**. That is, the spirit of the man of sin already existed in the days of Paul but was **under the radar** until the **specific time** that prophecy indicated he would **reveal** himself.

“The Son of Perdition”

2 Thessalonians 2:3: The ‘man of sin’ is also called ‘**the son of perdition**’ so we must pursue the meaning of this **enigmatic name**:

*“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the **son of perdition** . . .”*

The Character of Judas

John 17:12: Jesus said **concerning Judas**:

*“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except **the son of perdition**, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”*

The specific name ‘son of perdition’ **appears only** here and in 2 Thessalonians 2. In the Bible, a **name** is indicative of a **person’s character**:

*“In Biblical thought a name is **not a mere label** of identification; it is an expression of the **essential nature** of its bearer. A man’s name **reveals his character**. Adam was able to give names to the beasts and birds (Gen. 2:20) because, as Milton says, he understood their nature.” *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, volume 3, pp. 500, 501*

Jesus referred to Judas Iscariot with the **identical name** of the 'man of sin' so the character of the 'man of sin' must bear a **marked resemblance** to the character of Judas.

The Nature of the Antichrist

There is a fundamental **misconception** in the Christian World about the **nature** of the Antichrist. Most **conservative Protestants** teach that the antichrist will be a **wicked individual** who will sit in a rebuilt **Jewish temple** for three and a half **literal years**, persecute the Jews and **openly defy God** and blaspheme His name. However, this is an erroneous assessment of the evidence for the following reasons:

- Practically all conservative Bible scholars agree that the **man of sin** (2 Thessalonians 2), the **little horn** (Daniel 7) and **the beast** (Revelation 13:1-10) all represent **the same power**. It is noteworthy that in prophecy a **beast always represents a kingdom** and not an individual person.
- Prophecy informs us that the little horn would rule for a period of **1260 years**. It is rather obvious that **no individual** has lived that long!
- The man of sin was underground **in the days of the apostle Paul** and was being **restrained**. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:8, 9 the same man of sin will be **destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming**. There is not a person on planet earth who was alive in the days of Paul and will still be alive when Jesus comes.
- The expression 'the man of sin' (**masculine/singular**) would seem to refer to an **individual**. However, the **masculine singular** appears in **other contexts** for a **succession** of persons and not for lone individuals. For example, in **Hebrews 9:7** the expression '**the priest**' (masculine/singular) describes a succession of priests. Likewise, in **1 Samuel 8:11** the expression '**the king**' (masculine/singular) is used of a succession of kings. Finally, **2 Timothy 3:17** uses the expression '**the man of God**' to describe all Christians of all times.
- The Scriptures teach that the antichrist will be a **political/religious system** possessing the identical **character qualities as Judas**. It will be **ambitious**, covetous of **power and money**, and desirous of an **earthly kingdom**. While **overtly** professing loyalty to Christ, the antichrist will work **covertly** to betray Him.

Although **Dave Hunt** was a dyed in the wool **futurist**, he captured well the character of the antichrist:

*“While the Greek prefix ‘anti’ generally means ‘against’ or ‘opposed to,’ it can also mean **‘in the place of’** or **‘a substitute for.’** The Antichrist will embody both meanings. He will **oppose Christ while pretending to be Christ**. Instead of a **frontal assault** against Christianity, the evil one will **pervert the church from within** by posing as its founder. He will cunningly misrepresent Christ while **pretending to be Christ**. And right here is where the plot thickens. If the Antichrist will indeed pretend to be the Christ, then his **followers must be ‘Christians!’**” Dave Hunt, *Global Peace*, p. 7-8.*

The Greek word **antichristós** has the same basic meaning, as does **Vicarius Christi** in Latin. Most people assume that the word antichrist means **‘one who is against Christ.’** It is true that in Greek the preposition *anti* can mean ‘against’ when it is used with a **verb**. However, it is equally true that this preposition, when it is used as a **prefix to a noun** quite frequently means ‘instead of,’ or ‘in place of’

- In classical Greek, for example, the word **antibasileús** means ‘one who occupies the place of the king.’
- In the New Testament, the name Herod **Antipas** means that Herod ruled ‘in place of his father.’ (Revelation 2:13)
- The word **antitype** means ‘that which takes the place of the type.’
- Christ is spoken of as having given His life as a ransom ‘in place of (**antilutrón**) all (I Timothy 2:6).
- Thus, the word **antichristós** in Greek and **Vicarius Filii Dei** in Latin bear a very similar meaning!

So the antichrist will **not be** an **atheistic and blasphemous** individual **openly attacking** Christianity but rather a system claims to act **in the place of and in the name of** Christ. In this context it would be well to remember that **Francis** is the **first Jesuit pope** in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. Francis comes across as a **very pious person** who seems to manifest great regard the **poor and outcast** of society. Ellen White gave us a portrait of the Jesuit Order:

*“When appearing as members of their order, they wore a **garb of sanctity**, visiting **prisons and hospitals**, ministering to the **sick and the poor**, professing*

to have **renounced the world**, and bearing the sacred name of Jesus, who went about **doing good**. But **under** this blameless **exterior** the most criminal and deadly purposes were **concealed**.” *GC*, pp. 234, 235

The **best description** of the stealth character of the Papacy that I have ever read is in the book *The Great Controversy*:

“It is a part of her [**the papacy’s**] policy to assume the character which will best accomplish her purpose; but **beneath** the variable **appearance** of the chameleon she **conceals** the invariable **venom** of the serpent.” *GC*, p. 571

Let’s examine the character qualities of **Judas Iscariot**.

A Shrewd Administrator

The gospels portray Judas as a **shrewd politician and a sharp businessman** who carried the **money bag** and **craved the praise** of the world. Ellen White describes this quality:

“He had come more into contact with the world than they [**the other disciples**], he was a man of **good address**, of **discernment** and **executive ability**, and, having a **high estimate of his own qualifications**, he had led the disciples to hold him in the same regard. But the methods he desired to introduce into Christ’s work were based upon **worldly principles** and were controlled by **worldly policy**.” *Education*, p. 93.

“But Judas was a **speculator**. He thought that he could manage the **finances of the church**, and by his **sharpness in business** get gain. He was divided in heart. He **loved the praise of the world**. He refused **to give up the world** for Christ. He never committed his eternal interests to Christ. He had a **superficial religion**, and therefore he speculated upon his Master and betrayed Him to the priests, being fully persuaded that **Christ would not allow** Himself to be taken. Judas was a **religious fraud**. He held up a high standard for others, but he himself utterly failed to reach the Bible standard. He did not bring the religion of Christ into his life.” *5BC*, pp. 1101, 1102

“Judas summed up all the disciples, and flattered himself that the church would often be brought into **perplexity and embarrassment** if it were not for **his ability as a manager**. Judas regarded himself as the **capable one**, who could not

be overreached. In his own estimation he was an honor to the cause, and as such he always represented himself." DA, p. 717

Judas Coveted an Earthly Kingdom

It was Judas' strong desire that Jesus would establish an earthly kingdom. Contrary to what many think, Judas did not deliver Jesus so that He would die. He betrayed Jesus in the hopes that He would deliver Himself, destroy the hated romans and establish an earthly kingdom.

John 6:15:

When Jesus fed the five thousand it was Judas who encouraged the crowd to take Jesus by force to make Him King. But Jesus would have none of it:

"Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone."

"Judas was first to take advantage of the enthusiasm excited by the miracle of the loaves. It was he who set on foot the project to take Christ by force and make Him king. His hopes were high. His disappointment was bitter" DA, pp. 718, 719.

'Notwithstanding the Savior's own teaching, Judas was continually advancing the idea that Christ would reign as king in Jerusalem. At the feeding of the five thousand he tried to bring this about . . .'" DA, pp. 718, 719

When Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, Judas was disgusted:

"If Jesus could so humble Himself, he thought, He could not be Israel's king. All hope of worldly honor in a temporal kingdom was destroyed. Judas was satisfied that there was nothing to be gained by following Christ. After seeing Him degrade Himself, as he thought, he was confirmed in his purpose to disown Him, and confess himself deceived. He was possessed by a demon, and he resolved to complete the work he had agreed to do in betraying his Lord." DA, p. 645

Judas Coveted Money and Feigned Love for the Poor

According to Matthew 8:19-21 Judas offered himself to become one of Jesus' disciples and Jesus informed him that there would be no financial benefit if he did:

*"Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You, wherever You go."²⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the **Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.**"*

John 12:4-6: Judas not only coveted earthly **political power** but he also **coveted money**. When Jesus **refused both**, Judas chose to betray Him:

*"But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said,⁵ "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and **given to the poor?**"⁶ This he said, **not that he cared for the poor**, but because he was **a thief** and had the **money box**; and he used to take what was put in it."*

Luke 22:3-6: Judas betrayed Jesus **for money**

*"Then **Satan entered Judas**, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.⁴ So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them.⁵ And they were glad, and **agreed to give him money**.⁶ So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude."*

*"Judas had naturally a strong **love for money**; but he had not always been corrupt enough to do such a deed as this. He had fostered the evil spirit of **avarice** until it had become the ruling motive of his life. The **love of mammon** overbalanced his love for Christ. Through becoming the slave of one vice he gave himself to Satan, to be driven to any lengths in sin." DA, p. 716*

Became Satan's Vicar

After feeding the five thousand, Jesus referred to **Judas as 'a devil'**. Jesus knew that Judas was the **ringleader** in the movement to force Him to take over the reins of the **civil government** to become King.

John 6:70, 71: Jesus referred to Judas **as a devil**:

*"Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is **a devil**?"⁷¹ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who **would betray Him**, being one of the twelve."*

John 13:2: As Satan had done in heaven, Judas **feigned support** for Jesus while he was **secretly undermining** Him. At this point the devil had merely put into

the **heart of Judas** the idea of betraying Jesus but he had **not yet passed** the point of no return:

*“And supper being ended, **the devil** having already **put it into the heart** of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him . . .”*

John 13:27: At the end of the Last Supper, Satan possessed Judas and he became the vicar of Satan:

*“Now after the piece of bread, **Satan entered him**. Then Jesus said to him, “What you do, do quickly.”*

*“Judas became **a representative** [bears the same meaning as ‘vicar’] of the enemy of Christ.” DA, p. 295*

His Hypocrisy deceived even the Disciples

It is important to realize that during the entire ministry of Jesus, Judas **did not reveal himself** for what he really was. Like the man of sin, he had **not revealed his true character**. He constantly worked at **cross-purposes** with Jesus while **claiming to support Him**. As with the ‘man of sin,’ His opposition to Christ was **not openly revealed** until the very end.

Judas had the variable appearance of a chameleon. He did not **openly war** against Jesus, but as Ellen White explains it, he manifested a **‘continuous, secret and subtle antagonism’** (Education, p. 92).

*“Judas possessed a **form of godliness**, while his character was **more satanic** than divine. He **professed** to be a disciple of Christ, but in words and in works **denied Him**.” The Sanctified Life, p. 59*

Judas was on **Jesus’ left** at the last supper (The **goats** on the **left** side, the left side is the **sinister** side, got up on the **left foot**). The right side is the side of **God’s favor** and the left side is the side of His disfavor:

*“Judas pressed next to Christ on the **left side**; John was on the right. If there was a **highest place**, Judas was determined to have it, and that place was thought to be **next to Christ**. And Judas was a traitor.” DA, p. 644*

Matthew 26:25: Judas had the other disciples deceived **until the very end**:

The word **‘traitor’** refers to a person who **professes loyalty** to someone and yet works by **subterfuge** to undermine him:

*"Then Judas, who was **betraying** Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, **is it I?**" He said to him, "You have said it."*

John 13:26-29: Judas had a **form of godliness** and deceived his **own colleagues**. He was the instrument in the hands of Satan to betray Jesus:

*"Jesus answered, "**It is he** to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. ²⁷ Now after the piece of bread, **Satan entered him**. Then Jesus said to him, "**What you do, do quickly.**" ²⁸ But no one at the table **knew for what reason** He said this to him. ²⁹ For **some thought**, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy those things we need for the feast," or that he should give **something to the poor.**"*

Betrayed Jesus with a Kiss

Luke 22:47, 48: Jesus delivered Jesus **with a kiss**:

*"And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus **to kiss Him**. ⁴⁸ But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you **betraying** the Son of Man **with a kiss?**"*

Judas went to Perdition (destruction)

Matthew 27:3-5: Judas went to **perdition**

*"Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, **was remorseful** and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, ⁴ saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" ⁵ Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and **hanged himself.**"*

Summary of Characteristics:

- A shrewd **politician** and sharp **administrator**
- Coveted **political power** and desired Christ to set up an **earthly kingdom**
- Was **covetous of money** and **earthly display**
- He feigned an interest for **the poor**
- He became the **vicar** or representative of Satan

- His hypocrisy deceived even those who were in the **inner circle**
- He betrayed Jesus with **a kiss**
- He was an **enemy from the inside** who feigned a love for Jesus

Opposes God

2 Thessalonians 2:4: We are told that the Antichrist would '**oppose God**':

*"... who **opposes** and **exalts himself above** all that is called God or that is worshiped..."*

What does it mean to 'oppose God'? Most **conservative protestant** scholars see the antichrist as one who **will openly defy** God. However, the character of Judas clearly shows that the opposition is **not overt** but rather **covert**. Judas **professed to love** Jesus and support Him but **stealthily opposed** Him.

The greatest enemies of Jesus were those who **professed to serve** God. Although **Saul of Tarsus** claimed to defend God's cause he was actually **betraying it**. The system we are talking about **claims to serve the true God** but in its history it has persecuted and **killed millions** in the name of God. The Roman Catholic Church would never admit that in killing the saints **it was opposing God**.

John 16:2: Jesus predicted that **after His departure** many of His followers would be killed in the name of God:

*"They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he **offers God service** [when they are really opposing God]."*

Acts 5:38, 39: **Gamaliel** warned the members of the Sanhedrin that in professing to serve God, they might **actually be opposing Him**:

*"And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing;³⁹ but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it--lest you even be found to **fight against God**."*

According to the book **Education, p. 92**, Judas manifested a '**continuous, secret and subtle antagonism**' against Christ. He did not war **openly** but rather opposed Jesus by stealth. In this manner, Judas had a character similar to Lucifer:

*“Working with **mysterious secrecy**, and for a time **concealing** his real purpose under an **appearance** of reverence for God. . .” The Great Controversy, p. 495*

The Act of Sitting

2 Thessalonians 2:4: We are told that the Antichrist would ‘**sit**’ in the temple of God. **What does it mean ‘to sit’?**

*“. . . who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he **sits [kathizo]** as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”*

Matthew 23:2:

*“The scribes and the Pharisees **sit in Moses’ seat.**”*

We are told that the Scribes and Pharisees **sat (kathizo)** on Moses’ **seat (kathedra)**. This expression is **not to be understood literally**. Actually, sitting on Moses’ Seat was a **symbolic expression** meaning that when the scribes and Pharisees spoke **ex-cathedra, (from the throne)** their teachings were to be accepted **as infallible** because they had supposedly received them in an **unbroken line** of oral tradition from Moses. The Roman Catholic Jerome Bible Commentary explains the meaning of the expression:

*“The phrase [**sit on Moses’ Seat**] is most probably a **metaphor** for the **authority** of the scribes to teach. In rabbinical tradition the interpretation of the Law was carried on in a scribal tradition that theoretically went back through an **unbroken chain** of scribes to Moses. This view is, of course, entirely **unhistorical.**” (The Jerome Bible Commentary, volume 2 (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 102)*

In the Temple of God as God

2 Thessalonians 2:4:

*“. . . who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in **the temple of God**, showing himself that he is God.”*

We are also told that the man of sin sits **as God ‘in the temple of God’ claiming** to be God. Is the expression ‘temple of God’ a reference to the **literal rebuilt** Jerusalem temple?

Matthew 21:12, 13: When Jesus entered the Jewish temple at the **triumphal entry** He described the temple as ‘the temple of God’ and ‘My house’:

*“Then Jesus went into the **temple of God** and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹³ And He said to them, "It is written, **'My house** shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'”*

Matthew 23:38: But when Jesus **forsook** the temple a short while later, He said to the Jewish leadership:

*“See! **Your house** is left to you desolate.”*

Clearly, the Jewish temple was **no longer God’s temple** after Jesus left it. When the **apostle Paul** used the word ‘temple’ (naos), he always applied it spiritually **to the Christian church** and **never to the literal** Jewish temple (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21).

Two Greek words are translated ‘temple’ in the New Testament. One is **hieron** and the other is **naos**. The apostle Paul **never** used the word *naos* to refer to the **Jewish temple**. Without exception, he used the word *naos* as a reference to the **spiritual temple**, the Christian church. The **book of Acts** refers to the Jewish ‘temple’ **25 times** and it is **never called naos**. Furthermore, not even once in any of the **epistles** is the word *naos* applied to the literal Jewish temple.

Paul explained to the **Ephesians** what he meant by the word ‘temple’:

Ephesians 2:19-22

*“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.”*

In this passage the apostle Paul clearly explains that the temple is spiritual:

- **Foundations** of the temple: Apostles and Prophets
- **Chief Cornerstone:** Jesus
- **Stones:** Believers

- **Shekinah**: The Holy Spirit (invisible)

In conclusion, the man of sin who sits in the temple of God must **sit within the Christian Church**. The link between the **little horn** and the **man of sin** can be clearly seen by the fact that the little horn/beast speaks **blasphemies** against the Most High and **demands worship**.

It is hardly a coincidence that Pope **Benedict XVI**, at the conclusion of the week for Christian unity in **St. Paul's Outside the Wall**, sat on a great **white throne** and on each side of the throne was a **cherub**. This is a usurpation of the position of the **great YHWH** because it is He who sits between the cherubim (Psalm 80:1).

Paul had warned them

2 Thessalonians 2:5 Paul was not to blame for the misunderstanding of the Thessalonians. He **was surprised** that they did not remember that he had taught them these things when he was with them:

*“Do you not remember that when I was still with you **I told you these things?**”*

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #18: A Judas in the Church - Part 2

In our first lecture, we discussed the emergence of the man of sin. We noticed that the spirit of the man of sin was already operational during the lifetime of the apostle Paul but was under the radar, just waiting for the opportune time to reveal himself. In the lesson today, we will notice that in the days of the apostle Paul something/someone was restraining the man of sin from openly revealing himself.

Paul’s Mysterious Restrainer

2 Thessalonians 2:6, 7:

“And now you know what [neuter: ‘something’] is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He [masculine: someone] who now restrains will do so until He [masculine: someone] is taken out of the way.”

In the times of the apostle Paul, someone/something was preventing the ‘man of sin’ from openly rising to power. So to speak, the ‘man of sin’ was anxious to openly reveal himself but he was restrained or in captivity. What was restraining the ‘man of sin’ in the days of Paul?

The answer is that the Roman Empire/emperors ruled the world and had the reins of civil power and the sword. The man of sin could not occupy the throne of civil power until the Roman Empire/emperor were taken out of the way. Here is how the apostle Paul describes the power that ruled in his day:

Romans 13:4

*“For **he [the civil authority]** is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for **he [the civil authority]** does not bear **the sword** in vain; for **he [the civil authority]** is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on **him [whoever]** who practices evil.”*

The critical question at his point is this: **How** was the ‘man of sin’ **released from his captivity**? What **removed his chains** so that he could fully reveal himself? We find the answer in the books of **Daniel and Revelation**.

The Transfer of Civil Power

Daniel 7:23, 24: Paul was referring to this **specific prophecy** in 2 Thessalonians 2:

*“Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast shall be a **fourth kingdom [the Roman empire]** on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces.’²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise **from this kingdom [the divided Roman empire]** and another shall rise **after them [papal Rome]**; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings.”*

According to these verses, the **[1] Roman Empire** would be fragmented into **[2] ten kingdoms** and then the **[3] man of sin** would rise to power from this kingdom. **Cyril of Jerusalem** (318-386 AD) who was living in the period when the Roman Empire was falling apart, understood very well the link between Daniel 7 and 2 Thessalonians 2:

*“But this aforesaid Antichrist is to come when the **[1] times of the Roman Empire shall have been fulfilled**, and the end of the world is drawing near. There shall rise up together **[2] ten kings of the Romans**, reigning in different parts perhaps, but all **about the same time**; and after those an eleventh, the Antichrist, who by his magical craft shall **[3] seize upon the Roman power**; and of the kings who reigned before him, ‘three he shall humble,’ and the remaining seven he shall keep in subjection to himself.”* (‘Catechetical Lectures’ Section 15, on II Thessalonians 2:4; **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers**, vol. VII, p. 108 [New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1895])

The book of **Revelation** describes this transfer of power:

Revelation 13:2: The ten-horned dragon **gave his throne and authority** to the beast:

*“Now the **beast [symbol of the papacy]** which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The **dragon [pagan Rome] gave him [the papacy] his power, his throne, and great authority.**”*

Ellen White describes this **transfer of power** from pagan Rome to papal Rome:

*“In the **sixth century [538]** the papacy had become firmly established. Its **seat** of power was **fixed in the imperial city**, and the bishop of Rome was declared to be the **head over the entire church**. Paganism had **given place** to the papacy. The dragon had given to the beast “his power, and his seat, and great authority” **Revelation 13:2**. And **now began** the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-7.” **GC**, p. 54*

Thus, Daniel, John and Ellen White all agree that the **vacancy** of the imperial throne in the west led to the **rise of the papacy**.

How the ‘Man of Sin’ was released

In the year **330 AD** Emperor Constantine **moved the seat** of the Roman Empire to Constantinople thus **weakening the political power** of the Roman emperor/empire in the west.

Then, around the **end of the fourth** and **early fifth** centuries, hordes of **barbarian tribes** from the north invaded and carved up the Roman Empire. **Romulus Augustulus**, the last emperor of the west was deposed in the year **476 AD**. Says a historian about the significance of the year 476 AD:

*“When the insignificant Romulus Augustulus was deposed (476), there was **no longer even a titular emperor.**” (Paul Hutchinson & Winnifred E. Garrison, 20 Centuries of Christianity: A Concise History. First edition, p. 93, 1959, Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., New York)*

Without an emperor on the throne, the **civil society** of the empire **fell apart**. The [1] abandonment of Rome by Constantine and the [2] barbarian incursions into the Western Roman Empire turned it **upside down** and left it **without a civil ruler** who could preserve law and order.

In the midst of this **chaotic situation**, the **Bishop of Rome** was **enticed** by the Barbarian tribes to take the reins of civil power and bring about **order** in the empire. As a result, the bishop of Rome was not only the **spiritual leader** of the church but also became the **temporal ruler** of the state. In this way, the Roman Empire **was taken out of the way** to give way to the papacy. This is how **Cardinal Manning** and **other historians** describe this transfer of power:

*“But **from the hour** when Constantine, in the language of the Roman law, ‘Deo jubente,’ by the command of God, **translated the seat** of power to Constantinople, from that moment there **never reigned in Rome** a temporal prince to whom the Bishops of Rome owed a permanent allegiance.” (The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, Second edition, London: Burns & Lambert, pp. 11, 12)*

The Roman Catholic, **James P. Conroy** explains it this way:

*“Long ages ago, when Rome through the **neglect of the Western emperors** was left to the mercy of the barbarous hordes, the Romans turned to one figure for aid and protection, and asked him to rule them; and thus, in this simple manner, the best title of all to **kingly right**, commenced the **temporal sovereignty** of the popes. And meekly stepping to the **throne of Caesar**, the vicar of Christ took up the scepter to which the emperors and kings of Europe were **to bow in reverence** through so many ages.” James P. Conroy, American Quarterly Catholic Quarterly Review, April, 1911*

*“Under the **[stage #1: the dragon]** the popes had **no temporal powers**. But when the Roman Empire had **disintegrated [stage#2: the ten horns]** and its place had been taken by a number of rude, barbarous kingdoms, the **Roman Catholic Church [stage #3: the little horn]** not only became independent of the states in religious affairs but **dominated secular affairs** as well.” Carl Conrad Eckhardt, The Papacy and World Affairs (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937), p. 1*

*“During the **whole medieval period** there was **in Rome a single spiritual and temporal authority [the papacy]** exercising powers which in the end exceeded*

those that had ever lain within the grasp of the Roman emperor.” (R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*, volume 2), pp. 24-25

“[In] the Middle Ages the church was not a State, **it was the State**; or rather, the civil authority (for a separate society was not recognized), was merely **the police department of the Church**.” John N. Figgis, *From Gerson to Grotius*, p. 4

This idea of the church ruling in **temporal** as well as in **spiritual** affairs was explained in **1302** when pope **Boniface VIII** wrote a significant bull (personal letter) titled **Unam Sanctam**:

“We are informed by the texts of the gospels that in this [**Roman Catholic**] Church and in its power are **two swords**; namely, the **spiritual** and the **temporal**. **Both**, therefore, are in the **power of the Church**, that is to say, the spiritual and the material sword, but the former [**the spiritual**] is to be administered for the Church but the latter [**the temporal**] by the Church; the former in the hands of the **priest**; the latter by the hands of **kings and soldiers**, but **at the will and sufferance of the priest**.”

Cardinal **Edward Henry Manning** described **the manner** in which the Roman Pontiff originally rose to civil power in the Roman Empire. Manning explained what occurred when the Barbarians invaded the Roman Empire and tore it apart:

“Now the **abandonment of Rome** was the **liberation** of the pontiffs. Whatsoever claims to obedience the emperors may have made, and whatsoever compliance the Pontiff may have yielded, the whole previous relation, anomalous, and annulled again and again by the vices and outrages of the emperors, was finally dissolved by a **higher power**. The providence of God permitted a succession of **irruptions**, Gothic, Lombard, and Hungarian, to desolate Italy, and to **efface from it every remnant of the empire**. The pontiffs found themselves **alone**, the **sole fountains of order, peace, law, and safety**. And from the hour of this providential **liberation**, when, by a divine intervention, the **chains fell off** from the hands of the successor of St. Peter, as once before from his own, no sovereign has ever reigned in Rome except the Vicar of Jesus Christ.” Henry Edward Manning, *The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ*, Preface, pp. xxviii, xxix. London: Burns and Lambert, 1862

Manning further explains:

“It [the papacy] waited until such a time as God should break its **bonds** asunder, and should **liberate it from subjection to civil powers**, and **enthroned it** in the possession of a **temporal sovereignty** of its own.” Henry Edward Manning, The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ (London: Burns & Lambert, second edition, 1862), pp. 11-13

Manning is saying that when the emperor Constantine moved the see of the Empire to Constantinople and the barbarians carved up the empire, the **bishop of Rome filled the vacuum** and became the arbiter in **civil affairs** as well as in **religious**. Remarkably, Manning refers to this taking over of civil power by the bishop of Rome with expressions such as “**breaking bonds asunder**”, and “**chains falling off**”, terminology that is reminiscent of 2 Thessalonians 2. The dragon had given the beast ‘his power, his throne and great authority’ (Revelation 13:2)

The noted Bible commentator, **Albert Barnes**, understood the meaning of 2 Thessalonians 2:7:

*“The supposition which will best suit this language is, that there was then some **civil restraint**, preventing the development of existing corruptions, but that there would be a **removal, or withdrawing of that restraint**; and that then the tendency of the existing corruptions would be seen. It is evident, as Oldshausen remarks, that this resisting or restraining power must be **something out of the church**, and distinguished from the anti-Christian tendency itself . . . It is necessary, therefore, to understand this of the **restraints of civil power**. Was there, then, any fact in history which will accord with this interpretation? The belief among the primitive Christians was, that what hindered the rise of the man of sin was the **Roman Empire**, and therefore “they prayed for its peace and welfare, as knowing that when the **Roman Empire should be dissolved and broken in pieces**, the empire of the man of sin would be raised on its ruins” From Barnes’ Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved*

Ellen G. White has some interesting statements regarding how the **secular power was removed** and the papacy was able to ascend to power:

*“The spirit of compromise and conformity [of the early Christian church] was **restrained** for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under*

paganism [the Roman Empire]. But as **persecution ceased**, and Christianity **entered the courts and palaces of kings**, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions.” *GC*, p. 49.

“The vast empire of Rome **crumbled to pieces**, and **from its ruins** rose that mighty power, the Roman Catholic Church. This church boasts of her infallibility and her hereditary religion” (Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, volume 1, p. 50)

As we have seen, in cryptic language, the **apostle Paul** had already referred this moment when the civil power of the Roman Empire would be given over to papal Rome. In 2 Thessalonians 2:6, 7 the apostle referred to the removal of the mysterious **restrainer**:

“And now you know **what** is restraining [**the civil power of the Roman Empire**], that **he** may be revealed in **his own time** [**once the restrainer was taken out of the way**]. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only **he** [**the emperor**] who **now restrains** will do so until **he** is **taken out of the way**.”

Paul’s Cryptic Language

The **early church Fathers** were practically **unanimous** in the opinion that the ‘restrainer’ was a reference to the Roman **Empire** in general and to the **emperors** in particular. In 2 Thessalonians 2:6 the apostle refers to **what** was restraining (using the neuter article **to katéchon**) but in verse 7 he refers to **who** was restraining (using the masculine article **ho katéchon**). By his use of language, Paul indicates that the Church at **Thessalonica knew who/what** was restraining. And yet Paul wrote in **veiled, cryptic** language. Why didn’t Paul just come out and write openly that the Roman Empire was the restrainer that would be taken out of the way in order to give way to the papacy?

The answer is not hard to find. If Paul had said openly that the Roman Empire would be taken out of the way, the Roman government would have had grounds to accuse Paul of **sedition**. So Paul had to be **cautious** in the language that he used.

Dispensationalists (Evangelicals who believe in the Rapture of the church before the tribulation) and even the **Andrews University Study Bible**

erroneously teach that the restrainer is the **Holy Spirit** who will be removed before the tribulation. However if this were true, then why would there be any need for Paul **to be so cautious**? It is clear that Paul could not define the ‘restrainer’ openly and he did not need to because the Thessalonians knew who he was writing about.

It will be noticed that Cardinal Manning wrote that the fall of the Roman Empire led to the ‘**liberation**’ of the Roman Pontiff. If the Roman Pontiff was liberated by the fall of the Empire, then he must have been **restrained** or in **captivity** before. Likewise, if the **chains fell off** the successor of Peter then the chains must have been in place before the Empire fell. The inevitable conclusion from Manning’s words is that the fall of the empire removed or **took away** the restraint from the Bishop of Rome.

The Ante-Nicene Fathers

Now let us turn to the writings of the early church Fathers to see how they understood the ‘restrainer’. It must be noted that many of these church fathers were **living in the very time frame** of Rome’s demise and fall.

Let us begin with **Tertullian** (160-240 AD):

*“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who **now hinders** must hinder, until he be taken out of the way.’ What **obstacle** is there but the **Roman state**, the falling away of which, by being scattered into **ten kingdoms**, shall introduce **Antichrist** upon (its own ruins)? ‘And then shall be revealed the wicked one.” ‘On the Resurrection of the Flesh,’ chapter 24; Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. III, p. 563 [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1908]*

Tertullian (160-240 AD) also wrote:

*“The very end of all things threatening dreadful woes is only **retarded** by the continued existence of the Roman Empire.” (‘Apology,’ chapter 32; Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. III, p. 43)*

Lactantius, who lived in the early **Fourth Century**, wrote:

*“The subject itself declares that the fall and ruin of the world will shortly take place; except that **while the city of Rome remains**, it appears that nothing of this kind is to be feared. But when that capital of the world **shall have fallen**, and*

*shall have begun to be a street, which the Sibyls say shall come to pass, who can doubt that the end has now arrived to the affairs of men and the whole world? It is that city, that only, which **still sustains all things**.” (‘The Divine Institutes,’ book 7, chapter 25; Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. VII, p. 220)*

Next we present the testimony of **Ambrose** (died in 398 AD):

*“**After the falling or decay** of the Roman Empire, Antichrist shall appear.” (Quoted in, Bishop Thomas Newton, Dissertations on the Prophecies, p. 463 [London: B. Blake, 1840])*

Next in line is **Chrysostom** (died in 407 AD):

*“When the **Roman Empire is taken out of the way**, then he [the Antichrist] shall come. And naturally. For as long as the fear of this empire lasts, no one will willingly exalt himself, but **when that is dissolved**, he will attack the anarchy, and endeavor to seize upon the government **both** of man and of God.” ‘Homily IV on 2 Thessalonians 2:6-9,’ Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, vol. XIII, p. 389 [New York: Charles Scribner’s and Sons, 1905]*

Finally, we will quote from **Jerome** (died in 420 AD):

*“He that **letteth [restrains]** is taken **out of the way**, and yet we do not realize that Antichrist is near.” (Letter to Ageruchia, written about 409 A. D. Letter 123, section 16; Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, vol. VI, p. 236 [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1912]).*

‘In His Time’

2 Thessalonians 2:6:

*“And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed **in his own time**.”*

What is the meaning of the expression ‘in his time’? The **reflexive pronoun** (‘his own’) indicates that the man of sin would arise at a **specific time**. The little horn prophecy in Daniel 7:25 indicates that there was **a set time** for the little horn to rise to power: ‘time, times and the dividing of time.’ Revelation 13:5 refers to this period as 42 months and Revelation 12:14 as 1260 days.

The Mystery of Iniquity

2 Thessalonians 2:7:

*“For the mystery of lawlessness is **already** at work; only **He [the emperor]** who now restrains will do so until **he [the emperor]** taken out of the way [by the barbarian invasions].”*

The mystery of iniquity was **already at work** in the days of Paul. The word ‘iniquity’ is the identical word that is translated ‘transgression of the law’ in 1 John 3:4 where we are told that sin is the transgression of the law.

1798 not the End of the Story

Thus far, we have seen that the papacy **was restrained** or in captivity as long as the **Roman Empire stood**. When the Western Empire fell, the papacy was able to capture the throne that it did not relinquish for 1260 years.

However, this is not the end of the story. Prophecy predicts that the ‘man of sin’ would have two periods of dominion—one in the past and one in the future. The papacy would be freed from captivity to the civil power in **538 AD** but would be thrown back into captivity by the same power in **1798 AD**. But the prophecy of Revelation 13:9, 10, 3 indicates that the papacy will **once again be freed** from its captivity and recover the power of the sword when the civil powers of the world allow themselves to be used for the **papacy’s purposes**. The apostle Paul does not specify the two stages of the papacy described but rather describes the entire history of the ‘man of sin’ in broad strokes from his day until the second coming. That is to say, Paul did not explain that the ‘man of sin’ would be **bound** (before 538 AD) and then **released** (in 538 AD) and **bound again** (in 1798 AD) only to be **released once more** (by the beast from the earth in the near future).

Two Stages of the Man of Sin

Not only does the book of **Revelation** describe a second stage of the papacy. **Ellen White** does as well:

*“The influence of Rome in the **countries that once acknowledged her dominion** is still far from being destroyed. And prophecy foretells a **restoration of her power**. “I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound*

was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." Verse 3. The Great Controversy, p. 579

"When our nation shall so abjure the principles of its government as to enact a Sunday law, Protestantism will in this act join hands with popery; it will be nothing else that **giving life** to the tyranny which has long been eagerly watching its opportunity to **spring again** into active despotism." 5T, p. 712

"Protestants will throw their whole influence and strength on the side of the Papacy; by a national act enforcing the false Sabbath, they will **give life and vigor** to the corrupt faith of Rome, **reviving** her tyranny and oppression of conscience. Then it will be time for God to work in mighty power for the vindication of his truth." ST, June 12, 1893

Released Once Again

Why has not the deadly wound **healed yet**? What is keeping the papacy in **captivity**? **Malachi Martin**, Jesuit scholar and friend of **pope John Paul II** who wrote the best-selling book, The Keys of this Blood explained the reason in 1986:

"[For] **fifteen hundred years** and more, [papal] Rome had kept as **strong a hand** as possible in each local community around the wide world. By and large, and admitting some exceptions, that had been the **Roman view** [Ellen White calls it the 'Roman element' GC 581] until **two hundred years of inactivity** had been **imposed** upon the papacy by the **major secular powers** of the world." Quoted in Christianity Today (November 21, 1986), p. 26.

There are **three main points** in this statement by Martin:

- The papacy kept a **strong hand** in each local community around the wide world for **fifteen hundred years**.
- During the last **200 years** the papacy has **not been able** to exert this power because **inactivity** has **been imposed** upon her contrary to her will.
- The two hundred years of inactivity have been imposed upon the papacy by the **great secular powers** of the world.

No doubt Martin **did not realize** that he was describing the deadly wound and the **captivity** of the papacy that is described in **Revelation 13:10**. **What**

happened two hundred years before Martin wrote this statement? The answer is unmistakable: The **French Revolution (1789-1797)** took away the power of the sword when the pope was taken captive in 1798. France **emancipated itself** from papal power establishing **a republic**. As a result, one nation after another in the **western hemisphere** formed democratic governments that have **not allowed the papacy** to use them to accomplish her own ends.

However, the French Revolution did much **more than just deliver France** from the iron fist of the papacy. It actually led **all the major powers of Europe** within a brief period of time to proclaim their emancipation from papal dominance. As a result, **nation after nation** in Europe formed democratic governments that guaranteed civil and religious liberty. For this reason, Henry Edward **Cardinal Manning** in **1862** (even before Victor Emmanuel II confiscated the papal states in 1870) lamented that the nations of Europe had forsaken the papacy:

*“See this Catholic Church, this Church of God, feeble and weak, rejected even by the **very nations called Catholic**. There is Catholic **France**, and Catholic **Germany**, and Catholic **Italy giving up** this exploded figment of the **temporal power** of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.’ And so, because the Church **seems weak**, and the Vicar of the Son of God is renewing the Passion of his Master upon earth, therefore we are scandalized, therefore we **turn our faces from him**.” (*The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ*, pp. 140, 141, emphasis mine)*

Ellen White and the Healing of the Wound

So, prophecy tells us that the **history of the papacy** is **not yet complete**. The **civil rulers** of the world will **once again** allow the papacy to attach herself to them to determine and dictate her agenda. The striking prophecy of **Revelation 13:3, 11-18** tells us that the papacy will be **released from captivity** and will **recover the sword** of civil power and then she will behave as she did in her **heyday**. Then the prophecy of **2 Thessalonians 2** will reach its **complete fulfillment**.

Revelation 17 presents a vivid portrayal of the time when the prophecy of Revelation 13:3, 11-18 will be fulfilled. In this passage we see a **[1] harlot woman** whose name is **[2] Babylon** (17:5) who sits on **[3] many waters**, that is, upon nations, multitudes, tongues and people (17:1, 15). She sustains an **[4] adulterous spiritual relationship** with the **civil rulers** of the earth (17:2).

She is garbed in [5] **purple and scarlet, gold and precious stones** (17:4). The kings of the world gladly drink her [6] **fermented wine** of false doctrine (17:2) and give decrees against those who refuse to drink with them. She has [7] **daughters** that were born from her at some point because she is called the 'mother of harlots' (17:5). And most significantly, she [8] **sheds the blood** of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus (17:6).

Ellen G. White, wrote **one hundred years before** Martin and used virtually **identical terminology**. She predicted that the restraints now imposed upon the papacy by the secular governments of the world will be **removed** and the papacy will recover the civil sword:

*"Let the **restraints** now **imposed** by **secular governments** be **removed** and Rome be **reinstated** in her former power, and there would speedily be a **revival** of her tyranny and persecution." GC, p. 564*

The Parallel of Revelation 20

The **best parallel** to understand the binding and unbinding of the papacy is found in the book of **Revelation** itself. The prophecies tell us that in the **final days** of earth's history Satan will be alive and free because he is able to influence the **civil powers** of the world to do his bidding. Satan has always accomplished his purposes by **using the rulers** of the world. We can see this repeatedly in the Bible. Satan used **Pharaoh**, the great dragon (Ezekiel 29:3), to attempt to destroy Moses. In **Revelation 12** we find the dragon standing before the woman to devour the child as soon as he was born. Satan was behind the plot but the visible instrument that Satan used in his attempt was **Herod**, a civil ruler of the Roman Empire. So, Satan is **well and free** now and wreaking havoc because the kings of the earth are at his disposal to carry out his agenda.

However, when Jesus comes, all the **kings of the earth** that supported Satan's agenda will die (Revelation 19:21). Without his support base Satan will have a **deadly wound** and will be chained in a prison of **inactivity** (Revelation 20:1-3). However, after the thousand years the wicked kings will resurrect and they will **once again** lend Satan their support (Revelation 20:5). In this way Satan's wound will be **healed** and he will be **released** from his prison (Revelation 20:1-3, 7-9). In short, when Satan loses the support of the kings of the earth at the second coming he is **wounded and in captivity** but when he regains their support after the millennium he is **healed and free** of captivity. In a similar

manner, when the papacy is able to use the civil powers to accomplish its will, she is healed and free but when the kings withdraw their support she is wounded and in captivity.

The Law: The Great Issue in the End Time Conflict

We have noticed that the ‘man of sin’ will be characterized by a stealth attack on God’s law:

- The little horn thought that it could change **God’s law**.
- The antichrist is called the **man of sin** and sin is the transgression of the law.
- The man of sin is called the mystery of **lawlessness**.
- The final warfare against God’s people involves the **commandments of God**:

Revelation 12:17:

*“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep **the commandments of God** and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”*

A Powerful Miracle Worker

2 Thessalonians 2:8: Jesus will destroy the man of lawlessness at the **second coming**:

*“And then the **lawless one [the transgressor of the law]** will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His **coming [parousia]**.”*

2 Thessalonians 2:9: But **before** the man of lawlessness is destroyed, he will counterfeit the second coming of Jesus:

*“The coming **[parousia]** of the lawless one is according to the **working** of Satan, with all **power, signs, and lying wonders** . . .”*

Acts 2:22: The combination of the three Greek words, ‘power, signs and wonders’ is used in only **one other verse** in the New Testament, Acts 2:22. There we are told that Jesus performed these marvelous works. This means that

the antichrist will counterfeit the miracles that Jesus performed while He was on earth.

*"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by **miracles, wonders, and signs** which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know . . ."*

Ellen White described what the counterfeit second coming will be like:

*"As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will **personate Christ**. The church has long professed to look to the Savior's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will **make it appear** that Christ has come. In **different parts** of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of **dazzling brightness**, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation (Revelation 1:13-15). **The glory** that surrounds him is **unsurpassed** by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: "Christ has come! Christ has come!" The people **prostrate themselves in adoration** before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is **soft and subdued**, yet full of **melody**. In **gentle, compassionate tones** he presents **some** of the same gracious, heavenly **truths** that the Savior uttered; **he heals the diseases** of the people, and then, in his **assumed character** of Christ, he claims to have **changed the Sabbath** to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to **listen to his angels** sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost **overmastering delusion [an allusion to II Thessalonians 2]**." *GC*, p. 624*

Our only protection at that time will be to know **how** Jesus will come and **what His word teaches** concerning the Sabbath/Sunday issue:

*"But the people of God will not be misled. **The teachings** of this false christ are not **in accordance with the Scriptures**. His blessing is pronounced upon the worshipers of the beast and his image, the very class upon whom the Bible declares that God's unmingled wrath shall be poured out. And, furthermore, Satan is not permitted to counterfeit **the manner** of Christ's advent. The Saviour has warned His people against deception upon this point, and has clearly foretold **the manner** of His second coming. "There shall arise false christs, and false*

prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. . . . Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:24-27, 31; 25:31; Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. This coming there is **no possibility of counterfeiting**. It will be **universally known**—witnessed by the whole world.

Only those who have been **diligent students** of the Scriptures and who have received the **love of the truth** will be shielded from the **powerful delusion** that takes the world captive. **By the Bible** testimony these **will detect** the deceiver in his **disguise**." GC, p. 625

Why People will embrace the Counterfeit

2 Thessalonians 2:10: People will be lost because they **refused** to receive the **love of the truth** and **God's word** and His **law** are the **truth**:

““The coming [*parousia*] of the lawless one is according to the **working** of Satan, with all **power, signs, and lying wonders** and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the **love of the truth** that they might be saved.”

John 17:17: God's **word is truth**

“Sanctify them by Your truth. **Your word is truth**.”

Psalms 119:142: The **law of God** is the truth

“Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your **law is truth**.”

2 Thessalonians 2:11-13: Counterfeit Christians will **refuse to believe the truth**:

“And for this reason God will send them **strong delusion**, that they should believe **the lie [the counterfeit second coming]**,¹² that they all may be condemned who **did not believe the truth** but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #19: Wrong Person, Wrong Place, Wrong Time

An introductory remark by Ellen G. White

“Error is never harmless. It never sanctifies, but always brings confusion and dissension. It is always dangerous. The enemy has great power over minds that are not thoroughly fortified by prayer and established in Bible truth.” 5T, p. 292

Review of the Historical Flow Method in Daniel 7

- **Lion** = Babylon (605-539 B. C.)
- **Bear** = Medo-Persia (539-331 B. C.)
- **Leopard** = Greece (331-168 B. C.)
- **Dragon** = Rome (168-476 A. D.)
- **Ten Horns** = Divisions of Rome (476 A. D.)
- **Little Horn** = Roman Catholic Papacy (538-1798 A. D.)
- **Deadly wound** with the sword (1798 AD)
- **Beast from the earth** (1798 AD)
- Separation of **church and state**—civil and religious liberty
- Deadly wound **healed** by the beast from the earth
- **Final Test** for God’s people (seal of God or Mark of the beast)
- Close of **human probation**
- The **final tribulation** for the saints of the Most High
- **Deliverance** at the second coming

Time, Times and Dividing of Time

Daniel 7:25

*“And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and **think to change times** and **laws**: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”*

During this time:

- The **little horn**: the papacy
- Persecutes the **saints**
- Thinks to change the **times and the Law**

Revelation 12

Revelation 12:14:

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

- The **dragon**: Satan through the little horn
- The **saints**: The woman
- The **same period**: Time, times and the dividing of time

The earth helps the woman and then God raises up a faithful remnant

Revelation 12:16: The United States helps the woman. A respite from persecution:

*“But the **earth helped** the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and **swallowed up the flood** which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.”*

Revelation 12:17, KJV: The **final onslaught:**

*“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the **commandments of God**, and have the **testimony of Jesus** Christ.”*

Revelation 13

Sequence of Powers in Revelation 13:1, 2:

- Lion
- Bear
- Leopard
- Dragon
- Ten Horns
- Beast (42 Months)
 - **Beast = little horn = dragon**
 - **Saints = woman**
 - **3.5 times = 42 months**

Satan's Final Plan to Attack the Law and the Times

Satan's Plan to Counteract the Remnant's Message

- The Change in God's Law = The Mark of the Beast (Revelation 13:15-16)
- Change in God's Times = The False Prophet (Revelation 16:13)

The Two Parties in the Final Conflict

- Those who keep God's commandments and have the seal of God versus those who break the commandments and have the mark of the beast
- Those who have the testimony of Jesus versus the false prophet

Why Satan Hates the Historical Flow Method

The historical flow method helps us identify:

- Who the Antichrist is (the papacy)
- When he would rise to power (after the removal of the empire)
- Where he would rise (in the church)
- What he would do (persecute the saints, blaspheme God, think to change times and the Law)
- How long his first stage of power would last
- How he would be wounded by the sword
- How the United States would guarantee civil and religious liberty

- **Who would help** him recover his power (the United States)
- It also gives us a clear picture of what **the issues** will be in the final conflict (the Commandments of God and the Testimony of Jesus)
- Furthermore, it points out **when and where the remnant** would arise to counteract its work (in the earth)
- What the remnant's **message and mission** will be (the three angels message)

Without the historical flow method, the church would wander in **prophetic darkness**.

Historicism's Demise

After 1844, historicism well-nigh disappeared. Notice the words of **Richard Kyle** who used to belong to a **Plymouth Brethren** church:

*“Despite its visibility the Millerite movement had **little influence on subsequent end-time thinking**. It did, however, have three long-term effects: (1) Millerism spawned the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (2) it **discredited historicist premillennialism, causing it to fade out almost entirely after 1844**; and (3) the Millerite fiasco demonstrated the perils of setting **definite dates** for Christ’s return.” Richard Kyle, *The Last Days Are Here Again*, p. 91.*

*“The **Great Disappointment** of 1844 had **decimated historicist premillennialism**, but a **futurist premillennialism** called dispensationalism soon arrived on the scene.” Richard Kyle, *The Last Days Are Here Again*, p. 102.*

Telling words of Thomas Ice, a Futurist.

*“Historicism, **once the dominant view of Protestants** from the Reformation until the middle of the last century [**please note that 1844 is almost at the midpoint of the 19th century**], appears to exert **little attraction** as a system of prophetic interpretation to **conservative Christians** (outside of Seventh-day Adventist circles). . . Within **evangelicalism** during the **last one hundred fifty years**, futurism has grown to **dominate and overcome historicism**.” Thomas Ice and Kenneth L. Gentry Jr. *The Great Tribulation: Past or Future?* p. 6.*

Dangers of Futurism

1. Futurism changes the time for the appearance of the Antichrist (not after the disintegration of the Roman Empire but at the end of the age after the rapture of the church).

If the Antichrist did not appear during the 1260 years, then he is **still in the future** and **Papacy did not change** the times and the law! Thus **futurism hides** the culprit who attempted to change the times and the Law.

2. Futurism changes the place for the appearance of the Antichrist.

If the **Antichrist** will sit in a future **rebuilt Jewish temple** for three and a half literal years, then prophecy is **not fulfilling** in Rome and in the United States!

3. Futurism changes the manner in which the Antichrist will appear.

If he will be an **individual**, then he cannot be a **worldwide system**!

4. Futurism changes the parties in the final conflict.

If the final battle is between the Jews and a **coalition of enemies** against the **Jews**, then it has nothing to do with the battle between **true and counterfeit Christians**!

5. Futurism blurs the issues in the final conflict

For futurists the central issues in the final conflict are economic, ethnic and political. The Bible tells us that the central issues will be the **commandments of God and worship**, particularly the sign of true worship, which is **the**.

6. Futurism destroys the timing of the 2300-day prophecy

Daniel 8:14

“And he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

If there is a **2000-year gap** in the 70-week prophecy, then the cleansing of the sanctuary **did not begin in 1844!**

The year 1844 means far more than just the beginning of the investigative judgment. When the **pioneers** of the Seventh-day Adventist Church entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary they discovered a **whole cluster** of

truths shortly after 1844—the law, the Sabbath, the judgment, the state of the dead and God raised up the gift of prophecy to explain it all! These are the very truths that the **Christian world rejects**.

7. Futurism obliterates the on time appearance of the remnant church immediately after the 1260 years.

Revelation 12:17

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

- It appears after the **1260 years**
- It rises in the **United States**
- The remnant keeps the **commandments** of God
- The remnant has the **testimony** of Jesus Christ

8. Futurism destroys the need to study the book of Revelation

Revelation 4:1

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.”

If the three angels’ messages are proclaimed after the church is taken to heaven, then they have **no relevance today**. Then the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is misguided!

9. Futurism leaves itself wide open to believe the Antichrist’s counterfeit second coming!

Matthew 24:26, 27

“Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

A Powerful Miracle Worker

2 Thessalonians 2:8: Jesus will destroy the man of lawlessness at the **second coming**:

*“And then the **lawless one [the transgressor of the law]** will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His **coming [parousia]**.”*

2 Thessalonians 2:9: But **before** the man of lawlessness is destroyed, he will counterfeit the second coming of Jesus:

*“The coming [**parousia**] of the lawless one is according to the **working** of Satan, with all **power, signs, and lying wonders** . . .”*

Acts 2:22: The combination of the three Greek words, ‘power, signs and wonders’ is used in only **one other verse** in the New Testament, Acts 2:22. There we are told that Jesus performed these marvelous works. This means that the antichrist will counterfeit the miracles that Jesus performed while He was on earth.

*“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by **miracles, wonders, and signs** which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know . . .”*

Ellen White described what the counterfeit second coming will be like:

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then, in his **assumed character** of Christ, he claims to have **changed the Sabbath** to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to **listen to his angels** sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost **overmastering delusion** [an allusion to **II Thessalonians 2**].” *GC*, p. 624

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“And for this reason God will send them **strong delusion**, that they should believe **the lie [the counterfeit second coming]**,¹² that they all may be condemned who **did not believe the truth** but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Futurists will be **unprepared** to pass victoriously through the tribulation because they are not expecting to go through it.

10. Futurism gives Christians a false sense of security. They reason thus:

“If I don’t make to heaven at the rapture, I can still be saved during the tribulation. If I am not saved during the tribulation, I can be saved during the millennium.”

Revelation 16:15

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

Revelation 3:18

“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”

The Consequences of 9/11:

- Brings the USA to global prominence in order to make it possible to give power back to the Papacy
- Directs all eyes to the Middle East for the fulfillment of prophecy
- Leads people to give up their freedoms and encourages them to trust the government to keep them safe. The issue is one of control of commerce, religion, politics, media, etc. (only Republicans can keep you safe?)

Two final comments by Ellen G. White:

The Great Controversy, p. 581

“God's word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated. Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is already being given her. We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the Roman element is. Whoever shall believe and obey the word of God will thereby incur reproach and persecution.”

*“The papacy is just what prophecy declared that she would be, the apostasy of the latter times. 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4. It is a part of her policy to **assume the character** that will best accomplish her purpose; but beneath the **variable appearance of the chameleon she conceals the invariable venom of the serpent**. “Faith ought not to be kept with heretics, nor persons suspected of heresy” (Lenfant, volume 1, page 516), she declares. Shall this power, whose record for a thousand years is written in the blood of the saints, be now acknowledged as a part of the church of Christ?*

*“It is not without reason that the claim has been put forth in Protestant countries that **Catholicism differs less widely** from Protestantism than in former times. There has been a change; but the change is not in the papacy. Catholicism indeed resembles much of the Protestantism that now exists, because Protestantism has so greatly degenerated since the days of the Reformers.*

*As the Protestant churches have been seeking the favor of the world, **false charity [political correctness]** has blinded their eyes. They do not see but that it is right to believe good of all evil, and as the inevitable result they will finally believe evil of all good.*

*Instead of standing in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints, they are now, as it were, apologizing to Rome for their **uncharitable opinion [politically incorrect]** of her, begging pardon for their bigotry.”*

If Protestantism had **not gone astray** from its roots, do you think that **Billy Graham** would have said that pope John Paul II was *'the greatest moral leader of the world'*?

Do you think that **Robert Schuller** (founder of the famous Crystal Cathedral) would have said that he hopes the day will come when the entire Christian world will accept the pope as its leader?

Would **Paul Crouch**, the founder of **TBN** have said that he is not protesting anything and that he is deleting the word Protestant from his vocabulary?

Would **Lutherans have signed** a 'Joint Declaration of Righteousness by Faith'?

Would **influential Protestant clergy** have signed the document *'Evangelicals and Catholics Together'*?

Would **Tony Palmer** have said that the protest is over and that now we are all Catholics again?

Would **Kenneth Copland** say to the pope: *"we bless you with all of our **hearts**, we bless you with all of our **souls**, we bless you with all of our **might**, and we thank you sir, we thank God for you, and so, all of us declare together: **Be blessed.**"*

Would **Ralph Reed** say to Catholics: *"The truth my friends is this. Catholicism **never has been**, is not today, and **never will be a threat** to American democracy. It was and remains the most colorful and the most vibrant thread running through the tapestry of American democracy."*

Would **Rick Warren** have said, *"We are on the same team"*?

Would **James Robison** say to the pope, *"Pope Francis, let me just say to you that **I see Jesus in you**; and in Christ we are **brothers**, we are family."*

Having thrown out the **proper method** to identify the Antichrist, these religious leaders **see no danger** in joining forces with the papacy. I know these appear to be harsh words but **they are the truth!**

“THE PROPHETIC PANORAMA: RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS OF INTERPRETING PROPHECY”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

Lecture #20: The Final Test

Introduction

As we examine the book of Revelation, one thing is clear. The final crisis will involve **two objects** of worship each with **their respective sign of authority**.

On the one side will be the **true creator God** and His **seal** while on the other will be a **false pretender** who has as his **mark of authority**, the mark of the beast. Being that the final conflict will be **over worship** and two respective signs, we must dedicate some time to discuss the **foundation of all worship**. The book of Revelation clearly indicates that worship to God has as its foundation the **first four commandments** of God’s Law. The beast will attack each of these commandments:

- **First Commandment**: The beast that rises from the earth will command everyone to worship the beast (13:3, 4)
- **Second Commandment**: The beast from the earth will command everyone to worship the image of the beast (13:14)
- **Third Commandment**: The beast blasphemes the name of God (13:6)
- **Fourth Commandment**: The beast changed the Creator’s sign and will impose its own counterfeit sign on pain of death (13:15-17)

The book of Revelation also explains that there will be a **small remnant** that will **worship** the true Creator God and receive His **seal**. On the other hand, the **vast majority** will worship the **beast** and receive its **mark**. We must therefore discover the identity of the beast and his mark.

- The faithful remnant **follows** the lamb wherever He goes (14:4)

- The whole world **wonders** after the beast (13:3)

God and the False Pretenders

1 Chronicles 16:26 The true God is **distinguished** from all **false pretenders** by the fact that He is the **Creator**:

*“For all the gods of the peoples are idols, **but** the LORD made the heavens.”*

Why we Worship

Psalm 95:1-6: We **worship**, we **bow down** and we **kneel** before God because He is the **Creator**:

*“Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.
2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. 3 **For** the LORD is the great God, and the great King **above all gods.** 4 **[the reason why He above all gods]** In His hand are the deep places of the earth; the heights of the hills are **His** also. 5 The sea is **His**, for He **made it**; and His hands formed the dry land. 6 Oh come, let us **worship** and **bow down**; let us **kneel** before the LORD our **Maker**.”*

Nehemiah 9:6: Heaven and earth **worship** God because He is the **Creator**

*“**You alone** are the LORD; You have **made heaven**, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, **the earth** and **everything on it**, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. The host of heaven **worships You**.”*

God is **above all false pretenders** because He is the Creator. So let us **go back to the creation** story.

God Established a Memorial of His Creatorship

Genesis 1:31-2:1: God **finished** His work the **sixth day**:

*“Then God saw everything that **He had made**, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were **finished**.”*

Genesis 2:2-3: God **finished** on the **seventh day**:

*“And on the **seventh day** God **ended** **[the identical word in 2:1]** His work which He had done, and He **[1] rested** **[‘ceased’]** on the **seventh day** from all His work*

which He had done.³ **Then** God [2] **blessed** the **seventh day** and [3] **sanctified** it, **because** in it He rested [**‘ceased’**] from all His work which God had created and made.”

God finished His work on the **sixth day** and on the **seventh day**. How can something be **finished twice**?

Illustration: A **Master Artist** works for six days on a nature masterpiece and finishes on the sixth day. However, the Artist must **sign the work** before it is finished. Anyone can claim a work of art if it is unsigned.

God did **three things** connected to the Sabbath at creation (remember these because we shall meet them again in a few moments):

- He **rested** on the Sabbath
- He **then blessed** the Sabbath
- He **then** made the Sabbath **holy**

Two Key Points

- The Sabbath is the **seventh day** of the week
- God **rested, blessed and sanctified** the **seventh day** Sabbath

Facts about the Days

The days of creation were **literal** 24-hour days, as we know them **today**:

- In the Old Testament, the word day with a **numeral qualifier** always means a 24-hour day
- Each day had an **evening and morning**
- Language of **immediacy**: God **spoke and it was done**
- The expression **‘and it was so’** does not indicate long periods of time
- The **fourth commandment** would be absurd if the days were long periods

Original Plan for All

- There was **no Jew** so it cannot be called the **Jewish Sabbath**
- There was **no sin**. In its original function it had **nothing** to do with the **Old Covenant**

God Created the Weekly Cycle

Henry Morris, the well-known creationist scientist, wrote that God established the **weekly cycle of seven days** at creation **as a pattern** for all successive weeks:

*“The Lord himself had worked six days, then rested on the seventh, setting thereby a **permanent pattern** for the benefit of mankind.” Henry Morris, *Biblical Creationism*, p. 62*

Ellen White explained that the weekly cycle has **never been broken**:

*“Like the Sabbath, **the week** originated at creation, and it **has been preserved** and brought down to us through Bible history. **God Himself measured off** the first week as a **sample** for **successive weeks** to the close of time. Like every other, it consisted of **seven literal days**. Six days were employed in the work of creation; upon the seventh, **God rested**, and He **then** blessed this day and set it apart as a day of rest for man.” *PP*, p. 111*

At creation, God not only made **material things**, He also created **time**. He not only created the 24-hour **day**, the **month** and the **year**, but He also **created the week** composed of seven days with **no astronomical reason**.

The Same Sabbath of Creation?

How do we know that the **Sabbath today** is the **same Sabbath** of creation? There is **no evidence** that the weekly cycle has **ever been broken**.

Today, Christian claim to keep **Sunday in honor of the resurrection**. They are quite certain that Sunday today is the **same Sunday** on which Jesus resurrected from the dead. If this is true then the Sabbath is also the **same Sabbath!**

Moreover, how do we know that the Sabbath today is the **same Sabbath of creation?** Simply because Jesus created the Sabbath (John 1:1-3) and **habitually kept it** while He was on earth (Luke 4:16). It is obvious that the creator of the Sabbath would not have kept the wrong day!

Contrary to Ellen White, **Henry Morris** in the same book, *Biblical Creationism* affirms that **any day** in seven will do because we have no way of knowing if the **weekly cycle** today is the **same as at creation**.

Some **European** and **Latin American** countries have used the art of **obfuscation** by changing the calendar so that **Monday** is the first day and Sunday is the seventh

day. In **Colombia** there is a program titled '**the Seventh Day**' that airs on Sunday! Clearly, this contradicts the Bible because Jesus did not resurrect on the seventh day but rather on the first.

A further point: The **papacy teaches** the faithful to celebrate **Palm Sunday, Ash Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Holy Friday, Sabbath of Glory**, on a **yearly basis**. So why does it teach that the resurrection must be celebrated on a **weekly**?

God is Owner because He is the Creator

Psalm 24:1, 2:

*"The earth **is the LORD's**, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein **for [because]** He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters.*

Review each day and ask the question: To whom does the **light**, the **firmament**, the **vegetation**, the **heavenly lights**, the **birds**, the **fish**, the **land animals, man and woman** belong?

All that God made is **His** because **He made it** so the **Sabbath** must also be **His** because He made it at the same time He made everything else! The Sabbath was **made for man** just like everything else (**Mark 2:27**). It does not say that Jesus made the Sabbath **for the Jews** but for **anthropos**.

In order for the Sabbath to be the 'Sabbath of the Jews' **it must belong to them**. The Bible calls the Sabbath '**the Sabbath of the Lord your God**,' and God referred to it as '**my holy day**.'

God Commands Man to Keep the Memorial

Exodus 20:8-11: God commands man to **keep** the **memorial** of creation

*"Remember [it must have existed before, because it points to a past event] the Sabbath day, to keep it **holy**.⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all **your** work,¹⁰ but the seventh day is the Sabbath **of the LORD your God [because God rested at creation]**. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.¹¹ **For [the reason: 'because']** in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and [**1**] rested the*

seventh day, therefore the LORD [2] blessed the Sabbath day and [3] hallowed it.

- The fourth commandment repeats the **same thoughts** as the creation account. The fourth commandment informs us that God **rested** and then **blessed** and **sanctified** the seventh day. The Sabbath of the fourth commandment is the **same Sabbath of Genesis!**
- The seven days of creation were **literal** because the fourth commandment tells us to **follow God's example**. How could God tell us to work six days and rest the seventh as He did at creation if the days were **not literal**?
- The word '**remember**' at the very beginning of the fourth commandment indicates that it existed **before God spoke and wrote the law** at Sinai. **Memorials commemorate past events**. When I say '**remember the Alamo**' is calls my attention to an event that occurred in history.
- Christians would agree that we should **worship God** because He is **our Creator** but would it be logical for them to say: "**But I don't need to be reminded of it!**"
- God made a **memorial in time** that **comes to us** every week no matter **where we are!!**

Jesus the Redeemer

The Creator is **also the Redeemer**. Jesus **finished** the work of creation on the **sixth day** and **rested** the seventh. The same Jesus said '**it is finished**' on the cross and then rested from His **works of redemption** in the tomb on the Sabbath.

Why God did not Command Man to Cease

However, **protestant theologians** are quick to point out that there is **no record in Genesis** that indicates that **God commanded Adam and Eve** to keep that first Sabbath and therefore the Sabbath is **not a creation institution**.

They ask: "If the Sabbath is a creation institution, **why didn't God** give Adam and Eve **a clear command** to keep it?"

To understand **the reason**, we must first discover **when** God blessed the Sabbath and **made it holy**. Two **texts** clearly tell us that God **rested the entire seventh day** and **then** blessed it and made it holy:

Genesis 2:3: God rested and **then** sanctified the Sabbath:

*“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it He **rested** from all His work which God had created and made.” [See the cause and effect use of the word “because” in Genesis 2:23]*

Exodus 20:11: God rested and **then** sanctified the Sabbath:

*“For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and **rested** the seventh day. **Therefore** the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” [See the cause and effect use of the word “therefore” in Genesis 2:24]*

Summary

- God ‘made the Sabbath’ by **resting on it** and then He gave it to man. He could not have given it to man **before He made it!!**
- God made the day **holy** when it **ended**. Adam and Eve could not keep the Sabbath holy until God **made it holy**.
- Adam and Eve could not follow God’s **example** until He had **first given it**

*“God made man in His own image and then **gave him an example** of observing the seventh day [Adam and Eve were present watching God’s **delight in creation**], which He sanctified and made holy.” Lift Him Up, p. 38*

*“**After resting** upon the seventh day, God sanctified it, or **set it apart**, as a day of rest for man. **Following the example** of the Creator, **man was to rest** upon this sacred day, that as he should look upon the heavens and the earth, he might reflect upon God’s great work of creation; and that as he should behold the evidences of God’s wisdom and goodness, his heart might be filled with love and reverence for his Maker.” Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 47*

*“**Because He had** rested upon the Sabbath, “God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it,”—**set it apart** to a holy use. He **gave it** to Adam as a day of rest. It was a **memorial** of the work of creation, and thus **a sign** of God’s power and His love.” DA, p. 281*

- The **fourth commandment** applies to Adam and Eve, and the entire human race with the **second Sabbath** of human history because, according to the commandment, they had to **work six** first in order to keep the **fourth commandment**. At creation God could not command man to **cease from His works** because he had not worked! God worked six days, rested the seventh and then gave the week to man telling him to follow His example of working six and resting on the seventh.

Sign of a New Creation: Three Ideas

Isaiah 66:22, 23: The prophet **Jeremiah** tells us that as a result of the **plagues and the second coming**, the earth will return to the condition it was in before creation week—**without form, void and dark** (Jeremiah 4:23). For this reason, God will have to make a new heavens and a new earth.

Three ideas linked:

- **Creation** of a new heavens and a new earth
- **Worship** to the Creator for His new work
- Worship on the **Sabbath**

*"For as the [1] new heavens and the new earth which **I will make** shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain."²³ And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one [2] **Sabbath** to another, all flesh shall come [3] to **worship** before Me," says the LORD."*

Important Points:

- God will create the new heavens and earth in **six literal days**
- The redeemed will be **eyewitnesses** of the new creation
- On the **seventh day** God's people will rest in the **contemplation** of the new creation

The Sign between God and His People

Exodus 31:16, 17: The Sabbath is **the sign** of the relationship between God and His people:

*"Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant."¹⁷ It is a **sign** between Me and the children of Israel forever; **for [because: The reason is creation before sin]***

*in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the **seventh day** He **rested** and was refreshed."*

Some theologians have argued that these verses clearly teach that the Sabbath was a sign only between **God and the children of Israel**. However, this is a fallacious and deceptive argument for at least **four reasons**:

First, God gave **all** Ten Commandments **to Israel**. Does this mean that the Ten Commandments were binding **only** upon Israel because God gave them to Israel? To answer **yes would be absurd!** It defies logic to say that nine commandments apply to everyone but only **one applies to the Jews**. God gave the Ten Commandments to Israel because they were **His people at the time**, but that does not mean that they were binding **only** upon **literal** Israel. The text does not say that the Sabbath was a sign **exclusively** between God and literal Israel.

Second, these verses clearly **transcend** literal Israel because **creation** is the reason why the Sabbath is a sign between God and His people. That is to say, we must keep the Sabbath because God established it as a **sign of creation**. Would it make any sense to think that **Israel alone** was required to keep the Sabbath in **commemoration of creation**? Do not all human beings need to remember that God created the heavens, the earth and everything in them?

Third, **Galatians 3:28, 29** states that those who are '**in Christ**' are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. If Christians are Abraham's seed, then they are members of Israel and as such should keep the Sabbath.

Finally, **Isaiah 56:4-7** clearly states that the Sabbath was intended for **Gentiles** as well as Jews and Jesus explicitly affirmed that the Sabbath **was made for man** (**Mark 2:27**). Thus our Lord taught that the Sabbath was a creation institution that was made for the benefit of man. The use of the word **anthropos** by Jesus is significant. He did not say that the Sabbath was made for Israel but rather for '**humankind**' (NRSV).

Ezekiel 20:12, 20:

*"Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be **a sign** between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who **sanctifies them** . . . hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be **a sign** between Me and you, that **you may know** that **I am the LORD your God.**"*

Contrast of Two Signs

Revelation 14:6, 7: Worship the true creator God:

- The **last message** of God to the World calls upon us to **worship the Creator**
- These verses harken back to **creation** and the **Fourth Commandment:**

*“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and [1] **worship Him** who [2] **made** heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.” [A reference to **creation and the fourth commandment**]*

Revelation 14:9-12 Don’t worship the beast:

*“Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone **worships** the beast and his image, and receives his **mark** on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who **worship** the beast and his image, and whoever receives **the mark** of his name.” ¹² Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”*

John Paul II, Francis I

In spite of the fact that the Bible, without exception, refers to the seventh day Sabbath as God’s day of rest, **Popes John Paul II** (in the Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*) and **Francis I** (in the encyclical *Laudato Si*) have declared that the seventh day Sabbath is **Jewish** and the **Christian Sabbath is Sunday**. However, as we have seen, the Sabbath cannot be Jewish because they did not bless or sanctify it.

The papacy claims the Sabbath is a **relic of the Jewish Old Covenant** but they continue to do many **old covenant things** of the old Covenant such as **sacrifices** on altars, holy **vestments**, sprinkling holy **water**, burning **incense**, lighting

candles, making **shrines** to the saints, a **rigorous casuistry**. By doing this they **strain the gnat** and swallow the camel.

Sunday cannot be holy because **God did not rest on it!** Jesus rested from creation, redemption and will rest from the new creation on Sabbath!

Even more telling is the fact that **neither** John Paul nor Francis actually believe that the creation story of Genesis **is literal**. Both of them have gone on the record saying that the creation story **is symbolic** and that the universe came into existence by a **big bang** and this **world has evolved** over the course of **millions of years** through the process of evolution.

John Paul in a speech to the **Papal Academy of the Sciences** stated:

*“Today, almost half a century after the publication of the encyclical (Pope Pius XII, Humane Genensis, 1950 was very cautious about accepting the theory of evolution), **new knowledge** has led to the recognition of the theory of evolution as **more than a hypothesis**. It is indeed remarkable that this theory has been progressively accepted by researchers, following a series of discoveries in various fields of knowledge. The convergence, neither sought nor fabricated, of the results of work that was conducted independently is in itself **a significant argument in favor of the theory.**”*

Pope Francis said:

*“The **Big Bang**, which today **we hold** to be the origin of the world, **does not contradict** the intervention of the divine creator but, rather, **requires it** . . . Evolution in nature is **not inconsistent** with the notion of creation, because **evolution requires the creation** of beings that **evolve**. When we read about Creation in Genesis, we run the risk of imagining **God was a magician**, with a magic wand able to do everything **but that is not so** . . . He created human beings and **let them develop** according to the **internal laws** that he gave to each one so they would **reach their fulfillment** . . .”*

Devastating Implications

These statements by the pope are **troubling** for the following reasons:

The foundation of **heterosexual** marriage between a man and a woman is founded on a literal reading of the creation story.

The foundation of true **gender identity** has as its foundation the **literal reading** of the creation story.

The foundation of the **Sabbath** as a memorial of the Creator is a **literal reading** of the creation story.

Francis I has admonished the strong to help the weak and the rich to help the poor. However, his counsel does not fit with the foundation of evolution is the **survival of the fittest** or **natural selection**. If this is true, why the strong help the weak and the rich help the poor?

How many millions of years must we wait for evolution to work out its wrinkles to reach its **Omega Point**?

The Character of God

Evolutionary theory **mars the beautiful character** of God:

- It is an attack on the **omnipotence** of God (does not God have **the almighty power** to create things **instantaneously** by speaking them into existence?)
- It is an attack against the **omniscience and wisdom** of God (Isn't God wise enough to create everything **perfect from the start** without having to use a method of **trial and error** where there is much suffering and death?)
- It is an attack on the **love and mercy** of God (how can a God of love use a method where there is much suffering, cruelty, pain and death? Does this sound like a God who feels pain when a bird falls to the ground?)
- It destroys the need for a **savior** (if the story of Genesis is symbolic then the story of the fall is also symbolic)

The Final Test

The great final test that will divide the world is **not merely a matter of days** but rather of **authority**. The observance of the Sabbath is a **sign of loyalty and obedience** to the Creator. The observance of Sunday is the sign of **loyalty and obedience to the beast**. Thus, the matter of days will test which authority you will obey. The first angel's message commands us to worship the Creator and the third warns us not to worship the beast/little horn who attempted to change God's law. Are we **so loyal** to God that we will even be **willing to die** to be faithful to Him?

¹ Jerusalem Bible, footnote commentary on Daniel 7:8-9

² The book was titled: In Sacrum Beati Ioannis Apostoli, & Evangelistiae Apocalypsin Commentarij

³ Froom, PFF, volume 2, pp. 489-490

⁴ Froom, PFF, volume 2, p. 495

⁵ Froom, PFF, volume 2, p. 496

⁶ Froom, PFF, volume 2, p. 497

⁷ Froom, PFF, volume 2, p. 501

⁸ Quoted in Froom, PFF, volume 2, p. 500. Emphasis supplied

⁹ Quoted in Froom, PFF, volume 2, p. 502. Emphasis supplied

¹⁰ G. S. Hitchcock, The Beasts and the Little Horn, p. 7

¹¹ Henry Alford, The New Testament for English Readers, volume 2, pp. 348, 349

¹² Henry Alford, The New Testament for English Readers, volume 2, part 2, p. 351

¹³ Richard Kyle, The Last Days Are Here Again, p. 62

¹⁴ George Eldon Ladd, The Blessed Hope (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 37



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