

The Coming of the Lord, the Last Days, and the End of the World—*As Taught by Jesus and His Apostles*

by Larry T. Smith

There is a **major misconception and error** in most modern day minds concerning the meaning of these terms, and the error is, that any time these terms are used, **they always refer to a future time** at the end of the church age, the end of time, or the end of our present physical world. People never seem to stop long enough to study their Bibles and observe how these terms were used by Jesus and his Apostles, or they would realize **they used these terms as to something that would take place in their generation to end the Jewish age of law keeping and to fully establish his New Covenant Kingdom in the earth.**

The confusion of these terms has resulted in creating **two different viewpoints** of Bible prophecy today. Each of these two main viewpoints has within it **three different positions.** The following is a brief description of each:

FIRST VIEWPOINT—FUTURIST

Futurists believe that when the Scripture speaks of the coming of the Lord, the last days, and the end of the world that it is referring to events that will take place sometime in the future. They also believe the Great Tribulation is a future seven-year period that follows a gap of 2000—and still counting—years which takes place between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel's prophecy. Most teach that Jesus Christ and His Spiritual Kingdom (The Church) have never yet fulfilled the six points Daniel prophesied would take place during this 70-week time frame, but instead believe these prophecies must have a literal physical fulfillment in the earth. Futurists also believe that the Book of Revelation is an account of this future Great Tribulation period that will culminate with the Coming of the Lord and the end of the world. They hold three different positions in regard to when they believe these occurrences and the rapture of the Church will take place. These three positions are known as **PRE** (before), **MID** (middle), and **POST** (end) **TRIBULATION.**

SECOND VIEWPOINT—HISTORICAL

This group believes that most—or all—of these prophecies were fulfilled in the generation in which Jesus and the Apostles lived and were concluded in 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem and its old covenant worship system of animal sacrifices. They teach that this fulfillment was **the sign** to all men that God's New Covenant was now fully established in the earth, and is His final method of obtaining salvation.

Nearly all Historical adherents believe the Church (Jew and Gentile in one body) is Spiritual Israel, and that Daniel's 70th Week was fulfilled by Jesus Christ without any gap of time between the 69th and 70th weeks. They believe this because the Bible says nothing about a gap between the weeks of Daniel's prophecy. They also believe that Jesus Christ literally and spiritually fulfilled Daniel's six-point prophecy when Jesus was cut off in the midst of the 70th week by His crucifixion. That agrees with Daniel 9:24, which shows this prophecy was to be fulfilled during the 70 weeks. They say that His cutting off (Jesus' death) caused the sacrifice and the oblation, (the animal sacrifices that were offered in the Jewish Temple for the sins of Israel), to no longer be accepted. (That is exactly what happened when Jesus died on the cross; these old methods were no longer accepted by God as His method for man to obtain salvation. **God now sees Jesus as mankind's final and all conclusive sacrifice.**) I will deal with this subject in detail later in this series of teachings in a lesson entitled *Daniel's 70th Week.*

Historical believers, like futurist believers, have basically three different positions. The following is a brief description of each of these differences:

HISTORICIST

They believe that most prophecy is now history that has progressively been fulfilling itself through time, even up to our day. Most Historicist see Rome or the Catholic Church as Revelation's "Babylon the Great."

PARTIAL PRETERIST

Do not let the word Preterist throw you off. It simply means past. This group believes in a partial past interpretation of prophecy. Most believe the Church—Jew and Gentile in one body—is the True Israel of God, Daniel's 70 weeks are fulfilled, the Great Tribulation and the time of Jacob's trouble was the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, Jerusalem was Revelation's Babylon the Great, Matthew 24 was fulfilled during the generation in which it was written, the first 19 chapters of the book of Revelation are fulfilled, and the remaining chapters of Revelation are being fulfilled in the Church. They believe there still is a final judgment, and a final coming of the Lord that will end the Church Age and will resurrect the dead in Christ, **even though the destruction of Jerusalem was referred to in scripture as a "coming of the Lord."** (This viewpoint is probably closest to the position that I currently endorse on Bible prophecy. However, I strive to remain open so that I can always walk in the light as God reveals more understanding about the Scriptures.)

TOTAL PRETERIST

The Total Preterist believes the same as the Partial Preterist, except they believe **all prophecy was fulfilled** when the Lord came in judgment against Jerusalem in 70 AD. They believe that He resurrected the dead at that time, and that we who are alive and remain will be caught up to meet the Lord as we die. They also believe the world and the Kingdom of God (Church Age) will never end because the Scriptures teach that His Kingdom is an "everlasting Kingdom that will never be destroyed."

The main difference between the Partial Preterist and the total Preterist is found in their differing viewpoints of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17. The Partial Preterists believe its fulfillment will take place in the future. The Total Preterists believe its fulfillment took place in 70 AD when Jesus came back to bring judgment against Jerusalem. They say that those who were dead and in the graves then were resurrected and those who are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord as they die.

Please note that all viewpoints—both Futurist and Historicist—believe in the resurrection of the dead and spending eternity with Jesus as the eternal reward of the Christian. They only differ as to the **timing of the resurrection** and **the events surrounding it.**

TWO COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PRETERISM

(1) Some men have used the statements that Paul made to Timothy about Hymenaeus and Philetus to say that Preterists teach the same doctrine concerning the resurrection. Paul said that these men "blasphemed" because they "erred, saying that the resurrection is past already." (See 1 Timothy 1:19-20 and 2 Timothy 2:16-18). The problem with this comparison is that Paul wrote these letters to Timothy before the 70 AD fall of Jerusalem. This fact causes this argument to lose its strength as a scriptural proof against the beliefs of Total Preterism. **As for the Partial Preterist, which is my current stance, this argument does not even apply. We do not teach that the resurrection took place in 70 AD, but that the 70 AD coming was a coming in judgment. And to distance us even further from this argument, Partial Preterists believe that there is yet to be a final resurrection.** After carefully examining the spirit of what Paul said, you can see these men were taking the position that there no longer remained a future hope or resurrection for those living then, because they believed the resurrection was past. Hymenaeus and Philetus taught a doctrine not far removed from Sadducean teachings of that century, who Jesus rebuked for their unbelief in a future resurrection. One reason why Hymenaeus and Philetus may have taught this doctrine was because they may

have thought the resurrection of the saints that took place when Jesus arose from the grave (see Matthew 27:53) was the final resurrection. Scripture does not adequately reveal why these men taught this heretical doctrine, but Paul's pre-70 AD writing of these letters dismisses their teachings from being an argument against Preterist doctrine.

The reason I am saying this is to address those preachers who have said, "If you are a Preterist, then you don't believe in a future resurrection." I can tell you now that what they are saying is just not true. **Both views of Preterism believe in a future resurrection.** Total Preterists teach, "to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8) This is what most Christian ministers evidently believe when they proclaim at funerals the deceased person is "now in Heaven with the Lord." This is exactly what the Preterists say happens to a person when they die; they go (are resurrected) instantly to be with the Lord.

(2) Some have said the teaching that the Church is "Spiritual Israel" is a doctrine that allegedly promotes anti-Semitism. That is simply not true! **To believe that the Church is Spiritual Israel is to simply believe that the New Covenant message of salvation,** which the Apostles preached in the book of Acts, **is the everlasting gospel,** and will remain the only gospel message by which all men, both Jew or Gentile, can ever obtain salvation. Some men deny that they believe the Church is the Israel of God; yet when they are questioned, they state that they believe that the New Covenant message is the only message that will ever save anyone even during their supposed future tribulation. That is an impossible position to carry, for to believe that the New Covenant message is the only remaining plan of salvation is to agree with the very basis on which the teaching that the Church is the Israel of God is founded. You must either follow the Dispensational beliefs that there will be a change of covenants and a return to Law-keeping, or you must believe that the Church is the Israel of God.

These explanations only begin to define the different opinions that men have in reference to this subject. I am purposely leaving them brief so that we can move on to what really matters, and that is what the Bible says Jesus and His Apostles believed when they spoke of these subjects. Man may have 10,000 different viewpoints on this subject, but **the only one that really matters is what Jesus and His Apostles taught and believed.** This study is designed to address the questions that will unlock the true meaning of this subject. These questions are whether or not Jesus and His Apostles taught that these occurrences would happen in **their generation**—which would **end the Jewish Age** or **world** of that day—or if they were speaking of some yet to be fulfilled **unknown time** which is to take place thousands of years later in the future.

THE BIBLE IS VERY CLEAR

The Bible is very clear on their statements concerning these subjects, and leaves you only with the choice of whether you are going to accept their statements and the New Testament as being divinely inspired and true, or whether you are going to say they were in error when they made their statements. This would mean their statements were the assumptions and opinions of misled men rather than the inspired word of God.

WERE JESUS AND THE APOSTLES WRONG?

Would any Bible-believing person side with an opinion that would suggest that the New Testament writers were in error? Would a Christian reduce any scripture down to being a man's assumption or opinion, rather than being a divinely inspired Word from God? Unfortunately the answer to this is, "Yes." Even in the more conservative Apostolic ranks of Christianity some men have challenged the divine inspirations of some scripture when they were pressed about this issue.

QUOTES OF STATEMENTS

One of these men wrote in a national publication that, **"The Apostles preached the coming of the Lord because they believed it was the last days. Two thousand years later I am preaching the coming of the Lord because it is the last days."** His statement clearly holds the position that the Apostles were writing

what they thought, and were thereby in error. It also holds the position that he—a preacher of today—has a revelation of truth greater than the Apostles did in Jesus' day.

Another preacher was asked about the statements that Jesus and His Apostles made concerning the coming of the Lord in the last days and whether he felt their statements about their soon expectancy of that coming was correct or in error. He answered this by saying, **“The Apostles were mistaken in their interpretation of the time period in which Jesus was referring. That was a good thing though because their mistake saved the lives of those in the early church when they fled from Jerusalem in 70 AD.”** This statement clearly holds the position that the New Testament writings of the Apostles contain errors. If this is true, then the New Testament could not have been divinely inspired, and its spiritual worth is questionable at best.

If the New Testament contains one or more erroneous statements, how could a person truly trust it to determine truth? One would have to wonder how many other scriptures were written by the inspiration of misled men, and not by the all-knowing God. Ultimately this type of reasoning challenges the authenticity of the plan of salvation, the necessity of holiness, the biblical basis for morality, and ultimately every other subject in the Bible.

WAS JESUS A DECEIVER?

The question then becomes, “Was Jesus a deceiver?” For many years the adherents of Atheism, Agnosticism, Humanism, Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam, have used the statements that Jesus and His Apostles made about His coming, to criticize Christianity. Critics say Jesus didn't come during that generation—at least that's what some contend—so He was either mistaken or a liar. Either of these—they say—would make Him a false prophet, and not the messianic Son of God.

In his book, *The Last Days According to Jesus*, R. C. Sproul addresses this subject of Preterism and the way critics use scriptures about Jesus' coming to attack Christianity. He shows that these critics use the very same scriptures that many Christians have ignored—or have refused to deal with—to suggest that Jesus was a false prophet. The problem here isn't the critics' criticism; it's the Christians saying, “Amen” to their findings. You see, every time a Christian suggests certain scriptures found in the New Testament are in error, they are in effect agreeing with those who criticize Christianity. Even if their position is taken in order to defend a futurist viewpoint of prophecy, they are still siding with those whose greatest desire is to erode the very foundation that we have for determining biblical truth—the New Testament.

A person, who would dare to make a statement that would indicate that they thought the Apostles were wrong, would have to believe that Jesus was also wrong, since His statements totally agreed with the Apostles' teachings. You must remember that the Apostles received their teachings from Jesus, so they taught what He taught them.

SCRIPTURES THAT CONTAIN THE STATEMENTS MADE ON THESE SUBJECTS BY JESUS AND THE APOSTLES

JESUS to His Disciples

(Mat 10:23) But when they **persecute you** in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, **Ye [YOU] shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.**

Jesus told His disciples that He would come before they would be able to cover all of the cities of Israel. This fact denotes His coming in their generation. What people have failed to realize—but will be forced to admit after we cover all these scriptures—is that **the Lord coming in judgment against Jerusalem was referred to by Jesus and His Apostles as a “coming of the Lord.”** I believe that **the failure to recognize this key point is the greatest cause of error concerning Bible prophecy,** and if you refuse to admit this point, then the Scripture will always be confusing to you.

(Mat 16:27) For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then **he shall reward every man according to his works.**

(Mat 16:28) Verily I say unto you, **There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.**

This scripture does not leave any doubt that Jesus was referring to his coming in their generation while some of them were still alive to see it. This would be a coming in which he would reward every man according to his works. This is another statement men tend to always put in the future, but Jesus said it would happen before all of them had died. This scripture leaves no room for debate. Either he came in their generation and it came true, or he didn't come and it is false, and this would make Jesus a false prophet as the critics say he is.

Some say this is referring to the Holy Ghost outpouring, or His transfiguration on the mountain with Peter, James, and John. The problem is that this doesn't agree with the rest of the Bible's language when it refers to the Holy Ghost or the transfiguration, because verse 27 of Matthew 16 says that He will reward every man according to his works. However, it does fit in with his rewarding the wicked in the book of Revelation and other places. Another scriptural proof that this coming could not be referring to the transfiguration is that Jesus told the High Priest and the Sanhedrin that they would see Him "coming in the clouds of heaven." The reason this is important is that the High Priest and the Sanhedrin were not present during the transfiguration, and their absence from this event proves that this coming is referring to another event, which Jesus said they would witness personally.

Jesus confirmed His coming in that generation when he spoke to Peter concerning John.

(John 21:18) Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.

(John 21:19) This spake he, **signifying by what death he [Peter] should glorify God.** And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

(John 21:20) Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

(John 21:21) Peter seeing him [John] saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

(John 21:22) Jesus saith unto him, **If I will that he [John] tarry till I come, what is that to thee?** follow thou me.

(John 21:23) Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

(John 21:24) **This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.**

Jesus was saying here that Peter would die for the glory of God, but that He may allow John to live to see his coming, which means it would have to take place in that generation for John to be alive to see it. History declares John to have been still alive at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, which would make Jesus statement an absolute truth, provided that the coming he was referring to was the destruction of Jerusalem.

Jesus to the High Priest and the Sanhedrin

(Mat 26:63) But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou **tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.**

(Mat 26:64) Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, **Hereafter shall ye [you] see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.**

(Mat 26:65) Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, **He hath spoken blasphemy:** what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now **ye have heard his blasphemy.**

(Mat 26:66) What think ye? They answered and said, **He is guilty of death.**

Jesus said THEY would see Him when He came in the clouds sitting in a place of power. If “they” were going to see Him, then **His coming would have to take place in their generation**. This makes three times in Scripture that Jesus told His listeners that some of them would still be alive to see His coming in the clouds. This makes three witnesses, and the Bible says that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, let every word be established, so we can no longer say Jesus did not come in His generation without denying the truth of His statements. Why did this statement anger the High Priest so much? Simply stated, he knew that Jesus was applying to Himself a messianic prophecy, which is found in the book of Daniel. This angered the High Priest because he knew that Jesus was thereby stating that He was their long-awaited Messiah. Matthew 24 also has Jesus making reference to this when He said, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days you would see **the SIGN of the Son of man in the heavens.**” In both instances Jesus showed that the **destruction of Jerusalem** and its old worship system **would be the SIGN to the nations** that He had all power in heaven and in earth, and that He was ruling as King of kings, and Lord of lords in His Spiritual Kingdom—the Church.

Look at what he was quoting from in the book of Daniel.

(Dan 7:13) I saw in the night visions, and, behold, **one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven**, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

(Dan 7:14) And there **was given him dominion**, and **glory**, and a **kingdom**, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is **an everlasting dominion**, which shall not pass away, and **his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed**.

There are two subjects that **have not** been fully studied out by most Christians, in regards to **biblical imagery** and **definitions**. They are:

- (1) JESUS COMING IN THE CLOUDS
- (2) THE KINGDOM OF GOD

We have always been told these two subjects always refer to things that are to come to pass in our future—and some of it may—but let’s look at the Bible’s language regarding these subjects.

JESUS COMING IN THE CLOUDS

“**COMING IN THE CLOUDS**” is Old Testament imagery that usually refers to God’s coming in judgment on a nation. **God using another nation’s army usually carried out this type of coming**. Notice that the Biblical imagery used is almost identical to that of the book of Rev.

(Isa 19:1) The burden of Egypt. Behold, **the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt:** and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.

This describes his coming in judgment on Egypt.

(Jer 4:13) Behold, **he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind:** his **horses** are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! **for we are spoiled**.

(Jer 4:14) **O Jerusalem**, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

This describes his coming in judgment to spoil Jerusalem. The high priest and the Jews knew the language of the Old Testament and that’s why they were so angry at him. He was saying in answer to their question as to whether or not he was the Christ, that he had the power to come in judgment against Jerusalem and that would be the sign that he ruled in the heavens and His Church Kingdom had been established in the earth.

(Ezek 30:3) For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, **a cloudy day**; it shall be **the time of the heathen**.

(Ezek 30:18) At Tehaphnehes also the day shall be darkened, when **I shall break there the yokes of Egypt**; and the pomp of her strength shall cease in her: as for her, **a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity**.

(Ezek 30:19) **Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt: and they shall know that I am the LORD**.

In these scriptures from Ezekiel, God describes **His coming in the clouds of judgment** against Egypt **using a heathen army**. Nahum used the same type of imagery in his prophecy.

(Nahum 1:2) God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; **the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies**.

(Nahum 1:3) The LORD is slow to anger, and **great in power**, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the **whirlwind** and in the **storm**, and **the clouds are the dust of his feet**.

(Nahum 1:4) He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and **drieth up all the rivers**: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.

(Nahum 1:5) The **mountains quake** at him, and the **hills melt**, and **the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein**.

(Nahum 1:6) Who can stand before **his indignation**? and who can abide in **the fierceness of his anger**? his fury is poured out like fire, and **the rocks are thrown down by him**.

Many of Bible prophecy teachers say that Revelation 16:12 is literally talking about the Euphrates River drying up to allow a physical army to come and attack modern-day Israel. Notice that Nahum uses the same language to describe this judgment. Nahum wasn't suggesting a physical fulfillment; he—just like Revelation—was simply using biblical imagery.

The Lord uses the **same biblical imagery used in the book of Revelation** to describe his coming in judgment and the clouds are described as the dust of the Lord's feet. One man writing against the historical viewpoint claimed Preterist believed this was the "dust of the Roman Army's feet" as they entered Jerusalem. I have never heard or read anyone who taught this, and he was supposed to be quoting me. I know I have never said that, but **the scriptures declare it to be the dust of the Lord's feet in Biblical imagery as he comes in judgment**.

Zephaniah used the same type of imagery in his prophecies.

(Zep 1:14) The **great day of the LORD** is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.

(Zep 1:15) That day is a **day of wrath**, a day of **trouble** and **distress**, a day of **wasteness and desolation**, a day of **darkness and gloominess**, a **day of clouds** and **thick darkness**,

(Zep 1:16) A **day of the trumpet** and alarm **against the fenced cities**, and against the high towers.

(Zep 1:17) And I will bring **distress upon men**, that they shall walk like blind men, **because they have sinned against the LORD**: and **their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung**.

This once again **describes the Lord coming in the clouds as a day of judgment**. It is clear to see that the phrase "His coming in the clouds" is used when the Bible is referring to God coming in judgment against a nation or a people who have sinned or disobeyed Him. This is consistent with all of these Old Testament scriptures.

Now let's look in the book of Joel and think about the biblical imagery used here to describe the heathen army that was coming to destroy another nation. **Notice that much of its language is identical to the imagery used in the book of Revelation**.

(Joel 2:1) Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the **day of the LORD cometh**, for it is nigh at hand;

(Joel 2:2) A day of darkness and of gloominess, **a day of clouds and of thick darkness**, as the morning spread upon the mountains: **a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.**

(Joel 2:3) A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the **garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness**; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

You can tell that this is the devastation that an army would leave behind as they moved across the land. Notice it mentions the Garden of Eden. This was usually a reference to Jerusalem.

(Joel 2:4) The appearance of them is **as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen**, so shall they run.

John also used Joel's imagery of horses, horsemen, and warfare, in his ninth chapter of Revelation.

(Joel 2:5) Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of **fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.**

(Joel 2:6) Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.

(Joel 2:7) They shall run **like mighty men**; they shall climb the wall like **men of war**; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks:

(Joel 2:8) Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded.

(Joel 2:9) **They shall run to and fro in the city**; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.

(Joel 2:10) The **earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:**

God is describing here their total devastation.

(Joel 2:11) And the **LORD shall utter his voice before his army**: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the **day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?**

This again proves that His coming in the clouds refers to God using another nation's army to execute His judgments on another nation. **In verse 10 He even uses the same biblical imagery as is found in Matthew 24 and Revelation 6 to describe what was to happen after the destruction of Jerusalem.** Many try to say this is a literal happening at the end of this physical earth. Yet God uses the same prophetic language to describe three other judgments in the Old Testament.

Some say Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation have to be future since the sun, moon, and stars are still in the sky. Those who say this do not realize this same imagery was used many times in the Old Testament to describe God's judgments, which have already been fulfilled, and yet the literal sun, moon, and stars have not stopped shining. This is true because, as **God said in the Old Testament, the SUN, MOON, and STARS were "for signs" and "to rule," which means a sign of rulership or government.**

(Gen 1:14) And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and **let them be for signs**, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

(Gen 1:16) And God made two great lights; the **greater light to rule the day**, and the lesser light to **rule the night**: he made the stars also.

JOSEPH'S DREAM AND HUMAN GOVERNMENT

Remember Joseph's dream used these symbols to denote human government.

(Gen 37:9) And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the **sun** and the **moon** and the **eleven stars** made obeisance to me.

(Gen 37:10) And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? **Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?**

This came to pass when Joseph was made a ruler in Egypt and his brothers came there and bowed before him. But notice in verse 10 that Joseph's father, Israel, understood the true meaning of the imagery of Joseph's dream. He knew that his government was going to bow down to Joseph's. He saw this from Joseph dreaming that the sun, moon, and stars were bowing down to Joseph. **In biblical imagery, seeing a star fall from the sky foretold a coming change in the government it was referenced to;** it was referring to a future time when that government was not only going to bow down to their victor, but was to be completely overthrown by them and consequently cease to exist as a power. The following prophecies from the Old Testament are just a few of the examples which prove this to be true. Keep in mind that these events have already come to pass, and the actual sun, moon, and stars are still in the sky.

PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON IN THE O.T.

(Isa 13:9) Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with **wrath and fierce anger**, to **lay the land desolate**; and he shall **destroy the sinners thereof out of it**.

(Isa 13:10) For the **stars of heaven** and the constellations thereof shall **not give their light**; the **sun shall be darkened** in his going forth, and the **moon shall not cause her light to shine**.

(Isa 13:11) And **I will punish the world for their evil**, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

The actual fulfillment of this happened when the armies of the Medes and Persians defeated the King of Babylon and took over his city. **This represented a change in government and authority**. Approximately 200 years before it would be fulfilled, Isaiah 44:28 stated that the man who would carry out this judgment and give the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem would be named Cyrus. **Isaiah 9:6-7 also prophesied that when Jesus would come, the government would be upon His shoulders**. It should not be of any surprise then that the same biblical imagery is used in the New Testament—especially in the book of Revelation—to describe His destruction of Jerusalem's old covenant worship system by a heathen army, and His establishment of the New Covenant of Grace—the New Jerusalem—the new light of the world! This occurrence is referring to the time that the NEW SUN of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2, Revelation 21:23) took the place of the old sun (natural Jerusalem).

THE DESTRUCTION OF EGYPT

(Ezek 32:7) And **when I shall put thee out**, I will **cover the heaven**, and **make the stars thereof dark**; **I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light**.

(Ezek 32:8) All the bright **lights of heaven will I make dark over thee**, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD.

The actual fulfillment of this was Egypt's defeat at the hands of another army, and describes a change in government.

THE DEFEAT OF IDUMEA AND BOZRAH

(Isa 34:4) And all the **host of heaven shall be dissolved**, and the **heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll**; and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and **as a falling fig from the fig tree**.

THIS IS THE SAME LANGUAGE AS THE WRATH OF REV. 6

(Rev 6:13) And the **stars of heaven fell unto the earth**, even **as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.**

(Rev 6:14) And the **heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together;** and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

(Rev 6:15) And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

(Rev 6:16) And **said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:**

COMPARE REVELATION 6 WITH LUKE 23

The scriptures we have just quoted in Revelation 6 are the fulfillment of Jesus' preaching in Luke 23:28-30.

(Luke 23:28) But Jesus turning unto them said, **Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.**

(Luke 23:29) For, behold, **the days are coming**, in the which **they shall say**, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

(Luke 23:30) Then shall **they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.**

This shows that the things happening in Rev. are happening to the people of that generation and their children. It is nothing more than the biblical imagery of the destruction of Jerusalem as we will see later. The heavenly shaking described in Mat. 24:29 is also prophesied in Haggai and quoted in Heb. 12 as being the transition from law to grace and the only thing left standing after that would be his kingdom that cannot be moved. He has put the lights out on natural Jerusalem and the old worship system of animal sacrifices, because his church the New Jerusalem is now the light of the world, and gets it's light from the Sun of Righteousness. This is the sign his Kingdom has been thoroughly established in the earth.

Joel prophesied both Pentecost and Holocaust when he prophesied the outpouring of God's Spirit on all flesh and the sun being turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the Day of the Lord. Peter confirmed this in Acts 2 as being that spoken by Joel when the Holy Ghost fell. He claimed this was happening in the last days, and they knew the day of Judgment was soon to follow on those that rejected this kingdom.

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

(Mat 3:1) In those days came **John the Baptist**, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

(Mat 3:2) And saying, **Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

WORDS OF JESUS

(Mat 4:17) From that time **Jesus began to preach**, and to say, **Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

HE THEN SENT OUT HIS DISCIPLES

(Mat 10:7) And as **ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

Notice that they were all preaching that **the Kingdom of God was "at hand,"** and not several thousand years away. That means they had to be referring to the Church Kingdom.

HE SAID AGAIN

(Mat 12:28) But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, **then the kingdom of God is come unto you.**

(Joh 18:36) Jesus answered, **My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight,** that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

(Luke 17:20) And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, **when the kingdom of God should come,** he answered them and said, **The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:**

(Luke 17:21) Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, **the kingdom of God is within you.**

He was telling them here that it is a spiritual kingdom and not a physical kingdom as most men teach it to be.

(Rom 14:17) For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but **righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.**

(John 3:5) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

It is easy to see that Jesus and His Apostles believed the Kingdom of God to be the Spirit of God indwelling in the hearts of believers after they are born again and not a future kingdom in the earth. The Apostles wrote as if the Kingdom of God was something they had already received rather than something they were waiting to receive in the future.

(Col 1:12) Giving thanks unto the Father, which **hath made us** meet to be **partakers of the inheritance of the saints** in light:

(Col 1:13) Who **hath delivered us** from the power of darkness, and **hath translated us into the KINGDOM of his dear Son:** [*hath is past tense*]

Does this do away with the belief that we will spend eternity with the Lord after our death? Absolutely not! That is the hope and promise of every true Christian, but it does not change the fact that His Church is called the Kingdom of God in the Bible. I am not teaching “Kingdom Now” doctrine, as some men teach it, but I am teaching the Church Kingdom now.

With these points established, you can understand that **HIS “COMING IN THE CLOUDS”** deals with **HIS JUDGMENT ON JERUSALEM** and the **FULL ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS KINGDOM IN THE EARTH.**

MORE STATEMENTS MADE BY JESUS AND HIS APOSTLES

(Mat 24:1) And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple.

(Mat 24:2) And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, **There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**

This was fulfilled in their day at the destruction of Jerusalem. Nearly all prophecy teachers believe that this was fulfilled during the time of Jerusalem’s destruction. The problem begins when they try to divide the next statement into different time periods.

(Mat 24:3) And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, **when shall these things be?** and **what shall be THE SIGN of thy coming,** and **of the end of the world?**

Notice that it says, “The sign”—singular—not “signs”—plural. Pay special attention to this point.

They were not dividing this out, but were **asking for the one sign** that would bring about the **destruction of the temple**, the **coming of the Lord**, and the **end of the age in their generation**. They asked this because Jesus had plainly told them that some of them would still be alive to see this occurrence take place. By reading Mark's account of the same question, it becomes clearer that Jesus never intended for these events to be separated. He was just answering their question about **the one sign** that would let them know when **all these things** would be fulfilled. Jesus gave them many signs that would come to pass but He said, "the end was not yet"; later He revealed what would be the key **sign** that would begin the three and one-half year period that Daniel prophesied as the **"time of the end."** This **sign** would be **Jerusalem being surrounded by armies** and was the signal for Jesus' followers to flee the city to escape His coming wrath, which would be carried out by the Roman Army.

Let's read Mark's account of the same statements we just read in Matthew 24.

(Mark 13:4) Tell us, when shall these things be? and **what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?**

Remember that Jesus ended his description of these events by telling us when they would all be fulfilled, so it should leave no doubt as to the time of it's fulfillment. He said all this would be completed before that generation he was speaking to had passed away.

(Mat 24:34) Verily I say unto you, **This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.** These statements make it very clear that these occurrences should not be divided—if you are going to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. *Strong's Concordance* supports this interpretation in its definitions of the Matthew 24:3 word "coming."

COMING—Parousia (par-oo-see'-ah—*Strong's* NT: 3952). It is said to be, "from the present participle of NT: 3918; **a being near**, i.e. **advent (often, return; specifically, of Christ to punish Jerusalem, or finally the wicked)**; (by implication) physically, aspect: KJV-coming, **presence**."

To understand how **this was also "the end of the world"**, you need to understand the difference in the three different Greek words translated world in the KJV.

WORLD - COSMOS 2889. kosmos, kos'-mos; prob. from the base of G2865; orderly arrangement, i.e. decoration; by impl. **the world** (in a wide or narrow sense, **includ. its inhab.**, lit. or fig. [mor.]--adorning, world. (EXAMPLE)

(Mat 4:8) Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

This means the physical earth and its inhabitants. This is the meaning most people put on the word world in the N.T. regardless of which word is being used, and **this is one of the main reasons for all the related misinterpretations of the scriptures.**

WORLD - 165. aion, ahee-ohn'; from the same as G104; prop. an age; by extens. perpetuity (also past); by impl. the world; spec. ([Jewish] **a Messianic period (present or future)--age**, course, eternal, (for) ever (-more), [n-]ever, (beginning of the, while the) world (began, without end). Comp. G5550.

This is the word used in Matthew 24:3. There it shows that **they were asking about the end of the "age,"** and **not the end of the "cosmos"** (earth) as most people try to teach. The Jews only understood there to be two ages: the current age they were living in, and the coming age of their Messiah. Because of that, they were not asking about the end of the "cosmos," but the end of their "aion" or "Jewish" age. They wanted to know when their Messiah Jesus would come in judgment against Jerusalem to destroy its old worship system. This, they were told, would be the sign to the Jews and to the world that Jesus is now ruling in His Kingdom—which is the Church. The following scriptures prove this is referring to the **last days** of the **Jewish age**.

(Heb 1:1) God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

(Heb 1:2) **Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

This scripture calls the time that they were living in the “last days.” This refers to the last days of the Jewish age of Law-keeping.

(Heb 9:26) For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now **once in the end of the world** hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

This says **Jesus died at the end of the world**. Is that still future as well? We know that this is impossible to apply to the future since Jesus died almost 2,000 years ago. The only way this scripture would make any sense is to understand that **the term “world” is being used here as a reference to the “age.”** This would make this statement to say that **Jesus’ death ended the age of Law**. This wasn’t a physical ending, but a spiritual one, because God no longer accepted their sacrifices. This ending also brought in the Church’s New Covenant, which was also purchased by Jesus’ blood.

HIS COMING WAS NEAR AND WAS TO HAPPEN IN THEIR DAY

The language of Scripture shows that their writers believed that they were currently in the last days. They also believed that they would live to see Jesus come back to end the Jewish age, and to judge the rebellious of Jerusalem. **These are some of the scriptures of which Futurists say the New Testament writers must have been mistaken when the writers wrote them**, because in the Futurist’s mind, Jesus still has not come. Once again, this problem is created because of their failure to recognize that Jesus and His Apostles referred to His coming in judgment to destroy Jerusalem as a **“coming of the Lord.”** This does not do away with the **“resurrection at the last day.”** The failure to recognize the differences in these two events has created much of the confusion, which currently exists concerning Bible prophecy.

(Heb 10:25) Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, **as ye see the day approaching.**

Notice that this verse says, “As **‘YE’** (or **‘YOU’**) see the day approaching.” This is a reference to those who heard him then, and not to those who were still several thousand years away in the future!

(Heb 10:37) **For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.** He said it’s not much longer and He is coming. Was He wrong? I don’t think so.

(1 Pet 1:20) Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but **was manifest in these last times for you.**

Peter called it “the last times.” He was referring to his time, not to a time in the future.

(1 Cor 10:11) Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written **for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.**

Paul said that they were the ones upon whom “the ends of the world are come.” He couldn’t have been talking about the end of the physical world because it is still here, so he must have been talking about the end of the Jewish age of Law-keeping. He was referring to a time when God would have a new sun, moon, and stars.

OIKOUMENE—THE KNOWN WORLD

WORLD - 3625. oikoumene, oy-kou-men'-ay; fem. part. pres. pass. of G3611 (as noun, by impl. of G1093); land, i.e. **the (terrene part of the) globe; spec. the Roman empire**:--earth, world. (EXAMPLE)

(Mat 24:14) And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in **all the world** for a witness unto all nations; and **then shall the end come**.

Most scholars say this refers to **the inhabited part of the earth, or “their known inhabited part”**, more specifically **the Roman empire of their day**. A brief look at a few scriptures will show **this is something that was fulfilled in their day before the end came at Jerusalem**.

(Rom 1:8) First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that **your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world**.

(Rom 10:18) But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, **their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world**.

(Col 1:5) For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of **the gospel**;

(Col 1:6) Which is come unto you, **as it is in all the world**; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

(Col 1:23) If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the **gospel**, which ye have heard, and **which was preached to every creature which is under heaven**; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

(Rom 16:25) Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

(Rom 16:26) But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, **made known to all nations for the obedience of faith**:

“**All the world**” meant the inhabited world that **they knew in their day**. Some people say that the fulfillment of Bible prophecy has to be in the future if it has never literally happened to the entire world. What if you used this same type of logic on the next two scriptures?

(Luke 2:1) And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that **all the world should be taxed**. (Roman Empire)

You would then have to say that this scripture is future, because the whole earth has never been taxed. We know this future time frame can't be true. This scripture clearly applied only to the Roman Empire, and was definitely fulfilled during that time. This same fact applies to the next scripture.

(Acts 11:28) And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be **great dearth throughout all the world**: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

Some would say since the “whole world” has never experienced a worldwide famine, this scripture has to be referring to the future as well. This type of reasoning is exactly why some miss the simplicity of the truths found in the book of Revelation and other similar scriptures. The remaining context tells us that it happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. We can thereby know with certainty that it was for their time, and not written for a future time. Had the last part of this scripture that declares the time period been left off, Futurists would no doubt be trying to say this famine is still for the future.

MATTHEW AND LUKE'S ACCOUNT OF THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

MATTHEW 24:15 gives the **key sign** to recognize the **time of the end**—the **Abomination of Desolation**. Luke revealed this occurrence to be **the armies surrounding Jerusalem**. That is exactly what the **early church saw and thereby knew to flee to safety** before the coming judgment on Jerusalem took place. To prove this we simply have to compare Matthew's account with Luke's on this subject.

(Mat 24:15) When **ye [YOU]** therefore **shall see** the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Proof this could not be referring to some future antichrist stopping animal sacrifices is found in the next verse. How could those in the country know what was happening in the temple?

(Mat 24:16) Then let **them which be in Judaea** flee into the mountains:

(Mat 24:17) Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

People have applied this to a rapture of the Church, but this is nothing more than Jesus telling His people to hurry and to get out of the city of Jerusalem before He judges her.

(Mat 24:18) Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

(Mat 24:19) And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

(Mat 24:20) But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

Jesus would only give such a warning because He knew when this judgment took place that there would still be some who were **still engaged in the Jewish Law and its customs**. How can we know this? Simply because the unbelieving Jew's reluctance to accept Jesus' New Covenant was the very reason He brought judgment against them.

(Mat 24:21) For **then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.**

Jesus let those to whom He spoke know that they were the ones that would see the heathen army surround Jerusalem. When they saw this they were to escape that city because Jesus said there was a great tribulation coming there the likes-of-which had never been seen before, and never would be seen again. For a person to teach that this tribulation is for a future time, he would need to ignore these scriptures' time references, and the obvious context in which Jesus spoke them.

Josephus, in his Volume One of the *Works of Josephus*, says, "Whereas **the war which the Jews made with the Romans hath been the greatest of all those**, not only **that have been in our times**, but, in a manner, of those **that ever were heard of**; both of those wherein cities have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

Luke made the same statement as Matthew concerning the Abomination of Desolation, except **he revealed what the Abomination of Desolation was.**

(Luke 21:20) And **when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know** that **the desolation thereof is nigh.**

This is the same statement as Matthew, except Luke replaced the phrase, "abomination of desolation" with what it actually was, "Jerusalem compassed with armies." If you accept all Scripture as being divinely inspired, then this scripture needs no further interpretation since it leaves no room for guesswork. Here in Luke, Jesus is clearly saying that the instrument He would use to bring the desolation was the Roman army who would surround Jerusalem in preparation for her destruction.

The Abomination was actually the abominable sins of Israel, which are revealed in Ezekiel chapters 8 and 16. **The judgment, however, would be carried out by a heathen army** just as God has always done in the past. This is the judgment that was to be brought against those that refused the seal of God. The New Testament reveals this seal to be the seal of water and spirit, which is pictured in Ezekiel 9. This seal is the same one that is found upon the 144,000 of Revelation, which means they had received the born again experience of the New Covenant.

(Luke 21:21) Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

(Luke 21:22) For **these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.**

Now, would one want to question the New Testament? Is it right? Was it really true that by the time this event was completed, “all things” that were written in the Old Testament (at least concerning this subject) would be fulfilled? Or would one dare side with the critics that claim that Jesus’ statement was incorrect?

(Luke 21:23) But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be **great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.**

(Luke 21:24) And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and **shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.**

I would like to explain this “times of the Gentiles,” but first let me reemphasize the fact that those who did not fall by the edge of the sword were **led away captive into all nations** is **definite proof that this scripture refers to the 70 AD tribulation** and not to some final future tribulation at the end of the Church age. I say this because Dispensationalists teach that Jesus will come at the end of this tribulation to rescue the Jews, and to set up His 1000-year reign of peace. This futurist scenario would leave no time for those who were spared the sword to be carried away captive into all the nations, but we do find a perfect fulfillment of this during the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem. During this siege 1.1 million Jews were killed, and over 90,000 captives were led away and dispersed into all nations. I will cover this subject in more detail during my lesson on *The Great Tribulation*.

THE TIME OF THE GENTILES

Some teach this “**time of the Gentiles**” (Luke 21:24) refers to the time of the Gentile Church Age. The problem is **there is no “Gentile” Church Age since the Church of Jesus Christ is plainly explained in Scripture as being “Jew and Gentile together in one body”**. The Scripture makes it clear that a Jew is not cut-off from the salvation of Jesus Christ. They can easily receive the Holy Ghost now if they—like everyone else—believe in Jesus, and accept His message of salvation. It is Jesus’ will for all of them to be born again right now! They are not cut-off except by their own unbelief.

I believe this reference to **the “time of the Gentiles” is the time that God allotted to the Gentiles for the destruction of Jerusalem.** This siege was prophesied to last approximately 42 months, and according to history, it did.

(Rev 11:1) And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

Here God is separating the New Jerusalem— the true Church—from the old Jerusalem.

(Rev 11:2) But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; **for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.**

He is saying, “I don’t want you to measure the old city, because it is no longer the exclusive city of My worship system. But I do want you to measure My true temple, the Church, My true worship system, because what’s outside this ‘Holy City’ is no longer part of it.” God goes on to show that because Jerusalem is no longer the place of His true worship system, she is going to be, “trodden down of the Gentiles,” for 42 months. This was fulfilled a few years later in 70 AD. This scripture is **one of the “proofs”** that help prove that **the book of Revelation was written probably sometime in the early 60’s, and before the fall of Jerusalem.** The reason why I say this is because if the Temple and city were not still standing when it was written, then this scripture would not have made any sense to John’s readers. The prophet Daniel agrees with this 42-month time period in the twelfth chapter of his prophecy.

(Dan 12:6) And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, **How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?**

(Dan 12:7) And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for **a time, times, and an half**; and **when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.**

Every Bible teacher that I have ever studied from or heard speak always says this is the three and one-half year Great Tribulation. The problem is that they usually place the tribulation sometime in the future instead of allowing it to stay in the timeframe in which the Bible says it should remain—the generation that was alive during the 70 AD fall of Jerusalem.

(Dan 12:8) And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

(Dan 12:9) And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: **for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.** (Not the end of time, and it turned out to be over 500 years later)

COMPARE THIS WITH THE TIME TEXT OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

I believe that John opened the vision that Daniel sealed because it was now “the time of the end.”

(Rev 1:1) **The Revelation of Jesus Christ**, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants **things which must shortly come to pass**; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

He didn't say this was going to happen 2,000 to 3,000 years in the future. He said the things He was about to reveal in the book of Revelation “must shortly come to pass.”

(Rev 1:3) Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: **for the time is at hand.**

He said the time is “at hand.” Compare the phrase “at hand” with its usage in the rest of the New Testament, and you will discover that this is a reference to it being close by, not far off, something that was soon to take place.

(Rev 1:7) Behold, **he cometh with clouds**; and **every eye shall see him**, and **they also which pierced him**: and **all kindreds of the earth [land] shall wail because of him.** Even so, Amen.

“**He cometh with clouds**” is the same biblical imagery used in the Old Testament to describe Gods coming in judgment against a nation, and God usually used another nations army to carry out this destruction. “**Every eye shall see him**” is imagery dealing with the fact that all, **including “those who pierced him”**, will see and know about his coming in judgment against Jerusalem. How are “**those who pierced (crucified) Him**” going to see Him coming unless they are still alive on that day? This fulfillment would be impossible if this is referring to a time in the future. It would have been easy to fulfill if this was referring to His coming in their generation. The word “earth” here is the same word that means “land,” and is normally used in reference to the tribes of the land of Israel.

Look now in Revelation 22, which is the closing chapter of that great book, for even more proof that the book of Revelation was to be fulfilled immediately after it was written.

(Rev 22:6) And he said unto me, **These sayings are faithful and true**: and the Lord God of the holy prophets **sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.**

Even at the closing of the Book of Revelation He said it again, “The things which must shortly be done.”

(Rev 22:7) Behold, **I come quickly**: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

He said you had better keep these things because I am coming soon!

(Rev 22:10) And he saith unto me, **Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.**

God told Daniel to seal his book because its prophecies would not be fulfilled in the days in which they were written. But that is not what He told the apostle John. **God told John not to seal his book** because the time for its fulfillment was at hand.

As previously stated, I believe that John opened the sealed vision of Daniel because it was then “**the time of the end.**” This does not mean that it was “the end of time” as most preach.

(Rev 22:12) And, behold, **I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**

Remember, Jesus said that some of **them** would **still be alive when He came back to give His rewards.** Here He is giving those rewards out: to the wicked He will destroy them in His wrath; to the righteous He is going to allow them to flee into the wilderness and be safe from the destruction of Jerusalem. The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:4-43) says the same thing. There Moses says it will be a time when God will **reward the wicked** and be **merciful to His people.**

(Rev 22:20) He which testifieth these things saith, **Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**

THE TIME OF THE SIXTH KING—THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE DATING OF REVELATION

I believe—along with many other biblical scholars and writers—that the Book of Revelation (**most or all**) was **fulfilled during the age in which it was written.** It was **written in the early 60’s AD,** and **before the fall of Jerusalem** and **in the days of the “sixth King.”** The fall of Jerusalem occurred, just as the Bible said it would, in the **days of the ten kings associated with the Roman Empire.** It was these ten horns the Bible says would “hate the whore, make her desolate, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.” There seems to be various schools of thought among Historical viewpoints and commentaries as to the exact identity of the eight kings of Revelation 17:10 and the ten kings of Revelation 17:16, yet they all agree that these kings were associated with the Roman Empire around the time of the fall of Jerusalem, and were definitely a part of Daniel’s fourth beast, or ruling kingdom in the earth, which most prophecy writers teach to be the Roman Empire.

I will not try to make a definite identification here as to who I think these various kings and rulers were other than to say that I lean the strongest toward believing that **the first seven kings of Revelation 17:10 were the seven Procurators that Rome placed over Judea and Jerusalem after the death of Herod Agrippa I.** To properly identify these rulers, one must be able to find a connection between them and the whore. Agrippa’s son, Agrippa II, was considered too young to oversee the troubled area of Judea, so Roman authority decided to reduce it down to a province. Cuspius Fadus was then sent into Judea as the first of seven procurators (viceroys or governors) who were chosen to lead Judea during this time. Historical records differ with each other by a year or two as to the exact years of their reign, but we do know that the Apostle John was writing Revelation during the time of the sixth king. **Albinus was the sixth of these rulers and he ruled Judea from 61-65 AD. This makes the time of John’s writing of Revelation to have happened sometime during the early 60’s AD.** Gessius Florus had a short reign during 65 AD, and was the seventh and final of these procurators. After Gessius, Nero himself took control of Judea because of the trouble the Romans were having there with the Jews. This made Nero the eighth king. Revelation says the eighth king was the beast, and **most scholars also agree that Nero was the beast of Revelation 13** which persecuted the Church for three and one-half years. This three and one-half year persecution of the Church occurred in the last of Nero’s reign and ended with his death in 68 AD. This creates a perfect fulfillment to this prophecy and it took place shortly after John penned the book in the early 60’s AD.

The Bible shows that the beast took control and gave power to ten rulers, which finally resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem. This destruction was fulfilled under the leadership of the Roman Emperor Vespasian. Rome had previously divided Palestine into ten geographical areas and administrative districts. The following are a listing of these: (Southern) Samaria, Judea, and Idumea; (Northern) Galilee and Perea; (Northeastern) Iturea, Trachonitis, Gaulanitis, Auranitis, and Batanea. Evidently Nero gave these ten districts authority to rise against Jerusalem when they began to rebel against Rome. This scenario would once again be a perfect historical fulfillment to this entire prophecy of Revelation chapter 17.

Some contend that Nero, Vespasian, and the fall of Jerusalem were all in the past by the time John penned Revelation, which they say was around 90-100 AD. Those who subscribe to this later date do so because of the words of one man—**Irenaeus**. The other late date writers of church history were simply quoting Irenaeus or were quoting from other writers who had quoted his statements. He wrote over **100 years after John** was banished to Patmos. But his words must be called into question since he is also the same writer that is credited with saying **Jesus preached up to 40 or 50 years of age**. This older age for Jesus is inconsistent with both the biblical record and other extra-biblical sources that refer to the time span of Jesus' earthly ministry. Because of this discrepancy, should anyone use Irenaeus' teachings to interpret the prophecies of Revelation? Should the information of a man who didn't know the correct age of Jesus be found trustworthy enough to be the sole source for a late date of the book of Revelation? I don't think so. This is just one of the reasons why I say you can't trust history on this subject, because **history is inconclusive** when dealing with this subject. To determine truth about the Bible one must look beyond history and look to the Bible itself; to determine the time frame in which Revelation was written you must look at the **internal evidence** that is found within its own pages, which all point to a Pre-70 AD writing of the book. There is much internal evidence that proves the book of Revelation was written before the fall of Jerusalem. The following are just three of the more powerful ones:

1. Why would John write to a church in Revelation 11:2 about the holy city being trodden under foot by the Gentiles for forty-two months as a future event, if it had already been fulfilled in 70 AD? Jesus predicted this occurrence in Luke 21:21 and said that all these things He foretold would be fulfilled before that generation He was speaking to then had passed away. John is saying Jerusalem "**shall be** trodden down," which is a definite indication that it had not happened at the time of his writing.
2. History indicates that Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake in 66 AD (see the *New Unger's Bible Dictionary*), and was not rebuilt till the 161-180 AD reign of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Since that is the case, why would John be writing to a church in a city that had been destroyed 30 years prior to his writing? That would make no sense. It would however make sense if he wrote it while the city was still standing in the early 60's AD. This time frame also agrees with the time of the sixth King, and was before the fall of Jerusalem.
3. The Bible reveals Jerusalem to be the Great Whore that sat on a political beast (Rome) and used its influence toward this governmental power to persecute and to kill Jesus, His apostles, His prophets, and His saints. The beast would then turn on the whore, make her desolate, and burn her with fire. The perfect fulfillment of this took place during the three and one-half year siege of Jerusalem ending in September 70 AD. This proves this occurrence has to be dealing with the siege of Jerusalem that ended in 70 AD, and not a Futurist interpretation that says Jesus will return and save Jerusalem from destruction at some future time.

These are only a few of the main reasons why today many others and I believe that the Book of Revelation was written prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. For an in-depth study on the subject of the dating of the book of Revelation I recommend **Dr. Kenneth Gentry's book *Before Jerusalem Fell***. This book is available through Rightly Dividing the Word.

The terms "**last days**" and "**the end of the world**" were used most of the time in the New Testament in reference to the last days of the **Jewish age of Law-keeping as the method of salvation**—not to a future time at the end of the physical world. This "**last days of the Jewish age**" was **spiritually ended with the**

death of Jesus, but was **physically and literally ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and its old worship system**. This destruction serves as **THE SIGN** that the Son of Man **is ruling** in His Kingdom.

We will now look at some additional New Testament scriptures that help to prove that the above statements concerning these things being fulfilled in their 70 AD generation and that Jesus is now ruling with power are true.

MORE TIME TEXT GIVEN BY JESUS AND HIS APOSTLES

Let's look and see within what time frame the Apostles expected Jesus to return.

PETER SAID...

(1 Pet 4:7) But the **end of all things is at hand**: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.
[Peter wrote these words a few years **before the fall** of Jerusalem.]

It becomes evident when a person reads this statement that Peter was referring to the destruction of Jerusalem and the physical ending of animal sacrifices as the end of all things. Compare this statement with Jesus' statements recorded in Matthew 24:3 and Mark 13:4 about when these things shall be, and **the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled**. Peter said here it was about to happen, and it did a few years later in 70 AD.

(1 Pet 4:17) For the **time is come** that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, **what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?**

PAUL SAID...

Paul answered this when he wrote to the persecuted church at Thessalonica and assured them that God was about to **pour out His wrath upon those** that were **persecuting them**.

(2 Thes 1:3) We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

(2 Thes 1:4) So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for **your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure**: [They were already in tribulation.]

(2 Thes 1:5) Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, **that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer**:

(2 Thes 1:6) Seeing it is **a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you**;

Paul spoke as though he expected for God to soon take vengeance against those who were troubling them during their lifetime. What comfort would there have been in Paul telling those saints that God was going to punish those who were persecuting them in another 2,000 years or so? The only comfort would have been the promise of a soon deliverance.

(2 Thes 1:7) And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

(2 Thes 1:8) **In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ**:

(2 Thes 1:9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

(2 Thes 1:10) When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe **(because our testimony among you was believed)** in that day.

Paul is clearly stating it was their obedience to Jesus and His gospel that would save them, and their rebellion against Him that would bring judgment. Paul added more statements on this time text in 1 Corinthians 7 and in Romans 16.

(1 Cor 7:29) But this I say, brethren, **the time is short**: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;

He is saying that the time is so short that you better start living like you aren't even married. This doesn't mean they were to leave their families. Paul was just exhorting them to focus on Christ's imminent return. **Was the time truly short, or does the New Testament contain erroneous statements?**

(Rom 16:20) And the God of peace shall **bruise Satan** under your feet **shortly**. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Before I explain this scripture, let's compare Paul's statement with Malachi 4:1-3.

(Mal 4:1) For, behold, **the day cometh**, that shall **burn as an oven**; and all the **proud**, yea, and all that **do wickedly, shall be stubble**: and the day that cometh shall **burn them up**, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

(Mal 4:2) But **unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings**; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

(Mal 4:3) And **ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this**, saith the LORD of hosts.

When you compare these two texts it seems that Paul was drawing his statements in Romans from the book of Malachi. Many scholars say Paul had to be referring to the **destruction of Jerusalem** and its **old worship system** when he wrote Romans 16:20. If that is true—and it seems that it is—then I have to ask **why so many Christians of today are trying to resurrect a system that was called "Satan" in the Bible and was destroyed by God for its outdated method of salvation**.

TRYING TO RESURRECT WHAT GOD HAS DESTROYED

(Gal 2:18) For if I **BUILD AGAIN the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor**.

(Gal 2:19) For I **through the law** am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Paul is clearly saying we don't need to resurrect this old Law system, or the Temple, or the blood of red heifers. He is saying all we need is Jesus' blood! Paul is clearly saying here that we should not rebuild the Law system that God has destroyed. If we do, we make ourselves a transgressor. By reading the next scriptures, we can see further why God no longer wants the Law enacted.

(Rom 10:4) For **Christ is the end of the law for righteousness** to every one that believeth.

(Rom 3:20) Therefore **by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin**.

Paul said, "The Law gives us the knowledge of sin." **Jesus is the one who came to deliver us from the curse of the Law**, because it brings us destruction. Remember, there were **two trees mentioned in the Garden of Eden**: the Tree of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The Tree of Life was symbolic of Jesus Christ. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was symbolic of the Law. He also said that "by the Law is the knowledge of sin" and that knowledge contained in the Law slew us, but Jesus Christ came to deliver us from this curse of the Law and give us life! (See Romans 7:11; Galatians 3:13; Romans 6:23.)

JAMES SAID...

(Jam 5:7) Be patient therefore, brethren, unto **the coming of the Lord**. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, **until he receive the early and latter rain**.

To the Jewish farmer the purpose of the early rain was to cause the seeds to grow, and the purpose of the latter rain was to mature this same crop for harvesting. Judging from his time text given in the next verse, James is evidently viewing the early church period from the outpouring of the Holy Ghost (seed rain) until the destruction of Jerusalem as one planting and harvest season. This agrees with many of the parables in the Bible such as the wheat and tares of Matthew 13:37-43. There Jesus said the wicked (tares) were gathered first and the righteous (wheat) were left to shine forth as the sun.

(Jam 5:8) Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the **coming of the Lord draweth nigh**.

(Jam 5:9) Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, **the judge standeth before the door**.

Notice, James wrote, "**the coming of the Lord draweth nigh**." He also wrote, "the judge standeth before the door." He didn't say He was on His way to the door. He said He is at the door now. **Did God inspire James when he wrote this, or did James write this on his own?** In order to prove their interpretations, men who believe Futurist theology have had to fight against the words of the New Testament and suggest that its writers—the Apostles—missed it.

JOHN SAID...

(1 Jo 2:18) Little children, **it is the last time**: and as ye have heard that **antichrist shall come**, even **now** are there **many antichrists**; **WHEREBY we know that it is the last time**.

John said it was then the "last time," which is the same thing as "last days," because the spirit of antichrist was already working. 1 John 2:19 clearly stated that these who were of the spirit of antichrist were those that "went out from us, but they were not of us." It becomes evident then that **the spirit of antichrist was a reference to those Christians who had left Christianity and went back into Judaism's legalistic system of Law-keeping**. One would have to question then the spirit behind Dispensational Theology that teaches a return to Law-keeping in the near future.

JESUS SAID...

(Mat 24:34) Verily I say unto you, **This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled**.

(Luke 21:22) For **these be the days of vengeance**, that **all things which are written may be fulfilled**.

(Luke 21:32) Verily I say unto you, **This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled**.

To what generation was He referring? Was it to that generation then or to some future generation? Jesus answered these questions by saying some of them would still be alive when it happens. **In Matthew 23, Jesus sets the stage for this teaching and very clearly states to which generation He was referring**.

Before we once again read in Matthew 23, let's read the book of Revelation's description of Babylon the Great. There we will see the identity of Babylon the Great, which we also find revealed in Matthew 23.

BABYLON THE GREAT

The following are prophecies concerning Babylon the Great that are found in the book of Revelation.

(Rev 16:6) For **they have shed the blood of saints and prophets**, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

(Rev 18:20) Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and **ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her**.

(Rev 18:24) And **in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth**.

Remember this description. When we can find a city guilty of the blood of the prophets, apostles, saints, and (the key point) of all that were slain upon the earth, then we can know for sure to what city this refers.

(Rev 11:8) And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of **the great city**, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, **where also our Lord was crucified**.

(Rev 19:2) For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and **hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand**.

In what great city was Jesus crucified? Rome or Jerusalem? It was Jerusalem. This is a definite reference to Jerusalem being "**the great city**." (I will deal with the identity of the two witnesses in a later lesson.) Babylon is called "the great city" in the book of Revelation.

(Rev 14:8) And there followed another angel, saying, **Babylon is fallen**, is fallen, **that great city**, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

The great city that has fallen in this judgment is Jerusalem. Babylon is that great city that sat on the beast that had seven heads (seven mountains) and ten horns. It was the beast, and not the whore that sat on the beast, that had the seven heads and ten horns. Rome fits this description since it is a city that has seven hills. Rome was also the political strength that Jerusalem was riding on when she persecuted and killed the apostles, prophets, and saints of Jesus Christ. Then, just as Revelation 17 says, Rome turned on Jerusalem and threw her off its back and devoured her in 70 AD. Remember, **this harlot city is described in Revelation as the one that killed the prophets, the apostles, and the saints, and is also guilty of the blood of all that were killed upon the earth**. Jesus exposed who this city was and called her by name in Mat. 23 before he detailed her destruction in Mat. 24.

THE WORDS OF JESUS TO THE UNBELIEVING JEWS IN MATTHEW 23

(Mat 23:29) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because **ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous**,

(Mat 23:30) And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

(Mat 23:31) Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that **ye are the children of them which killed the prophets**.

(Mat 23:32) **Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers**. (*Finish the transgression*)

Matthew's, "Fill ye up the measure of your fathers," and Daniel's, "Finish the transgression," are synonymous descriptions of the same event. Daniel said this event would take place during his 70 weeks prophecy, and Matthew indicated that this would happen when the unbelieving Jews killed their Messiah.

(Mat 23:33) Ye serpents, ye **generation** of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

(Mat 23:34) Wherefore, behold, **I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city**:

Jesus said that these unbelievers would kill the apostles, the people who He sent to them, and that they would also persecute these first century Christians from city to city. To see this come to pass, all you have to do is read the books of Acts.

(Mat 23:35) **That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth**, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Here it is again. The unbelieving Jews were the ones that God was going to hold responsible for all the blood that had been shed in the earth. Remember, when they asked for Jesus' death, they told the ruler of Rome to **"let His blood be upon us and our children."**

(Mat 23:36) Verily I say unto you, **All these things shall come upon this generation.**

This proves to which generation He was referring in Matthew 24:34 when He said, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." To say that this is referring to some future generation, maybe even that of our day, would directly contradict the clear meaning of Jesus' words found here.

(Mat 23:37) **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee**, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

(Mat 23:38) Behold, **your house is left unto you desolate.**

(Mat 23:39) For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Jesus called the name of the city that killed the prophets, the apostles, and was guilty of the blood of all righteous clear back to righteous Abel, "**Jerusalem.**" He then said He was going to bring all those things on her in that generation and make her desolate. This was fulfilled in 70 AD, forty years after Jesus' crucifixion. He gave them one generation—forty years—to choose between Him, and the Law. Those who refused Him, He judged according to the Law.

PAUL AGREED WITH JESUS

Paul agreed with the words of Jesus. He spoke of this occurrence in 1 Thessalonians.

(1 Thes 2:14) For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the **Jews**:

(1 Thes 2:15) **Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us**; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

(1 Thes 2:16) Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to **fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.**

God sent His wrath to avenge for their killing of the prophets, apostles, the saints, and even their Messiah—Jesus.

COMPARING AND INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE

You can understand the **gathering of the elect** (Matthew 24) by comparing the **destruction of Babylon the Great** (Jerusalem), followed by an **invitation to the marriage supper** (Revelation 19), with the **parable of the wedding feast** (Matthew 22).

(Mat 22:1) And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by **parables**, and said,

(Mat 22:2) The **kingdom of heaven** is like unto a **certain king**, [God] which made a **marriage for his son**, [Jesus]

(Mat 22:3) And **sent forth his servants** [*Apostles*] to call them that **were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.** [*This is the Apostles inviting the Jews to be saved.*]

(Matt 22:4) Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and **all things are ready: come unto the marriage.**

The marriage supper was already prepared before the destruction of Jerusalem, so the invitation to the marriage feast was literally nothing more than the preaching of the gospel to the lost, which brings a person into a marriage relationship with Jesus Christ under the New Covenant. This relationship will result in spending eternity with Jesus for those who are obedient to the New Covenant message.

(Mat 22:5) But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

(Mat 22:6) And the remnant **took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.**

This was referring to the apostles preaching to the unbelieving Jews, and just as Jesus said, they rejected the apostles' message, and attacked them by physically abusing them, and by murdering them.

(Mat 22:7) But when the **king heard** thereof, **he was wroth:** and **he sent forth HIS ARMIES,** and **destroyed those murderers,** and **burned up THEIR CITY.**

This is talking about Jerusalem. God is showing that He will burn their city because they refused the invitation He sent, via the apostles, to partake in His wedding.

(Mat 22:8) Then saith he to his servants, **The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.**

(Mat 22:9) **Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.**

(Mat 22:10) So those servants went out into the highways, and **GATHERED TOGETHER** all as many as they found, both bad and good: and **the wedding was furnished with guests.**

Remember they "**gathered together**" those who would come. This is the "**gathering together of the elect**" in Matthew 24, which followed the great tribulation (the destruction of Jerusalem). In Revelation 19, the marriage supper took place after Jerusalem was destroyed.

(Rev 19:2) For true and righteous are his judgments: for **he hath judged the great whore,** which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and **hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.**

(Rev 19:7) Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: **for the marriage of the Lamb is come,** and his wife hath made herself ready.

This compares with the marriage invitation found in Matthew 22. It took place after the city was destroyed. This also matches the sending out of His angels (messengers/preachers) to **gather the elect** from the four corners of the earth immediately after the tribulation of those days.

(Mat 24:31) And he shall **send his angels** [*messengers*] with a great sound of a trumpet [*preaching of the Word*], and they shall **GATHER TOGETHER his elect from the four winds,** from one end of heaven to the other.

We are still gathering souls to Jesus today! This also matches Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares. In that parable Jesus said the tares are gathered first so that the righteous could shine forth as the sun (Son of Righteousness).

CONCLUSION

Jesus and His Apostles taught that the **COMING OF THE LORD**, the **END OF THE WORLD (AGE)**, and the **LAST DAYS**, were all primarily referring to **His coming in judgment on Jerusalem**. They taught that this coming would happen in **their generation**, and would bring an end to the **Old Covenant worship system**. This **coming** (the destruction of Jerusalem) would be a **sign** to all men that **Jesus was ruling in the heavens** and that **His Kingdom had been thoroughly placed in the Earth**, which was fulfilled by placing His Spirit in the hearts of His believers through a born again experience.

Dispensationalists and **Futurists** must have a **future Jewish Temple** and the **restoration of its sacrificial system** in order to **fulfill their prophetic interpretations of the scriptures**. But I believe that the Bible teaches that the **New Covenant message is the only message that will ever save a person** and that **God will never again turn back to literal temples and animal sacrifices for salvation**.

In prayer, God showed me that the **danger of Futurist doctrine is that it deceives you into believing the New World Order is a prophesied occurrence that cannot be prayed against**. But that is not true because **The True Church—through prayer and fasting—has the power to bring this system down, or at least hold it back from its anti-Christian agenda** so that the Church can continue to accomplish God's purpose in the earth. Satan has used natural things like physical **temples, lands, and animal sacrifices, to distract the Church** so it won't see and understand these truths.

God wants to bring us to **spiritual fullness** and to a **unity of focus** so that we can **defeat the powers of darkness** and **evangelize our world** for His Kingdom!

I believe the correct interpretation of Bible prophecy is very important to the Church in order to avoid deception and to fulfill its true purpose in the earth. That is why I have tried my best to share these truths in this study. However, whether we ever agree on every area of prophecy or not, **let's agree to respect and honor each other and to work together to reach this lost world with the only gospel that will ever save anyone—the Apostle's New Testament gospel of Jesus Christ!**