

# The Time Of The End



## Studies In Eschatology

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**To God Be The Glory!**

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# **The Time Of The End**

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# The Time Of The End

## Four Views Of The Millennium

### INTRODUCTION

1. A precious hope of Christians is the return of Jesus Christ...
  - a. Promised by angels when He ascended to heaven - **Ac 1:9-11**
  - b. Proclaimed by His apostles in their writings - **1 Th 4:16-18**
2. Events in the Middle East often spark interest in Jesus' return...
  - a. People wonder if the time of the end is near
  - b. Some often affirm "yes!" with great certainty, only to be proven wrong
3. What can we know about "**The Time Of The End**" ...?
  - a. The Bible speaks of resurrections, a millennium, judgment, new heavens and new earth
  - b. What does it reveal about the sequence of such events?
  - c. Can we know when the time of the end is near?
4. Why even bother with such things...?
  - a. To be aware of other views (especially when a popular view is proven wrong time and again)
  - b. To avoid being misled by cults and others who use their views on prophecy to influence people

[A study of such things is called **eschatology**, from the Greek word "eschatos" (**last things**). The study is complicated by the diversity of views surrounding it. Here is a summary of four major views...]

### I. DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM

#### **A. DISTINCTIVE FEATURES...**

1. **The kingdom:** Jesus failed to establish it at His first coming, will succeed at His second
2. **The church:** views the church and Israel as two distinct identities with two individual redemptive plans
3. **The tribulation:** a seven-year period (the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Dan 9:25-27) containing the reign of the Anti-Christ just prior to the millennium; restoration of Jews to Israel, conversion of the remnant of Israel, temple rebuilt, priesthood, sacrifices restored
4. **The rapture:** the church (living and dead) is raptured to meet the Lord in the air either at the beginning (pre-trib), middle (mid-trib) or end (post-trib) of the seven years of tribulation; tribulation saints and O.T. dead will be raised at the end of the tribulation
5. **The millennium:** Christ will return at the end of the tribulation to institute a 1000 year rule from a holy city (the New Jerusalem); those who come to believe in Christ during the tribulation (including the 144,000 Jews) and survive will go on to populate the earth during this time; those who were raptured or raised previous to the tribulation period will reign with Christ over the millennial population
6. **Post-millennium:** Satan, bound during Christ's earthly reign, will be loosed to deceive the nations, gather an army of the deceived, and take up to battle against the Lord; the battle will end in the judgment of the wicked and Satan, followed by entrance into the eternal state of glory by the righteous
7. **Major proponents:** John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, Louis Sperry Chafer, J. Dwight

Pentecost, Norman Geisler, Charles Stanley, Chuck Smith, and Chuck Missler

-- A visual synopsis of this view: <http://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/dispre.html>

## B. OBSERVATIONS...

1. This view is highly popular today, mostly due to Hal Lindsey (The Late, Great Planet Earth), Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins (Left Behind series)
  2. A variation was taught among churches of Christ by R. H. Boll
  3. It is of recent origin, its distinctive elements first taught by John Nelson Darby (1830 A.D.)
  4. It views the church as either an after-thought or an unrevealed mystery in the OT
  5. It teaches a number of resurrections; at least two for the righteous and one for the wicked
- **Requires a strictly literal interpretation of OT prophecy and the book of Revelation**

[Most people think of dispensational premillennialism when they hear the word ‘premillennialism’; there is another form of premillennialism that has been around a lot longer...]

## II. HISTORICAL PREMILLENNIALISM

### A. DISTINCTIVE FEATURES...

1. **The kingdom of God:** present through the Spirit since Pentecost, to be experienced by sight during the millennium after Christ’s return
  2. **The church:** the fulfillment of Israel (physical Israel has no distinctive redemptive plan)
  3. **The tribulation:** a time of apostasy and suffering just before the millennium, ended by the battle of Armageddon and destruction of the Anti-Christ; many Jews converted at this time
  4. **The rapture:** living and dead saints to meet the Lord in the clouds immediately preceding the millennium
  5. **The millennium:** Christ will return to institute a thousand-year reign on earth; there will be the re-establishment of temple worship and sacrifice as a remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice
  6. **Post-millennium:** Satan loosed, the battle of Gog and Magog, Satan defeated; the wicked dead are raised, the great white throne judgment, followed by the eternal state
  7. **Major proponents:** George Eldon Ladd, Walter Martin, John Warwick Montgomery, and Theodore Zahn
- A visual synopsis of this view: <http://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/hispre.html>

### B. OBSERVATIONS...

1. Not to be confused with dispensational premillennialism (see above)
  2. Called “historical” (or “classic”) because elements of this view were first espoused by Justin Martyr (165 A.D.)
  3. It was taught among churches of Christ by: Barton W. Stone, Moses E. Lard, David Lipscomb, James A. Harding, and T. W. Brents
  4. This view is free from some of the troubling aspects found in dispensational premillennialism (especially in regards to the church as an after-thought)
  5. It teaches two separate resurrections; the righteous are raised before the millennium, the wicked afterwards
- **Its interpretation of OT prophecy and the book of Revelation is not strictly literal**

[Another view that was once very popular is that of...]

## III. POSTMILLENNIALISM

**A. DISTINCTIVE FEATURES...**

1. **The kingdom of God:** a spiritual entity experienced on earth through the Christianizing affect of the Gospel
  2. **The church:** the fulfillment of Israel (similar to historical premillennialism)
  3. **The millennium:** an era (not a literal 1000 years) during which Christ will reign over the earth, not from an literal and earthly throne, but through the gradual increase of the Gospel and its power to change lives; **after** this gradual Christianization of the world, Christ will return and immediately usher the church into their eternal state after judging the wicked
  4. **Post-millennium:** Christ returns, the righteous and the wicked raised, followed by the final judgment and the eternal state
  5. **Major proponents:** Rousas J. Rushdoony, Greg L. Bahnsen, Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., David Chilton, and Gary North
- **A visual synopsis of this view:** <http://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/post.html>

**B. OBSERVATIONS...**

1. This view was very popular prior to the world wars of the twentieth century
  2. It was taught among churches of Christ by: Alexander Campbell, Tolbert Fanning, J. W. McGarvey, Robert Milligan, and E. G. Sewell
  3. It does not necessarily hold to a literal 1000 year reign of Christ (similar to amillennialism)
  4. It teaches just one resurrection, the righteous and wicked at the same time
- **Its interpretation of OT prophecy and the book of Revelation is not strictly literal**

[A fourth view that was once the most dominant view is referred to as...]

**IV. AMILLENNIALISM**

**A. DISTINCTIVE FEATURES...**

1. **The kingdom of God:** a spiritual reality that all Christians partake in and that is seen presently by faith, but will be grasped by sight at the consummation
  2. **The church:** the eschatological fulfillment of Israel, the visible manifestation today of the kingdom foretold by OT prophecy (along with John the Baptist and Jesus)
  3. **The millennium:** not a literal 1000 years, but a long period of time between the first coming and second coming of Christ; inaugurated with Christ's resurrection - in an "already/not yet" sense, Christ already reigns over all and is already victorious over Satan
  4. **Post-millennium:** Satan loosed, battle of Gog and Magog, Christ returns, Satan defeated, the righteous and wicked dead are raised, the great white throne judgment, followed by the eternal state
  5. **Major proponents:** Anthony Hoekema, William Hendrikson, Gregory K. Beale, Robert B. Strimple
- **A visual synopsis of this view:** <http://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/nunc.html>

**B. OBSERVATIONS...**

1. This view is perhaps better termed Nunc-Millennialism or Inaugurated Millennialism
  - a. "Amillennialism" suggests a lack of belief in the millennium
  - b. Though "a" can mean "in" (rather than the commoner "none")
  - c. This view holds the millennium of Rev 20 is now, just not a physical kingdom
2. Popularized by Augustine (400 A.D.), and remains the dominant view among Catholics and some Protestant denominations (Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican)
3. It was taught among churches of Christ by: Foy E. Wallace, R. L. Whiteside, C. R. Nichol

- and most in the churches of Christ since the early twentieth century
4. It teaches just one resurrection, the righteous and wicked at the second coming of Christ
- **Its interpretation of OT prophecy and the book of Revelation may be literal or symbolic, depending on the context**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. This survey is not intended to be exhaustive...
  - a. There are variations in each of the four views
  - b. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Seventh-Day Adventists have their own peculiar views
2. But perhaps it helps to identify areas to examine regarding the end times ...
  - a. The meaning of expressions like "last days" in the Bible
  - b. The interpretation of prophecy in the OT and Revelation
  - c. The relationship between the church and the kingdom of God
  - d. The meaning of the millennium in Revelation 20
  - e. The doctrine of the resurrection and concepts of the rapture
  - f. The role of Israel in God's plan for the future
3. In the meantime...
  - a. Are you ready for whatever comes?
  - b. Are you watching for the Lord's return? - **1 Th 5:1-6; 2 Pe 3:10-14**
  - c. Are you working for the Lord now? - **Mt 24:44-51**

***Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. - 1 Co 15:58***

In our next study, we shall look at eschatological expressions such as "last days" found in Scripture...

**Note:** A useful aid in preparing this study was the **Blue Letter Bible** website, especially its Eschatology section entitled, "**Four Views Of The Millennium**" - <http://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/mill.html>

# The Time Of The End

## Are We In The Last Days?

### INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study, we illustrated the diversity of views related to the end of time...
  - a. Dispensational premillennialism
  - b. Historic premillennialism
  - c. Postmillennialism
  - d. Amillennialism
2. Perhaps some of the confusion is due to misunderstanding phrases like “last days”...
  - a. Many people wonder if we are living in the “last days”
  - b. If we are, doesn’t that suggest the time of the end is at hand, within our lifetime?

[It is important that we understand and apply Bible terms in Bible ways. How then do the Scriptures use eschatological expressions such as the “last days”? Let’s first take a look at a few...]

### I. THE LAST DAYS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

#### **A. USAGE OF THE PHRASE “LAST DAYS”...**

1. By Jacob, telling his sons of things to come - **Gen 49:1**
2. By Moses, speaking to Israel in the wilderness - **Num 24:14; Deu 4:30; 31:29**
3. By Isaiah, to foretell the establishment of the Lord’s House - **Isa 2:2**
4. By Jeremiah, in reference to Judah, Moab, and Elam - **Jer 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39**
5. By Ezekiel in reference to Gog and Magog - **Ezek 38:8,16**
6. In the book of Daniel, in regards to Persia, Greece, and others - **Dan 10:14**
7. By Hosea, in reference to Israel - **Hos 3:5**
8. By Micah, likewise prophesying of the Lord’s House - **Mic 4:1**

#### **B. MEANING OF THE PHRASE “LAST DAYS”...**

1. The Hebrew is **akharit hayyamim**
2. Various translated as **latter days, days to come, in the future**
3. It may refer to the end of the age, the eschaton, or to the distant future - **NET**
4. In prophetic language denoted, not the future generally, but the last future, the Messianic age of consummation...But we must not restrict “the end of the days” to the extreme point of the time of completion of the Messianic kingdom; it embraces “the whole history of the completion which underlies the present period of growth” - **Delitzsch**

#### **C. OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE PHRASE “LAST DAYS”...**

1. It was used to describe events prior to the coming of Christ - e.g., **Dan 10:14**
2. Though it could simply mean “in the future”, it often had Messianic connotations
3. It described events at the beginning of the Christian age - **Isa 2:2; cf. Lk 24:46-47**
4. The phrase therefore encompassed the entire age of the Messiah, not just the end

[In the Old Testament, the expression “last days” often looked forward to a period of time beginning with the first coming of Christ. This is confirmed as we now look at...]

## **II. THE LAST DAYS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

### **A. OCCURRENCE OF THE PHRASE “LAST DAYS”...**

1. Peter’s quotation of Joel’s prophecy - **Ac 2:16-21**; cf. **Joel 2:28-32**
2. Paul wrote of things to come in the “last days” - **2 Ti 3:1**
3. The writer of Hebrews tells how God now speaks to us in “these last days” - **He 1:2**
4. James wrote as one living in the “last days” - **Jam 5:3**
5. Peter wrote of scoffers to come “in the last days” - **2 Pe 3:3-4**

### **B. PHRASES SIMILAR TO THE “LAST DAYS”...**

1. “The ends of the ages” - **1 Co 10:11**; **He 9:26**
2. “The last hour” - **1 Jn 2:18**

### **C. OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE “LAST DAYS”...**

1. It is clear that we are now living in the “last days” - **Ac 2:16-17**; **He 1:2**
2. The “ends of the ages” has come upon us - **1 Co 10:11**
3. It began with the first coming of Christ - **He 9:26**
4. The apostles spoke of things yet to come in the “last days” - **2 Ti 3:1**; **2 Pe 3:3-4**
5. Even so, we are also living in “the last hour” - **1 Jn 2:18**
6. We have been living in the “last days” since the first coming of Christ!

## **CONCLUSION**

1. From the New Testament we learn that...
  - a. We are now living in the “last days”, the “ends of the ages”
  - b. Even though the “last days” have encompassed almost two thousands years
2. This does not discourage the informed Christian..
  - a. A thousand years is as a day to the Lord, and vice versa - **2 Pe 3:8-9**
  - b. The “last days” could end tomorrow, or another thousand years from now, if the Lord wills
3. In faith and hope we still look forward to...
  - a. The “last day”
  - b. The “end of the age”
  - c. The “day of the Lord”

– **Phrases we shall consider in another study**
4. In which great events will occur...
  - a. The coming of the Lord
  - b. The resurrection of the dead
  - c. The judgment of all mankind
  - d. The “new heaven and a new earth”

– **Events we shall examine in a later study**

Will we be ready for the events of the “last day”? It all depends on how we are living in “the last days”...

# The Time Of The End

## Other Eschatological Expressions

### INTRODUCTION

1. Much of the confusion regarding the end times may be due to...
  - a. To certain eschatological expressions, such as the “last days”
  - b. Misunderstanding their use in the Scriptures
2. In our previous study we saw from the New Testament...
  - a. That we are now living in the “last days”, the “ends of the ages” - cf. **He 1:2; 9:26**
  - b. Even though the “last days” have encompassed almost two thousands years
3. There are other eschatological expressions we should be careful to understand such as...
 

a. The “last day”	c. The “day of the Lord”	e. The “appearing of the Lord”
b. The “end of the age”	d. The “coming of the Lord”	f. The “revelation of the Lord”

[In this study, let’s see how these six expressions are used in the Scriptures, beginning with...]

### I. THE LAST DAY

#### **A. EXAMPLES...**

1. Used of the resurrection from the dead - **Jn 6:39-40,44,54; 11:24**
2. Used in reference to the day of judgment - **Jn 12:48**

#### **B. EXPOSITION...**

1. The “last days” (plural) cover the period of time between the Lord’s first and second coming - **He 1:2**
2. The “last day” (singular) is literally the last day as far as time on earth is concerned
3. On that day, two great events occur: the resurrection of the dead and the day of judgment
  - a. Yet according to some “end time scenarios”, the resurrection is not on “the last day”
  - b. Nor is the resurrection and the judgment at the same time

[Jesus’ use of the phrase “last day” does not fit premillennial scenarios which separate the resurrection of the righteous and the judgment by a thousand years. Another phrase used exclusively by Jesus is...]

### II. THE END OF THE AGE

#### **A. EXAMPLES...**

1. Jesus used this phrase in explaining two of His parables - **Mt 13:39-40,49**
2. The disciples referred to it in asking Jesus questions - **Mt 24:3**
3. Jesus made mention of it in the Great Commission - **Mt 28:20**

#### **B. EXPOSITION...**

1. The “end of the ages” (plural) cover the period of time between the Lord’s first and second Coming - **He 9:26**
2. The “end of the age” (singular) refers to the end of this present age, i.e., the end of time

- a. Note that Jesus also said “end of **this age**” - **Mt 13:40**
- b. At which time the great harvest, judgment and condemnation of the wicked will occur

[Similar events (e.g., the judgment) will occur at “the end of the age” as on “the last day”. Now let’s consider a phrase commonly used to refer to different events...]

### **III. THE DAY OF THE LORD**

#### **A. EXAMPLES...**

1. Used frequently in the OT of God’s judgment upon nations
  - a. Babylon - **Isa 13:1,6,9**
  - b. Egypt - **Jer 46:1-2,10; Eze 30:1-5**
  - c. Israel - **Joel 1:15; 2:1,11-14**
2. Used occasionally in the OT in reference to the day of judgment in the NT
  - a. In the book of Joel, quoted by Peter - **Joel 2:31; Ac 2:20**
  - b. In the book of Malachi, in anticipation of the coming John the Baptist - **Mal 4:5**
3. Used in the NT in reference to:
  - a. The judgment - **1 Co 5:5; 2 Co 1:14**
  - b. The coming of the Lord - **1 Th 5:1-2**
  - c. The cataclysmic end of all things - **2 Pe 3:10**

#### **B. EXPOSITION...**

1. The “day of the Lord” may certainly refer to God’s judgment on a particular nation or people
2. In the NT, it’s use in that sense may be implied by the context - e.g., **Lk 17:22**
3. But generally in the NT, it appears to refer to the judgment to come at the “last day”

[Context must determine whether the phrase “the day of the Lord” refers to the second coming of Christ, or some judgment of God upon a nation which prefigures the final judgment. The same is true with...]

### **IV. THE COMING OF THE LORD**

#### **A. EXAMPLES...**

1. Used by both the disciples and Jesus in the Olivet discourse - **Mt 24:3,27,37,39**
2. Used in reference to the resurrection - **1 Co 15:22-23; 1 Th 2:9; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23**
3. Used in reference to other events at the coming of Jesus - **2 Th 2:1,8; 2 Pe 3:4,12**
4. Christians encouraged to be patient for the coming of the Lord - **Ja 5:7-8; 1 Jn 2:28**
5. Used in reference to Christ’s first coming - **2 Pe 1:16**

#### **B. EXPOSITION...**

1. The Greek word translated “coming” is **parousia**
  - a. “presence, coming, or arrival” - **Strong**
  - b. “a being near, that is, advent (often, return; specifically of Christ to punish Jerusalem, or finally the wicked) - **ibid.**
2. Thus we find it used in two ways:
  - a. To refer to Jesus’ coming in judgment upon Jerusalem in 70 A.D., as foretold in Mt 24
  - b. To refer to the Jesus’ final coming in judgment upon all nations at the end of time

[Again, context determines the proper understanding of phrases that may be used to refer to different events. This is true with yet another phrase...]

## **V. THE APPEARING OF THE LORD**

### **A. EXAMPLES...**

1. Used in reference to the first coming of the Lord Jesus - **2 Ti 1:10**
2. Used most often to refer to His final coming - **1 Ti 6:14; 2 Ti 4:1,8; Ti 2:13**

### **B. EXPOSITION...**

1. The Greek word translated “appearing” is **epiphaneia**
  - a. “appearing, brightness” - **Strong**
  - b. From which we get the word “epiphany”
2. It is used in connection with:
  - a. The day of Christ and coming of the Lord (“the brightness of His coming) - **2 Th 2:1-3,8**
  - b. The day of judgment - **2 Ti 4:1**

[Finally, we find this phrase or others similar to it...]

## **VI. THE REVELATION OF THE LORD**

### **A. EXAMPLES...**

1. Used by Paul referring to the second coming of Christ - **1 Co 1:7; 2 Th 1:7**
2. Used by Peter referring to the second coming of Christ - **1 Pe 1:7,13**

### **B. EXPOSITION...**

1. The Greek word translated “revelation” or “coming” is **apokalupsis**
  - a. “appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation” - **Strong**
  - b. This word emphasizes the visibility of the Lord’s return
2. We note it’s use in regards to:
  - a. Both the coming of the Lord and the day of the Lord - **1 Co 1:7-8**
  - b. The grace and condemnation to be brought at that time - **2 Th 1:7-9; 1 Pe 1:7,13**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. We have briefly surveyed these six eschatological expressions...
 

a. The “last day”	c. The “day of the Lord”	e. The “appearing of the Lord”
b. The “end of the age”	d. The “coming of the Lord”	f. The “revelation of the Lord”
2. We have seen that context determines their use and meaning...
  - a. Three phrases sometimes refer to different events (day of the Lord, coming of the Lord, appearing of the Lord)
  - b. Three phrases refer only to the second coming of Christ (last day, end of the age, revelation of the Lord)
3. But in regards to the second coming of Christ, all six phrases used in reference to either or both...
  - a. The resurrection of the dead
  - b. The day of judgment that is to come

As we shall see in future lessons, these great events will occur at the same time, not separated by other significant events or periods of time...

# The Time Of The End

## The Interpretation Of Prophecy

### INTRODUCTION

1. Previously I suggested that much of the confusion regarding end times may be due to various eschatological expressions...
  - a. Such as “last days”, “coming of the Lord”, etc.
  - b. Misunderstanding their use in the Scriptures
  - c. Failing to observe how their use in the Scriptures creates problems for some end time scenarios
2. Another reason for confusion regarding end times relates to interpretation of prophecy...
  - a. Such as those in the Old Testament and the book of Revelation
  - b. Whether we should interpret them literally or figuratively

[Indeed, “**The Interpretation Of Prophecy**” may be the main reason behind the plethora of views related to the end times...]

### I. THE IMPORTANCE OF HOW ONE INTERPRETS PROPHECY

#### **A. EXPRESSED BY A DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALIST...**

1. “No question facing the student of Eschatology is more important than the question of the method to be employed in the interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures.” - **J. Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come**
  2. “The adoption of different methods of interpretation has produced the various eschatological positions and accounts for the divergent views within a system that confront the student of prophecy. - **ibid.**
  3. “The basic differences between the premillennial and amillennial schools and between the pretribulation and posttribulation rapturists are hermeneutical, arising from the adoption of divergent and irreconcilable methods of interpretation.” - **ibid.**
- **Note: This is what separates even pretrib and posttrib dispensational premillennialists**

#### **B. EXPRESSED BY A HISTORICAL PREMILLENNIALIST...**

1. “Here is the basic watershed between a dispensational and nondispensational theology.” - **George Eldon Ladd, The Meaning Of The Millennium: Four Views**
  2. “Dispensationalism forms its eschatology by a literal interpretation of the Old Testament and then fits the New Testament into it.” - **ibid.**
  3. “A nondispensational eschatology forms its theology from the explicit teaching of the New Testament.” - **ibid.**
- **Note: This is what separates dispensational and historic premillennialists**

#### **C. EXPRESSED BY A POSTMILLENNIALIST...**

1. “Premillennialists place strong emphasis on literal interpretation and pride themselves on taking Scripture just as it is written.” - **Loraine Boettner, The Meaning Of The Millennium: Four Views**
2. “Postmillennialists and amillennialists on the other hand, mindful that much of both the Old and New Testaments is unquestionably given in figurative or symbolical language, have no

objection on principle to figurative interpretation and readily accept that if the evidence indicates it is preferable.” - **ibid.**

- **Note: Boettner does not distinguish dispensational from historic premillennialists, the latter of whom would agree with him**

#### **D. EXPRESSED BY AN AMILLENNIALIST...**

1. “There is a basic difference in the method of biblical interpretation employed by premillennialists and amillennialists.” - **Anthony A. Hoekema, The Meaning Of The Millennium: Four Views**
  2. “Premillennialists, particularly those of dispensationalist persuasion, are committed to what is commonly called the ‘literal’ interpretation of Old Testament prophecy.” - **ibid.**
  3. “Amillennialists, on the other hand, believe that though many Old Testament prophecies are indeed to be interpreted literally, many others are to be interpreted in a nonliteral way.” - **ibid.**
- **Note: Hoekema distinguishes between dispensational and historic premillennialists**

[Thus everyone admits that how one interprets prophecy greatly determines the end time scenario to which they hold. How then should we interpret prophecy? Literally, figuratively, or some of both...?]

## **II. THE CHALLENGE IN INTERPRETING PROPHECY**

### **A. ILLUSTRATED WITH OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY...**

1. The prophets themselves did not always understand - **1 Pe 1:10-12; Dan 12:8-9**
  2. Many in Jesus’ day did not understand
    - a. The people who wanted to make Him a physical king - **Jn 6:14-15; cf. 18:36**
    - b. Jewish leaders who killed Jesus in their ignorance - **Ac 3:13-15,17-18; 13:27**
    - c. Disciples of Jesus, unsettled by His death - **Lk 24:13-24,25-27**
  3. Even the apostles needed Jesus’ help in understanding - cf. **Lk 24:44-47**
  4. Some of the OT prophecies were clearly figurative
    - a. Amos foretold of the restoration of David’s tabernacle - **Amo 9:11-12**
    - b. James by inspiration interpreted it to refer to the church - cf. **Ac 15:13-18**
- **Interpreting all OT prophecies literally did not prepare people to receive Christ**

### **B. SEEN IN ATTEMPTS TO INTERPRET PROPHECY...**

1. The many different views held: premillennial, postmillennial, amillennial
  2. Even among those hold similar views
    - a. Premillennialists differ as to pretrib, midtrib, posttrib events
    - b. Amillennialists differ as to the dating and meaning of Revelation
  3. Premillennialists who profess to interpret prophecy literally are not consistent
    - a. Walvoord admits that “the rod of His mouth” is figurative - cf. **Isa 11:4**
    - b. Some interpret the locusts in Revelation as “armor-plated, missile-firing, flying war-machines”
    - c. Few interpret the 144,000 to be literal male virgins - cf. **Re 14:1-4**
  4. Notice the many cults that have arisen based on their “interpretation” of prophecy
    - a. E.g., Mormons, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses
    - b. E.g., David Koresh and the Branch Davidians, Charles Manson
- **Such diversity of views and evident failures by many should encourage caution**

[This is not to say that we cannot understand prophecy, but that we should be careful in how we handle

God's word. With that in mind, may I offer...]

### **III. SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERPRETING PROPHECY**

#### **A. OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY...**

1. Look to Jesus and His apostles for the proper interpretation
    - a. Remember, Jesus had to explain to His apostles - **Lk 24:45**
    - b. If it were not for Spirit-led apostles, we probably would not have made the connection between many OT prophecies and their fulfillment
      - 1) Cf. **Mt 2:15** with **Hos 11:1**
      - 2) Cf. **Mt 4:13** with **Isa 9:1-2**
  2. Do not base end time scenarios solely on OT prophecies
    - a. Without NT interpretation, interpretation of OT prophecies is conjecture at best
    - b. Yet many cults based their peculiar teachings on such prophecies
- **Give heed to the words of Jesus and His apostles in the New Testament to avoid being misled by self-proclaimed interpreters of prophecy in the OT**

#### **B. NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY...**

1. Carefully note the context in which prophecies are found
    - a. Are there indicators which place the time of their fulfillment?
    - b. E.g., the Olivet Discourse - cf. **Mt 24:34**
    - c. E.g., the book of Revelation
      - 1) "things which must shortly take place" - **Re 1:1; 22:6**
      - 2) "the time is near" - **Re 1:3**
      - 3) "the time is at hand" - **Re 22:10**
  2. Let the explicit take precedent over symbolic
    - a. A book like Revelation is clearly figurative ("signified") - cf. **Re 1:1**
    - b. Whereas Jesus and His disciples often explained things clearly
      - 1) Such as the events of the last day - cf. **Jn 5:28-29; 12:48**
      - 2) Such as the events of coming of the Lord - cf. **1Th 4:15-5:2; 2 Pe 3:10-12**
    - c. If interpretation of symbols in prophecies lead to doctrines that contradict clear teaching elsewhere, something's amiss!
- **Inspired explicit teaching is a better guide than uninspired interpretations of figurative and otherwise challenging passages!**

### **CONCLUSION**

1. The interpretation of prophecy has often been a stumbling block...
  - a. Many rejected Jesus in His day because they misinterpreted prophecy
  - b. Many are led astray today by cults who misuse figurative prophecies in the Bible
2. The study of prophecy can be very beneficial...
  - a. If we give careful heed to the clear teachings of Jesus and His apostles
  - b. If we do not base our conclusions on prophetic interpretations by uninspired men that clearly contradict what is taught in the New Testament

With the New Testament as our guide we can "rightly divide the word of truth", especially as it pertains to the proper interpretation of prophecy...

# The Time Of The End

## The Kingdom And The Church

### INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study, we considered the significance of how one interprets prophecy...
  - a. Whether to always force a literal interpretation, or be open to figurative interpretation
  - b. To give precedence to uninspired interpretation of OT prophecy, or to apostolic application as found in the NT
2. Another issue of distinction regarding the end times is one's view of the kingdom and the church...
  - a. Are **the kingdom of God** and **the church of Christ** the same, or are they different?
  - b. Was the church part of God's original plan, or was it an afterthought or a contingency?

[Some believe that the kingdom Christ came to establish was rejected, and therefore will be established when He comes again. Is that so? Let's first consider...]

### I. TWO VIEWS OF THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH

#### **A. THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH ARE DIFFERENT...**

1. The kingdom is to be a earthly, theocratic kingdom of Israel
    - a. Prophesied in the Old Testament
    - b. Initially presented by Jesus to Israel at His first coming
    - c. Withdrawn by Jesus when Israel rejected Him
    - d. "...the pivotal point in the Lord's ministry to Israel was reached in the twelfth chapter, where the rejection of Israel by Christ, because of their announced rejection of Him, and the withdrawal of the offer of the kingdom is recorded." - **Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come, p. 463**
  2. The church is a temporary substitute for the kingdom
    - a. Unheralded in the Old Testament
    - b. Not revealed until after the rejection of Christ by Israel
    - c. An entirely new and unexpected program
    - d. "In the parables the Lord outlines the program in the development of the theocratic kingdom during the period of the King's absence, and announces the inception of an entirely new, unheralded, and unexpected program - the church." - **ibid., p. 463**
- **This view is held by most dispensational premillennialists today (Herman Hoyt views the church as a contingency plan foreseen by Christ)**

#### **B. THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH ARE RELATED...**

1. The kingdom is to involve all nations
  - a. Prophesied in the Old Testament
  - b. Presented by Jesus to Israel, and then to all nations by His apostles
  - c. To be manifested in varying degrees with the passing of time
2. The church is an important aspect of the kingdom
  - a. Part of God's eternal purpose
  - b. Alluded to in the Old Testament
  - c. Those in the church constitute citizens of the kingdom

- **This view is held with variations by historic premillennialists, postmillennialists and amillennialists today**

[The danger of some views (e.g., dispensational premillennialism) is the disparaging treatment of the church as simply an afterthought, or at best a contingency plan. Here is what I believe to be...]

## **II. A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH**

### **A. THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM...**

1. The kingdom that Jesus came to establish was intended to be spiritual
    - a. Entered into by a spiritual birth - **Jn 3:3-5**
    - b. Manifested through the reign of Christ in the hearts of men - **Lk 17:20-21**
    - c. A kingdom not of this world - **Jn 18:36**
    - d. A kingdom of righteousness, joy, and peace - **Ro 14:17**
  2. The Jews did not reject the kingdom, Jesus rejected them!
    - a. They wanted to make Jesus a physical king, but He refused - **Jn 6:14-15**
    - b. He explained that the kingdom would be given to others - **Mt 21:43**
- **Throughout His ministry Jesus taught that the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, not an earthly one**

### **B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM...**

1. The kingdom is spoken of as being present
    - a. Paul and other Christians were in it - **Co 1:13**
    - b. John and other Christians were in it - **Re 1:9**
  2. Jesus certainly has all the authority due a king
    - a. All authority in heaven and on earth - **Mt 28:18**
    - b. Authority over all principality and power - **Ep 1:20-22; Co 2:10; 1 Pe 3:22**
    - c. He is reigning, just as His Father did - **1 Ti 6:14-15; Re 1:5; cf. Dan 2:21; 4:17**
    - d. As foretold, He is reigning in the midst of His enemies - **Psa 110:1-3; 1 Co 15:24-27**
- **Since His exaltation to the right hand of God, the kingdom of God has been manifested in the reign of Jesus Christ**

### **C. THE FUTURE OF THE KINGDOM...**

1. To be purified when the Son comes again - **Mt 13:40-42**
  2. To be delivered to the Father when He comes again - **Mt 13:43; cf. 1 Co 15:22-26**
  3. To become the heavenly, everlasting kingdom - cf. **2 Ti 4:18; 2 Pe 1:10-11**
- **The kingdom of God, inaugurated when Jesus ascended to heaven, will be culminated when He returns to deliver the kingdom to His Father**

### **D. THE CHURCH IS NOT AN AFTERTHOUGHT...**

1. It was part of God's eternal plan to be carried out in Christ - **Ep 3:10-11**
  2. The growth of the church was foretold in the OT - **Amos 9:11-12; cf. Ac 15:14-18**
  3. Though it was a 'mystery' until revealed by the apostles - **Ep 3:3-9**
- **The church was foreknown, just as the suffering and death of Christ**

### **E. THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH...**

1. The church is the assembly or congregation of God's people
  - a. Both Jews and Gentiles, where there is now no difference - **Ga 3:28**

- b. Gentiles are now part of the commonwealth of Israel - **Ep 2:11-13**
- c. Together they make one body, one new man - **Ep 2:14-16**
- 2. The church is thus the new spiritual Israel
  - a. The true descendants of Abraham - **Ga 3:7,29**; cf. **Ro 9:7-8**
  - b. A new creation, and the Israel of God - **Ga 6:15-16**
  - c. A holy nation, the people of God - **1 Pe 2:9-10**
- **The church are those citizens of the kingdom who freely submit to the Son in the day of His power - cf. Psa 110:3**

## CONCLUSION

1. **The kingdom of God today** is everything God intended when He sent His Son to die for our sins...
  - a. The rule of God in the person of Jesus Christ
  - b. Manifested most visibly in the church, that community of souls who freely submit to His rule
  - c. Experienced also by His ruling in the affairs of men today, just as His Father did in OT times
  - d. Inaugurated by the ascension of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit, to be culminated when the kingdom is delivered by Christ to the Father at His second coming
2. **The church of Christ today** is everything God intended when He sent His Son to die for our sins...
  - a. Not an afterthought, nor a contingency plan for the kingdom
  - b. But the body of Christ, the kingdom of Christ, foreseen in God's eternal purpose
  - c. Purchased by His blood, enlarged by the obedience to the gospel
  - d. Experiencing the blessings of the Son's rule now, looking forward to the heavenly and eternal aspects of the kingdom when delivered to the Father upon Jesus' return

Just as the death of Christ was foreordained by God (**Ac 2:23**), so the kingdom of God was presented and established by Jesus at His first coming just as God planned...

***"Known to God from eternity are all His works." - Ac 15:18***

# The Time Of The End

## Israel And The Land Promise

### INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we examined the relationship between **the kingdom** and **the church**...
  - a. Noting that dispensational premillennialists view the kingdom of God to be the earthly, theocratic kingdom of Israel yet to be established
  - b. While others (including historic premillennialists) view the kingdom of God to be spiritual, with the church as a visible manifestation of God's rule through Jesus Christ
2. One's view of the kingdom is directly related to one's understanding of **the role of Israel**...
  - a. Those who look to an earthly, theocratic kingdom of Israel do so because they believe there are promises to that nation which have not been fulfilled
  - b. Thus they believe the end times will involve the fulfillment of such prophecies

[One such promise is that made to Abraham concerning **the land of Canaan**. In this study, we will the examine that promise. First, let's do so in the context of...]

### I. GOD'S THREE-FOLD PROMISE

#### **A. THE LAND PROMISE...**

1. Made to Abraham while still in Ur of Chaldees - **Ac 7:2-3; Gen 12:1**
  2. Repeated several times to Abraham - **Gen 12:7; 13:12-14; 17:8**
  3. Confirmed to Isaac, and later to Jacob - **Gen 26:3; 28:13**
  4. Its borders were to extend from:
    - a. From the river of Egypt (the Brook of Egypt, or Wadi el Arish) - **Num 34:5; Jos 15:4**
    - b. To the Euphrates River - **Gen 15:18**
- **This promise refers to the land of Canaan, later known as Palestine**

#### **B. THE NATION PROMISE...**

1. Made to Abraham - **Gen 12:2**
  2. Repeated to Abraham several times - **Gen 13:16; 17:6**
  3. Confirmed also to Isaac and Jacob - **Gen 26:4; 35:11**
- **This promise refers to the nation of Israel, the descendants of Jacob**

#### **C. THE SEED PROMISE...**

1. Made to Abraham - **Gen 12:3**
  2. Repeated to Abraham - **Gen 22:18**
  3. Confirmed also to Isaac - **Gen 26:4**
- **This promise refers to Jesus Christ - cf. Ac 3:25-26; Ga 3:8,16**

[All professing Christians agree that the **nation** promise and the **seed** promise have been fulfilled. But what about the **land** promise...?]

### II. THE LAND PROMISE EXAMINED

**A. WAS THE LAND PROMISE FULFILLED...?**

1. Most dispensational premillennialists believe the promise is yet to be fulfilled
  2. Some say that it was never fulfilled
  3. Others say it was fulfilled, but that the land was to be Israel's:
    - a. "forever" - **Gen 13:15**
    - b. "as an everlasting possession" - **Gen 17:8**
- **Thus their belief that Israel needs to be restored to the land today**

**B. THE LAND PROMISE WAS FULFILLED...!**

1. As stated by Joshua
    - a. God gave the land - **Josh 21:43**
    - b. Israel possessed the land - **Josh 21:43**
    - c. Israel lived in the land - **Josh 21:43-44**
    - d. "not a word failed...all came to pass" - **Josh 21:45**; cf. **23:14**
  2. As implied by the cities of refuge
    - a. Six cities were promised, 3 on each side of the Jordan - **Num 35:9-15**
    - b. Three were given in the trans-Jordan, three more promised if God kept His promise to give Israel all the land promised to their fathers - **Deu 19:7-9**
    - c. Six cities were given; so God must have kept His promise! - **Josh 20:7-9**
  3. As experienced during the reign of Solomon
    - a. The extent of the land promised described to Abram - **Gen 15:8**
    - b. The extent of the land ruled over by Solomon - **1 Kin 4:21**
    - c. God's promise regarding the land had been fulfilled!
  4. As praised by the Levites upon their return from Babylonian captivity
    - a. God made a covenant with Abraham concerning the land - **Neh 9:7**
    - b. God performed His words - **Neh 9:8,23-25**
  5. As praised by the Psalmist
    - a. God remembered His promise to Abraham - **Psa 105:42**
    - b. He gave His descendants the land - **Psa 105:43-45**
- **Without question God fulfilled the promise to give Israel the land!**

**D. WAS THE LAND PROMISE UNCONDITIONAL...?**

1. The promise to **receive** the land was unconditional - cf. **Deu 9:5**
  2. But the promise to **retain** the land was conditional - cf. **Josh 23:15-16**
  3. Captivity and return to the land was foretold - **Deu 4:25-27; 28:15-68; 30:1-10**
- **The OT thus describes the history of Israel's captivity and restoration**

**F. WAS THE LAND PROMISE TO BE FOREVER AND EVERLASTING...?**

1. It was indeed promised "forever", "as an everlasting possession" - **Gen 13:15; 17:8**
2. However, the Hebrew word translated 'forever' and 'everlasting' is **olam**
  - a. "meaning a very long time" - **TCWD**
  - b. "may cover a person's lifetime (**Exo 21:6; 1 Sa 1:22**) - **ibid.**
  - c. "a period of many generations (**Josh 24:2**) - **ibid.**
  - d. "the time of the present created order" (**Psa 73:12**) - **ibid.**
  - e. "The term 'forever,' for a perpetual possession, means as long as the order of things to which it belongs lasts." - **Barnes**
  - f. "...to the end of the present dispensation" - **Clarke**
3. If 'everlasting' always meant lasting forever, then we should still be observing:
  - a. Circumcision - **Gen 17:10-13**

- b. The Passover - **Exo 12:14**
  - c. The Feast of Unleavened Bread - **Exo 12:17**
  - d. The priesthood of Aaron - **Exo 29:9**
  - e. The Sabbath - **Exo 31:16-17**
  - f. The sacrifices, with their portions for the priests - **Lev 6:18; 7:34-36; 10:15**
  - g. Fasting and animal sacrifices on the Day of Atonement - **Lev 16:29-34**
  - h. The Feast of Tabernacles - **Lev 23:39-42**
  - i. ...and many other elements of the Law described as 'everlasting ordinances'
4. Yet the New Testament teaches such ordinances were not permanent
- a. They were fleshly ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation - **He 9:6-10**
  - b. Circumcision is clearly no longer binding - **Ga 5:1-6**
  - c. Even Sabbath days are no longer bound - **Co 2:14-17**
- **Thus the promise of the land was to last only as long as it fulfilled God's purpose**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. God fulfilled His promise for Israel to **receive** the land...
  - a. So say Joshua, the Psalmist, and the Levites
  - b. At the very least Solomon ruled over the entire land described to Abraham
2. Israel's **retention** of the land was always conditional...
  - a. Moses and Joshua warned Israel that it was conditional
  - b. The Assyrian and Babylonian captivity illustrates how Israel lost the land
  - c. The Restoration described in Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah illustrates how Israel regained the land

Dispensational premillennialists, however, contend there are still OT promises regarding Israel's restoration that have yet come to pass. We shall consider those promises in our next study.

Meanwhile, have you received the blessings of **the Seed promise** made to Abraham...? - **Ac 3:25-26**

# The Time Of The End

## The Restoration Of Israel

### INTRODUCTION

1. Our previous study established that God's promise concerning the land of Canaan was fulfilled...
  - a. So say Joshua, the Psalmist, and the Levites
  - b. Solomon himself ruled over the entire land described to Abraham
2. Yet many believe there were prophecies of a **latter day restoration** of Israel...
  - a. To be fulfilled in modern times, just before the Lord returns
  - b. That the return of Jews to Palestine and the establishment of Israel as an independent state in May, 1948, was a fulfillment of such prophecies
3. Intertwined with such a restoration are beliefs concerning...
  - a. The rebuilding of the temple, where the Dome of the Rock now stands
  - b. The reinstatement of animal sacrifices, as was done in the Old Testament

[The idea of a "latter day" restoration of Israel is integral to the **dispensational premillennial** view of the Lord's second coming. To better understand the issues involved, let's first take a look at several...]

### I. ARGUMENTS FOR A LATTER DAY RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

#### **A. FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT...**

1. God has promised to restore His people to Israel - **Jer 29:14**
    - a. From all nations and all places
    - b. Not just Assyria and Babylon
  2. There will be a second restoration - **Isa 11:11**
    - a. The first was restoration after the Babylonian captivity
    - b. The second is supposedly happening today
  3. Return prophecies made to those who had been restored - **Zec 8:1-8**
    - a. People who had come back from Babylonian captivity
    - b. Thus it must referred to later events, i.e., events happening today
  4. The expression "in the latter days" confirm this - **Jer 30:24**
    - a. I.e., just before the second coming
    - b. Assuming that's the time to which "latter days" refers
  5. The promise of physical and economic restoration - **Isa 35:1; 61:4**
    - a. Not just political and religious restoration
    - b. But also the land itself along with ancient ruins
  6. Along with promise of victories over their enemies - **Amo 9:14-15**
    - a. No longer shall they be pulled up from the land
    - b. Suggesting victory over any who would try
- **Such are the arguments from the OT for a latter day restoration**

#### **B. FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT...**

1. The return of Jerusalem to the custody of the Jews - **Lk 21:24**
  - a. The city to be trodden down by the Gentiles

- b. Until the time fulfilled, believed to have occurred
  - 2. The rebuilding of the temple - **2 Th 2:4**
    - a. Inferred by some from Paul's teaching about the destruction of the man of sin
    - b. Who is to be destroyed at Christ's coming
  - 3. The regathering of the twelve tribes - **Mt 19:28**; cf. **Ro 11:25-27**
    - a. Inferred by those who believe in an end-of-the-age restoration
    - b. That a national return in unbelief would be followed by national conversion
- **Such are the arguments from the NT for a latter day restoration**

### C. FROM CURRENT EVENTS...

- 1. The establishment of the state of Israel on May 14, 1948
    - a. Offered as proof that the prophecies are being fulfilled
    - b. As Jews from around the world migrate to Israel
  - 2. The present day reclamation of the land
    - a. After centuries of neglect
    - b. Through irrigation and re-utilization of physical resources
  - 3. The swift victories of the Jews over their enemies
    - a. The War of Independence, 1948
    - b. The Sinai Campaign, 1956
    - c. The Six-Day War, 1967
    - d. The Yom Kipper War, 1973
  - 4. Other points often made:
    - a. Control of Jerusalem now in the hands of Israel
    - b. Plans are being made by some to rebuild the temple
- **Such are the arguments from current events for a latter day restoration**

[The arguments for a latter day restoration may seem plausible, but do they really stand up against a close examination? Let's now consider...]

## II. THE ARGUMENTS EXAMINED MORE CLOSELY

### A. FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT...

- 1. The promise of restoration - **Jer 29:14**
  - a. This restoration is the one after 70 years of Babylonian captivity - **Jer 29:10**
  - b. Applied by Daniel to the time in which he was living - **Dan 9:2**
  - c. In which Jews throughout the Persian empire (not just Assyria and Babylon) were encouraged to return to Jerusalem - **Ezr 1:1-4**
- 2. The "second" restoration - **Isa 11:11**
  - a. This could apply to the Babylonian restoration, if the "first" refers to the deliverance from Egyptian bondage in the days of Moses - cf. **Isa 11:16**
  - b. However, the context suggests a figurative restoration made possible in the days of the Messiah - **Isa 11:1,10**; cf. **Ro 15:12; 11:5**
- 3. The return prophecies in Zechariah - **Zech 8:1-8**
  - a. Zechariah prophesied about the year 520 B.C.
  - b. His prophecies were fulfilled in the days of Ezra (458 B.C.), Nehemiah (446 B.C.), and afterward - **Ezr 7:1-10; Neh 11:1,2**; cf. also **1 Macc 14:8-12**
- 4. The "latter days" in **Jer 30:24**
  - a. As seen in a previous study, in the OT it can mean simply "in the future"
  - b. The context of Jeremiah makes it clear that it refers to after the 70 years of Babylonian

captivity - **Jer 29:1,10,14; 30:3,22,24**

5. The promise of physical and economic restoration - **Isa 35:1; 61:4**
    - a. These passages also have reference to recovery after the Babylonian captivity
    - b. They can also have figurative reference to the coming of the Messiah - cf. **Isa 61:1-3; Lk 4:18-21**
  6. The promise of victories over their enemies - **Amo 9:14-15**
    - a. Again, these promises likely refer to the restoration following Babylonian captivity
    - b. In any case, such promises were conditional - cf. **Jer 18:7-10**
- **Such are the responses to those espousing a latter day restoration of Israel**

## B. FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. The return of Jerusalem to the custody of the Jews - **Lk 21:24**
    - a. The passage speaks not of Jews retaking custody, but of the trampling down of the city
    - b. “until the times of the Gentiles has been fulfilled” is interpreted by some to simply refer to the Parousia (second coming of Christ) - **Lenski, Hendriksen**
  2. The rebuilding of the temple - **2 Th 2:4**
    - a. “the temple of God” is understood by many to refer to the church - **Augustine, Jerome, Chrysostom, Barnes, Gill, Clarke**
    - b. It is so used by Paul and Peter - **1 Co 3:16-17; 1 Pe 2:5**
    - c. Thus it may have no reference to the literal temple in Jerusalem
  3. The regathering of the twelve tribes - **Mt 19:28**
    - a. A literal regathering may be inferred, but it is not necessarily implied
    - b. The “twelve tribes” has been figuratively applied to Christians - **Ja 1:1; cf. 2:1**
    - c. Many understand **Mt 19:28** to refer the blessed state of the apostles in the eternal state, as their reward in eternal life after suffering so much for Christ - **Mt 19:29; cf. Mk 10:30**
  4. Regarding the passage in **Ro 11:25-27**, some thoughts from various scholars:
    - a. “The term “All Israel” means the total number of elect Jews, the sum of all Israel’s remnants.” - **Hendriksen**
    - b. “The term ‘all Israel’ in Rom. 11:26a must be understood as indicating the collective elect out of Israel.” - **Volbeda**
    - c. “ ‘All Israel’ in 11:26, is not the people of Israel, destined to be converted collectively, neither is it the church consisting of united Jews and Gentiles; but it is the full number which during the course of the centuries is gathered out of Israel.” - **Bavinck**
    - d. “ ‘All Israel’ is to be understood as a designation not of the whole nation but of the whole number of the elect out of the ancient covenant people ... and the adverb ?? t?? (so) cannot mean ‘after that,’ but only ‘in this manner.’ ” - **Berkhof**
- **Such are the responses to those espousing a latter day restoration of Israel**

## C. FROM CURRENT EVENTS...

1. The claim that “the time of the Gentiles ended May 14, 1948, when Israel became an independent state,” and that “the Jews have returned to their country in fulfillment of prophecy” is contradicted by the following facts (as per **Hendriksen**):
  - a. Today only about one out of every five Jews is living in Israel
  - b. Today the very existence of Israel—and of Jerusalem as an independent Jewish city—is still being threatened
  - c. The great majority of Jews do not regard Jesus as their Lord and Savior
2. The second Hezbollah-Israeli War (2006) ended in defeat for Israel
3. The current land making up the country of Israel is but a small portion of that promised and fulfilled by God in days of Joshua and Solomon

4. It is unlikely the Muslims will let Zionists destroy the Dome of the Rock to rebuild the temple
- **Such are the responses to those espousing a latter day restoration of Israel**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. The arguments for a latter day restoration of Israel...
  - a. Are based on a literal rendering of prophecy (cf. **“The Interpretation Of Prophecy”**)
  - b. Depend on eisegesis that often fails to consider the context of Biblical history
2. They also overlook much of the teaching in the New Testament...
  - a. Regarding the removal of that which divides Jew and Gentile - **Ep 2:11-22**
  - b. The passing away of the Law (with its sacrifices) - cf. **Heb 8-10**
  - c. The fact that in Christ Jews have died to the Law - **Ro 7:1-6**
  - d. There is no longer any distinction between Jew and Gentile - **Ga 3:28-29**
3. The passing of time has also disproved a “latter day” restoration...
  - a. It has been almost sixty years since modern Israel became a state
  - b. Many events presumed to take place within a generation of that event did not occur

It is not that God’s Word has failed; rather, God’s Word has been mishandled. **Dispensational premillennialism**, though it is the most popular view espoused today, more than any other has proven to be the most unreliable view concerning the Second Coming of the Lord...

**Note:** Much of the material in this outline is based on an article by William Hendriksen entitled **“Are Restoration Prophecies Being Fulfilled Today?”** from his book, **Israel In Prophecy**, (Baker: Grand Rapids, chapter II, pp. 16-31). You can read it online [here](#).

# The Time Of The End

## The 1000 Year Reign (Millennium)

### INTRODUCTION

1. Ideas regarding Christ's second coming are closely related to one's view of **the millennium**...
  - a. A 1000 year reign
  - b. Mentioned in just one passage of Scripture - **Re 20:4**
2. Briefly described, these views are...
  - a. **Pre-millennial** - Jesus to return **before** He reigns a literal 1000 years on the earth
  - b. **Post-millennial** - Jesus to return **after** He reigns a literal or figurative 1000 years from heaven
  - c. **A-millennial** - There is **no** literal 1000 reign; Jesus reigns now and can return at any time
3. The premillennial view is very popular today...
  - a. Especially the dispensational version of premillennialism
  - b. Expressed often in books, movies, television, etc.

[But does **Rev 20:4** teach a literal 1000 reign of Christ on the earth? Is the premillennial interpretation of that passage consistent with that taught elsewhere in the Scriptures? Let's first examine...]

### I. THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

#### **A. THE BINDING OF DECEPTIVE SATAN...**

1. Just prior, the victory over the beast and false prophet are described - **Re 19:19-20**
  2. Then Satan is bound with a chain and cast into a bottomless pit for 1000 years - **Re 20:1-3**
  3. He is unable to deceive the nations like he did previously - cf. **Re 12:9; 13:14**
  4. Afterward he is released to once more deceive the nations for a short time - **Re 20:7-9a**
  5. But then Satan also is defeated once and for all - **Re 20:9b-10**
- **The 1000 year binding of Satan relates to his ability to deceive the nations**

#### **B. THE REIGN OF RESURRECTED SOULS...**

1. John sees thrones and resurrected souls reigning with Christ - **Re 20:4-6**
  2. The souls are those beheaded for their witness, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, nor received the mark on their foreheads - cf. **Re 12:11; 13:12-17; 14:9-11**
  3. They are blessed to experience a "first resurrection", serving as priests and reigning with Christ for "a thousand years"
  4. A scene similar to one described earlier - cf. **Re 15:2-4**
- **Twice it is mentioned that such souls reign with Christ a 1000 years**

#### **C. OBSERVATIONS...**

1. The focus of this passage is not on the reign of Christ per se, but rather:
  - a. The binding of deceptive Satan
  - b. The reign of resurrected souls
2. Note carefully what is **not** said about the reign of resurrected souls
  - a. Nothing is said about them reigning on earth
  - b. They could just as easily be reigning with Christ in heaven!

3. The number 1000 is often used figuratively in Scripture
    - a. Israelites were to keep the covenant for 1000 generations - **Deu 7:9**
    - b. Is it literal when God says that the cattle on 1000 hills are His? - **Psa 50:10**
    - c. God will remember His word for 1000 generations (but no more?) - **Psa 105:8**
  4. If the 1000 year reign is to be taken literally, then why not also:
    - a. The great chain - can a spiritual being like Satan be bound by a literal chain?
    - b. The dragon and serpent - are we to understand Satan to be a literal dragon?
    - c. The beheaded souls - are only those beheaded worthy to be with Christ during a literal reign on the earth?
- **No one consistently interprets this passage literally; everyone interpret some element figuratively**

[Before we offer an explanation of the passage, let's take into consideration...]

## **II. THE REMOTE CONTEXT**

### **A. THE BOOK OF REVELATION...**

1. As a whole, it is a revelation by means of signs or visions - **Re 1:1** (cf. "signified")
  2. Consider the visions of Christ:
    - a. Does He literally have a two-edged sword out of His mouth? - **Re 1:16; 19:15**
    - b. Is He literally a slain lamb, having seven horns and seven eyes? - **Re 5:6**
  3. Consider other elements in visions throughout the book:
    - a. Will a great star literally fall from heaven to the earth, without destroying it? - **Re 8:10**
    - b. Will the terrible locusts be literal (Hal Lindsey said they represent helicopters)? - **Re 9:3**
    - c. Will the beast of the sea be literal (most say he will be a world ruler)? - **Re 13:1-2**
    - d. Will the 144,000 be literal men who are virgins (JWs say the number is literal, but the description of only virgin men is not)? - **Re 14:1-5**
  4. Note also to whom the book is written, and what is said about the timing of its events
    - a. Written to seven churches in Asia - **Re 1:4**
    - b. About "things which must shortly take place" - **Re 1:1**
    - c. About things for which "the time is near" - **Re 1:3**
    - d. About "things which must shortly take place" - **Re 22:6**
    - e. About things not to be sealed, "for the time is at hand" - **Re 22:10**
- **The book of Revelation is filled with symbols and figurative language, written mostly to encourage the early Christians about things they were to soon face - cf. Re 2:10**

### **B. THE REST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT...**

1. There is no mention of a 1000 year reign of Christ on the earth!
2. Christ is reigning **now** from heaven
  - a. He has all authority in heaven and on earth - **Mt 28:18**
  - b. He is Lord of all - **Ac 2:36; 10:36**
  - c. He is Lord of the living and the dead - **Ro 14:9**
  - d. He is head over all things - **Ep 1:20-22**
  - e. Angels, authorities, and powers have been made subject to Him - **1 Pe 3:22**
  - f. He is truly the ruler over the kings of the earth - **Re 1:5**
3. His kingdom (reign) was always intended to be **spiritual**, not physical
  - a. He resisted when people tried to make Him an earthly king - **Jn 6:15**
  - b. He said that His kingdom was not of this world - **Jn 18:36**
  - c. His kingdom was not to come with observation, but to be within you - **Lk 17:20-21**

- d. His apostles taught that kingdom was spiritual in nature - **Ro 14:17**
- 4. His coming again is not to establish His kingdom, but to deliver it to God
  - a. When Christ comes and the dead are raised, that is the end - **1 Co 15:22-24**
  - b. He will deliver the kingdom to God, when He has put to an end all rule, authority and power - **1 Co 15:24**
  - c. He reigns now, and must do so until all enemies are put under His feet - **1 Co 15:25**
  - d. The last enemy to be destroyed will be death, which will occur when the body is raised from the dead - **1 Co 15:26,51-54**
- **The NT (including Revelation) teaches that Christ is reigning now from heaven!**

### C. OBSERVATIONS...

1. The idea that the 1000 year reign of Rev 20 is something that begins at least 2000 years after the book is written is contrary to the very words of the book itself - cf. **Re 1:1,3; 22:6,10**
2. The idea that Christ's kingdom has not yet been established, that it is to be a physical kingdom where Christ reigns from Jerusalem, is not taught in Rev 20, and is contrary to the clear teaching elsewhere in the NT concerning His kingdom and the events of His second coming - cf. **1 Co 15:20-28**
3. Like most of Revelation, chapter 20 is figurative, and must be handled carefully
  - a. It was written to comfort Christians of the first century A.D.
  - b. It provided hope to those who faced great tribulation when Satan deceived nations (like the Roman empire) to persecute Christians - cf. **Re 2:10**
  - c. Despite such efforts, Satan's power was limited, and He himself would be restrained for a long period of time (1000 years, figuratively speaking) - cf. **Re 20:3**
    - 1) Notice, it is only his ability to deceive whole **nations** that is limited
    - 2) His ability to deceive individual **people** remains unabated
  - d. During that time when Satan's influence was weakened, those who suffered dearly would be privileged to join Christ in His kingly reign - cf. **Re 20:4-6**; note also **Re 2:26-27**
  - e. It is reasonable to assume that this reign is in heaven - cf. **Re 3:21; 7:9-17; 15:2-4**
  - f. Of course, the passage does suggest a short period of tribulation when Satan is released where he can deceive the nations again, but which will be terminated by the power of Christ's coming and the final judgment - cf. **Re 20:7-15**
- **Thus a literal 1000 year reign of Christ on earth is simply not taught in the NT**

### CONCLUSION

1. The same can be said about other elements of dispensational premillennialism...
  - a. The idea of special and secret **rapture** of just Christians
  - b. The concept of several **resurrections** rather than just one
 -- **Which we shall examine in later lessons**
2. What can be said about **Revelation 20**...?
  - a. It is a figurative passage in a book that is highly symbolic
  - b. No one interprets the passage entirely literally; everyone spiritualizes some portion of the book
  - c. The passage should be interpreted in the context of the book overall and the rest of the NT
  - d. It provided hope to those who experienced the terrible tribulation of the first three centuries
  - e. It should encourage us never to despair when facing tribulation for the cause of Christ today

We can take heart, knowing that even now Jesus is "ruler over the kings of the earth" and we are also reigning with Him...! - cf. **Re 1:5-6; Ep 2:4-7**

# The Time Of The End

## The Rapture And The Resurrection

### INTRODUCTION

1. Unique to premillennialism is the idea of a **secret rapture**, along with **several resurrections**...
  - a. The rapture refers to the “catching up” of believers at Christ’s return
  - b. Which involves the first of several resurrections of the righteous and the wicked
2. It is a doctrine not held by Orthodox, Reformed and Roman Catholic churches...
  - a. But which gained popularity in the 1830s, and especially in the 1970s
  - b. Mainly through proponents of dispensational premillennialism

[Does the Bible teach that there will be a secret rapture, along with several different resurrections? Or does it reveal that there will be just one resurrection of all mankind? Let’s first take a closer look at...]

### I. THE DOCTRINE OF THE RAPTURE

#### **A. THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD...**

1. The actual word **rapture** is not found in the English Bible
  2. It comes from the Latin word **raeptius**, used in the Vulgate translation
  3. Which is a translation of the Greek word **harpazo** found in **1 Th 4:17**
  4. Which in most English translations is rendered as “**caught up**”
- **Its common use today generally implies a belief in a secret rapture**

#### **B. THE ELEMENTS OF THE DOCTRINE...**

1. Jesus will first come to raise the righteous dead and rapture the righteous living
2. It is generally described as a secret event (millions suddenly disappear!)
3. This will occur either before, during, or at the end of a 7 year period of tribulation
  - a. There is much disagreement among proponents of the time of the rapture
  - b. Which suggests the Scriptures do not clearly teach this doctrine as some imply
4. Following the 7 year tribulation, Jesus will return with His saints to reign on earth for a literal 1000 years
5. Many have tried to set dates for this rapture - **Wikipedia**
  - a. **1792** - Shakers calculated this date
  - b. **1843** - March 21 1843 predicted by William Miller founder of the Millerites, the failure of Jesus to appear on this date after his followers had sold all their possessions was referred to as The Great Disappointment
  - c. **1981** - Chuck Smith undogmatically predicted that Jesus would likely return by 1981
  - d. **1988** - Publication of 88 Reasons why the Rapture is in 1988, by Edgar C. Whisenant
  - e. **1989** - Publication of The final shout: Rapture report 1989, by Edgar Whisenant - More predictions by this author appeared for 1992, 1995, and other years.
  - f. **1992** - Korean group “Mission for the Coming Days” predicted October 28, 1992.
  - g. **1993** - Seven years before the year 2000. The rapture would have to start to allow for seven years of the Tribulation before the Return in 2000. Multiple predictions.
  - h. **1994** - Pastor John Hinkle of Christ Church in Los Angeles predicted June 9, 1994. Radio evangelist Harold Camping predicted September 27, 1994.

- i. **1997** - Stan Johnson of the Prophecy Club predicted September 12, 1997.
  - j. **1998** - Marilyn Agee, in *The End of the Age*, predicted May 31, 1998.
  - k. **2000** - Many "millennial" predictions.
  - l. **2006** - Many predictions for June 06, or 06/06/06
- **The doctrine of a secret rapture has been used to manipulate many people**

### C. THE EXAMINATION OF THE DOCTRINE...

1. Passages offered in support of the doctrine
    - a. Jesus' words to comfort His disciples - **Jn 14:2-3**
    - b. Paul's description of the resurrection - **Ph 3:20-21; 1 Co 15:49-55**
    - c. Paul's writing to comfort and warn the Thessalonians - **1 Th 4:13-18; 2 Th 2:1-7**
  2. None of these verses necessarily exclude a resurrection of the wicked at the same time
    - a. They simply focus on the hope of the righteous
    - b. The Bible teaches one resurrection, not many (see below)
  3. The Bible does not teach a silent rapture - cf. **1 Th 4:16**
    - a. There will be a shout
    - b. There will be the voice of an archangel
    - c. There will be the trumpet of God
- **The concept of a secret rapture, separate and apart from the resurrection of the wicked is simply not taught in the Bible**

[As further confirmation, let's now focus our attention on...]

## II. THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION

### A. AS TAUGHT BY PREMILLENNIALISTS...

1. All premillennialists teach at least two resurrections:
    - a. The resurrection of believers at the **beginning** of the millennium
    - b. The resurrection of unbelievers at the **end** of the millennium
  2. Dispensational premillennialists add even two more:
    - a. The resurrection of tribulation saints at the **end** of the seven-year tribulation
    - b. The resurrection of millennial saints at the **end** of the millennium
- **Premillennial theory requires more than one resurrection**

### B. AS TAUGHT BY THE BIBLE...

1. There will be one resurrection of believers and unbelievers occurring together
    - a. As taught by Jesus - **Jn 5:28-29**
    - b. As believed by Paul - **Ac 24:14-15**
  2. Believers will be raised at "the last day" - **Jn 6:39-40,44,54**
    - a. Not several times (pre-trib, post-trib, post-mil, etc.)
    - b. Not several days, years, or 1000 years before "the last day"!
  3. Passages offered in support of several resurrections do not necessarily teach what the premillennialists say they do
    - a. E.g., **1 Th 4:13-16** concerns itself with the resurrection of the righteous, but that does not demand that the wicked are not being raised at the same time
    - b. E.g., **Re 20:4-6** describes a resurrection of "souls", not bodies, and the reigning with Christ is likely to occur in heaven, not on earth - cf. **Re 2:26-27; 3:21**
- **The clear teaching of Scripture describes just one resurrection**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. The doctrine of the rapture has been **misrepresented** by the premillennialists...
  - a. The righteous will indeed be “caught up” to be with the Lord
  - b. But it will not be a secret or silent event
2. The doctrine of the resurrection has **mangled** by the premillennialists...
  - a. There will be a resurrection of the righteous and the wicked at the last day
  - b. Not several resurrections, separated by years before the last day
3. If we allow **the clear teachings of the Bible** to guide us in our study..
  - a. Not forcing our interpretation of difficult prophetic passages upon them
  - b. We are less likely to get carried away by fanciful theories that have failed time and again

May the words of our Lord motivate us to be ready for His coming...

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

# The Time Of The End

## The Antichrist And The Man Of Sin

### INTRODUCTION

1. A common element of end time speculation is the rise of a world ruler, an individual who...
  - a. First comes on the political scene as a hero, but proves to be a villain
  - b. Is thought to be **the Antichrist** and **the Man of Sin** described in the Bible
2. The anticipation of such a person is not limited to premillennial views...
  - a. Some amillennialists look for a single adversary to arise shortly before Christ returns
  - b. For example: Edward J. Young, Anthony A. Hokema
3. Connections between **the Antichrist** and **the Man of Sin** are often made with...
  - a. The visions of Daniel concerning the “little horn”, and the king of the South - **Dan 7,8; 11:36-45**
  - b. The visions of Revelation concerning the beast of the sea - **Re 13:1-9**

[We shall consider the visions of Daniel and Revelation later, but in this study let's first consider what is actually said about...]

### I. THE ANTICHRIST

#### **A. AS REVEALED IN THE BIBLE...**

1. John is the only one who actually uses the expression “antichrist”
2. He used the phrase just five times
  - a. “you have heard that antichrist is coming” (ESV) - **1 Jn 2:18**
  - b. “so now many antichrists have come” (ESV) - **1 Jn 2:18**
  - c. “This is **the** antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son” (ESV) - **1 Jn 2:22**
  - d. “This is the spirit of **the** antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.” (ESV) - **1 Jn 4:3**
  - e. “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and **the** antichrist.” (ESV) - **2 Jn 1:7**
3. Some observations:
  - a. Note the use of the definite article (“the”) - **1 Jn 2:22; 4:3; 2 Jn 1:7**
  - b. Note the indefinite and plural use of the term “antichrist” - **1 Jn 2:18**
  - c. Note that in at least some sense the antichrist was already present - **1 Jn 4:3; 2 Jn 1:7**
  - d. John was concerned about a spirit of antichrist producing many antichrists in his day
  - e. But his words have been taken to suggest an individual antichrist was yet to appear

– **The challenge is to determine whether John had an individual antichrist in mind**

#### **B. AS ANTICIPATED BY MAN...**

1. The definite article “the” leads many to anticipate an individual antichrist
  - a. John Chrysostom held that it was the resurrected Nero
  - b. Some Catholic sources held that it would be an apostate priest or even pope
  - c. Premillennialists and others look for a singular adversary to arise
2. That there were “many antichrists” and was “now in the world already” lead others to

conclude antichrist is an attitude reflected in both individuals and systems

- a. John certainly applied the term that way to the Gnostics of his day - **2 Jn 1:7**
  - b. Protestant reformers like Luther and Calvin identified the Roman papacy as the antichrist
- **The evidence for a singular adversary is simply not as strong as many suggest**

[But what about the man of sin? Won't he be the Antichrist? Well, let's take a look at what is said about...]

## **II. THE MAN OF SIN**

### **A. AS REVEALED IN THE BIBLE...**

1. **His perverse character - 2 Th 2:3**
    - a. A man of "lawlessness" - having no regard for God's law
    - b. A son of "perdition" - one begotten for destruction
  2. **His God-defying activity - 2 Th 2:4**
    - a. He opposes and exalts himself
      - 1) Above all that is called God
      - 2) Above all that is worshiped (including Jesus)
    - b. He sits as God in the temple (the church?)
    - c. He shows himself that he is God!
  3. **His present restraint and future revealing - 2 Th 2:5-8**
    - a. He was being restrained at the time Paul wrote
      - 1) The Thessalonians knew what was restraining him
      - 2) For Paul had told them when he was with them
    - b. Even so, the "mystery of lawlessness" was already at work
      - 1) His lawless influence was already spreading
      - 2) But it was hidden (still a mystery), to be revealed only when that which restrains was removed
    - c. He would be revealed when the restraining force was removed
  4. **The decisive nature of his defeat - 2 Th 2:8**
    - a. He will be consumed and destroyed by the Lord
    - b. His end will be similar to that of those who know not God and obey not the gospel of Christ - cf. **2 Th 1:7-9**
  5. **The timing of his defeat - 2 Th 2:8**
    - a. This will happen at the coming of the Lord
    - b. The Lord will destroy the man of sin with the brightness of His coming!
    - c. Just as the Lord will destroy Satan at His coming - cf. **Re 20:10**
  6. **His relation to Satan - 2 Th 2:9-10**
    - a. His coming will be according to the working of Satan
    - b. His coming will be with all power, signs, lying wonders
    - c. He will exercise unrighteous deception among those who are perishing
- **Who or what is this "man of sin, the son of perdition"?**

### **B. AS ANTICIPATED BY MAN...**

1. One view is that the man of sin is **one particular individual**
  - a. Who will arise with great power and deceive many just before Christ returns
  - b. Who is the "antichrist" spoken of by John in **1 Jn 2:18**
  - c. This view is held by premillennialists, and some amillennialists (e.g., Edward J. Young, Anthony Hoekema)

2. Another view is that the man of sin is **a series of individuals**
  - a. Perhaps a successive line of men with the same general character
  - b. In this sense many have applied it to the Roman papacy
    - 1) This was first suggested by a pope himself!
      - a) Gregory the Great (550-604 A.D.) said that whoever arrogates to himself the title of “universal priest” is a forerunner of antichrist - cf. Hendriksen
      - b) It was not long before patriarchs of Rome began to claim such distinction
    - 2) Many Protestants view the papacy as the “man of sin” (e.g., Luther, Barnes)
      - a) Noting the similarity between what is said about the man of sin, and what the Roman papacy became
      - b) Suggesting that either the Holy Spirit or the Roman empire was what was “restraining” the lawlessness that was just beginning and would eventually lead to the apostasy and revelation of the man of sin

-- **I am prone to think the latter view may be the correct one**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. What I have suggested in our study is this...
  - a. **Antichrist** is applied by John to those in his day who denied Jesus coming in the flesh
  - b. Whether he also had in mind an individual to appear later is not certain
  - c. **Man of sin** is described by Paul as though it was an individual
  - d. But his present restraint and future revealing suggests the possibility that it refers to a series of individuals
2. As with many prophetic passages, there has been a lot of foolish speculation...
  - a. In every generation, attempts have been made to identify the man of sin, the antichrist
  - b. In the 20th century alone, from Kaiser to Hitler to Hussein, etc.
  - c. Many have spoken, confident in their identification, only in time to be proven wrong
3. What is important, indeed necessary, is that we be ready for whatever comes...
  - a. Whether the man of sin and antichrist proves to be a specific individual
  - b. Or whether the man of sin is indeed a series of individuals, such as the papacy
4. How shall we be ready for whatever comes...?
  - a. Have a strong love for the truth - cf. **2 Th 2:9-10**
  - b. Believe in the truth - cf. **2 Th 2:11-12**
  - c. Obey the gospel of Jesus Christ - cf. **2 Th 2:13-14; 1:7-9**

Only then can we be confident that we are in a right relationship with the Lord, unlikely to be deceived by any individual or false system that might come before the Lord returns...

# The Time Of The End

## The Visions In Daniel

### INTRODUCTION

1. Much confusion regarding end times is related to prophetic interpretation...
  - a. Especially regarding prophecies in the books of Daniel and Revelation
  - b. The use of such books is common among the cults with their end time scenarios
2. Dispensational premillennialism also depends heavily on such books...
  - a. With its interpretations of the visions found in Daniel
  - b. With its interpretations of the book of Revelation as a whole
3. Because many are acquainted only with dispensational premillennial views regarding the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, we will...
  - a. Offer some alternative views
  - b. With links for further study

[In this lesson, our attention will be on the **visions in the book of Daniel**. We start with...]

### I. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

#### A. THE VISION...

1. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, has a dream - **Dan 2:1-13**
2. God reveals the dream to Daniel - **Dan 2:14-23**
3. Daniel then explains the dream and its interpretation to the king - **Dan 2:24-45**
- **A vision of a great statue of gold, silver, bronze, and iron mixed with clay, struck and destroyed by a stone that would become a great mountain**

#### B. ITS MEANING...

1. Daniel describes the image as depicting **four kingdoms** which shall rise and fall
2. The first one, represented by the head of **gold** is definitely **Babylon - Dan 2:37-38**
3. World history confirms that the next three kingdoms would be:
  - a. The **Medo-Persian**, represented by the chest and arms of **silver - Dan 2:39a**
  - b. The **Grecian**, represented by the belly and thighs of **bronze - Dan 2:39b**
  - c. The **Roman**, represented by the legs of **iron**, with feet mixed with **iron and clay - Dan 2:40-43**
4. During the days of these kings, God would establish a kingdom that would never be destroyed, and itself would destroy the kingdom of iron and clay - **Dan 2:34-35,44-45**
5. **When was this vision fulfilled?** Note what happened during the days of the Roman empire:
  - a. The announcement of the angel Gabriel to Mary - **Lk 1:31-33**
  - b. The message of John the Baptist ("the kingdom of heaven is at hand") - **Mt 3:1-2**
  - c. The proclamation of Jesus concerning the kingdom ("the time is fulfilled") - **Mk 1:14-15**
  - d. What "time" was fulfilled? The time described by Daniel!
- **The dream of Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled with the first coming of Christ!**

[For more on **Nebuchadnezzar's Dream** and its fulfillment, [look here](#). Let's now turn to...]

## II. THE VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS

### A. THE VISION...

1. The four beasts from the sea - **Dan 7:1-8**
  2. An awesome judgment - **Dan 7:9-12**
  3. The coronation of the Son of Man - **Dan 7:13-14**
  4. The interpretation explained to Daniel - **Dan 7:15-29**
- **A vision of four great beasts, followed by two related visions involving the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man**

### B. ITS MEANING...

1. The similarities of this vision with Nebuchadnezzar's dream should not go unnoticed
    - a. Both visions refer to four kingdoms
    - b. The four kings of **Dan 7** represent four kingdoms - cf. **Dan 7:17,23**
  2. The four kingdoms of **Dan 7** are likely the same kingdoms of **Dan 2**
    - a. The **lion with the eagle's wings** represents **Babylon** - **Dan 7:4**; cf. **2:36-38**
    - b. The **bear with ribs in its mouth** represents **Medo-Persia** - **Dan 7:5**; cf. **2:39a**
    - c. The **leopard with four wings and four heads** represents **Greece** - **Dan 7:6**; cf. **2:39b**
    - d. The **dreadful beast with ten horns (plus one)** represents **Rome** - **Dan 7:7-8**; cf. **2:40-43**
    - e. The **ten horns** and **little horn** may represent emperors or kings who ruled during events involving the establishment of God's kingdom (see below)
  3. In response to these four kingdoms, God would judge them and everlasting dominion would be given to the Son of Man and His saints - **Dan 7:9-28**
  4. The vision is similar to visions in Revelation; they likely refer to the same thing
  5. **When was this vision fulfilled?** Consider what is said about the establishment of the "everlasting kingdom" (i.e., the church):
    - a. To be established in the days of the Roman empire - **Dan 2:44**; **Lk 1:30-33**; **Mk 1:14-15**
    - b. Which began when Jesus ascended to heaven - **Dan 7:13-14**; **Ac 1:9**; **2:36**; **Ep 1:20-23**; **1 Pe 3:22**; **Re 1:5,9**
    - c. Which suffered great persecution at the outset - **Dan 7:25**; cf. **2 Ti 3:10-12**; **1 Pe 1:6**; **4:12-13**; **5:8-11**; **Re 1:9**; **2:10**; **17:14**
    - d. Yet saints who persevered even to death continued to reign with Christ in heaven (i.e., they "possess the kingdom") - **Dan 7:18**; cf. **2 Ti 4:17-18**; **Re 2:26-27**; **3:21-22**; **20:4-6**
- **The vision of the four beasts was fulfilled in the early centuries of the church!**

[For more on **The Vision Of The Four Beasts** and its fulfillment, [look here](#). We next turn to...]

## III. THE VISION OF THE RAM AND THE GOAT

### A. THE VISION...

1. A two-horned ram and a one-horned male goat - **Dan 8:3-8a**
  2. The goat's horn replaced by four notable ones - **Dan 8:8b**
  3. A little horn that became great, arrogant, and sacrilegious - **Dan 8:9-12**
  4. The sanctuary and host trampled underfoot 2300 days - **Dan 8:13-14**
- **A vision of two beasts, and great persecution to follow**

### B. ITS MEANING...

1. Explained by Gabriel - **Dan 8:15-19**

- a. Refers to “the time of the end” - **Dan 8:17**; cf. **8:26**
  - b. Refers to “the latter time of the indignation” - **Dan 8:19**
  2. The two-horned ram depicts the kings of Media and Persia - **Dan 8:20**
  3. The one-horned goat depicts the kingdom of Greece - **Dan 8:21-22**
    - a. The broken horn likely refers to Alexander the Great
    - b. The four notable ones likely refers to his military leaders that divided the Grecian empire
  4. A fierce king will arise, but will eventually be defeated - **Dan 8:23-25**
    - a. Likely Antiochus Epiphanes, ruler of Syria (175-163 B.C.)
    - b. Who imposed Greek culture and desecrated the temple
  5. The vision of the 2300 evenings and mornings - **Dan 8:26**
    - a. May refer to over six years of abomination by Antiochus Epiphanes (171-165 B.C.)
    - b. Was to be sealed, for it refers to many days in the future (about 400 years later)
  6. **When was this vision fulfilled?** Gabriel does not leave us to wonder:
    - a. It was fulfilled with the rise and fall of Media-Persia and Greece
    - b. It involved the abominations that occurred during the inter-testamental period
    - c. Thus “the time of the end” refers not to the end of the world
    - d. Rather the ending of the Jewish dispensation that came to an end eventually with the coming of Christ
- **The vision of the ram and goat is straightforward, and provides keys to help us understand other visions (see conclusion)**

[For more on **The Vision Of The Ram And The Goat**, [look here](#). Now let us consider...]

#### **IV. THE VISION OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS**

##### **A. THE VISION...**

1. The angel Gabriel appears to Daniel - **Dan 9:20-23**
  2. Seventy weeks are determined for Israel and Jerusalem - **Dan 9:24**
    - a. To finish the transgression
    - b. To make an end of sins
    - c. To make reconciliation for iniquity
    - d. To bring in everlasting righteousness
    - e. To seal up vision and prophecy
    - f. To anoint the most holy
  3. The start and end of sixty-nine weeks - **Dan 9:25**
    - a. From the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem
    - b. Until an anointed one a prince (ESV)
  4. After the sixty-nine weeks - **Dan 9:26**
    - a. The anointed one will be cut off, but not for himself
    - b. The people of the prince will destroy the city and the sanctuary
    - c. The end of it will be with a flood, desolations are determined until the war is ended
  5. During the seventieth week - **Dan 9:27**
    - a. The prince will confirm a covenant with many
    - b. In the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering
    - c. On the wings of abomination shall be one who makes desolate
    - d. Until the determined consummation is poured out on the desolate
- **A vision of seventy weeks, describing events greatly affecting Israel and Jerusalem**

##### **B. ITS MEANING...**

1. Most agree that the sixty-nine weeks terminate with the first coming of Christ
  2. Dispensational premillennialists believe that the “clock stopped,” and the seventieth week will be a seven year tribulation prior to the millennium
  3. **When was this vision fulfilled?** I agree with Albert Barnes’ interpretation:
    - a. The seventieth week started with the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry (at age 30)
    - b. Three and a half years later Jesus was crucified, bringing an end to the need for sacrifices
    - c. Through the preaching by His apostles to Israel for 3-4 years following Pentecost, His new covenant was confirmed
    - d. The “people of the prince” proved to be the Roman army that destroyed Jerusalem and its temple in 70 A.D., just as Jesus foretold - cf. **Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14; Lk 21:20**
- **This vision was fulfilled in its entirety during the first century A.D.**

[For more on **The Vision Of The Seventy Weeks**, [look here](#). Finally, let’s take a look at...]

## **V. THE VISION OF THE TIME OF THE END**

### **A. THE VISION...**

1. A glorious man appears to Daniel to tell him what will happen - **Dan 10:1-21**
  - a. To his people “in the latter days” - **Dan 10:14**
  - b. A vision that refers “many days yet to come” - **Dan 10:14**
2. There will be conflict between Persia and Greece - **Dan 11:1-4**
  - a. Four Persian kings will arise - **Dan 11:1-2**
  - b. A mighty Greek king will rise, whose kingdom will break into four pieces - **Dan 11:3-4**
3. There will be conflict between Egypt and Syria - **Dan 11:5-20**
  - a. The king of the South (Egypt) will gain in strength - **Dan 11:5**
  - b. There will be a failed alliance with the king of the North (Syria) - **Dan 11:6**
  - c. The South (Egypt) will rise in anger - **Dan 11:7-8**
  - d. The conflict will accelerate, involving other people including Jews - **Dan 11:9-14**
  - e. A powerful king of the North (Syria) will rise then fall - **Dan 11:15-19**
  - f. Followed by another who will rule but a short time - **Dan 11:20**
4. The rise of a vile man - **Dan 11:21-45**
  - a. Whom the people will not honor - **Dan 11:21**
  - b. He shall take the kingdom peaceably, but with intrigue - **Dan 11:21-24**
  - c. He shall provoke the king of the South (Egypt) - **Dan 11:25-28**
  - d. He will bring blasphemies against Israel - **Dan 11:29-32**
  - e. Those who resist him will do valiantly - **Dan 11:32-35**
  - f. The blasphemies of this king - **Dan 11:36-39**
  - g. The king’s conquests during “the time of the end”, and his own end - **Dan 11:40-45**
5. The ultimate victory of Daniel’s people - **Dan 12:1-3**
  - a. “At that time” Michael the great prince shall stand, during great trouble - **Dan 12:1**
  - b. There will be deliverance for those whose names are found written - **Dan 12:1**
  - c. Many who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake - **Dan 12:2**
  - d. Those who are wise and turn many to righteousness will shine - **Dan 12:3**
6. Final instructions and answers given to Daniel - **Dan 12:4-13**
  - a. Seal the book until the time of the end - **Dan 12:4; cf. 12:9**
  - b. “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?” - **Dan 12:5-7**
    - 1) Three and half times
    - 2) When the power of the holy people is completely shattered
  - c. “What will be the end of these things?” - **Dan 12:8-13**

- 1) From the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, - 1290 days
  - 2) Blessed is he who waits and comes to 1335 days
- **A vision that would affect Daniel's people "in the latter days"**

## B. ITS MEANING...

1. It reveals what would happen to **Israel** "in the latter days" - **Dan 10:14**
2. Yet it begins with the **Persian** kings who live shortly after Daniel - **Dan 11:2**
3. The mighty king of **Greece** is undoubtedly **Alexander the Great**, whose empire was divided by his four generals - **Dan 11:3-4**
4. The **Egyptian-Syrian** conflict, vividly described, occurred from 300-175 B.C. - **Dan 11:5-20**
5. The vile man who commits blasphemies was likely **Antiochus Epiphanes** - **Dan 11:21-35**
6. From **Dan 11:36-45**, views of the identity of this vile man vary:
  - a. He is still Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria
  - b. He represents the Roman emperors during the first century, A.D.
  - c. He is the Antichrist, a world ruler still to come
7. One's interpretation of **Dan 11:36-45** will affect their interpretation of **Dan 12:1-13**
8. **When was this vision fulfilled?** I agree with those who say:
  - a. The entire vision leads up to and pertains mostly to the Antiochian persecution
  - b. Which occurred during the inter-testamental period between Malachi and Matthew
  - c. That "the time of the end" refers to **the closing days of God's dealings with Israel** as His covenant nation
  - d. Which is how the phrase is used in "The Vision Of The Ram and The Goat" that depicts many of the same events - cf. **Dan 8:1-27** (esp. **17,26**)
  - e. And therefore **Dan 12:1-3** may refer to a "spiritual resurrection" in which many are aroused during the Antiochian persecution to do great things while others will do shameful things

[For more on **The Vision Of The Time Of The End**, please [look here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).]

## CONCLUSION

1. Because of such phrases as...
  - a. "the time of the end" - **Dan 8:17; 11:35,40; 12:4,9**
  - b. "the latter time", "the latter days" - **Dan 8:19; 10:14**
  - c. "many days in the future", "many days yet to come" - **Dan 8:26; 10:14**

-- **It is easy to assume that the visions of Daniel pertain to the end of time as we know it**
2. But such phrases are used in "**The Vision Of The Ram And The Goat**" to describe...
  - a. Events involving Israel during the days of the Media, Persia, Greece, and Syria empires
  - b. Events which occurred before the coming of Christ, from 400 to 150 B.C.
  - c. Events which are said to be so far in the future that Daniel was to seal up the vision - **Dan 8:26**

-- **Thus I would caution against assuming the visions of Daniel pertain to the end of time as we perceive it**

There are good reasons to believe that the visions of Daniel have been completely fulfilled. We are certainly better off looking to the apostolic teaching of the New Testament concerning the end of time, rather than basing systems of eschatology on dubious interpretations of Old Testament prophecy...

# The Time Of The End

## The Prophecy Of Matthew 24

### INTRODUCTION

1. A challenging passage in the Bible is Jesus' discourse on the Mount of Olives...
  - a. Given shortly after He left the temple with His disciples
  - b. Recorded in **Mt 24:1-51; Mk 13:1-37; Lk 21:5-36**
  - c. Commonly referred to as "**The Olivet Discourse**"
  - d. Our focus will be primarily on Matthew's account - **Mt 24:1-51**
  
2. It's difficulty is apparent when one considers the diversity of interpretations...
  - a. Some maintain it is about events preceding the Lord's second coming
  - b. Others say that it is about events related to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
  - c. And many believe it refers to both events
  
3. Even those who apply it to both events differ as to when a particular event is being described...
  - a. Some say **vs. 4-28** refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, and **vs. 29** begins the discussion about the Lord's second coming (McGarvey)
  - b. Others contend that **vs. 35** begins talking about the second coming
  - c. Some believe that Jesus **switches back and forth** throughout the discourse (Zerr)
  
4. In light of **Luke 17**, I have trouble with **Matthew 24** describing both events...
  - a. Where Jesus is talking about "one of the days of the Son of Man" - **Lk 17:22-37**
    - 1) Note: He alludes to the fact there is more than one "day of the Son of Man"
    - 2) I.e., the Lord will come in judgment in ways prior to His final coming at the Last Day
  - b. In **Lk 17**, Jesus uses language similar to **Mt 24**, but in ways that do not allow for a simple division of **Mt 24**, either at **verse 29 or 35**; notice...
    - 1) **Lk 17:26-29** is parallel to **Mt 24:37-39** (found **after** verses 29,35)
    - 2) Yet **Lk 17:31** is parallel to **Mt 24:17-18** (found **before** verses 29,35)
    - 3) And then **Lk 17:34-36** is parallel to **Mt 24:40-41** (found **after** verses 29,35)
  - c. If Jesus is describing just one event in **Lk 17** (which I believe He is), then He is likely describing just one event in **Mt 24**

[I tend to view **Matthew 24** as depicting **the destruction of Jerusalem** which occurred in 70 A.D., though it certainly foreshadows His second coming. To see why, let's start with...]

### I. THE SETTING OF MATTHEW 24

#### **A. THE WORDS OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE...**

1. His parables depicting Israel's rejection of Him, and its consequence
  - a. The parable of the two sons - **Mt 21:28-32** (cf. v.31-32)
  - b. The parable of the wicked vine dressers - **Mt 21:33-46** (cf. v.42-45)
  - c. The parable of the wedding feast - **Mt 22:1-14** (cf. v.7-9)
2. His condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees
  - a. Who would fill up the measure of their fathers' guilt - **Mt 23:29-32**
  - b. Who kill, crucify, scourge, and persecute the prophets, wise men, and scribes He would

- send to them - **Mt 23:33-34**
- c. Upon whom the blood of all the righteous would come, upon that very generation - **Mt 23:35-36**
- 3. His lamentation over Jerusalem
  - a. The city who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her - **Mt 23:37a**
  - b. The city unwilling to accept the love shown to her - **Mt 23:37b**
  - c. Whose house would be left desolate - **Mt 23:38-39**

## **B. THE PROPHECY OF JESUS ABOUT THE TEMPLE...**

- 1. After his disciples were showing Him the buildings of temple - **Mt 24:1**
- 2. Declaring that not one stone would be left upon another - **Mt 24:2**

## **C. THE QUESTIONS OF THE DISCIPLES...**

- 1. In Mark's gospel, two questions are asked - **Mk 13:4**
  - a. "When will these things be?"
  - b. "What will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"
- 2. In Luke's gospel, the two questions are similar - **Lk 21:7**
  - a. "When will these things be?"
  - b. "What sign will there be when these things are about to take place?"
- 3. In Matthew's gospel, the second question is worded differently - **Mt 24:3**
  - a. "When will these things be?"
  - b. "What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"
- 4. Observations regarding these questions:
  - a. Matthew wrote his gospel for a Jewish audience
    - 1) He likely recorded the questions as asked by the disciples, who presumed that the destruction of temple would mean His coming and the end of the age
    - 2) Jewish readers of the gospel would likely have the same conception
  - b. Mark and Luke wrote their gospels to Gentiles
    - 1) To avoid possible misunderstanding by non-Jewish readers, they worded the disciples' questions to reflect what the discourse is actually about
    - 2) I.e., the destruction of the temple and the sign when its destruction would be imminent

[When the **setting** leading up to "The Olivet Discourse" is carefully considered, the **subject** of Jesus' words become clear. **The destruction of the temple** is the matter under consideration, **not the second coming of Christ**. Now let's proceed to examine more closely...]

## **II. THE DISCOURSE OF MATTHEW 24**

### **A. WHAT WILL NOT BE THE SIGN...**

- 1. Be careful that none deceive you, claiming to be the Christ - **Mt 24:4-5**
- 2. Don't be troubled by wars, earthquakes, famines, pestilence - **Mt 24:6-8**
  - a. Such things will come, but the end (destruction of the temple) is not yet
  - b. They are only the beginning of sorrows (not the sign of the end)
- 3. Anticipate persecution and hard times - **Mt 24:9-13**
  - a. You will be killed and hated for His name's sake
  - b. Many will be offended, betray one another, and hate one another
  - c. False prophets will deceive many
  - d. The love of many will grow cold because of lawlessness

- e. But he who endures to “the end” will be saved -- “the end” refers here:
  - 1) Not to the second coming (implying one must live until Christ comes again)
  - 2) Nor to the destruction of Jerusalem (implying once one has survived that event, one’s salvation is secured)
  - 3) But to the end of one’s life - cf. **Re 2:10**
- 4. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world - **Mt 24:14**
  - a. As a witness to all the nations
  - b. Then the end (the destruction of the temple) will come
    - 1) This would end the Jewish sacrifices, and other remnants of OT worship
    - 2) That which was nailed to the cross, abolished by Jesus’ death, would pass away - cf. **Co 2:14-17; Ep 2:14-16; He 8:13**
  - c. Was the gospel preached to all nations prior to the destruction of the temple? Note what Paul wrote prior to 70 A.D. - **Ro 10:16-18; Co 1:23**

**B. WHAT WILL BE THE SIGN...**

- 1. The “abomination of desolation” - **Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14**
  - a. Standing in the holy place (the holy city Jerusalem)
  - b. As foretold by Daniel - cf. **Dan 9:26-27**
- 2. When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies - **Lk 21:20**
  - a. Luke therefore explains the “abomination of desolation”
  - b. In 70 A.D., Roman armies surrounded and besieged Jerusalem prior to destroying it and the temple
- 3. Thus Jesus answers the disciples’ question: **“What sign will there be when these things are about to take place?”**

**C. WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SEE THE SIGN...**

- 1. Those in Judea are to flee to the mountains - **Mt 24:16-22**
    - a. Don’t delay by going to your homes and getting your clothes
    - b. It will be a difficult time for pregnant and nursing mothers
    - c. Pray that your flight be not in winter (when travel is difficult) or on the Sabbath (when city gates are closed to travel)
    - d. For there will be “great tribulation”, though shortened for the elect’s sake
      - 1) Luke specifies the nature of this tribulation - **Lk 21:23b-24**
      - 2) A Jewish general taking captive by the Romans just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 offered this summary:
        - a) All the calamities which had befallen any nation from the beginning of the world were but small in comparison with those of the Jews
        - b) In the siege of Jerusalem, no fewer than 1,100,000 perished (it was during the time of the Passover, when more than 3,000,000 Jews were assembled)
        - c) In surrounding provinces 250,000 were slain
        - d) 97,000 were taken captive, some killed by beasts in Roman theaters, some sent to work in Egypt, others sold as slaves
      - **Flavius Josephus**, Jewish Wars (from **Barnes** Commentary on Matthew)
    - 3) The “elect” were Christians, spared by a shortened siege
      - a) The Jews in the city engaged the Romans in battle
      - b) Titus, the Roman general, being called to return to Rome, proceeded to end the siege and stormed the city (**Barnes** Commentary)
2. Don’t be misled by false christs and false prophets - **Mt 24:23-28**
  - a. Even those who show great signs and wonders to deceive

- b. For the coming (judgment) of the Son of Man will be like lightning across the sky
  - 1) Do not expect to find Him in the desert or in inner rooms
  - 2) When He comes in judgment, it will be swift - cf. **Lk 17:22-24**
- c. Where the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered
  - 1) Alluding to Jerusalem surrounded by armies
  - 2) This is the “sign” to warn them it is time to flee Jerusalem and Judea!

#### **D. WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT...**

1. Events to occur “immediately after the tribulation of those days”...
  - a. Cosmic disturbances - **Mt 24:29**
    - 1) The sun will be darkened
    - 2) The moon will not give its light
    - 3) The stars will fall from heaven
    - 4) The heavens will be shaken
  - b. The sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven - **Mt 24:30**
    - 1) All the tribes of the earth will mourn
    - 2) They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory
  - c. The elect will be gathered - **Mt 24:31**
    - 1) For with a great sound of the trumpet, angels will be sent
    - 2) They shall gather the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another
2. Such events certainly sound like the second coming of Christ, but consider two reasons why they may not be referring to Jesus’ coming at the Last Day...
  - a. The events were to occur “immediately after the tribulation of those days” (“in those days, after that tribulation”) - **Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24**
    - 1) They are connected in time to the tribulation described in **Mt 24:15-28**
    - 2) This “coming” of Jesus was to occur at the conclusion of the siege of Jerusalem
  - b. The events are similar to those used to foretell God’s judgment of other nations
    - 1) Babylon - **Isa 13:1,6-13**
    - 2) Egypt - **Isa 19:1-2; cf. Eze 32:2,7-9**
    - 2) Tyre - **Isa 23:1; 24:21-23**
    - 3) Edom - **Isa 34:4-6**
    - 4) Nineveh - **Nah 1:1-5**
    - 5) Israel - **Amo 8:9**
    - 6) Judah - **Jer 4:5-6,23-28**
3. Therefore I suggest that even **Mt 24:29-31** refers to the destruction of Jerusalem
  - a. Like other Jewish prophets, Jesus uses figurative language to depict:
    - 1) The judgment to befall the wicked (in terms of worldwide destruction)
    - 2) The provision made for the righteous (in terms of the gathering by angels)
  - b. Jewish prophets foretold God’s judgment upon such nations...
    - 1) Using figures of worldwide destruction, even though the judgment was local
    - 2) Perhaps because such judgments foreshadow God’s Final Judgment to come upon the entire world at the Last Day

#### **E. ADMONITIONS TO BE PREPARED AND PRODUCTIVE...**

1. The parable of the fig tree - **Mt 24:32-33**
  - a. New branches and leaves indicate summer is near
  - b. When you see these things (Jerusalem surrounded by armies), the time is near
2. It would happen before “this generation” passed away - **Mt 24:34**

- a. Some define “generation” as a race of people (i.e., the Jews) - cf. **McGarvey, B. W. Johnson**
- b. But note its use by Jesus just prior to this discourse - **Mt 23:33-36** (esp. 36)
- c. The destruction of Jerusalem came to pass within forty years!
- 3. The words of Jesus will come to pass - Mt 24:35
  - a. Heaven and earth shall pass away one day - cf. **2 Pe 3:7,10**
  - b. But Jesus’ words will by no means pass away
  - c. With v. 35, some believe Jesus now talks about the second coming; but Jesus is using an illustration to demonstrate the surety of His words - e.g., **Mt 5:18**
- 4. Of that day and hour, only the Father knows - Mt 24:36
  - a. They might discern the general timing with the advance of armies toward Jerusalem
  - b. But the day and hour when the siege would begin, only the Father knew
  - c. So don’t delay when the “sign” appears (Jerusalem surrounded by armies)
- 5. It will be like the days of Noah - Mt 24:37-39
  - a. In the days before the flood...
    - 1) Noah knew what was coming and was preparing, but people continued with their normal activities
    - 2) Only when it was too late did the people know
  - b. Prior to the siege of Jerusalem...
    - 1) Many people probably thought the conflict would end peacefully, and so lived their lives accordingly
    - 2) But once the siege began, it was too late
- 6. Some will be taken away - Mt 24:40-41
  - a. When the city was stormed, 97,000 Jews were taken captive
  - b. Some to be killed by beasts in Roman theaters, some sent to work in Egypt, others sold as slaves - **Flavius Josephus**, Jewish Wars (as per **Barnes** Commentary on Matthew)
- 7. Therefore, watch! - Mt 24:42-44
  - a. You don’t know the hour of the Son of Man’s coming
  - b. Don’t be caught off guard, like the master of a house who did not know when a thief would break in
  - c. Be ready, for the Son of Man will come when you not expect Him
  - d. The siege of Jerusalem might begin promptly, so flee Judea promptly when you see the armies surrounding Jerusalem!
- 8. The parable of the faithful servant and the wicked servant - Mt 24:45-51
  - a. The faithful servant is blessed if doing the master’s will when he comes
  - b. So the disciples of Jesus are admonished to be productive

## CONCLUSION

- 1. Note carefully that Matthew 24 depicts a **local, escapable** judgment...
  - a. Where Jesus warned those in Judea of what is to come
  - b. Where they are given a sign to let them know when to flee
- 2. It does not fit a **worldwide, inescapable** judgment...
  - a. As will characterize the second coming of Christ
  - b. As taught to Christians throughout the world - cf. **1 Th 5:2-3; 2 Th 1:7-10; 2 Pe 3:10-12**
- 3. **Matthew 24** certainly alludes to our Lord’s Second Coming...
  - a. But that is no different than the prophecies by other Jewish prophets who foretold God’s

- judgment upon other nations and cities
- b. It was a common motif used by Jewish prophets, we should not be surprised to see Jesus using the same
  - c. And rightly so, for God's judgments upon nations in the past are types and shadows of the Final Judgment to befall the entire world when Jesus comes again
4. In addition to the **setting** leading up to the discourse, there is the **natural flow** of the discourse itself that leads me to conclude it is entirely about the destruction of Jerusalem...
- a. Jesus' disciples are told what will not be the sign - **Mt 24:1-14**
  - b. They are told will be the sign that His coming is near - **Mt 24:15**
  - c. They are told what to do when they see the sign - **Mt 24:16-28**
  - d. His coming in judgment (the fall of Jerusalem) is described in terms reminiscent of other Jewish prophets who foretold of God's judgments upon various nations - **Mt 24:29-31**
  - e. Admonitions are given for them to be prepared and productive in the meantime - **Mt 24:32-51**

So I view **Matthew 24** to describe a **local, escapable judgment** which occurred in 70 A. D. However, there is still the **worldwide, inescapable judgment** at the Last Day - cf. **1 Th 5:2-3; 2 Th 1: 7-10; 2 Pe 3:10-12**

Are you ready for that Day? The admonitions to be prepared and productive are very similar:

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

*“Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?”*

*“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;”*

*- 2 Peter 3:10-14*

# The Time Of The End

## The Book Of Revelation

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Book of Revelation is often used to support various end-time scenarios...
  - a. Especially by dispensational premillennialists
  - b. Who view **Re 4-20** as yet to be fulfilled
2. The Book of Revelation is used to support things found nowhere else in Scripture...
  - a. The millennium - mentioned only in **Re 20:1-6**
  - b. Separate resurrections - also only in **Re 20:1-6**
3. While there are many diverse views regarding Revelation...
  - a. There are reasons to believe it has mostly been fulfilled
  - b. Especially **Re 4:1** to **Re 20:7**

[This study will present introductory material to the book that offers such a view (see [here](#) for more material on the Book of Revelation)...]

### I. THE NATURE OF THE BOOK

#### **A. IT IS UNIQUE...**

1. Different from other books of the New Testament
2. Different from styles of writing commonly used today

#### **B. IT IS APOCALYPTIC...**

1. The word 'revelation' in Greek is **apokalupsis**
  - a. Which means 'an uncovering' or 'unveiling'
  - b. Thus a book intended to reveal, not conceal
2. The book is an example of **apocalyptic literature**
  - a. A literary style popular from 200 B.C. to 200 A.D.
  - b. Known for highly symbolic or figurative language
  - c. Written normally during times of persecution
  - d. Usually depicting the conflict between good and evil
  - e. Intended to encourage the righteous to persevere
  - f. Other examples: parts of Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and Matthew 24

#### **C. IT IS CHALLENGING...**

1. Not to the early church
  - a. They were familiar with the apocalyptic style and OT symbology
  - b. They were familiar with the historical circumstances prompting the Revelation
  - d. It evidently was intended to be understood by simply listening - cf. **Re 1:3**
2. But to people today
  - a. Who are unfamiliar with apocalyptic literature and OT symbology
  - b. Who are unfamiliar with the historical background of the book
  - b. Who are prone to take things literally

[To properly interpret the book, we must understand **its historical context**. We must also interpret it in a manner that would have been **meaningful to those to whom it was addressed..**]

## **II. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK**

### **A. DIFFERENT VIEWS OF INTERPRETATION...**

1. **The preterist view**
  - a. The book refers to events that were fulfilled in the first century A.D., or shortly thereafter
  - b. It was written primarily to encourage the original readers
  - c. Its value for today would therefore be didactic (teaching the value of faithfulness to God)
2. **The historicist view**
  - a. The book provides a panoramic view of the future of the church from as it goes through history
  - b. This view finds in the book such events as the rise of Catholicism, Islam, the Protestant reformation, world wars, etc., ending with the return of Christ
  - c. As such it would encourage Christians no matter when they lived
3. **The futurist view**
  - a. Apart from the first few chapters, the book depicts events which immediately precede the second coming of Christ
  - b. Therefore most of the book has yet to be fulfilled (or is being fulfilled now)
  - c. Its value is primarily for Christians who will be living at the time Jesus returns
4. **The idealist view**
  - a. The book does not deal with any specific historical situation
  - b. It simply illustrates the principle that good will ultimately triumph over evil
  - c. As such the book is applicable to any age

### **B. PREFERRED VIEW OF INTERPRETATION...**

1. Mostly a preterist view
  - a. That most was fulfilled (or was started) in the first three centuries - **Re 1:1-20:6**
  - b. With some futurist elements (the eternal destiny of the redeemed) - **Re 20:7-22:5**
2. Reasons for the preterist view
  - a. The book was written specifically to seven churches in Asia - **Re 1:4**
  - b. It was to uncover “things which must shortly come to pass” - **Re 1:1,3; 22:6,10**
  - c. John was told, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand” - **Rev 22:10**
3. Compare the last point with **Dan 8:26**
  - a. Daniel was told to “seal up” his vision, “for it refers to many days in the future”
  - b. Yet we know that his vision was fulfilled within several hundred years
  - c. John, however, was told “do not seal” what he had seen “for the time is at hand”
  - d. How could this be, if most of Revelation refers to what has yet to occur almost two thousands later?
4. Place yourself in the position of the Christians to whom the book was addressed
  - a. The book was written to comfort them, to reveal things “shortly come to pass”
  - b. If the futurist view is correct, how do events at least 2000 years later help them?
  - c. Imagine if someone wrote you of things soon to take place, but in reality they were not to occur until 4000 A.D. -- Would that be of any real comfort?

[Such is the problem I see with the “futurist” view of dispensational premillennialism. Now for some thoughts related to...]

### **III. THE DATE OF THE BOOK**

#### **A. DIFFERENT VIEWS OF THE DATE...**

1. **The early date, around 64-68 A.D.** during the reign of **Nero**
  - a. The Syriac version of the New Testament (dating back to the 2nd century A.D.) says the book was written during the reign of Nero
  - b. The Muratorian Fragment (170-190 A.D.) and the Monarchian Prologues (250-350 A.D.) claim that Paul wrote to seven churches following the pattern of John's example in Revelation, placing the book of Revelation even before some of the Pauline epistles(!)  
-- **Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 12; p. 406**
2. **The late date, around 95-96 A.D.** toward the end of the reign of **Domitian**
  - a. Appeal is often made to a statement of Iraneaus who lived in the late 2nd century A.D.
  - b. Irenaeus (185 A.D.) stated that the apostle John “saw the revelation...at the close of Domitian’s reign (A.D. 81-96)” - **Contra Haereses 5.30.3; ANF, 1:559-60**
  - c. His statement is rather ambiguous, however, and can be understood in several ways (see **Redating The New Testament, by John A. T. Robinson**, for a detailed examination of Irenaeus' quotation)
  - d. Besides, if the book were written toward the **end** of Domitian’s reign wouldn’t that make it a rather belated word of comfort?

#### **B. PREFERRED VIEW OF THE DATE...**

1. **The spring of 70 A.D.**, during the reign of **Vespasian**
  - a. Before the destruction of Jerusalem
  - b. Which occurred in the fall of 70 A.D.
2. **The internal evidence:**
  - a. The eight kings mentioned in **Re 17:9-14**
    - 1) **If** the kings were emperors, and **if** we start with Augustus...
    - 2) ...the first five are Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero (who died June 9, 68 A.D.)
    - 3) Nero’s death left the empire in an uproar (this may be the “deadly wound” in **Re 13:3,12,14**)
    - 4) Three men (Galba, Otho, and Vitellius) tried vainly to consolidate power over the empire, but it was Vespasian who restored order in 70 A.D.
    - 5) Thus, the “deadly wound” was healed, and Vespasian would be the sixth “king” (or the “one is” in **Re 17:10**)
    - 6) This would make Titus the seventh and Domitian the eighth
  - b. Notice carefully what is said about the beast in **Re 17:8,11**
    - 1) John was told that the beast “**is not**”
    - 2) It “was” and “is about to ascend” (ESV)
    - 3) At the time Revelation was given, the beast “**is not**”!
    - 4) If we understand (as I do) that the “beast” represents imperial Rome as personified in its emperors Nero and Domitian, then Revelation could not have been written during the reigns of either Nero or Domitian!
  - c. The condition of persecution in Asia Minor as mentioned by John
    - 1) Peter also wrote to Christians in Asia Minor, just a few years before - **1 Pe 1:1**
    - 2) They were suffering similar persecution - **1 Pe 1:6; 4:12; 5:9**

- a) Persecution by the Jews with the help of Roman authorities - **Re 2:9; 3:9**
  - b) Going on since the days of Paul's missionary journeys - **Ac 13:50; 14:5,19; 17:5-8,13; 18:12**
3. Thus I agree with Jim McGuigan, and with Philip Schaff who wrote concerning the date of 70 A.D., in the spring, during the reign of Vespasian:
- a. "The early date is best suited for the nature and object of the Apocalypse, and facilitates its historical understanding. Christ pointed in his eschatological discourses to the destruction of Jerusalem and the preceding tribulation as the great crisis in the history of the theocracy and the type of the judgment of the world. And there never was a more alarming state of society."
  - b. "The horrors of the French Revolution were confined to one country, but the tribulation of the six years preceding the destruction of Jerusalem extended over the whole Roman empire and embraced wars and rebellions, frequent and unusual conflagrations, earthquakes and famines and plagues, and all sorts of public calamities and miseries untold. It seemed, indeed, that the world, shaken to its very center, was coming to a close, and every Christian must have felt that the prophecies of Christ were being fulfilled before his eyes."
  - c. "It was at this unique juncture in the history of mankind that St. John, with the consuming fire in Rome and the infernal spectacle of the Neronian persecution behind him, the terrors of the Jewish war and the Roman interregnum around him, and the catastrophe of Jerusalem and the Jewish theocracy before him, received those wonderful visions of the impending conflicts and final triumphs of the Christian church. His was truly a book of the times and for the times, and administered to the persecuted brethren the one but all-sufficient consolation: Maranatha! Maranatha!"
- **History of The Christian Church, Vol. I, pp. 836-837**

[Now for some thoughts regarding...]

#### **IV. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK**

##### **A. TO REVEAL WHAT MUST SHORTLY TAKE PLACE...**

- 1. Stated at the beginning of the book - **Re 1:1,3**
- 2. Stated at the end of the book - **Re 22:6,10**

##### **B. TO REVEAL THE JUDGMENT TO COME...**

- 1. In particular, it is a revelation from Christ concerning the judgment to come upon those who were persecuting His people - **Re 6:9-11; 16:5-7**
- 2. This judgment was directed especially toward two enemies:
  - a. **Babylon, the harlot - Re 17:6; 18:20,24; 19:2**
    - 1) Many think the harlot is the city Rome, but I believe it was **Jerusalem**
    - 2) If so, then Revelation describes the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy found in **Mt 23:29-39; Lk 21:20-22**
  - b. **The beast which supported the harlot - Re 17:7-13**
    - 1) I believe it to be **the Roman empire** when led by her persecuting emperors (e.g., Nero, Domitian), which at first supported the "harlot" in her persecution of God's people, then turned on her (cf. the destruction of Jerusalem, 70 A.D.).

#### **CONCLUSION**

1. The purpose of Revelation was to make known how Christ would bring judgment on Jerusalem and Rome for their having rejected God and persecuted His people...
  - a. This judgment began with the destruction of Jerusalem in the fall of 70 A.D.
  - b. It continued until the final cessation of persecution by Rome in 313 A.D., when Constantine became an emperor supportive of Christianity
  - c. As **Philip Schaff** said of John: “Undoubtedly he had in view primarily the overthrow of Jerusalem and heathen Rome, the two great foes of Christianity at that time.”
  
2. In fulfilling this purpose, the book was designed to both warn and comfort...
  - a. For erring disciples, it was **a book of warning** (repent or else) - **Re 2:5,16**
  - b. For faithful disciples, it was **a book of comfort** (blessed are those who overcome) - **Re 1:3; 2:7; 3:21; 14:13; 22:14**
  
3. Yet, there are elements in the book that are still future...
  - a. The ultimate defeat of Satan - **Re 20:7-10**
  - b. The final judgment - **Re 20:11-15**
  - c. The eternal destiny of the redeemed - **Re 21:1-22:5**

-- **For such would have further encouraged the Christians in Asia Minor to remain faithful**

And so it should encourage us today. But if we are willing to **let the Book of Revelation speak for itself**, and study it in the context of its historical and biblical setting, we shall not misapply it to support end-time scenarios that flatly contradict the clear teachings of other Scriptures...

For further study, I strongly recommend this book: [Worthy Is The Lamb, by Ray Summers](#)

# The Time Of The End

## What We Can Know About The Second Coming

### INTRODUCTION

1. In this series, I have sought to...
  - a. Survey the diversity of views related to the Second Coming of Christ
  - b. Explain why I believe the amillennial view is the scriptural view
2. It is possible that my efforts have lead to confusion rather than clarity...
  - a. The complexity of the various views certainly do not help
  - b. It is possible that my efforts themselves were not clear

[With a desire to leave one with a clear hope concerning the Second Coming, this lesson will summarize those things I believe we can know about our Lord's return. Beginning with...]

### I. THE CERTAINTY OF HIS COMING

#### **A. PROCLAIMED BY ANGELS AT HIS ASCENSION...**

1. Cf. **Ac 1:9-11**, the "two men...in white apparel"
2. Who said that "This same Jesus, who was taken up from into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

#### **B. PROCLAIMED BY THE APOSTLES...**

1. Peter, in his second recorded sermon - **Ac 3:19-21**
2. Paul, in writing to...
  - a. The Corinthians - **1 Co 11:26; 15:22-23**
  - b. The Thessalonians - **1 Th 1:9-10; 2:19; 3:13**
  - c. The young evangelist, Timothy - **2 Ti 4:1**
3. The writer to the Hebrews - **He 9:27-28**

[Just as throughout the Old Testament one finds the recurring theme "**The Messiah is coming!**", so in the New Testament we find not only "**He has come!**" but also "**He is coming again!**" To the certainty of His coming, we can add...]

### II. THE MANNER OF HIS COMING

#### **A. HE WILL COME IN PERSON...**

1. "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come..." - **Ac 1:11**
2. "The Lord himself will descend from heaven..." - **1 Th 4:15-17**

#### **B. HE WILL COME WITH THE CLOUDS...**

1. "This same Jesus...will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" - **Ac 1:11** (referring to verse **9**: "He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight")
2. "In the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." - **1 Th 4:17**
3. "Behold, He is coming with clouds..." - **Re 1:7**

**C. HE WILL COME WITHOUT WARNING...**

1. "The day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." - **1 Th 5:2**
2. "For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes..." - **1 Th 5:3**
3. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night..." - **2 Pe 3:10**

[Of course, this unexpected coming of the Lord will not surprise the faithful, who seriously watch for the Lord's coming (cf. **1 Th 5:4-11**). With joyful anticipation, they await the personal return of their Savior. What will happen when the Lord returns? To answer this question we now consider...]

**III. THE PURPOSE OF HIS COMING****A. TO RAISE THE DEAD...**

1. "For the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth..." - **Jn 5:28-29**
  - a. Note that there is but **one resurrection**, including both the good and evil, that will occur at one time ("the hour")
  - b. As Paul said, "...there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." - **Ac 24:15**
2. Those who are alive at the Lord's coming...
  - a. Will be "changed" in "the twinkling of an eye", being clothed with immortality and incorruption - **1 Co 15:50-54**
  - b. Then "caught up...to meet the Lord in the air." - **1 Th 4:16-18**

**B. TO DELIVER UP THE KINGDOM TO GOD...**

1. Contrary to the view that Jesus has yet to establish His kingdom on earth, He has been ruling over His kingdom since He first ascended to heaven!
  - a. In fulfillment of the prophecy that God would raise up the Christ to sit on the "throne of David", Jesus was raised from the dead and made "Lord" - **Ac 2:30-36**
  - b. All authority in heaven and earth has been given unto Him - **Mt 28:18**
    - 1) He is far above all principality, power, might, and dominion, with all things placed under His feet - **Ep 1:20-22**
    - 2) At the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers are made subject to Him - **1 Pe 3:22**
  - c. Christians are said to be "in" His kingdom
    - 1) Having been "delivered...from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love" - **Co 1:13**
    - 2) They are "in the kingdom...of Jesus Christ" - **Re 1:9**
  - d. Christ will continue to reign "till He has put all enemies under His feet" - **1 Co 15:25**
    - 1) Note that His reign will be concurrent with the fact enemies are still present
    - 2) As prophesied by the Psalmist: "Rule in the midst of Your enemies!" - **Psa 110:1-2**
  - e. Thus Christ is **now** "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of Lords" - **1 Ti 6:15; cf. Re 19:16**
  - f. And He will reign "till He has put all enemies under His feet" - **1 Co 15:25**
    - 1) The last enemy that will be destroyed is death itself - **cf. 1 Co 15:26**
    - 2) Which we have seen will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord when He will raise the dead - **1 Co 15:51-54**
2. So when Jesus comes, it will not be to **set up** His kingdom, but to **deliver up** His kingdom!
  - a. As Paul clearly told the Corinthians - **1 Co 15:23-26**
  - b. As taught by Jesus in His Parable of the Tares

- 1) His kingdom will last until “the end of this age”
- 2) After which “the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (i.e., the heavenly kingdom) - **cf. Mt 13:36-43**

[As suggested by the Parable of the Tares, delivering up the kingdom to the Father requires some “weeding”. This leads us to consider another purpose of our Lord’s coming...]

### **C. TO JUDGE THE WORLD AND PUNISH EVIL...**

1. God has appointed “a day” in which He will judge the world - **2 Pe 3:7**
  - a. The one appointed to be the Judge is Jesus Christ - **Ac 17:31; 2 Co 5:10**
  - b. The standard by which He will judge will be the words He has spoken - **Jn 12:48**
2. It will be a day of perdition (utter destruction) of ungodly men - **2 Pe 3:7**
  - a. Those who know not God and have not obeyed the gospel will be punished with “everlasting destruction” - **2 Th 1:7-10**
  - b. Those whose names are not in the “Book of Life” will be cast into the “lake of fire” - **Re 20:11-15**

### **D. TO USHER IN THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH...**

1. As taught by Peter - **2 Pe 3:10-14**
  - a. This will follow the “passing away” of the present heavens and earth (**10-12**)
  - b. It is in fulfillment of God’s promise (**13**; cf. **Isa 65:17-19; 66:22-23**)
  - c. It is something we are to “look for” (**13-14**)
  - d. It will be a realm where righteousness dwells, therefore the need for us to be found “in peace, without spot and blameless” when Christ returns (**13-14**)
2. As taught by John - **Re 21:1-22:5**
  - a. It will follow after the first heaven and first earth have “passed away” (**1**, cf. **20:11**)
  - b. It will be the place where the “New Jerusalem” will abide when it “comes down out of heaven” (**2**; cf. **3:10c; 21:10**)
  - c. God will dwell with us in this “New Jerusalem” that has “come down out of heaven” (**3-27; 22:1-5**)

## **CONCLUSION**

1. The purpose of Jesus’ second coming can be summed up by His statement in **Re 22:12...**

***“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”***

2. That Jesus has not yet come is only an indication of God’s long-suffering, but rest assured that “day” will come! - **2 Pe 3:8-10**
3. In the meantime, what should be our attitude be toward the coming of our Lord...?
  - a. One of **prayerful preparation** - **Lk 21:34-36; 2 Pe 3:14**
  - b. One of **joyful expectation** - **Ph 3:20-21**
  - c. One of **patient endurance** - **He 10:35-39**

May the Lord find us **watching** and **working** when He comes again...!