



END TIMES AND ISRAEL

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Irene Faulkes D.D



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Bible Abbreviations Used

ASV	American Standard Version
AMP.	Amplified
BBE	Bible in Basic English
Ber.	Berwick
Cass.	Cassirer
CEV	Contemporary English Version
Con	Coneybeare
EMTV	English Majority Text Version
ERV	Easy To Read Version
ESV	English Standard Version
GW	God's Word
ISV	International Standard Version
LEB	Lexham English Bible
LITV	Literal Translation Version
MKJV	Modern King James Version
NIV	New International Version
Phil.	Phillips
RWP	Robertson's Word Pictures
Spri	Helen Spurrell from original Heb.
VWS	Vincent's Word Studies
WNT	Weymouth's New Testament
YLT	Young's Literal Translation

About the Author

Irene Bonney Faulkes, ‘now the aged’, was reared from babyhood in the belief of popular end-times doctrines. All such even in the church today stem from John Nelson Darby founder of the Exclusive Brethren. She studied and taught them from teenage years.

About forty-five years ago she began to see that pulpits and books were often the sources of mismatch with Scripture. She would then read her Bible and see the discrepancies. Until then she had believed all preaching.

Seeing misconceptions that obviously were at variance with the Word of God she began a long pursuit for Truth. The New Testament would come alive bit by bit over a period of years in this regard. She delved into the history of the Old Testament. The beliefs of the early men of God of the first three centuries were investigated. To her abhorrence the discovery of non-belief in the Millennium doctrine was apparent. She purchased many books and studied them. She also received a Certificate from Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri for her study of ‘Dispensational Truths’.

When the internet made its appearance as a source of knowledge her investigations widened. Corroborative evidence ensued that present, modern and generally held end-time beliefs were erroneous.

Over the years she intensely disliked the possibility that she was right and they were wrong. She did not want to be in that position.

As a woman of prayer and love for the Word of God she could do nothing else but accept what the Word of God really has to teach us about this subject.

This book is the result. She trusts the saints of God will be led by the Spirit into the actual Truth of the words of the faith of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Irene Faulkes D.D.

Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge thanks to God for such writers as Phillip Mauro who helped enlighten me on this subject. They have been few. Most of us who were ingrained with Darby's theories little realized there was no Scripture to back it up.

We all should follow Peter's admonition, "Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formally had in ignorance".

As Paul says: "That testimony is true. For this reason rebuke them sharply, so that they may become sound in the faith, ¹⁴not paying attention to Jewish myths or to commandments of those who reject the truth." (Titus 1:13-14).

Their strongest myth was that their Messiah would reign on earth and deliver them from national enemies.

Are we in the church following in their footsteps? We are destined for glory not for a reign on this earth.

Irene y Faulkes D.D.

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CHAPTER 1

The Covenant With Abraham

The foundation of the church's hopes, that include both Jew and Gentile, is the covenant God made with Abraham. Popular opinion regardless, the purpose of the covenant is set out clearly. It is this: 'In order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we all (Jew and Gentile) might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith' (Gal.3:14). Paul was including the Gentiles with believing Jews in the benefits of this covenant. He says 'we' and he as a native Jew was writing to the church in Galatia that consisted of Jews and Gentiles who believed in Christ as in: 'Those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed' (v.9). Therefore that it could be finally for a Jewish nation is excluded.

This book in its entirety relates the Biblically expressed eternal plan of God for the End-times. All who read are encouraged to see the clear pattern of events that are set out in the whole Word of God. To do this, many times necessitates a departure from tradition and teaching that are in opposition to the clear messages of truth conveyed by all of the prophets, including those of the Lord Jesus. Honesty demands an unbiased approach.

Abraham was Promised Land that is the basis of all present day Jewish hopes of being in 'their own land' as thought. Christians also, are inclined to pivot their end time beliefs on this particular promise that must eventuate in a restored nation of Israel in their own land. Forgotten by many but not by Orthodox Jews and some preachers and Christian believers, is the fact that there were other areas in the covenant that pertain to it along with land. Circumcision is one that is not included in the presently held doctrine. Why retain just some tenets?

This covenant is extended to absorb the Mosaic covenant with the necessity for a temple, priesthood, sacrifices and as well, a Messiah. For the latter, segments from the prophetic writings are used in an extension of this first inclusion of law.

With regard to the Abrahamic covenant, in essence, its ultimate fulfillment is not in a nationally restored Israel. Neither has it any natural purpose for believers in Christ today. It has only a spiritual fulfillment. This is a definite pronouncement in that it is the promise of the Spirit. Such is for those who have faith in Jesus Christ and the redemption He procured for believers on the cross. There He became a curse for us so that righteousness or justification can be credited to us who believe in the same way righteousness was reckoned to Abraham. We are the children of Abraham by dependence on grace through faith.

Natural blessings to come to any people in this present world of creation are not the focus. The ultimate one is for a spiritual nation, whose blessings come through the Savior.

God's Real Purpose

Abraham was to be a father of many nations. All nations of the earth were to be blessed through him. His descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky, a spiritual people and as the sand on the seashore, a national people. This is the meaning, as we quote the verses concerned and use one commentary and our own comments:

I will make my promise to you and your descendants for generations to come as an everlasting promise. I will be your God and the God of your descendants' GW (Gen.17:7).

Gill says it like this, which is shown to be so in both of the Testaments of the Bible: "To his natural seed, as long as they should continue in the true worship of God; and in their own land; or until the Messiah came, in whom the covenant of circumcision had its accomplishment, and was at an end; and to all his spiritual seed, with respect to the accidental blessings of it, which are everlasting, and are never taken away, or become void."

Then we consider this verse:

"That in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. And your Seed shall possess the gate of His enemies' MKJV (Gen.22:17).

The marvel of this verse is that it shows multiplication of seed that comprises both natural and Spiritual. His descendants would become a natural and numerous nation, that turned out to be Israel.

The stars of the heavens representing the spiritual people are placed before the sand of the sea, the natural ones, as being of first importance.

The Seed Who will possess the gate of His enemies, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul is given the revelation concerning the fulfillment of every promise to Abraham. Here is what he says first of all:

'And to Abraham and to his Seed the promises were spoken. It does not say, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, "And to your Seed," which is Christ' MKJV (Gal.3:16).

Abraham was promised natural descendants for the purpose of bringing forth the promised Seed who inherits all God had declared would be.

Paul received knowledge of the mystery hidden to those of old:

'There cannot be Jew nor Greek (Gentile), there is no slave nor freeman, there is no male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

'And if you *are* of Christ, then you are a seed of Abraham, even heirs according to promise' LITV (Gal.3:28&29).

There is no distinction made between any who are in Christ Jesus. 'God is no respecter of persons' The main point of the equality of people is that between Jew and Gentile. Jews in Christ do not hold any higher place before God and Gentiles, for all of the future into eternity, He does not esteem them any higher.

When Paul wrote this epistle, it was just a short time before the nation of Israel would totally be finished forever. Their place before God as in the Old Testament would cease

to be. Now God is building a kingdom of priests and of kings who consist of both Jew and Gentile but are not considered to be different, one from the other.

All believers in Christ become the seed of Abraham and heirs of all of the promises given to Abraham. This is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The blessing promised to Abraham for God's people is recognized to be what Paul wrote in this verse, one that is spiritual:

‘That the blessing of Abraham might be to the nations in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith’ LITV (Gal.3:14).

How is it that we become the seed of Abraham? It is due to the declaration made by the Jehovah concerning the Son;

‘... If He should put His soul as a guilt offering, He shall see *His* seed ...’ LITV (Isa.53:10).

This is the glory of the promise given to Abraham that he surely understood because Paul said the gospel had been preached to him. It is this. He would have recognized the fact of the stars representing the spiritual seed that would be born to the Son, the actual Seed. They would receive Christ and believe in Him. In so doing, they would be born of God, children of the Messiah, who had no natural descendants but millions of spiritual ones.

What a revelation this must have been to Abraham. It is not surprising that when he looked at the natural fulfillment, he gazed past it into the spiritual one. In so doing he had his eyes on the city that would be built by God. The inhabitants would be his spiritual seed through the promised Seed, the One whose day to which he looked ahead. It would not be a city in this earth, or in any natural Israel. Their destiny and his, was the heavenly city of Zion.

Adam's Fall And God's Purpose Was One To Repair

The intention of God was to counteract the fall of Adam into sin. The promise of redemption is shown in His words to the serpent: ‘And there will be war between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed: by him will your head be crushed and by you his foot will be wounded’ BBE (Gen.3:15).

Continual enmity is predicted between Satan with his followers and Eve along with her natural and spiritual descendants. Satan would be allowed by God to strike the Son but that act would accomplish his own defeat on our behalf.

This was the great evangelical promise about Christ, who as the Seed, would make it effective. God's plan centered around this promise. It did not centre around Israel, the small nation He raised up. His purposes encompassed men of every tribe and nation as was prophesied: ‘He says, “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth” (Isa.49:6)’. This salvation is a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The main theme of the Old Testament is Christ. Those Scriptures revealed much about the Messiah who was to come. This fact is declared by Him when on one occasion He said: ‘You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life, and it is they that bear witness about me’ (Jn.5:39).

The central figure of history and in the Bible is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ Is Central

The theme of the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus Christ, not Israel, not believers but the Lord Jesus Christ. By the grace of God we who believe, Jew and Gentile, are placed in Him, that indicates union with Christ. The covenant with Abraham is written in the book of Genesis, by Moses. Jesus said to the Jewish nation: 'If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me' (Jn.5:40). In all the sermons, all the teaching as well as in the books about end times that one hears and reads, there is never an emphasis on the Lord Jesus Christ. Such an emphasis would be Spiritual, whereas the emphasis in end time prophecy is a carnal one. Such includes a carnal people, a present world, a national people (Israel) and earthly posturing.

Carnal, Worldly Worship

The book of Hebrews clearly states that the Old Testament had a people and worship that was not spiritual, rather carnal. This is: 'The first covenant did indeed have its ordinances for dealing with divine worship, and its sanctuary – a sanctuary, however, which had its home in this world' Cass (Heb.9:1). Other translations are: 'Its own ceremonial observances and a sanctuary belonging to this material world' Knox: or 'And its Holy Place was in the world' (Con).

According to such verses the reality does not lie in something existing in this world but of that in heaven. Law was implemented due to sin that continued to reign even after the establishment of the covenant with Abraham. The Jews remained under this covenant. All who worshipped God after Abraham, including those before law was introduced, experienced the mere outline or imperfect expression of the true image, indicated by:

'Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities' (Heb.10:1).

The believers in Christ, people of the Spirit, are the inheritors of every spiritual blessing promised to Abraham. They are shown to John as: 'A great multitude from every nation, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white with palm branches in their hands' (Rev.7:9). Such words cannot be a description of people on this earth. They are in heaven, in the presence of God and of the Lamb. As they are from every nation, the indication is that the Jewish nation is included but as being in heaven and not on earth.

The Blessings Are Spiritual Or Supernatural, Not Natural

Due consideration leads us to a certain conclusion. It is that the blessing promised to Abraham, having seen some of it worked out in the Old Testament through the nation of Israel naturally, now is to be worked out differently under the New Testament. It is fulfilled in a spiritual way and is not natural but supernatural and becomes the promise of the Spirit. Those who have the faith of Abraham are blessed with him. These blessings come through the Holy Spirit. Jesus was totally filled with the Holy Spirit during His ministry.

Jesus Christ 'through 'Eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God' (Heb.9:14). He was raised from the dead by that Spirit of Holiness. This was His Divine Spirit Being who is eternal. The eternal Triune God of the Old Testament and New is revealed as Spirit. He gave the Word who was made flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ. He works His salvation out in us through the Holy Spirit. We are born again of the Spirit. We are to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

The Spirit of Christ living in our spirits will bring immortality to our mortal bodies. We will enter heaven with Christ and the Holy Spirit controlling each one of us. God will dwell in the midst of us forever, He who is Spirit. How would Jews of a millennium on earth, receive immortality. According to false teaching, the Holy Spirit will be taken back to heaven when the New Testament Church is caught up in a declared 'rapture'.

With this understanding that clearly is projected, we must forget all our presently held pet theories of any fulfillment to come about in a national Israel on this earth, in the city of Jerusalem below. There is no promise in the New Testament concerning any natural Jerusalem. The nation of Israel cannot naturally be given a second chance, as most of them, already dead, have gone to paradise or hell.

There can be no reign of Christ from the geographical city of Jerusalem and neither should there be attraction to the exaltation of natural Israel. New Testament believers should not be consumed with a belief in an Israel as a natural nation. The book of Hebrews obviates belief in a restoration of any earthly temple or any of its rituals.

We can remove ideas about a period of a thousand years during which nations would be evangelized with 'another gospel'. Where is the promise of the Spirit in those things? They are all natural and of Law with its works, not spiritual and as Paul remarks: 'carnal or earthly and natural' (Heb.10:1). All who believe in the Messiah as atonement, who has already come, belong to the heavenly Jerusalem above.

Old Testament prophecy regarding Israel the nation and its captivity and return are to be seen from two aspects. The Word of God discloses that it is first the natural application to be followed by the spiritual one as revealed in the New Testament. Amazingly, godly and brilliant Bible scholars in other areas, have failed to recognize this Bible truth – first the natural and then the Spiritual. Instead, they have focused wrongly on always trying to discover a literal meaning from everything. This has led to a major portion of the Church being blinded as to the Truth from the Word.

Abraham's descendants according to the natural are dealt with by God throughout the Old Testament. They had the natural glory and the earthly institution of worship. His descendants in the New Testament are a heavenly people and nation with a heavenly glory within. In this way the everlasting Covenant given to Abraham is fulfilled in its main purpose. Jesus Christ is the Seed in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen. He as Seed was of Israel after the flesh. He, the heavenly and Divine Seed, has children after the Spirit who become heirs with Him, Abraham's Heir.

Moses declared that the glory of the Lord would fill all the earth as waters cover the sea. He anticipated a heavenly scene on a new heavens and a new earth God would re-create, according to Peter. For Abraham's descendants in the New Testament Israel, there is glory within according to the revelation given to Paul:

‘For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ’ (2 Cor.4:6).

Martha’s testimony of the Messiah confirms this. When she met Him as He came on hearing of the death of Lazarus, He told her He was the resurrection and the life. This verse conveys her faith in His Messianic role: ‘She said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world’ (Jn.11:27)’.

Her belief was based on the Old Testament scriptures that prophesied of the coming of the Messiah to Israel. He was to come into the world as Messiah only once and not twice.

CHAPTER 2

Regarding A Kingdom On This Earth

Verses Regarded As Proof Can Be Disregarded

Over the years, many have quoted the incident of the disciples questioning the Lord before His ascent to heaven to support the doctrine of the millennium and a kingdom of Christ on earth.

However, amazingly, we have failed to understand the significance of what the Lord was saying. The verses read: 'While the apostles were still with Jesus, they asked him, "Lord, are you now going to give Israel its own king again?" And Jesus said to them, "You don't need to know the time of those events that only the Father controls. But the Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power. Then you will tell everyone about me in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and everywhere in the world" CEV (Acts1:6-8)'.

We should realize that even after the resurrection, His disciples were still anticipating an earthly kingdom as was the whole nation. They had their eyes on earthly treasures and not on the riches of grace that were to be revealed in the epistles that we should be concentrating on. The church is following the error of national Israel whose end was destruction in A.D. 70.

A Mother Desires Her Sons' Prominence

Even the mother of James and John had asked that her two sons could sit in positions of power on His right and left hand (Mt.20:21). They all envisioned the Messiah as one whose kingdom was to be on this earth. It would be for a thousand years, according to their traditional beliefs.

He would release the nation from the bondage to others. At that time, for them it meant from the rule of the Roman Empire.

His reply to their question as to when He would make Israel again a kingdom of some power in the world, was related to His statement on a previous occasion that not even the Son of Man knew the time of coming, only the Father.

He did acknowledge their unsupported belief in the setting up of Israel as a kingdom again. However, He made no statement that it would ever occur.

His Kingdom Is To Be Given To The Father

As well, He who inspired Paul by the Spirit with the revelation that is part of the Scriptures showed very clearly that the kingdom ultimately was to be His Father's. It would not be secular and could not be so. The Father's kingdom is always heavenly.

The Jews should understand this and we also. Then we would realize that there could never be an earthly kingdom ruled by Christ.

The kingdom being placed in the Father's hands is shown in these verses:

‘Then after Christ has destroyed all powers and forces, the end will come, and he will give the kingdom to God the Father. Christ will rule until he puts all his enemies under his power, and the last enemy he destroys will be death. When the scriptures say that he will put everything under his power, they don't include God. It was God who put everything under the power of Christ’ CEV (1 Cor.15:24-27).

As stated, they had questioned Jesus about the time of the supposed events when Christ would take control of an earthly kingdom. His reply showed that it was not for them (or us) to know ‘the’ times of future earthly occurrences controlled by the Father .

The actual meaning here is that the article ‘the’ in front of ‘time’ is omitted in Greek. This gives meaning as being ‘time absolutely, without regard to circumstances’ while seasons as in the translation ‘the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power’ KJV are: ‘definite periods, with the idea of fitness’.

Those matters belong to the Father alone because the Greek uses a stronger than the simple possessive pronoun. ‘His’ in KJV ‘of His own power’, thus means ‘personal’.

Jesus Gives Rebuke, Pronouncement

A review of all this leads us to understand that their question was out of place because all those matters they were thinking about were in the hands of the Father in all of His authority. In this manner Jesus rebuked them.

Then He made a pronouncement that fitted the whole program of both the Father and Himself. This was that the kingdom of God (or of heaven) was to continue being proclaimed just as He had begun to do so.

Eventually, this became the object of all endeavors by those early preachers, as we discover on reading: ‘How can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was declared at first through the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, while God added his testimony by signs and wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to his will’ (Heb.2:3&4).

Therefore, He discounts any of our present day beliefs in a secular kingdom on this earth to be ruled over by Messiah, first for a thousand years in a millennium followed by an eternal kingdom on earth for an Israel.

The Earthly Kingdom Is Featured Today

Present day preachers, even on television, subscribe to these views.

This is what was taught by the so-called ‘Father of Dispensationalism’, John Nelson Darby. All our presently held doctrines of the end time have his supposed revelation that he began to teach in 1828. They are not Pentecostal doctrines but merely those taken on from what Darby taught all over the U.S.A. in the latter half of the nineteenth century. According to Darby and present day followers, the church spends eternity in heaven, with Israel on earth.

This is an anomaly; that Gentile saints today are emphasizing an earthly kingdom of a restored national Israel when they are hopefully following the belief in their own eternal life that is to be in heaven and not on this earth.

There is indeed only to be the Father's kingdom that is heavenly. According to Peter, heaven's bride as in Revelation will descend to be established on a new earth.

'But God has commanded the present heavens and earth to remain until the day of judgment. Then they will be set on fire, and ungodly people will be destroyed. Dear friends, don't forget that for the Lord one day is the same as a thousand years, and a thousand years is the same as one day. The Lord isn't slow about keeping his promises, as some people think he is. In fact, God is patient, because he wants everyone to turn from sin and no one to be lost.

'The day of the Lord's return will surprise us like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a loud noise, and the heat will melt the whole universe. Then the earth and everything on it will be seen for what they are. Everything will be destroyed. So you should serve and honor God by the way you live. You should look forward to the day when God judges everyone, and you should try to make it come soon. On that day the heavens will be destroyed by fire, and everything else will melt in the heat.

'But God has promised us a new heaven and a new earth, where justice will rule. We are really looking forward to that! My friends, while you are waiting, you should make certain that the Lord finds you pure, spotless, and living at peace' CEV (2 Pet.3:7-14).

Instead of our looking for 'Israel on earth' Peter instead gives the exhortation to be looking 'forward to the day' of judgment.

Kingdom Of The New Testament – 150 Times

'Kingdom' is mentioned one hundred and fifty times in the New Testament. On every occasion, it relates to the kingdom that has come through the gospel of Christ, who died on the cross as atonement for sin and who rose again, after which He ascended to heaven and sent the Holy Ghost. The kingdom of a Messiah ruling over an Israel on this earth is never mentioned. Zero times against one hundred and fifty!

Hereunder, there is no distinction made between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of God. These verses treat both as being identical: 'For you know very well that no immoral or impure person, or anyone who is greedy (that is, an idolater), has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God' ASV (Eph.5:5).

This kingdom is revealed as being of the Father's 'beloved Son': 'Giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins' (Col.1:12-14).

We are already in Christ's kingdom. 'The' kingdom indicates there is one only and no other, such as a Messianic kingdom ruled from Jerusalem. There is one kingdom and it is heavenly rather than earthly, as clearly revealed.

Kingdom Of 'God' Is Also Kingdom Of 'heaven'

When we consider two gospel accounts of the same event we cannot make the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven to be different.

Two mentions of the one are seen in: 'Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Mt.4:12&17) and in these words: 'Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good news"' (Mk.1:14)'.

His usage of 'the' signifies that there is one kingdom only and not two, viz. one of heaven and one of this earth during any millennium or even forever to be there. The Lord on this occasion introduces the kingdom that had been prophesied throughout the Old Testament. Jesus plainly announced one kingdom, His kingdom that would not have its place in this world. Rather it was an eternal and heavenly kingdom.

Such kingdom in the view of the Jews would be an earthly kingdom ruled by their Messiah who would eliminate or remove all of their enemies.

There is no place for this idea in the present world.

Jew, Gentile Suffer

We also do well to look at these verses that the Spirit has written for our information regarding Jew and Gentile. This is to affect every person who rejects Christ as Savior.

Paul writes: 'Tribulation and distress will come upon every human soul that does evil, upon the Jew first, and then upon the Greek (Gentile), whereas there will be glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does what is good, for the Jew in the first instance, and then for the Greek. There are no human preferences with God' (Rom.2:9-11).

These relate to the end time that in actuality occurs when the period of the gospel ends. To accept the millennium and Jewish nation views is to repudiate a multitude of verses in the New Testament.

Israel Did Possess The Land

We should note that the promise of land to the descendants of Abraham was fulfilled first of all with Joshua, who became leader after Moses died: 'So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war' (Josh.11:23).

Then King Solomon had possession of it as stated: 'Solomon was sovereign over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines, even to the border of Egypt' (1 Kgs.4:21). That possession came to the nation is also verified by: 'Thou are the Lord ... and didst make with him the covenant to give to his seed the land ... and thou has fulfilled thy promise' (Neh.9:7, 8).

One television evangelist has stated that 'Israel is the focus of the Old Testament. Israel is the focus of the New Testament'. I beg to point out that error as being antichrist. It can only be said to be a lie. It is not part of the truth.

Jesus Christ is the focus of the Old Testament. He is the embodiment of all the types and all the shadows. Jesus Christ is the focus of the New Testament. As well, Israel in the New Testament is never projected as a natural nation but rather as the Spiritual people of God. It is through Him that we have heard the gospel from heaven: 'God in these last days has spoken to us by His Son' (Heb.1:3).

The teaching that Jesus Christ is to come and stand on the Mount of Olives to begin His thousand year rule is tantamount to saying what the Pharisees and the Jews said when Christ was ministering here below. They expected their Messiah to have an earthly kingdom with a thousand year reign. It seems that the church of Jesus Christ has fallen into the same trap that they pursued. They ended with such a rejection of their Messiah that they crucified Him. The church also is rejecting the claims of their Messiah that His kingdom is not of this world.

Meaning Of 'Millennium'

'Millennium' means 'a thousand'. The term, 'a thousand', is used in scripture 'to denote something abundant, extensive or unlimited'.

When we read all of the following verses we can readily understand the wide connotations of the word, 'millennium', in the Bible.

We see this as each is mentioned:

'A thousand times' (Job 9:3); 'a thousand hills' (Ps.50:10); 'A day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere' (Ps.84:10); 'For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday' (Ps.90:4); 'A thousand shall fall at your side' Ps.91:7); 'the word He commanded for a thousand generations' (Ps.105:8); 'one could not answer him once in a thousand' (Job 9:3); 'a mediator, one of a thousand' (Job 33:23); 'little among the thousands of Judah' (Mic.5:2); 'thousands of rams and ten thousand of rivers of olive oil' (Mic.7:2); 'One of them will chase a thousand of you' (Isa.30:17), 'The smallest shall become a thousand' (another translation – the least one shall become a tribe); Isa.60:2;; 'the city which used to put a thousand in the field will be left with a hundred' (Amos 5:3); 'Your neck is like the tower of David, on it hang a thousand bucklers' (Song of Sol.4:4); 'One man among a thousand I found' (Eccl.7:28); 'Even though he should live a thousand years twice over' (Eccl.6:6).

It is obvious from all the above verses that when the term 'thousand' is used in such a manner it is not to be taken literally or definitely. It has an indefiniteness about it, which means it is unlimited. It is not exact and it is to be taken figuratively. It indicates a very large number or a very long period of time.

Immediately as shown, we can discount the millennium as being an exact period of a thousand years. This throws out our preconceived ideas on a supposed millennium of a thousand years after the coming of the Lord that James speaks about (5:8). Some of these ideas are set out in the following chapters. I have heard all of them in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.

Therefore, the term 'a thousand years' found a few times in Revelation 20 is not to be taken literally or definitely. Rather it represents 'a period of indefinite time that can be unlimited'.

The language of scripture is not a language used in heaven. The Spirit of God speaks through men and they utter His message in their own particular language and form of words and expressions.

It is only when we pray in other tongues that we are using a language that is heavenly orientated. Our understanding is quiescent. Speech is operative.

We are in the realm of the Holy Ghost who is of heaven. Being the first installment of the heavenly inheritance, glory is found in such prayer and worship.

When John heard as he was in the Spirit, language that the redeemed of heaven were using, it was due to miracles. Those who were glorifying the Lamb would not have been using his language of Aramaic, Hebrew or perhaps Greek.

So what language was in use? It had to be directly of heaven and made knowledgeable to him. It is such that we all from various tribes and nations will use when we gather together around the throne of God.

It is highly improbable that the multitudes will be remembering each one's language of earth. Spirit inspired language that is understandable to the newly recreated minds will be the certainty. The glories of heaven are surely a part of the seal of the baptism with the Holy Ghost that believers often receive here.

CHAPTER 3

Views About Israel And The Millennium

The calling of Israel is irrevocable. They are elect and the promises of God for His elect now even regarding the land will be fulfilled. However, all promises are presently carried over into the New Testament for the elect that consists of the church of the Living God, the present Israel of God.

Those of the previous national Israel, such as Moses and Elijah, who were saved, are now in heaven with all the saved Gentiles, waiting for the resurrection. Salvation and God's purposes now are never to include every Israelite. What is purposed is that the remnant, throughout all generations, who have faith in Messiah, will be participants in the promises.

It cannot mean that Israel as a nation at some time will all be saved and that in one generation will be brought back to the land of Israel. That would eliminate all the chosen Israelites of all ages who have circumcision of the heart. This cannot be the intention.

We must not follow the idea of a people who have an irrevocable call to mean a national Israel with the idea of a land on this earth. God has never made promises to them without imposing conditions. Again, there is not any indication in the word of a promise or verse concerning a certain generation that would make up a national Israel in any millennium.

Meaning Of Everlasting Is Not Forever And Ever

We see the promise of land in Genesis 17:8 that reads: 'All the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession'. 'Everlasting' in the Hebrew dictionary means 'in perpetuity; for a period; long continuance into the future' and the NRSV reads: 'All the land of Canaan for a perpetual holding'.

The covenant as well as circumcision, are both said to be everlasting. This could not mean everlasting as we understand its meaning, because circumcision ceased. Therefore the promise of that particular land cannot mean everlasting as we would think.

We note the following: that substantiates the correct meaning stated above-

- a.i. The only time Israel had all the land of Canaan was for periods.
- ii. Also, from A.D. 66 until A.D. 1948, there were no Israelites who had the land of Israel. Therefore how we normally understand everlasting cannot be exactly what God did say, as those two situations just mentioned proved not to be everlasting in the sense some would take it to be. In addition, when time ceases, it will not be

possible for the land of Israel to be possessed by a natural nation of Israel. Heaven is our home, even if it is the New Jerusalem coming down to the new earth.

iii. Israel has defiled the land. Once defiled, it cannot return to a state of not being defiled. Because of this, the land of Israel can never be used for a 'holy' or 'chosen' natural nation, even during the idea of the millennium. The Lord stated: 'I brought you into a plentiful land ... But when you entered you defiled My land, and made My heritage an abomination' (Jer.2:7).

b. God used the same word, 'eternal' or 'everlasting' for the Law, Sabbath, circumcision, kingdom, priesthood, Israel and so on.

For the covenant to mean that Israel must possess the land again (in a millennium) would also indicate that the covenant would mean that the natural Israelites must go back to being circumcised. This has never been God's requirement since the gospel was given. The Spirit thus replaces the Law that was nailed to the cross.

Doctrine Of The Millennium In Church History

There was not a doctrine of the millennium in the first three centuries that was part of the Church's beliefs. Their views on the Bible were basic and scripturally orientated. There were a few only following the idea of a millennium. Most of the important church Fathers do not mention such a doctrine. However, the Alexandrian (African) church, with the famous Origen, emphasized the allegorical interpretation of scriptures. That was the only major area where there was this belief.

During the Middle Ages, belief in the millennium was regarded as heretical. At the time of the Reformation, the doctrine was rejected. The Augsburg Confession condemned those: 'Who scatter Jewish opinions, that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall occupy the kingdom of the world'. The Second Helvetic Confession stated: 'We condemn the Jewish dreams, that before the Day of Judgment there shall be a golden age on earth and the godly shall possess the kingdoms of the world'.

Up to the present time, the millennium has never yet been embodied in a single confession. The weight of theological opinion is against it. If we do not have a sound scriptural basis for any belief or experience we should not follow it.

The Reformed theologians began to teach a spiritual conception of the millennium and one that is continuously in existence before the end of the world and the return of Jesus Christ. They rejected the idea of a visible reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years. They said there would be a period of the spiritual presence of Christ in the church that would bring about a universal religious awakening. This is ongoing.

First Teaching Of A Few In The Church About A Millennium

It is a matter of history that a churchman considered a pseudo-apostle, named Cerinthus, in the first half of the second century, was the originator of the doctrine of the millennium. He lived in Asia Minor. Three major false doctrines are attributed to him:

a. A dualistic cosmology suggesting a being subordinate to the Father, created the world.

b. A Docetic Christianity wherein the Holy Spirit is supposed to have descended on Jesus at his baptism and abandoned him at his death.

c. An eschatology (the end time) promoted by him that included a millennium. After the general resurrection, he said Christ would appear to establish an earthly kingdom. He was a Judeo-Christian leader who was a Gnostic and Judaizer. This is not a valid basis for believing in a millennium doctrine as presently taught.

The earliest writing on a period of millennium was in A.D. 130 in the 'Epistle of Barnabas' and this was Alexandrian. It had been in western Asia Minor that the teaching began to appear. Cerinthus was active there in the beginning of the second century.

As early as A.D. 155, Justin Martyr conceded that although all Christians hoped for the resurrection of the dead, some did not wait for an earthly kingdom. The teaching of an earthly kingdom was not general.

No Early Teaching That Israel Would Be Restored As A Nation

Believers from then on until the nineteenth century generally did not have doctrines about a millennium. Even as far back as the period after the apostles passed on, there was no teaching whatsoever of a future hope for Israel outside the church. There was no idea of a separate future hope for Israel as a nation.

The truth is that prophecies even of Moses regarding that nation if she sinned and particularly if she followed idolatry, forbid such a naturally based future hope. The dire result of their sin would be manifest as the Lord revealed in this:

'Every other malady and affliction, even though not recorded in the book of this law, the LORD will inflict on you until you are destroyed. Although once you were as numerous as the stars in heaven, you shall be left few in number, because you did not obey the LORD your God. And just as the LORD took delight in making you prosperous and numerous, so the LORD will take delight in bringing you to ruin and destruction; you shall be plucked off the land that you are entering to possess.

'The LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other; and there you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone, which neither you nor your ancestors have known.

'Among those nations you shall find no ease, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and a languishing spirit.

'Your life shall hang in doubt before you; night and day you shall be in dread, with no assurance of your life' (Deut.28:61-66).

This is the foundational reason that we have, what many scornfully call, 'The wandering Jew'. He has been castigated by Popes, Kings, Rulers, nations and peoples, even Luther.

Believers in Christ are to love Jews as we do all mankind, particularly as Judaism fathered the faith. We must present the one and only gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to them.

Jewish Carnality Wanted An Earthly Kingdom

The unbelief of the Jews was that in their carnality, their hope of the Messiah centered only on His being a natural King.

The Jews thought He would overthrow the Romans and set up a kingdom on earth, as was David's. That is still their hope. For two thousand years they have been proved wrong. Unfortunately, many in the church of Jesus Christ seem to be following in their train, when interpreting the scriptures regarding the end time events. Believers are centering their hopes around what is happening in the land of Israel forgetting it is only for a holy people. We are to look for Christ to come.

Modern Belief God Restored Israel

It is believed that God restored the nation of Israel in 1948. Much has been overlooked. There has not been an indication of any supernatural intervention by God in these years of supposed restoration. Compared to the redemption of God's people out of Egypt under Moses when there were many outstanding miracles, there are no such miracles. The Promised Land is only for God's holy people. The Jews had been thrown out of the land as being unholy.

Looking at the books of Ezra and Nehemiah concerning the restoration of Israel from its captivity of seventy years in Babylon, one sees the direct hand of God, through the prophet and priest. Today, there is no such evidence in the modern state of Israel. How can it be possible that any such momentous event under God for a restored Israel could happen without His supernatural acts as formerly?

There is no sign of any Divine action by the hand of God in recent times. This applies to the period beginning after the Second World War and continuing until the present day. An Orthodox Rabbi has also made such statements and Orthodox Jews follow that belief.

It is obvious that the Christians, who believe in the popular eschatology, lobbied the U.S. Government year in and year out since about 1945, as well as certain wealthy Jews there. One may well ask, where in the New Testament and even in the Old Testament, are Christians asked to help bring about a Jewish State and become politically involved in its formation? If the prophecies they accept are indeed to be fulfilled, would not God do it supernaturally without the aid of the Christians? The New Testament shows a lack of involvement of the Christians and the church in any politics, particularly Jewish.

Today, Jews And Christians Await A Millennium

Both orthodox Jews and Christians are looking for the Messiah to come to make Israel the centre of these natural beliefs. However, believers are to 'look for Him to come a second time to bring full and final salvation. We know that in heaven we have a better possession that is permanent' (Heb.9:28; 10:34). This verse is followed:

'Then I saw thrones, and those seated on them were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.' (Rev.20:4).

The belief that this refers to, a 1000 year reign of Christ on earth conflicts with their other beliefs that:

a. Judgment is given by God at the white throne. (Rev.20:11&12) So how can saints judge men? We are to judge only angels and that in heaven.

b. Saints are already raptured according to the main belief and this before the seven year tribulation. So how could there be those beheaded for their testimony of Jesus? How could there be any saints left who would testify of Jesus and to their death?

c. There is no clarity at to a mark of the beast on forehead or hand. It is pure assumption to assume any such mark for end time believers to be a possibility.

d. As their belief is that saints are in heaven for the marriage supper of the Lamb and the dead already resurrected, how can such come to life to supposedly reign with Christ for a thousand years

These proofs show the untenability of using this verse as proof of thousand year reign with Christ on earth. Suffice to say the verse must surely have a different meaning.

Jewish Worship Carnal; Christian Worship Spiritual

Ancient Jewry had a carnal hope of a Messiah who would rule on a national basis. They worshipped in a worldly sanctuary' (Heb.9:1). We have a spiritual hope. Our worship is heavenly. There we enter with Christ behind the veil, into the very presence of God who is Spirit, into His heavenly sanctuary that was opened for us by the shed blood of the Lamb.

Jesus, as our Melchizedek priest, took that blood in and saved us to fill us with His Spirit thus enabling us to worship as God demands, 'in Spirit and in truth'. There is nothing in Hebrews chs.7-10 that indicate the necessity for an earthly sanctuary, earthly priests and vestments or an earthly (worldly) form of worship at any time while there are people of God on earth. This is applicable for any period of time.

Paul's Preaching

Paul preached about Jesus, the Savior, to those in Abraham's natural line stating: 'And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."' (Acts 13:32-34)'

Here again we see the Seed promised to Abraham has been exalted as Son by God in a special act of manifesting Christ as having prior Sonship. The promises of God for Israel always had the Christ as the apex. Israel is a player in the scene. Despite her wonderful original position before God and all the blessings, the nation was there to be the bearer only of Him who is the One for whom and by whom everything exists.

Paul said that God declared: '... I will give you the holy promises made to David' (Acts 13:34). Israel, the nation is not the recipient of these. It is Israel, the Servant of the Lord, Jesus Christ, given by God, who receives the promises. These are not just to benefit any person of Israel but inclusion was made for the many Gentiles to whom also, the light would come.

Paul went on to testify that: ‘By this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, that what the prophets said does not happen to you:

‘Look, you scoffers! Be amazed and perish, for in your days I am doing a work, a work that you will never believe, even if someone tells you’ (vvs.39-41).

These words verify the fact that there is no blessing or regard by God for any one in Israel unless he or she enters the door that has been opened under the new covenant. The old one is past. The only way is through the crucified Savior. It is never to be through His being King on earth. It is, however, because He became man. although Lord, meaning God or Jehovah This was so as to die on the cross for sin and be resurrected from the dead.

We should note that this portion, ‘has fulfilled unto us, the children’ (v.33), uses ‘has fulfilled’ that has a compound verb, used only here. It is intensive in meaning and is to be understood as ‘has completely fulfilled’. In view of this also, there can be no millennium on earth where it remains for Jesus Christ to sit on an earthly throne of David. He already is sitting on the restored throne of David and that kingdom has no end. It remains for His second coming to give His saints the ability to live in its fullness.

This means, without a doubt, that everything promised by God to Israel in the Old Testament about Messiah has reached fulfillment. To look for it to occur is to deny these scriptures.

The promises centered on Jesus, the Seed, as given to Abraham. At His resurrection He was given the holy promises made to David, and sat on the throne. This was not an earthly but a heavenly one.

Peter on the day of Pentecost, spelt out the fulfillment of Israel’s hope regarding their Messiah. He is exalted on high as Lord. David was not the one lifted up to heaven. This king had asserted that one of his line, the Messiah, would be his Lord and given a heavenly position as King. Out of the mouth and writings of David in Psalm 110:1, comes the certainty that he was not expecting his descendant to rule on an earthly throne. He knew by the Spirit that it would be an eternal throne in heaven and never in Jerusalem.

Peter declares it thus: ‘This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God ... For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand’ (Acts 2:32-34)’.

Jesus has been raised and declared to be both Lord and Christ by the Lord God, the Father. His Deity and Messianic role are to be acknowledged forever and always but only through His atonement on the cross and not by means of His becoming an earthly king. A millennial reign would not fit into God’s plans.

We Look For Heaven – Not For A Millennium

We have a heavenly hope. Our citizenship is in heaven, even as Paul declares our hope in these words: ‘... And it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ’ (Phil.3:20).

We have an inheritance 'that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven' for us (1 Pet.1:4).

Abraham had been promised an inheritance on this earth, but 'he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God' (Heb.11:10). He is said by Paul to have had the gospel preached to him (Gal.3:8). This would have included what Jesus said about His kingdom being not of this world.

Currently Believed Order Of Events

The general belief is that there will be the rapture, then the millennium and after that the judgment. These verses of scripture disprove such ideas:

'... At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

'These shall pay a penalty--eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His sight,

'whenever He comes, in that Day, to be glorified among His saints and to be marveled among all those having believed, because our testimony among you was believed' EMTV (2 Thes.1:7-10).

Wuest sets it out clearly with: 'Of the revelation of the Lord from heaven ... who are such that shall pay the penalty of everlasting ruin ... whenever he comes to be glorified in his saints'.

Both occur on the same 'day'. There is no time lapse. This should not be difficult to grasp when we are aware of a future marvelously great miracle. The Lord will cause hundreds of millions of saints to rise up out of their graves. Immortality will be theirs at the 'twinkling of an eye'.

The two occurrences are simultaneous. It would appear that on that occasion somehow there is judgment for unbelievers. We are reminded that the Father has time in His control.

What we consider time does not enter the picture.

Jesus already had stated this fact in these words: 'Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming in which all those in the tombs will hear His voice and shall come forth--those who have done good, to a resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to a resurrection of condemnation' EMTV (Jn.5:28&29).

From these words, we gather that the resurrection of those who believe in Christ and those who do not will be concurrent. There is no mention of any rapture or of a millennium.

Over the centuries, there have been many erroneous doctrines throughout the whole of Christendom. That we have followed false end time views should be no surprise.

Surely many of us need to change our ideas. That number is in the hundreds of millions.

Focusing On A National Israel Deprives Believers

Most preachers and theologians over all this time as well as believers, have not followed through on the source of all beliefs presently held. We did not understand

the ramifications of the whole subject regarding Israel and the millennium. The erroneous doctrines that do now include alterations, have been supported because of a mere partial comprehension of the whole basic body of them. There is blindness as to how these actual beliefs are sourced.

How could the major part of the church of Jesus Christ be so blind?

In turn, the pursuance of doctrines exalting Israel as a nation, has fathered other beliefs that maintain our stance in the secular instead of the heavenly. There is emphasis placed on garnering wealth from this world and in seeking to take over ruler ship in the many dimensions of earthly progress. This has extended to welcoming the world's musical rock scene into our churches, thinking we will 'take over from the Devil'. Instead, we have allowed him in the form of worldliness to invade what God intended should be the domain of His holy people.

Emphasis by many is always on the God who is love. There is also truth, righteousness and justice that are His attributes. These words from Hebrews may often go unnoticed unless the Holy Spirit directs our attention to them. So, whatever our beliefs, we all are obligated to heed these strong warnings from the Holy Spirit:

'For if we willfully persist in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy "on the testimony of two or three witnesses".'

'How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by those who have spurned the Son of God, profaned the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?

For we know the one who said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God' (Heb.10:16-22).

The author of Hebrews directed all of his discourse to those who had come out of Law into the ways of the gospel of grace that featured a new priesthood, a heavenly environment, a holy people of rest and those who had tasted of eternal life and of the Holy Ghost power of the age to come. We also have left the paths of sin and this world, to enjoy the blessings of God through the gospel and the ways of the Spirit.

We can sit down alongside those Hebrews of that day and aspire to follow the injunctions given them.

CHAPTER 4

Matters To Be Considered

Many years ago, I realized that the common interpretation of a certain passage of scripture was incorrect. It concerned what Jesus taught on the coming of the Son of Man. He said the wicked world had been eating and drinking and marrying until Noah entered the ark. Then in His words: ‘... And they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away.’ He likened it to the coming of the Son of Man that would be similar. Many will be swept away; one taken out of the field and the other left in safety and one taken from work into judgment with the other kept safe.

Here are the exact words of Jesus in this translation: ‘When the Son of Man appears, things will be just as they were when Noah lived. People were eating, drinking, and getting married right up to the day that the flood came and Noah went into the big boat. They didn’t know anything was happening until the flood came and swept them all away. That is how it will be when the Son of Man appears. Two men will be in the same field, but only one will be taken. The other will be left. Two women will be together grinding grain, but only one will be taken. The other will be left’ CEV (Mt.24:37-41).

The common interpretation was that believers would be raptured and the rest left behind. After hearing this very often, it suddenly dawned on me that the implication of Jesus was that those taken away were the ones affected by judgment, not for salvation. It would not be the believers taken away at the rapture as I had been taught.

This understanding was the glimmer of light that eventually led to an upset of everything encompassed by the common end time teaching even though the doctrines had been firmly ingrained in my mind.

There began a long period of examining all these concerns. There was studying, questioning and evaluating with prayer. It had its end in enlightenment by the word and I believe, the Spirit. I saw these doctrines were wrong and that the scriptures taught something altogether different.

With regard to believers being raptured in the above fashion, apart from anything else, this portion of scripture as it stands alone is enough to dispel all belief in such a rapture. The reason is that it is the only mention in the whole Bible approaching any possible idea that it could be a doctrine. It is a fallacy to base a whole doctrine on one verse of scripture. As is proved elsewhere in this book, Jesus was acting in His office of Prophet by foretelling the event in relation to the troubles that were to fall upon Jerusalem and all Israel some years ahead. None of the apostles shows any indication

of such a scene as 'one taken and the other left'. All the books, tapes, DVDs and movies on this idea are plotted on the imagination.

The Parable Of The Fig Tree

There was yet another discovery that startled me. This was something that had been used for many years as proof of the restoration of Israel. It was that once the tree sprouted there could be certainty of the approach of summer. The tree was likened to Israel. Once she was restored, they said, with the idea omitting any declared tribulations occurring, the end would be in that same generation. As Israel became a nation in 1948, one must negate this belief on the basis there has been more than a generation that has passed. Christ has not come. However, today we do not hear much about this parable.

Years ago we did follow that belief, so we present some details. It concerns the illustration Jesus gave about the nation by use of a fig tree. He is speaking here only in a parable: 'Now take an example from the fig-tree: when her branch has become soft and puts out its leaves, you are certain that the summer is near; Even so, when you see all these things, you may be certain that he is near, even at the doors. Truly I say to you, This generation will not come to an end till all these things are complete' BBE (Mt.24:32-34).

Jesus was, in fact, warning them of His coming to judge the nation. This began in AD 66 but we were all oblivious of the true meaning and past history, seemingly.

It is clear from a perusal of the above verses that what we were being taught was indeed incorrect.

To further stimulate the fact of its meaning judgment on Israel and not blessing, this action is presented. Jesus cursed an actual fig tree that did not produce fruit (Mk.11:20-23). He was giving a lesson to His disciples that they would have been unable to understand at the time.

Why Jesus Cursed The Fig Tree

He showed in the cursing, the fate of the Jewish nation. It was unfruitful. Its end was near. In the passage written by Matthew, He had been foretelling the terrible events that would happen to the nation, speaking about natural Israel, its end and the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.

He says that when a fig tree puts forth its leaves, all know summer is coming. His meaning was that His coming in judgment as Son of Man was near and the terrible things predicted would take place before 'this generation' passes away. It did happen in the conquest under Titus, A.D. 66-70. That generation had not passed away. It would end around that time, there being forty years in a generation. When He said these words, it was around A.D. 30.

Jesus had used figurative language to explain a spiritual truth, in this case, being a prophecy of things to come.

The Son Of Man Gives Judgment

'And then the sign of the Son of man will be seen in heaven: and then all the (tribes in many versions) nations of the earth will have sorrow, and they will see the

Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a great sound of a horn, and they will get his saints together from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other' BBE (Mt.24:30,31). This sign the Jews did receive when destruction and death fell upon them. All the tribes in Judea certainly would mourn at that time. It is also relative to Dan.7:13 below.

The words of Christ concerning the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem and the actual events were accompanied by the revelation of His glory. The Son of man would be seen to be who He is, the One into whose hands God has passed the right to judge.

Jesus used prophetic words about the destruction that was to come upon Jerusalem. He said there would be false Christs and false prophets and there were many before A.D. 70. The great tribulation would be upon them. He included the following verse:

'For wherever the carcass may be, there the eagles will be gathered together' EMTV (Mt.24:28).

The carcass stood for the nation of Israel that would know its demise. Flocking around Jerusalem at the time were the many eagle pennants of the Roman army. If the translation is vultures, such birds often accompanied an army ready to devour its dead prey. 'Eagle' is in the majority of texts. This was judgment by the Son of Man.

Jerusalem And The Temple

The destruction of Jerusalem was the occasion of God's vengeance, by the hands of His Son, who thereby manifested His power and glory. All power had been placed in His hands by the Father. Jesus Christ said in Revelation that He was 'the Almighty' or *El Shaddai* that also means: 'The pourer forth, of love and of wrath'.

He was revealed after His ascension in clouds to a throne of great glory, as recorded in Dan.7:13&14:

'As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and kingship that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed'.

We are reminded of the description by John: 'Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters.

'In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead ...' (Rev.1:12-17).

It is important to view the whole chapter in Matthew 24 as judgment by Christ. He uses the above Old Testament quotation there to reveal His power that would be

displayed on this nation that had continuously left Jehovah for idolatry and who would reject Messiah.

A View Of Matthew 24

Explanation of the points begins when Jesus said, 'I prophesy to you that not a block of stone here will be left standing on one another' (v.2). This literally took place when the Roman soldiers under Titus totally demolished the temple, where not one stone remained, even though each stone was a gigantic piece of work. Josephus tells us that even the ground upon which the temple stood was leveled off.

According to that historian, we would have to say that the Dome of the Rock is not on the site of the earlier temples. The Dome of the Rock has been built on the site of the Roman fort Antonia. The Wailing Wall is actually the western wall of that fort which according to Josephus, Titus ordered to be left standing as an encampment for his troops. It would shelter them from the heat of the western sun. Titus let part of the fort remain as it had not been erected by the Jews but by Romans. Anything Jewish was utterly destroyed.

Why then are believers along with Jews, looking to rebuild on that very spot a temple supposedly for the Messiah? It is strange that both Jews and Christians have considered the Wailing Wall to be part of Herod's ancient temple. The belief of Christians in face of the words of Jesus is rather astounding, when He said this: '... You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down'. These words are also recorded by Mark and Luke, showing their importance.

The temple area also included the walls. If a wall remained standing, His prediction would prove erroneous. Indeed, both Josephus the Jewish historian and Titus the Roman General whose instructions brought about the total destruction of the city and the temple, left in their annals the fact that all was destroyed.

The wailing wall is not the remains of the temple that also did include the walls. In fact, a reputable scholar who assisted at archaeological digs a few times, Ernest Martin, has written that when he first took Christians on tours and they saw walls standing, many exclaimed in astonishment on being informed they had been part of the temple. This was when he believed the general idea that they were remains of the temple.

Then, as he went on archaeological digs he found they eventually gave evidence that the walls had been part of Fort Antonia (named after Anthony), a fortress for Roman soldiers.

The words of the prophet were fulfilled when a man called Turnus Rufus, did as it says: 'Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height' (Mic.3:12). This translation adds further light: 'And so, because of you, Jerusalem will be ploughed under and left in ruins. Thorns will cover the mountain where the temple now stands'. CEV

We learn from the histories of the atrocities at the time, that Titus ordered his Army to remove the huge stones. This was done eventually and the remains carted

far away from Jerusalem. Some stones had been smashed as the soldiers searched for all the gold that had melted when huge fires swept the place.

It is apparent that Jewry, Christianity and Islam have all been taken in by a false report. Obviously the temple Mount was not the presently accepted one.

The disciples asked Jesus about the end of the 'world' KJV or 'age' other versions, considering such meant the end of the Jewish economy. For them it seems to have had nothing to do with the end of our world. It is not as many have thought in our day.

He had previously spoken of His coming in His kingdom and glory. They wanted to know when he would set up His temporal kingdom. Since He said (they thought) He would destroy 'the temple', they expected He would set up another. Their Jewish ideas were wrong. Jesus' reply did not include the building of any temple.

The signs indicated by Jesus were fulfilled before A.D. 70. Such were false Christs, rumors of wars, nation rising against nation, kingdom against kingdom. Then there were the pestilences and famine, with many earthquakes and fearful portents, such as a strange star and a comet lasting a year.

It is recorded that a man did for some years walk around in the city crying out, 'Woe, woe'. Calamities were the beginning of sorrow and the people were delivered up to affliction in judgment.

The book of Acts shows Christians being delivered up to councils and beaten in synagogues. Some were put to death, well before A.D. 66. It was persecution and not judgment. Great persecution came under Nero and a large multitude was executed, having been betrayed by the others. Many deserted the faith of Christ. Despite all these occurrences the gospel of the kingdom that Christ began to announce continued to be preached. The faithful met what they considered to be a glorious end in dying for Christ.

As Jesus had prophesied, it is a remarkable piece of history that the remaining believers fled to the mountains. This occurred during a lull in the siege.

There came the abomination of desolation (also in Mk.13:14) as this prediction: '... And in their place shall be an abomination that desolates, until the decreed end is poured out upon the desolator' (Dan.9.27). This was the Roman army with its idolatrous ensigns and images that they placed in the temple for sacrifice. The soldiers wreaked devastation and desolation.

Jesus cried 'Woe' to the women who had babes at the breast. Josephus tells how babies were killed and eaten. All this was the greatest of tribulations and unparalleled in their history. The time was shortened by the Jews themselves who killed each other, and who also suffered severe famine. History shows that many impostors saying they were Christ came on the scene as Jesus foretold.

Jesus continued His discourse by stating that lightning would come from the east, exactly the direction from which the Roman Army entered Judea. The dead carcass was the Jewish nation around which the Roman armies, or eagles gathered.

'Signs in the heavens, the moon and the stars' was poetic language meaning calamity as the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Joel had used. The history of those times has not shown (to me anyway) that this literally occurred. However, on

the night of 16th June, 2011, due to ash from volcanic eruptions in Chile, the moon was affected. The ash was blown even over the South Pole, and millions could see the moon colored blood red in an eclipse. Nevertheless, in Queensland, Australia, the full moon appeared the previous evening as being pure white.

We do know that without a doubt, there is a judgment day waiting for the whole world to face.

Joel had prophesied of the destruction of Jerusalem that ties in with Matthew 24 as being at the end of the Jewish age. This was included in the famous prophecy where the Lord made the promise:

'I will pour out my spirit on all flesh ... I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.

'Then everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD call' (2:28-30).

This connects with the outpouring of the Spirit and the appearance of signs as well as salvation along with destruction.

Christians did escape at this, the time of 'Jacob's troubles'. Those left in Judea fled to the mountains as Jesus had said to do (Mt.24:26). In vs.17-20, He showed that there should be a speedy departure to safety, by believers who would heed His words. Those who did not, with other Jews, generally met the fate of death. Some survived and a number were taken into slavery by the Romans.

Jesus had prophesied about armies and a flight: 'You will see armies all around Jerusalem. Then you will know that the time for its destruction has come.

'The people in Judea at that time should run away to the mountains. The people in Jerusalem must leave quickly. If you are near the city, don't go in to it!'

Many Christians knew these words of Jesus and obeyed. There was an exodus of some of His believers from Judea at one stage and at another from the city of Jerusalem. We quote the following regarding the history of those times:

'... It is remarked by several interpreters, and which Josephus takes notice of with surprise, that Cestius Gallus having advanced with his army to Jerusalem, and besieged it, on a sudden without any cause, raised the siege, and withdrew his army, when the city might have been easily taken; by which means a signal was made, and an opportunity given to the Christians, to make their escape:, as Eusebius [an early church father] says, to a place called Pella; so that when Titus [another Roman general] came a few months after, there was not a Christian in the city. (A.D. 66).

'Nero ordered Vespasian, a veteran general, back to Jerusalem in A.D. 67 to crush the Jewish uprising ... the damage to its ruling prestige by the Cestius incident.

'Vespasian advanced into Galilee, He conquered its major cities and subdued the land of that area ... he marched south and encamped around Jerusalem. But when word came of Nero's death back in Rome, Vespasian delayed his plan for taking Jerusalem, withdrew his troops, and returned to Rome to become emperor. Once again, the Jews had prevailed and the church was given additional time to leave the

city, if they had not already left. The work of destroying Jerusalem was left to Titus, the son of Vespasian, who did so in A.D. 70. Pella was the site for Christians who were fleeing Jerusalem because the Roman army was coming to quiet a Jewish revolution. It continued as a strong Christian city after that and hosted many monasteries throughout the prosperous Byzantine period.

‘Eusebius, an early Pope wrote: “The whole body, however, of the church of Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella. Here those that believed in Christ, having removed from Jerusalem, as if holy men had entirely abandoned the royal city itself, and the whole land of Judea; the divine justice, for their crimes against Christ and His apostles finally overtook them, totally destroying the whole generation of these evildoers from the earth" according to Dr. John Gill 1809’.

Josephus also verifies the Christian departure from Jerusalem in his writings. It is clear from the scriptures that the warning Jesus had given His disciples, eventually occurred as fulfillment.

According to the following verse, Christ foretold that the time for the Lord’s retribution would arrive in their generation: ‘The prophets wrote many things about the time when God will punish his people. The time I am talking about is when all these things must happen’ ERV (Lk.21:20-22).

Jesus said the time of punishment would be co-incidental with the events He proclaimed would occur (Mt.24; Lk.21: Mkk.11). Remarkably, in view of the prevalence of end time doctrines, v.22 above shows the significance of all that the prophets of the Old Testament had recorded by way of punishment. The time would arrive as it did in that period A.D. 66-70. It was in A.D. 69 that sieges were lifted for a short period.

He declared all the tribes of the ‘earth’ or ‘land’ would mourn. Both these words are shown as the dictionary meaning of the Greek word, being: ‘All the tribes of the land will mourn’ means the tribes of Israel will mourn.

Jesus sent His angels or messengers of the gospel, to gather in those who would believe. John uses the word ‘angel’ in his book of Revelation, when referring to such as being the pastor of a particular church. The angel was not a heavenly being in this instance but ‘messenger’. From the day of Pentecost, the gospel was preached all over the Roman Empire.

The book of Acts is a depository of many of those historical events.

Jesus Curses The Fig Tree

After He concluded many of His prophecies concerning the Jews, there came the occasion when Jesus gave a lesson from the fig tree. This is the time when He said that the generation, the one of His day, would not end before all the words spoken had been fulfilled.

This fulfillment finally took place by A.D. 73, in the fall of Masada, where the remainder of Jews there, all committed suicide.

That the prophecy was fulfilled to the minutest detail leaves us with amazement, some horror, godly fear and utter faith in Christ and in His word. We quote the following scriptures that relate to the destruction of Jerusalem:

“There will be terrible earthquakes, famines, and dreadful diseases in various places. Terrifying sights and miraculous signs will come from the sky.

‘Before all these things happen, people will arrest and persecute you. They will hand you over to their synagogues and put you into their prisons. They will drag you in front of kings and governors because of my name.

‘It will be your opportunity to testify to them. So make up your minds not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. I will give you words and wisdom that none of your enemies will be able to oppose or prove wrong.

‘Even parents, brothers, relatives, and friends will betray you and kill some of you. Everyone will hate you because you are committed to me. But not a hair on your head will be lost. By your endurance you will save your life.

‘When you see armies camped around Jerusalem, realize that the time is near for it to be destroyed.

‘Then those of you in Judea should flee to the mountains. Those of you in Jerusalem should leave it. Those of you in the fields shouldn't go back into them.

‘This will be a time of vengeance. Everything that is written about it will come true.

‘How horrible it will be for women who are pregnant or who are nursing babies in those days. Indeed, the land will suffer very hard times, and its people will be punished.

‘Swords will cut them down, and they will be carried off into all nations as prisoners. Nations will trample Jerusalem until the times allowed for the nations to do this are over.

‘Miraculous signs will occur in the sun, moon, and stars. The nations of the earth will be deeply troubled and confused because of the roaring and tossing of the sea.

‘People will faint as they fearfully wait for what will happen to the world. Indeed, the powers of the universe will be shaken.

‘Then people will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

‘When these things begin to happen, stand with confidence! The time when you will be set free is near’ GW (Lk.21:11-28).

There are words Jesus said to a large crowd of people following Him to His crucifixion. He was addressing the issue of judgment that was soon to come in their generation. We see it in these verses:

‘And a great multitude of people were following Him, and of women who also were bewailing and lamenting Him.

‘But turning to them, Jesus said, Daughters of Jerusalem do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

‘For behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts which did not suckle.

‘And they shall begin to say to the mountains, fall on us! And to the hills, cover us!

‘For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?’ MKJV (Lk.23:27-31).

His reference to a green or a dry tree was in the form of a common proverb. The meaning according to RWP is that a green tree being hard to burn is for the innocent whereas a dry tree that is easily burnt is for the guilty. He represents Himself as the green tree, the innocent One.

JFB comments that if such a punishment (as the cross), is laid upon the innocent, what will happen to those provoking it!

Despite His crying: ‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they do’, He knew and foretold that a just punishment would eventually fall upon the nation. It would not only be for their great sin of crucifying their Messiah but for all of their wickedness done over the centuries, including that of killing the prophets. He was spelling out something of the events that would begin to overtake them in A.D. 66.

Why are our pulpits void of mention on the judgment Christ poured out on Israel at that time? Historians record that all of the abovementioned events occurred around the time of troubles for Israel, in the atrocities that occurred until her end. We note the following:

‘Secular historians of the time support the biblical record. And as to earthquakes, many are mentioned by writers during a period just previous to 70 AD there were earthquakes in Crete, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colosse, Campania, Rome, and Judea. It is interesting to note that the city of Pompeii was much damaged by an earthquake occurring on 5 February, A.D. 63 Henry Alford compiled the following list:

‘The principal earthquakes occurring between this prophecy and the destruction of Jerusalem [in A.D. 70] were, a great earthquake in Crete, A.D. 46 or 47; one at Rome on the day when Nero assumed the manly toga, A.D. 51; one at Apamea in Phrygia, mentioned by Tacitus, A.D. 53; one at Laodicea in Phrygia, A.D. 60; one in Campania; Seneca, in the year, A.D. 58. He writes:—“How often have cities of Asia and Achaea fallen with one fatal shock showing many cities have been swallowed up in Syria, how many in Macedonia! How often has Cyprus been wasted by this calamity! How often has Paphos become a ruin! News has often been brought us of the demolition of whole cities at once.”

Notice the tight geographical area of these earthquakes within a period of just twelve years.’

Flavius Josephus, an eyewitness to the events surrounding Jerusalem’s destruction, describes an earthquake in Judea of such magnitude ‘that the constitution of the universe was confounded for the destruction of men.’ Josephus goes on to write that the Judean earthquake was ‘no common’ calamity, indicating that God Himself had brought it about for a special purpose.

One commentator writes: ‘Perhaps no period in the world’s history has ever been so marked by these convulsions as that which intervenes between the Crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem?’

Since the generation between A.D. 30 and A.D. 70 is past, there is no reason to attach prophetic significance to earthquakes in our day. We cannot expect a second and detailed fulfillment of Matthew 24:7. Christ did not give any indication of such an event. Therefore, they are not signs of the immanency of Jesus' return in our generation. They were a prelude to the near coming of Jesus in judgment upon Jerusalem in the generation of the apostles.

Jesus' Words Are The Truth.

The words of Jesus in Luke 21 above were all fulfilled. He even declared that 'This will be a time of vengeance. Everything that is written about it will come true' (Lk.21:22).

Clarke writes: 'Judgment had been threatened by almost all the prophets against that wicked city. They had spoken of its crimes and threatened its ruin. Once God had destroyed Jerusalem and carried the people to Babylon; but their crimes had been repeated when they returned, and God had again threatened their ruin. Particularly was this very destruction foretold by Daniel (9:26&27).' There were persecutions, atrocities, pestilences, earthquakes and famines, and various armies that came and went. As pointed out, the Christians did escape.

None of these prophecies await any possibility of occurring in the future. These predicted events will never occur during any so-called period of the 'great tribulation'.

When we consider the contents of Matthew 24 (v.3 onwards) and then read the records by some historians of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70 we have to marvel at the accuracy of the Biblical record.

Every verse as prophesied by Jesus was fulfilled. They are not awaiting fulfillment during some time in the future. They do not refer to some future events that Darby and all his followers have stated would occur. A reading of the two relevant verses confirms this: 'But Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly I say to you, by no means will a stone be left here upon a stone, which shall not be thrown down".'

The destruction of Herod's temple having been announced and fulfilled, we can be assured that the contents of His discourse in Matthew 24 specifically concerned that event as well as Jerusalem itself. Solomon's temple had been destroyed and rebuilt in an inferior manner by Zerubbabel as in the book of Zechariah. Then came Herod's magnificent temple that somewhat used the design of Ezekiel. It was still called 'the second temple' by the Jews.

This was the subject of their question as specified here: 'And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"' EMTV (Mt.24:2&3)'.

They do not ask the signs of the Messiah's coming at the end of all of time to judge the world. They possessed Jewish minds that revolved around certain misconceptions of Old Testament prophecies. They were anticipating that the Messiah would be a national King who threw out all their enemies. It was not until

after Pentecost when the Holy Spirit began to teach them, that they understood this was not to be.

In the time of Jesus, the Jews viewed this verse differently from what many modern believers do: 'But you, Daniel, keep this message a secret. You must close the book and keep this secret until the time of the end' (of their age) ERV (Dan.12:4).

Their Jewish understanding was that the passage meant: 'That is, the period when all these things shall be accomplished. Then the truth of the prediction now carefully sealed up will be seen and acknowledged; and then, also, it may be expected that there will be clearer knowledge on all these subjects, for the facts will throw increased light on the meaning and the bearing of the predictions'. It is not about the end of this age of world history.

We have reason to place our faith in the word of God when we also note that Moses had prophesied about these events Jesus foretold. He particularly pointed out features of the Romans. This is to be observed in:

'The LORD will bring a nation from far away, from the end of the earth, to swoop down on you like an eagle, a nation whose language you do not understand, a grim-faced nation showing no respect to the old or favor to the young' (Ex.28:49&50). (Surely this is indicative of the Roman Army.)

'It shall besiege you in all your towns until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout your land; it shall besiege you in all your towns throughout the land that the LORD your God has given you.

'In the desperate straits to which the enemy siege reduces you, you will eat the fruit of your womb, the flesh of your own sons and daughters whom the LORD your God has given you' (vvs.51&52).

'The LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other' (v.64). This has been the case from A.D. 70 until the present time. Sadly, these prophecies by Moses centuries previously also happened historically in every detail, as history informs us:

'The LORD will bring you back in ships to Egypt, by a route that I promised you would never see again; and there you shall offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer' (v.68).

Josephus records that thousands of them were taken by the Romans to Egypt where they were offered as slaves with many remaining unsold as they were considered to be worthless for slavery.

The Run Of Events

There were certain events that occurred before Jesus was faced with the crucifixion. He told many parables and pronounced His death at the hands of the Jews. He foretold the end of the nation and the gathering in of another people. Afterwards, in chapter 24, He pronounces judgment and the end of Israel, the temple, priesthood and sacrifices.

Such terrible warnings are followed by other parables including the one about the ten bridesmaids or virgins. He discloses the fact that half of them, who were looking for the coming of the bridegroom, did not go into the marriage feast (Mt.25).

He includes as a finale, the parable regarding the handing out of talents and speaks of His coming as the Son of Man. This latter also surely was in relation to the judgment He would pour out on Israel. Some would 'be taken' and others 'left'.

It also can be applicable to the end of the church age as at that time He will also act as a Judge with great power. At the time of the end of the Jewish age, there would be fulfillment of the events foretold by Daniel about Israel. He catalogued such as pertaining only to his nation.

We note all of this from Daniel 12:1-4:

'Daniel, at that time the great prince (angel) Michael will stand up. Michael is in charge of your people.

'There will be a time of much trouble, the worst time since nations have been on earth. But Daniel, at that time every one of your people whose name is found written in the book of life will be saved.

'There are many who are dead and buried. Some of them will wake up and live forever, but others will wake up to shame and disgrace forever.

'The wise people will shine as bright as the sky. Those who teach others to live right will shine like stars forever and ever.

'But you, Daniel, keep this message a secret. You must close the book and keep this secret until the time of the end. Many people will go here and there looking for true knowledge, and the true knowledge will increase.' ERV

The time mentioned is in relation to that at the end of Daniel 11.

The whole chapter was fulfilled in exact detail by the rising of empires and rulers. Each verse can be identified with figures and events of history. A final King was Herod the Great in his palace (Dan.11:36-39&45). Some centuries later, he died a fearful death, A.D. 4. His grandson was smitten of God and eaten by worms (Acts 12:23).

Daniel speaks prophetically to the Jews alone and not people of any other race. Included was the great tribulation to be in those days Jesus would later predict. The Jews alive at that time and who believed in the Christ of the gospel would be saved. Regarding those who would rise up out of death, we can see this occurred in the gospels where it is revealed that many of the saints arose and appeared to some in Jerusalem at the resurrection of Christ.

Believers in Christ of that period now enjoy eternal life and those who did not will spend an eternity in hell. The last verse is not concerning people on this earth going from place to place by modern transport to convey any message. The reality is, according to the prophecy, that many of the Jews would be looking for fulfillment of Daniel's prophecies, but the real secret would not be discovered until it was occurring. That would be 'the time of the end' of the Jewish economy.

We think back to the matters in Matthew 25. After such were gone into, Jesus and His disciples partook of the Passover (Mt.26). Now He makes pronouncement that it has become a memorial of the shedding of His blood that ushers in the new

covenant. This can only occur after the end of celebration of the last Jewish Passover of the Old Testament or Covenant, for all time. It also necessitates the aforesaid destruction of temple worship and its sacrifices.

God thus made no allowance for any further celebration of the Jewish Passover as had been common for centuries. Christ Himself becomes the Passover Lamb, offered late on that final Passover day, Friday at 3 p.m. (the ninth hour). Sabbath Saturday, He is in the grave. Death is His portion, signifying the end of the old covenant.

The Father rests and Christ does, on the seventh day, 'from His work' (Heb.4:10). Sunday morning was a new week. Christ arose, 'on' the third day as He had repeatedly foresaid, marking the beginning of the actual occurrence when the gospel of grace and rest commences (Heb.3&4). Temple worship of external works ended.

Note must be taken of the then Jewish manner of calculating time. Portion only of a day was considered to be a day and night. Thus, on the Friday, He was placed in the grave before 6 p.m., when the second day commenced. Friday was the first day. Saturday became the second day. It was completed by 6 p.m. of that day. It was the Sabbath. The third day commenced at 6 p.m. Saturday and His resurrection occurred on that third day, before sunlight, around dawn.

This event was in the middle of the seventieth 'week' of Daniel 9:24-27. Christ, our sinless and pure Passover Lamb, had made atonement on the cross in the work of redemption. While hanging there He said: 'It is finished'. The work of redemption was completed on the cross and not in the grave. His resurrection brought about our justification as Paul shows:

'He was sentenced to death because of our sins and raised to life to justify us' ISV (Rom.4:25).

His death was on our behalf for our sin and its atonement. Through His resurrection we receive justification. Our justification was perfected and made complete.

'Whom God set forth *to be* propitiation, through faith, by his blood ...' RV (Rom.3:25).

'Propitiation' means 'an atoning victim'. This has given us a living hope for the finalizing of our salvation when the Lord comes. We learn this from:

'... He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

'Who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last times' ESV (1 Pet.1:3-5).

We have been born of God through His great mercy and are united to Christ. He has given us a hope that lives and is not dead. The resurrection of Jesus Christ verifies the work of salvation as being acceptable to God. Immortality is thus assured to us in a blessed way in which we should greatly rejoice and give thanks.

How then will Jews and Gentiles who come through a millennium, receive immortality?

CHAPTER 5

End-time Views Originated With Darby

Darby Proclaims End-Time Views

The modern teaching regarding the millennium began as an extensive influence on the English speaking church, with John Nelson Darby, about 1828. Darby was the founder of the Exclusive Brethren out of which came the Plymouth Brethren. He promulgated amongst other errors, the teaching of a 'thousand year reign of Christ'.

He was an aristocrat, part of the British Establishment as his middle name would indicate. This was given to him because Admiral Lord Nelson, famous for at least victory in the battle of Trafalgar, was his godfather. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin and originally served as an Anglican priest.

At the time he began to publicly air his views, Joseph Smith founder of the Mormons, also wrote of a regathering of Israel. In addition, the founder of Adventism (Seventh Day), Ellen White, began teaching the same things at that time. Judge Rutherford of the Jehovah's Witnesses wrote of the millennium and blessings for the Jews.

Strange bedfellows for us!

How Darby Came To Accept These Doctrines

While at college, Darby was influenced by such theologians as Professor Richard Graves, an advocate for the Jews in the British Empire. Darby, as part of the Establishment obviously acceded to the demand for there to be an Israel in the power of that empire.

Having become dissatisfied as a parish priest, he switched to the belief that the church was to be a heavenly people. By 1828 he had begun to propose some of his new ideas. He also became involved with the aristocratic Powerscourt Conferences that were about the return of Christ to earth.

He also became a friend of Francis Newman, formerly of Quaker background but who became a Roman Catholic, later to be Cardinal. With friends of such histories that naturally were influential, he subtracted and added to his doctrines, even naming the coming of the Lord as being 1842.

Darby's teachings were not original. A sixteenth century Jesuit monk had already brought forward settled theories as to the end times. There had been a book written by Theodore Beza, a Jew, who would have followed the normal but carnal Jewish belief that had been in existence at the time of Christ, of a millennial kingdom on

earth ruled by the Messiah. Also, there were prophecies from the Irvingites, even by one, Margaret McDonald, tending towards the soon return of Christ and to earth. Darby therefore was not original in his doctrines, as he claimed to be, even to the extent of declaring it to be a new revelation.

He is the recognized 'father of Dispensationalism' by some and thought the gospel age to be less important than that for Israel as being on this earth. During that same century, there grew to be a large number of the clergy and intellectuals who were infatuated with the idea of an Israel in its own land and about pre-millennialism.

John Nelson Darby and his followers, the Exclusive and Plymouth Brethren, have violently opposed speaking in tongues, saying it is of the Devil. They also taught that God's purpose of the cross of Christ would not have happened had the Jews not rejected Jesus as their Messiah.

They say the cross became necessary because of Jewish unbelief. They say that the church period then became a parenthesis only, because God's real purpose is with the Jews. However, Jesus Christ is the 'Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' and the cross is not a parenthesis. God loved the world of Jewry in particular.

They base their end-time views on the Old Testament and not the New and preach largely from it.

They Took Hold In England

The teachings of Darby had taken a hold in England through the Scottish preacher, Irving, who founded a large church in London. There was a student of prophecy, a Mr. Hartley Frere, who was not a minister and thus had no platform from which to promulgate such things. He had converted Irving to these beliefs. Irving had that platform and thousands listened to his great oratory. Darby was one. Irving obtained much of his data from perusal of the work of the Jesuit priest, Manuel Lacunzz, who wrote under the Jewish name of Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra.

In 1825 Irving's and Darby's belief in the imminent return of Christ was preached ardently. It did not happen. Nearly two centuries have passed without the expected return.

The American Churches Received Darby's Doctrines

Darby traveled a few times to the U.S.A. in the nineteenth century, converting the leading churchmen, theologians and Seminary and Bible School principals. It is amazing that they accepted it without much question and did not investigate the whole of the Bible to verify it.

America received these teachings at great length through at least D.L. Moody and C.I. Schofield with his Schofield Bible. D.L. Moody was poorly educated. Schofield was not a Bible scholar. Because his notes are at the bottom of each page of Holy Writ published by him, readers tend to receive his teachings. They appear to be part of the Bible! Spurgeon, towards the end of his life, the latter part of the nineteenth century, preached the pre-millennial return of Christ. Pentecostals in the main believe in Darby's doctrines and that coming from Irving. It should be noted that while the English Spurgeon was a Dispensationalist, he did refute some of Darby's ideas.

Neither man had access to much of the history that came into being after the book of Daniel. They were ignorant as most Westerners have been in relation to the history of the multitude of Christians and their leaders in the Asian Continent. This area extended from Syria, through Mesopotamia, right to the east. This included China, India, Sri Lanka and even Afghanistan with many other countries. Most of their manuscripts and documents were destroyed by the Mongols who eventually converted to Islam and Moslems also as well as the Chinese Ming dynasty. In our day all who would search for it, have access to much history. There is no excuse for the mass ignorance of these matters that exists among millions of believers.

As the end time doctrines were accepted by most leaders in the States, naturally their Seminaries and Bible Schools impregnated their students with such teachings. It has been the normal occurrence until this day.

According to my estimation, there may have been around twenty three million students so affected. These became missionaries, apostles, pastors, teachers, evangelists, prophets, church workers and it included lay people. How could the barrage of teaching from such a great number, result in anything but a wide-spread belief world-wide that exists at the present time?

Irving Prominent In Dissemination Of Such Doctrines

That Irving was the leader of the Irvingites who spoke in tongues should not be reason for Pentecostals to accept all his beliefs. Another thing is that Pentecostals and Charismatics in particular follow Darby's teachings on interpretation of Old Testament Prophecy and even certain portions of the New Testament whereas Darby strongly opposed the speaking in tongues. His followers still do, saying it is of the Devil. How can we Pentecostals be so indiscriminate in our thinking?

Regarding Irving's, Darby's and Schofield's beliefs, it is doubtful that most of us have known the full foundation of their teachings on prophecy that we have followed and that most still do. Such foundations are contrary to the Bible and to the teachings of the early church.

These beliefs are not to be classed as having originated from the Evangelicals, Fundamentalists, Pentecostals or Charismatics. It was John Nelson Darby, founder of the Exclusive Brethren, who promulgated this teaching of the millennium and the eschatology widely believed. Darby as being the acknowledged 'Father of Dispensationalism', with others, formulated this doctrine that originally came from a sixteenth century Monk, as stated above. He was also a British colonialist, which country desired Israel.

About Darby (This copied from the Internet)

'Because Darby insisted on there being irreversible and progressive ages, in which the church was merely one such age, he deduced, a priori, that there could be no future earthly hope for the church. He argued that scripture does not, ...present the restoration of a age; it never justifies its actual condition; though grace may... effect revivals during the long suffering of God, the age, as such, is actually gone, that the glory of the principle contained in it may shine forth in the hands of the Messiah. The attempt to set this age on another footing as to its continuance, than those ages

which have failed already, shows ignorance of the principles of God's dealing. The calling of God was always by grace. Instead he speculated that the church would soon be replaced in God's purposes on earth by a revived national Israel.

'The church has sought to settle itself here, but it has no place on the earth. [Though] making a most constructive parenthesis, it forms no part of the regular order of God's earthly plans, but is merely an interruption of them to give a fuller character and meaning to them (the Jews).

Darby, through his rigid literalist interpretation of scripture, regarded the covenantal relationship between God and Abraham as binding for ever, and that the promises pertaining to the nation of Israel, as yet unfulfilled, would find their consummation in the reign of Jesus Christ on earth during the millennium. He thereby encouraged an essential dichotomy between those promises that applied to Israel and those to the church'.

Darby misunderstood the prophets not only told the future but all God wanted his people to know. The purpose was not for an Israel on earth but for a Savior Who would come to save from all races for a heavenly kingdom. Abraham knew it but Darby did not.

The Seven Periods Of One Thousand Years Each

The Brethren for many years have taught all these things. One such is that there were periods of human history that were typified by the seven days of creation. God made the world in six days and on the seventh day He rested. Therefore, because Peter says one thousand years is 'as one day and one day as a thousand years in God's sight', man's history will last for a period of six thousand years followed by a millennium, the Sabbath rest that is to be specifically for the Jews. During the millennium it is said that Jesus Christ will physically sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem, after He has descended from heaven with His church of translated believers.

The six thousand years have actually passed, ceasing around 1996! As the whole doctrine is based on this opinion, one would think that the fact six thousand years have come and gone would alert its followers to see that if the foundation of belief failed the total edifice toppled to the ground.

The fact that some Bible expositors have measured time into seven ages has given rise to false ideas. Their seventh age is the 'thousand year reign of Christ', on this earth. Jesus Christ has a heavenly kingdom and never will it be on this earth.

Some early theologians and many today, did have the idea that a six day period of creation with a following seventh day of rest meant the world would exist for seven thousand years.

They considered six thousand years would be followed by a thousand years of 'rest' or millennium. They thought that because Peter said: 'A thousand years is with the Lord as one day' (2 Pet.3:8) that the world would exist as is for six thousand years and that the seventh thousand (millennium) would be for the Jew. Peter says 'as' and not 'is'. He does not say 'A thousand years is with the Lord, one day'. It is 'as' or 'like', a simile.

Jesus Would Descend And Stand On The Mount Of Olives

Regarding the belief that Jesus Christ will return to earth after the great tribulation, it is said that this time He will stand on the Mount of Olives which will split in two. I have never heard a single person say how the church will descend - with Him then, or after, or when it will do so! They quote from Zechariah and miss the spiritual nature of the application that never included a natural one, in this instance of prophecy. Many prophecies do have a dual interpretation but this one does not. It is a geological impossibility that has never occurred.

Jesus will appear as the Messiah to the Jewish Nation. They will accept Him. Jesus will sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem. He, with the raptured saints then on earth, will reign for a thousand years over the whole of humanity remaining after the great tribulation, the antichrist reign and the mark of the Beast. There are varied beliefs regarding this.

The Jews to Evangelize The World With Another Gospel

The Jews are expected to evangelize the world with the gospel of the kingdom. This is not the gospel of the atonement of Christ on the cross. It is another kind of gospel. Multitudes will believe that new gospel. This will include some of the Christians who are still alive after all the tribulation and who never made it in the rapture. There is to be a new chance for them. It is rather strange. They had believed the first gospel and now they must accept another one. Adherents of these ideas follow the idea of two gospels. There is an ignoring of the words of Scripture that tell us:

‘And having fallen away, *it is impossible for them* again to renew to repentance, crucifying again for themselves the Son of God, and putting *Him* to open shame, LITV (Heb.6:6); with

‘How much more, think ye, will he receive capital punishment, who hath trodden upon the Son of God, and hath accounted the blood of his covenant, by which he is sanctified, as the blood of all men, and hath treated the Spirit of grace with contumely?’ Murdock (Heb.10:29).

There are many beliefs from present-day preachers that stand condemned by the above words. Jesus Christ was not an ordinary man. He was and is God and Man.

What Belief About The Millennium Involves

Further identification of the belief in the millennium continues as follows. People remaining on earth after the terrible seven years’ of tribulation will live for centuries. The animal kingdom will no longer have enmity, one kind with another or against humanity. According to popular end time theory, Satan will be bound during the millennium and at the end of this period will be released to gather the nations to battle at Armageddon. The current belief is that evil is revealed during the last great battle that will be in one valley in Israel (Rev.16:16; 20:7-10). The carnage will be terrible, taking seven years to clean up! This is just prior to a suggested renewal of the earth. Peter informed us God will make a new heaven and a new earth.

The quite ridiculous beliefs are that the Church will somehow be taken back to heaven and this without the Savior being there. Instead Christ is to rule from

Jerusalem and minister in the Temple. Israel is to live on this renewed earth forever. The redeemed by the blood of the Lamb under the only gospel ever given will spend eternity in some other place, heaven.

However, the scene here that is figurative in the above verses shows it as being played out after a thousand years. Thayer's dictionary states the meaning as: 'plural of uncertain affinity'. Such a warfare, whatever its meaning, provides proof that multitudes of people who might be living during a millennium still have not been released from their sinfulness. Yet Jesus Christ supposedly had reigned over them for a thousand years. How can this be when He is to reign over the house of David (the redeemed) forever (Lk.1:52&53)?

Despite the fact that Satan is bound by the work of Christ on the cross, and that we have been translated out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of the Son, we still suffer in this world with sinfulness, sorrow, sickness and death. In such a matter also we can believe that Satan is bound for a 'thousand years' as he does not have complete control in this area that still afflicts us all. Nowhere does it say he is bound in hell. At the end, he is confined to the lake of fire prepared for him and his angels.

The faithful in the church continually reign in life throughout the whole church age, spoken of as being 'a thousand years'. Such an idiom, 'a thousand years' is an indeterminate period of time as already described.

Christ went into the strong man's house and has bound him. Satan is bound and goes around the earth from his center in the atmosphere like 'a roaring lion', See Mt. 12:29; Mk. 3:20-30, Lk. 11:29, or paralyzed, (Rhm), even neutralized, (Ber), as Heb. 2:14; Col. 2:15; Rev. 20:2.

Satan's power over nations is broken to such an extent that believers can enter heathen countries and multitudes of heathen are released from his power. They hear the gospel and believe in Christ as Savior from their sin.

Any thought of a literal war, with literal forces of war in the army of Christ against literal forces of war and the army of Satan, cannot rightly be entertained (Rev.19:11-21; 20:7-10).

One look at the scene in the garden of Gethsemane, when Peter used a sword and the subsequent action and words of Jesus, shows how contradictory such a literal war would be. Jesus said to him: 'Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?' (Mt.6:52&53).

Symbols

The Bible uses symbols for the Holy Spirit, e.g. a dove, oil, water and so on. A certain people in South Africa use the symbols of different colors to communicate different ideas. We should not think it strange that the writers of the books of Revelation and Daniel, used symbols as the Holy Spirit conveyed His message through them. They wrote the books in their natural language, part of which was in one case, Greek and in the other Hebrew, both writers being Jews. It was customary to include symbols as a feature of expression.

The Teachings Come From Darby To Us

All these teachings mentioned herein were promoted by Darby. They included that of seven ages he called 'dispensations', the last one being the so-called millennium. There are not any ages stated as such in the Bible. It is a man-made and imaginative theory. The word 'age' meaning as is said, 'a period of time or era during which God judges on a specific dimension' is never used in this sense.

The word 'dispensation' that we have in our English Bibles means 'ministry of'. Paul was given a dispensation of the grace of God to proclaim the gospel. Just once is 'dispensation' used as meaning 'a religious economy' in the KJV but this is another version: 'as a plan for the fullness of time' ESV (Eph.1:10). Other versions use 'administration' that obviously is not any period of time.

This seventh age of Darby's and the present day Evangelical Church was supposed to end in 1992, 1997 or 2000. We know it did not as we are still waiting the coming of the Lord's. Many at the turn of the century then readjusted their thinking and placed the date about fifty years ahead.

The battle Of Armageddon, The Great White Throne Judgment

The belief is that a battle will take place in one small valley of Armageddon (Rev.16:16). With all of our modern weapons and large, modern armies, how could this be? They say a period of a literal seven months will be needed to bury the dead (Ezek.39:11&12; Rev.19:17). The corpses, numbering many millions, would be rotten, disease producing and stinking. It is all a physical impossibility.

I suggest that the symbolic language used in the book of Revelation also concerns great and wonderful things willed and allowed by God, now taking place on this earth.

After the above occurrences, the millennium finishes with the battle of Armageddon. Then there is to be the Great White Throne judgment, the wicked thrown into hell and heaven begins. These things are all part of the end time eschatology.

When consideration is given to the book of Revelation one has to admit that there are difficulties. Much of the descriptions and language is such that there is trouble deciding actual meanings. There can be no certainty.

We cannot really relate the book to Matthew's Gospel or to that of Daniel. In Matthew, even though Jesus often used parables, He explained their meaning. As regards Matthew 24, history shows us without a doubt, what His prophecies intended to convey.

In relation to Daniel, even though he used apocalyptic language, the meaning and intention are clarified by looking at history and seeing the exact fulfillment. Sometimes the dreams and visions would be identified as having reference to future occurrences that became explicable or the writer did reveal what they meant.

Then there is Ezekiel's language of a similar nature. However, that book does not present itself as being difficult to understand as does the last book in the Bible.

It is totally different from Revelation where apart from the chapters at the beginning and the end, and some in the middle, the language is so mystical that the

obvious meanings escape us. However, we can rest assured that it mainly had its fulfillment in the destruction of Israel and Jerusalem. There is blessing there for us but we should be careful that we are not adamant about any answer we may think we have.

Schofield

Schofield later took Darby's teaching, even though he was not a theologian, and incorporated it into the Schofield Bible. This Bible found its way into millions of homes, as now the Dakes' Bible has proceeded down the same course. Every other Bible with footnotes at the bottom of its pages has followed the same path. They all subscribe to a doctrine appearing to be in the Bible itself but which actually cannot be found there.

People gave importance to these teachings because they were footnotes in a Bible and thus considered as reliable as the Bible itself. Schofield was a medical doctor. I had one of his books in which he stated that people who speak in tongues are fit for an Insane Institution. The whole doctrine did not originate with the Pentecostals. They followed it because some believers who already had that teaching, became baptized with the Spirit.

Schofield's Grave Errors – Four Gospels

Schofield Reference Bible that outlines Darby's doctrines discloses:

1. The gospel of the kingdom. The good news that God had promised to set up an earthly kingdom. It was to be political, spiritual, Israelites, universal and to be ruled over by Jesus as the greater son of David. It is the supposed millennium, a thousand years.

2. The gospel of the grace of God, the good news that Jesus died, was buried and rose again. Schofield says 'this' gospel!

3. The everlasting gospel, to be preached by Jews after the church is raptured, before the millennium. It is neither, he says, the gospel of the kingdom nor of grace. Those who were saved during the great tribulation will enter a millennial reign.

4. Paul's 'my gospel' is the gospel of grace with a fuller development than that preached by Christ and the apostles, he states. Paul had new insight giving a new gospel!

These are four distinct gospels, each supposedly bringing about salvation. It is heresy. There is one gospel that began to be proclaimed by Jesus and later revealed to Paul in its entirety.

Schofield's notes, taken from Darby, are thought inviolable. They are error and heresy. One could ponder on this question. Why are millions today following Darby and Schofield (Plymouth Brethren) who lived as late as the nineteenth century? The current teachings originated with them. Schofield's Bible was published the first time in 1909, and it has influenced millions. Should not all be following, our Apostle, Prophet, King and Savior, Jesus Christ, along with the apostle Paul and the early church in their teachings? He taught something else.

We Must Examine Their Doctrines

An intent look at their teachings shows a gross distortion of the scriptures. Peter warns us against this (2 Pet.3:16). In ch.1 he was careful not to follow myths, such as the Jewish ones, regarding the reign of Christ in the material world that we have. Then he says: ‘After all, if we told you about the power possessed by our Lord Jesus Christ and his future return, our procedure was not that we followed up artfully designed fables’.

It is apparent that the end time doctrines fall into the category that Peter rejected. The Jews did not follow the Scriptures in this belief. The doctrine of the millennium was originally held by the Jews, being their invention. Messiah was supposed to appear and reign in Israel for a thousand years, removing their enemies and propelling them to the head of all nations. Rather than to take notice of the Old Testament prophets, we are to listen to the Son. This is revealed in:

‘In many ways and in various ways of old, God spoke to the fathers in the prophets’ LITV (Heb.1:1).

‘In these last days *He* spoke to us in Son, whom He appointed heir of all; through whom He indeed made the ages ...’ LITV (Heb.1:2).

‘hath the end of these days spoken unto us in Son’ ASV BBE (v.2).

God had used the prophets to convey His messages. That era of the Jewish economy ended and another began. It was time for the Son to be revealed, as He spoke ‘in Son’. He is far higher than angels, let alone prophets. He is equal with God the Father who has spoken. We are to listen to Him with His new message. We are to obey His words.

Darby and Schofield and millions of us others, have been taking note of what Daniel, Ezekiel and Isaiah appear to mean rather than the plain words of the Lord Jesus. They prophesied regarding what has ended. Christ also prophesied regarding Israel and Jerusalem. Generally His words are applicable for the present.

They omitted to consider that God has spoken finally, in the last message, ‘in these last days’, i.e. the gospel age, even this present gospel age.

CHAPTER 6

The Natural And The Supernatural

Have the exponents of the generally accepted end time views of the rapture, the seven years' tribulation and the millennium followed by the battle of Armageddon, considered these following verses to which we refer?

Bodies Of Glory

Regarding the change to be made into our future bodies and the place we are told is to be our abode, Paul gives this description: 'But we are citizens of heaven ... when He comes back He will make these poor bodies of ours like his own glorious body' CEV (Phil.3:20,21).

It is clearly shown that we belong in the future to heaven and never again for this earth. Also, having bodies conformed to 'the body of his glory' our future environment and situation could never be again as at present.

He in His own body of such glory that He has for eternity, could never condescend to be an inhabitant of the lower world of earth. Then were He to do so, any who dwell here in the face of such glory, could never stand before Him.

It is obvious that the scriptures declare that we will be in heaven after the coming of the Lord. This accords with:

'For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

'For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

'Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord' ESV (1 Thes.4:14-17).

This descent with the living (who are yet in their graves) for those who still remain on earth, having received eternal life, is called 'the coming of the Lord'.

It is not a second coming because it is not to take place on this earth as His first coming at His birth did.

We are to wait for 'the coming' of the Lord and to look for it:

'... Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' KJV (1 Cor.1:7).

The apostle Paul towards the end of that epistle used this word in Aramaic:

‘*Maranatha*’. KJV (1 Cor.15:17). It means ‘the Lord cometh’.

It is said that early Christians used to greet one another with this word, saying, ‘*Maranatha*’. That was their hope and it is ours. He is to come to take us up to heaven.

In relation to a millennium, being in heaven, how could we ever be on earth, coming back for a thousand years as they say? Moses and Elijah appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration in glory (Lk.9:31). They were with Jesus, whose face was shining like the sun and His garments became as white as light (Mt.17:2).

This is a preview of the anticipated body of transformation waiting each believer. The three disciples ‘saw the glory’ and were terrified when the voice of the Father sounded from heaven. Anyone with this heavenly body could not mix with earthlings.

The Eternal State

Then there is this to consider: ‘For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens’ (2 Cor.5:1). Other translations say:

‘A house not made by human hands, eternal, and in heaven’ and there is: ‘God will provide me a building in heaven to live in, not built by human hands but eternal’.

The verses state clearly our new state is ‘eternal’. The place of the eternal is never on this earth. It is in heaven. Thus we see it is an impossibility according to the word of God for the changed saints, with these new and immortal bodies, to ever come back to this earth and world. How could those who have entered the timeless and eternal sphere of life ever come back to living in the sphere of time, which is what this earth is in.

After consideration of the facts presented, one has to state that the teaching of the millennium as generally taught is not in the Bible. There are many reasons that lend support to this view.

Jesus Christ is now glorified. The angels of God worship Him. He was seen by John the revelator in such a way that John himself fell to the ground. Can this Person, this Son of God, come down to a situation on our present earth to reign? Mere mortal men could not stand in His presence.

There is obviously to be no change in the bodies of earth’s inhabitants. Christ would not fit into our present earthly environment. He has sat upon His throne in heaven in a heavenly fashion. That is forever and ever.

How could this glorified Christ descend to earth again to mingle with mere men on earth in an every-day situation?

A Different Order Of Priesthood

The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom when Jesus died on the cross. This showed that God had put an end to the Divine requirement of the Old Testament order of temple worship, temple sacrifices and temple institutions including the Aaronic Priesthood. This is for all time.

We have a High Priest of the Melchizedek order that replaced the one of Levi, as in Hebrews 6-8.

That old covenant was made obsolete and the new covenant is now in effect. The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross has replaced for all time any sacrifices of animals that these teachers of error say will occur during the millennium.

I heard one on television expound about the daily sacrifice of the Jews that will exist for eternity, on earth. He also related the belief that the Jews and the believers included it seems, will rebuild the temple before Christ comes to reign. When He does appear, He will build another temple some kilometers to the north. What demonic fantasies are these?

Such things will never be instituted again. How then can we expect a temple to be rebuilt in the future in an earthy Jerusalem, with temple worship recommenced?

Hebrews 6:6 confirms this view by showing what sinfulness it would be to fall away to sacrificial worship: 'For they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame', it would be to 'trample underfoot the blood of Christ'.

Hebrews does not teach us, 'Follow Christ now. Do not go back to temple worship – until the millennium!' It teaches us we cannot go back to what God has declared is finished.

Once For All

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross is a 'once for all time' sacrifice, as the scripture declares: 'When Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down' (Heb.10:12). Atonement for sin was made on the cross and no further sacrifices are required. Millennium sacrifices would desecrate the cross. To believe in the millennium teaching, one must believe that Ezekiel's temple as a literal application would mean literal sacrifices (Ezek.4:17-27). This does not fit into anything of the New Testament where there is no provision made for any offerings of bulls, goats or rams as sin offerings. Are some suggesting that this Testament is to be abolished?

A Red Heifer

Certain Jews have even recently discovered a red heifer, as spoken of in Leviticus. For centuries there have been no red heifers. Some Jews are looking forward to a temple, the Messiah and sacrifices and have rejoiced that there still exists a breed of such heifers. We believe the only sacrifice God looks at now for all time has happened. The Messiah has come. Christ's sacrifice is sufficient.

Only The Blood Of Christ

It is sacrilege against the precious blood of Christ to think or mention that there could come a time when animal sacrifices would be re-introduced. His blood cleanses and purifies all who come to Him. His blood is that of 'the eternal covenant'. It is 'the' meaning only one and eternal. God could never make another covenant with an earthly Israel.

This one and only 'eternal covenant' is expressed by this: 'God ... brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant' (Heb.13:20). 'The eternal and shed blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, availed not only for us as sinners but to put the eternal agreement into

effect. Therefore there can never be a decreed building of a temple and its sacrificial worship in any future millennium.

Ezekiel Prophesied A Temple During The Captivity

Ezekiel's prophecy contains both a natural fulfillment where use would be made of the instructions for a future building. There would also be a supernatural one.

A clear understanding of Ezekiel's vision of the temple must be based on the knowledge that the Jews were in captivity in Babylon. Through Ezekiel, they were to understand that the glory of God was no longer in Jerusalem or the old temple as it had been destroyed. Therefore, for their immediate purposes, they would realize that this temple was indicative of a future time. A remnant of them was to return from captivity and exile.

There Was A Temple Built

Consideration needs to be given to the historical fulfillment of the building of a temple according to Ezekiel's vision. On return from exile, a temple was rebuilt using some of the features of that vision. Josephus also shows the evidence of such a building, being the one built by Herod, a building that was the jewel of the Roman Empire.

The disciples of Jesus pointed to its splendor before the crucifixion. Josephus relates that it was built according to 'piety'. It indicates that Herod followed the architecture as laid down by God. Scholars declare he used Ezekiel's temple as the basis of its structure.

This is the historical and natural fulfillment of the temple. It already has been built and will never be built again.

Apocalyptical

The kind of prophecy used by Ezekiel indicated the need to use forms and pictures, as a form of communication. It is to be interpreted accordingly and not only as prophecy in verbal, literal form would be. In the latter case, such would need to be interpreted literally, actually naturally, for a future time, as is done with many Old Testament prophecies, particularly those concerning the birth and death of Christ. Such prophecies were fulfilled literally.

Those that used figurative language were not to be fully taken literally or naturally. There would be application of a spiritual or supernatural fulfillment.

God Wanted A Dwelling On Earth

It is to be noted that God had promised a dwelling for His name, when the Children of Israel would finally reach the land of promise (Deut.12:11). His ultimate intention was not the Tabernacles of either Moses or David.

The First Temple

God desired a temple that would be the type of the church of Christ. This resulted in the building of the temple at the time of Solomon. When it had been built and opened, the glory that had been in the Tabernacle of Moses filled this new and magnificent structure (1 Kgs.8:11).

There would be nothing of God's *Shekinah* presence once that temple was destroyed.

The Second Temple

The second temple, rebuilt as we discover in Ezra, Nehemiah and Haggai, did not house the presence of God. The presence had departed for good. It did not return.

The Third Temple

When Herod built on to this one, using certain architecture as described by Ezekiel, there was still no presence of God. In reality, Ezekiel's temple comes into being as a fulfillment of its typology. This relates to the church of Jesus Christ. It is so collectively and individually.

All together, we are the temple of the Living God. Personally, each of us is a temple of the Holy Ghost. The anti-type is for both heaven and here on earth. Such a temple of believers has become the temple of His glory. (1 Cor.3:16;6:19; 2 Cor.6:16; Heb.12:22).

Ezekiel Prophecies A Spiritual Temple

Ezekiel was given in a form understandable to him in that day, a vision of the spiritual temple that was yet to be built. God is the Builder and He brings about a new beginning. The emphasis first of all is on mortals and judgment that is on nations and particularly on Jerusalem. He does speak of a new covenant.

In these chapters of Ezekiel there is no mention of the Messiah as such but rather of Him as the Shepherd (34:11-25). He Himself said: 'I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep' (Jn.10:9). He says this as God.

Ezekiel envisages Israel as being a nation of dry bones and one that is dead. It will live again, but in another form. It features the glory of God and that is the opening scene when he records his visions. It becomes a brightness to fill the temple that is described by the prophet in detail.

The true glory of God who dwells in light, could never be in an earthly temple. Ezekiel is speaking of heavenly glory, God's own glory (and not any replica) that only glorified saints can view in a heavenly scene. The wicked unbelievers are away from the presence of God for eternity.

The River In The Temple

The final scenes are those of the Spirit flowing as a deep river out of the temple. It also prefigures the new earth becoming the equivalent (if not more than that) of the Garden of Eden. This is the promised land for the people of God who will live there forever with God in the midst. It is the new earth wherein dwells righteousness.

Ezekiel shows by a form known to him and to Israel, that the New Testament named people of God, Jew and Gentile, will live forever with the river of life flowing and the glory of God in the midst. (Rev.21:1-4, Ezek.43:7; Eph.2:19;1:10).

This is its primary and final meaning according to typology. The building of the new temple, given from heaven, is to bring in the New Age, Eternity, after all evil is removed. It is a type of the gospel church, outside of the old covenant of God but now under the new covenant.

To understand the spiritual meaning of the vision of Ezekiel of the temple to be built in future days, we must consider that he prophesied by using typology.

The River Flowing Out From Herod's Temple

In the natural temple built by Herod, we can point out the beginning of the flow of the river. Jesus Himself, stood in that place, on the last day of the feast of Tabernacles before the last Passover week (Jn.7:38,39). He shouted out: 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink and out of His innermost being will flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Holy Ghost which they who believed on Him were to receive'.

Here in Herod's temple built according to Ezekiel's plan, the Savior announces the spiritual beginning of the symbolic river foreshadowed in Ezekiel.

The Spiritual or supernatural scene in Ezekiel's vision took place in the natural temple, 'Then he brought me back to the door of the house and behold, water was flowing from under the threshold of the house toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under, from the right side of the house' (Ezek.47:1).

We Are To Swim In The River

In this chapter, Ezekiel reveals the vision of the water reaching to the ankles, the loins and water to swim in. It was in the temple that the disciples met in an upper room when the Holy Ghost descended upon them from heaven, as in Acts 2. To this day, the water of the Holy Spirit has been flowing in the church of Jesus Christ.

The depth of the river of the Holy Ghost one experiences depends on the level of entrance into that stream. The deeper one enters through prayer in the Holy Ghost, the more wonderful the experience. Knowledge of and communication of the Lord through the Spirit is always by experience.

The oil within the Candlestick in the Holy Place has been replaced by the anti-type, Jesus Christ, Who is the Light and Who fills us with the oil of His Spirit today. We, or the Jewish nation, will never need a rebuilt temple on earth. Christ is the Light of the world. The church will never need a light in a re-built temple on earth. The true church includes the 'remnant' of the Jewish nation (Rom.9:29). Christ said we are to be lights as on a hill that others may behold and find Him.

The Elect

Romans 11:7 states emphatically: 'What Israel (the nation) sought so earnestly it did not obtain but the elect did.' Who are the elect? Obviously not the nation of Israel. Clearly the elect comprise the remnant of Israel, those who have faith in Christ as Redeemer and the multitude of Gentiles who also believe in Christ. They are the elect.

The nation of Israel no longer has any position before God. There is a new nation: 'They (the Jews) stumble as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God' (1 Pet.2:8,9).

As stated, 'God's elect' are those who are, 'chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood' (1 Pet.1:1).

The Jews crucified Jesus. They rejected Him. To this day, Jewry rejects Jesus as the crucified Savior of those believing fellow-countrymen and Gentiles in Christ, who are under the new covenant and not under the Law or really any part of the old covenant.

Romans 8:25-29 pursues the same thought regarding believers in Christ, as the elect:

'Called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called, those he called, he also justified, those he justified, he also glorified'.

God has a new people, a reconstituted Israel, a new nation, a new separated people – those called and believing in Christ according to the gospel – whether Jew or Gentile.

Another Chance

It is a wrong belief to say, as proponents of present-day eschatology do, that there will be another gospel, another message, another kingdom and another chance for natural Israel as well as for backslidden believers. There is no hint of this in the scriptures. As for those said believers, here we have an anomaly. They failed under the gospel of kingdom of God that has as its kernel, the atoning death of Christ but lo, they are to be given another opportunity a second time.

During the millennium the whole world is said to be given the gospel of the kingdom of God as presented by the Jews, with no cross. This gospel is 'another gospel' and is minus the atonement. Paul says such who preach anything other than that given to him by Christ, are to be accursed. Why is there failure to accept Paul's admonition?

Jesus Pronounces A New Nation

Jesus spoke plainly about the rejection of Israel and the kingdom of God being given to another.

His words resound to us today: 'Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner; This was from the Lord, And it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust' ASV (Mt.21:42-44).

The new nation is the one to which Peter attested: 'But to those who don't believe: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, a stone that people trip over, a large rock that people find offensive." The people tripped over the word because they refused to believe it. Therefore, this is how they ended up. However, you are chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, people who

belong to God. You were chosen to tell about the excellent qualities of God, who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light' GW (1 Pet.2:7-9).

He not only relates the new nation to what Jesus declared with regard to the old kingdom of God (Israel) but he aligns it with the Lord's stern rebuke concerning that nation. They would trip over Him and His gospel, He being the rock who became one of offence to them.

A New Nation Born In A Day

A marvelous picture of this new nation is given by the prophet Isaiah. He tells how a new nation would be born in a day. That definitely occurred on the day of Pentecost, when a new nation, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, was born.

Isaiah forcefully gives promise that there would be such a birth. This is six hundred years or so beforehand.

He cries out: 'Do you hear that noise in the city and those shouts coming from the temple? It is the LORD shouting as he punishes his enemies. Have you ever heard of a woman who gave birth to a child before having labor pains? Who ever heard of such a thing or imagined it could happen? Can a nation be born in a day or come to life in a second?

'Jerusalem is like a mother who gave birth to her children as soon as she was in labor. The LORD is the one who makes birth possible. And he will see that Zion has many more children. The LORD has spoken. If you love Jerusalem, celebrate and shout! If you were in sorrow because of the city, you can now be glad. She will nurse and comfort you, just like your own mother, until you are satisfied. You will fully enjoy her wonderful glory' CEV (Isa.66:6-11).

Glory is never earthly but being from God, it is heavenly. These verses have a Spiritual meaning.

In the face of this, the Darbyites, including all followers, decree this to be the natural nation of Israel.

This Is The Church Of Jesus Christ

Surely the application by the prophet relates to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On that wonderful day when the Holy Ghost was poured out, not only were the disciples filled with Him and His power, but Christ began His church for which He died and rose again.

Christ had taken His place on the right hand of the Ancient of Days, to be *El Shaddai*, the Purer Out. Rich blessings became the portion of those disciples, by the grace of His giving them the Holy Ghost.

She Was Born Quickly On The Day Of Pentecost

The sound of speaking in tongues that were the supernatural languages of the Holy Ghost, could be heard by many. At the same time, in the courts of heaven, preparations were made for the judgment that would come upon Jerusalem and the temple. Those living in the city at the time would emit strong cries from the torture,

suffering, death and destruction. It was to be after Pentecost, commencing in AD 66. In reality, the voice of the Lord was coming from heaven as this was His punishment.

Then in his writings, Isaiah declares the wonders of the new Zion. She was born immediately, on that Pentecost Day. She is the heavenly Jerusalem, giving birth to multitudes, not only of Jews but of many more Gentiles.

Rejoice At This Supernatural, Heavenly Fulfillment

All are exhorted to leave behind the sorrow over the destruction of the old and natural Jerusalem. Forget about that city! This must be replaced by tremendous joy and gladness. We have a new city, the city of the Living God and of the Lamb and it is our Mount Zion. She is our mother as Paul informed us. Christ the Head of His church, nourishes her through the Holy Ghost with love and comfort. We are destined to participate in her 'wonderful glory'. This is now and forevermore.

When John saw this city, his description had to be with the use of earthly terms and understanding. Through it, we are to catch a glimpse of her heavenly and eternal glory.

Already, as believers and particularly if we are baptized with the Spirit, have imbibed the word of Christ and pray in other tongues, our supernatural and heavenly language, our spirits catch the heavenly and glorious understanding. Yet we see but through a glass as if we are looking through a reflection in a mirror.

Natural Israel Is Forgotten

Israel as a nation is no longer a Theocratic kingdom of God. She has lost out. She will never be taken in again as a special nation under God, according to all the scriptures. There is not one promise by in throughout the New Testament that Israel will be restored. This being the case, the popular interpretation of the Old Testament in connection with a future restoration of Israel as a nation at the head of all the others, a natural nation to be ruled by a Messiah, is false. It is wrong, is a deception and remains a delusion that I myself once followed unwittingly.

The True Israel Of God

Paul clearly states who can claim to be in 'Israel', 'the Israel of God' (Gal.6:16). It is those who are new creations in Christ Jesus. Then there are the verses indicating who is a Jew in our day:-

'A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly, and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code' (Rom.2:28, 29).

'In him (Christ) you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men, but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God' (Col.2:11).

The Lord Jesus explained how circumcision was to be applied under the new covenant.

He said: 'I have a baptism to be baptized with' (Lk.12:50), in speaking of His death.

Then Paul related how we were baptized with Him: 'Now if we died with Christ' (Rom.6:8).

'You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ (into His death as above) have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise' (Gal.3:26-29).

'I have been crucified with Christ' (Gal.2:20).

'For we are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh' (Phil.3:3).

Is this not very clear? Particularly would this be so to those not prejudiced or brain-washed by the eschatology taught in a majority of churches, as I was once.

All this is borne out clearly with: 'For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come'.

This is the city that Abraham looked for in Hebrews 13:14: 'For he was looking forward to the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God'. Others also had this look: 'Instead, they were longing for a better country – a heavenly one' (Heb.11:10,16).

The glory of God is in heaven's temple. Almighty God and the Lamb are the temple. 'The Lamb is its lamp there with no need of a sun' (Rev.21:22-27). The final meaning of Ezekiel's temple is in heaven.

The New Temple

In case someone says that Jerusalem and its temple are to be rebuilt for the Jews, let us note that three verses above are in the book of Hebrews and were written to the 'Hebrews', i.e. Jews. There is not any plan in the mind of God to rebuild an earthly Jerusalem and temple. The plan is for a heavenly one but one finally to be placed on a renewed earth.

The Divine word became flesh and tabernacled among His people and was called Jesus. When He ascended into heaven He entered a very different sphere with a body suited for it.

As He is exalted and glorified, His body is not suited to live in this present sphere of earth. Neither will ours be.

It should also be noted that Jesus made it plain that the old temple was finished. His body had now become what the temple had been previously. There would never be any other temple on earth. His body was sufficient as the temple, in which we believers are placed.

The manifested glory of God will be eternally in this temple in heaven. Even now, while still on earth, there is glory within.

The prophet Haggai previewed the gospel church of Christ with these words: 'The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts' ESV (Hag.2:9).

That this prophecy relates to the gospel is obvious by the giving of peace. Christ 'made peace by the blood of His cross' (Col.1:20). Also, He said of Himself on one occasion: 'In this place is one greater than the temple' (Mt.12:6).

The great ideas typified by the Old Testament temple were now embodied in His person. He is the temple and when He died on the cross, the veil in the temple in Jerusalem was torn in two from top to bottom by the hand of God. The veil of His flesh was torn to enable His entrance into heaven on our behalf.

His raised body of the resurrection was to be the eternal seat and centre of the kingdom of God, as its temple. The older type of temple, built on earth, forever lost any significance at the resurrection of Christ.

The prophet declared that the Branch, being the Messiah, would build the temple of the Lord. Obviously Jesus Christ would not build a literal temple of stone in Jerusalem or in any other place.

The temple He is building now is of living stones and is an extension of His own body, because as is declared to believers: 'You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood' (1 Pet.2:5) and: 'Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it' (1 Cor.12:27).

The Future Temple

The future temple is in the holy city that John saw descending from heaven to earth that is the new earth created by God. The old earth no longer exists, with any of the former cities or inhabitants. The church is the holy city. John in vision saw it descend from God. It came on to a new earth. He never saw the church descending with a supposed return of Christ to rule and reign for a thousand years! Why not? Because there is only one descent.

The church comes down to the new earth, from and with God Himself.

CHAPTER 7

Background Of Beliefs As Against The Truth

‘And you know what is now restraining him, so that he may be revealed when his time comes. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who now restrains it is removed.

‘ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by the manifestation of his coming.

‘ The coming of the lawless one is apparent in the working of Satan, who uses all power, signs, lying wonders, ¹and every kind of wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

‘ For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false, so that all who have not believed the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness will be condemned’ (2 Thes.2:6-12).

In relation to the teaching on the great tribulation, a favorite portion of scripture used is that quoted above. The apostle taught that there would be a religious apostasy. The man of lawlessness is to be revealed, with the meaning: ‘To lay open what has not been revealed, or has been covered’. He is to proclaim himself as god.

Antichrist

At the time when the epistle was written, the power was then presently working. It may well have been law and order under the rule of an Emperor or Government. In that day it was Caesar, who surely was the one mentioned (Rev.13:18).

For a long time, fanciful ideas have been promulgated regarding a period of seven years. This despite the failure of finding a strong scriptural base. Along with this is also an antichrist. In my life-time I have heard the names of several supposed figures then in the world as an antichrist.

Such idea of antichrist stems also in part from chapter 9 of Daniel. Christ Himself has been replaced there, by an antichrist. It is Christ who had already made a covenant with ‘the many’ around the time of His crucifixion. We believers are under that new covenant. Christians are calling the work of Christ the work of the antichrist.

The Teaching Regards The cross As A Parenthesis

We believe that the Lord Jesus was born to die on the cross. These teachers say it was to establish an earthly kingdom. Can we follow their beliefs? They say Jesus did not sit on the throne of David on earth at His first advent because the Jews rejected and crucified

Him. They teach that the throne awaits Him for the millennium. Jesus Christ is now Lord on the throne of heaven. Can we expect demotion to a throne on earth?

Their belief is that had the Jews accepted Jesus' supposed offer to establish an earthly Davidic kingdom, people would then have been saved by legal obedience. There would have been no necessity for the cross. What error. Old and New Testament saints are saved by grace through faith in the atoning blood of the cross of Christ. There is no other way. Salvation is by grace through the Jesus Christ to all who believe. This was pre-ordained before the world was made.

They Said The Old Testament Did Not Predict The Gospel Church

Regarding prophecy, it is said that the Old Testament writers did not know of the church age. Therefore they saw the two advents of Christ, but with nothing intervening between these two comings. These two advents supposedly appeared to the prophets as one occurrence but that were actually typed as if there were two mountain ranges. The lower range in the foreground would have an Old Testament fulfillment. The higher mountains standing behind were to be fulfilled at the end of our present age. They concluded that all prophecies, which may appear to be referring to the first advent, are also in reality referring to His coming that lies ahead! In actuality, these prophecies find their complete fulfillment in Jesus Christ at His first coming. This is how wrong those teachers are.

During the millennium, Jesus will supposedly rule with a rod of iron. There is no word of the cross or of grace in their kingdom teachings as there is in the New Testament gospel of grace through our Lord Jesus Christ and His death.

Contrariwise, the gospels and epistles are full of quotations from the prophets who prophesied of Christ and of the things of the gospel.

Seven Dispensations

Present ideas regarding eschatology are based on the premises found in Clarence Larkin's Charts of the seven ages, which the passing of history has shown to be false. According to his reckoning, six ages finish just before A.D. 2000. Those six are assumed to have been four before Christ and two after Christ. It should be taken into account that there is no absolute proof that only four thousand years elapsed from creation to the coming of Christ in His birth as Messiah.

It would appear according to general belief in those charts that the seventh day should have commenced already. The two thousand years after Christ was born, being days five and six, should have ended in 1996, as Jesus was born according to historical records, in 4 BC, some authorities even suggesting the date as 7 B.C.

The seventh day has not begun. The coming of the Lord for His saints has not taken place. The seven years of tribulation have not occurred. All of these events should have been over for the seventh day representing the millennium. That day would have commenced, according to the schedule, in January, 1997 or even in January, 1993.

Refutations Of Their Errors

The general errors of Darby and those of like mind, even those propagated in the Schofield Bible and by all who follow him, are refutable. The following verse is a glaring

examples of the use of the Old Testament scriptures to bolster belief in Christ ruling on earth. It is followed by a comment.

There is this verse: 'The scepter shall not depart from Judah ... until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be' ASV (Gen.49:10).

Shiloh has come. It is Jesus Christ. He has come and has taken over the scepter from national Israel. They rejected Him. The sarcastic writing Pilate ordered to be placed above the cross, shows: 'This is Jesus, King of the Jews'. They had cried out: 'We have no King but Caesar'.

The gospel goes out so that both Jew and Gentile may believe in Him as Savior. The true Israel of God has begun and is still in the process of being built.

Another fact is that Jesus Christ is the Antitype of national Israel, of the law, circumcision and the prophets. He has transferred the believing part of natural Israel, into the Christian church that is part of Himself, becoming a new Israel. The remnant and believing Gentiles form the church with the crucified Christ as Head.

Despite what these false teachers spread, Jesus at His first advent has fulfilled the promises to national Israel and become their Deliverer. He came as a Deliverer to Zion, as prophesied in Isaiah 59:20. All believing Jews, the remnant, are given power to become the sons of God, along with all who believe: 'He came to His own and His own people did not accept Him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God' (Jn.1:11,12).

The prophecy is used by Paul in Romans 11:26 with a change. He substitutes it as: 'A Deliverer shall come out of Zion'. Zion in the New Testament is the church and not the mountain in Israel. He performs His coming out through His servants, ministers and believers, who preach the gospel. Through the Holy Spirit, He draws some to Himself.

God Has His Heavenly Jerusalem

God's interest now is not in an earthly Jerusalem. It has shifted to being in the heavenly Jerusalem. This heavenly Jerusalem, of which we are already citizens, will in the future come down to earth. This is disclosed by two verses.

The first is: 'But we are citizens of heaven and are eagerly waiting for our Savior to come from there. Our Lord Jesus Christ' CEV (Ph.3:20).

Also, there is one concerning what John viewed in vision as the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven to dwell in the new earth: 'Then I saw New Jerusalem, that holy city, coming down from God in heaven. It was like a bride dressed in her wedding gown and ready to meet her husband' (Rev.21:2).

Darby teaches there are two kinds of people – the heavenly church and the earthly Israel, for eternity. This is erroneous.

Ultimate Promise Of The Land.

From the scriptures we understand that the ultimate of the promise to Abraham concerning land, has its fulfillment in two ways, naturally and under the gospel. These points are to be observed:-

a. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob believed for their descendants to go into the promised land. They did enter and possess it. The promise of natural land to them was fulfilled later

on. However, they understood the promise of the land to be but a type of their heavenly inheritance. That is where they set their hearts and desires (Heb.12:8-10).

b. The heavenly Jerusalem is the people of God. 'But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother' ESV (Gal.4:26).

c. That city in Revelation 21 coming down to earth, fulfils the promise concerning land. God created Adam and gave him a garden. God promised Abraham land that he understood meant more than that of Canaan. He possessed the revelation that the ultimate fulfillment was heavenly. Earth and a garden are to be renovated, replenished and recreated for the abode of resurrected people with immortal bodies of those who are part of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Daniel 7 And 8

Consideration of Daniel 7 gives this insight that here again is the kingdom of the Messiah. The prophet names certain ones as being 'the saints of the Most High' with these words: 'But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever' ASV (Dan.7:18).

These are the saints, called such in the epistles, both Jew and Gentile, who are believers in Jesus Christ. These are from the whole church of both Testaments and not just Jewish saints. There are four empires in this chapter that have come and gone. They are Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece and the fourth is the Roman Empire, out of which arose ten kings.

The king 'arising after them and different from the earlier ones' (v.24) must be papal. He cannot be said to be 'the antichrist'. All these kingdoms were given their destiny as those eventually to fall giving place to an everlasting kingdom, that of Christ's. The Jewish connection here is with the Roman Empire that conquered Israel. After all fall, the heavenly kingdom of Christ prevails.

The next chapter 8 relates to those empires. Identifying a few: the 'great horn' is Alexander the Great and the 'four notable horns' are the four kingdoms after he died. The beast is Antiochus IV Epiphanes, 168 B.C. History already has been fulfilled.

The certainty is that neither Darby and his followers had, nor many present day believers have, a knowledge of ancient history, such as I myself once lacked.

Common sense tells us that the whole of this chapter, which has been fulfilled in history, could not refer to an anti-type of the beast who some wrongly say is the same antichrist beast of Revelation. The latter is a projection for a period well in advance of Daniel's time. Daniel 8 was fulfilled, occurring up to and well into the fourth century before Christ.

To make a part of its fulfillment to occur again, after a gap of many centuries, i.e. one prophecy only out of that chapter 8, regarding the beast, is illogical. In relation to Revelation, the beasts of that book and Daniel are different.

I, personally, have wondered for years, as I followed the millennium teaching and believed it: 'Why did the Lord give all those prophecies in the Old Testament about natural Israel and then about the seven years end time and millennium and leave a gap consisting of the church age that had few prophecies pointing to it?'

There is no need to wonder. Prophecies were given up to the church age. They cover two Israels, both a natural Israel, fulfilled in Old Testament times and a Spiritual one, the church of the New Testament. The Old Testament always points to the gospel age fulfillment as being spiritual, not to a supposed tribulation of seven years and a historical millennium.

The Kingdom Of Christ

Again, contrary to Darby's and adherents' doctrines, the Old Testament predicts the kingdom of God and of heaven to be that belonging to Christ. He is the Stone that will smash all earthly kingdoms with His judgment at the end of the world. His kingdom is for everlasting. We quote this from the vision of Nebuchadnezzar:

‘During the time of those kings, the God who rules from heaven will set up an eternal kingdom that will never fall. It will be like the stone that was cut from the mountain, but not by human hands--the stone that crushed the iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold ...’ CEV (Dan.2:44).

The times referred to, ended with the fourth kingdom, which was that of Rome. The Caesars reigned but it was well before the last days of the empire that the kingdom of Christ, an everlasting and heavenly one, was established. It continued a little in pure form and also as polluted Christendom. Restoration has partially come to the church.

There will be no restored Roman Empire, or city of Babylon, or actual temple! There was a fulfillment at Calvary. Sin was dealt with. Messiah confirmed the Covenant, with no interval between week's sixty-nine and seventy.

Many of us have only believed error because some people have done erroneous mathematical calculations on Daniel 9 and Revelation.

The Fulfillment Is Christ

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the covenants to Abraham and David. He was the son of David as disclosed in His genealogy that has its place in the first chapter of Matthew. He was born Prince of the House of David, to become its King. He is the Anointed Prince of Daniel 9:25 (see next chapter). Also, He is the Seed or Offspring of Abraham as Paul portrayed: ‘Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "and to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "and to your offspring," who is Christ’ ESV (Gal.3:16).

Peter shows the Son is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy as this ‘word of prophecy is confirmed’ in the coming of the Son. He writes that we are to pay attention to this word until the day dawns and the Morning Star arises in our hearts, at His coming (2 Pet.1:16-20). That in itself leaves no room for any millennium.

Peter did not present fables and neither should we, which apparently has been the case.

It Was For All

The death of the Lord Jesus Christ was ‘for all’. This includes those of the nation of Israel, Jews as well as Gentles who have faith in Him.

So greatly did God regard the Jews that they were offered the salvation of Christ first of all and that before the rest of the world. This is observed by reading: ‘For I am not

ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes, both to the Jew first and to the Greek' EMTV (Rom.1:16).

When Jews and others in a millennium are given another gospel, it shows total disregard for 'the gospel of Christ' that is the only 'power of God unto salvation'. There is an apparent disdain of His death for 'all'.

Here is a conclusion of Paul about His death: 'For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;' ESV (2 Cor.5:14).

I am not a Greek scholar but it appears that language is alphanumeric and that God has ordained its use in giving us the New Testament. Quotation hereunder is by an expert:

'Just as he designed the Hebrew alphabet to form the foundation of His creation, so he designed the Greek to fill His creation with echoing praises of the glorious Gospel of His Son throughout all eternity. This is the word of Almighty God, "that is able to save your souls." God is love! And this is the Gospel Truth, spelt with a capital T, pointing us ever back to the cross where the Lord suffered the capital punishment we deserved.'

Revealed to the world is one only 'Gospel Truth'.

There is a necessity for men to hear the gospel of Christ and to find salvation for their souls through it. I ask the reader: 'What kind of salvation is to be provided for the souls of those who come out of a millennium as living on earth under a Messianic reign and a temple order of animal sacrifices?'

The grace of God has appeared for all men, both Jew and Gentile, in one generous gift of His Son, our God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Anticipation of a millennium and a favoritism to be shown to Jewry would thwart the eternal purposes of our God. Peter said: 'He is no respecter of persons' (Acts 10:34) and we should eliminate the exaltation of Israel as is common.

Here is the will of God for Jew and Gentile:

'But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we did, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life' EMTV (Tit.3:4-7).

The only heirs in any purpose of God are those who are 'justified by His grace' to be in 'the hope of eternal life'.

A most important feature about the nation of Israel can be discovered in these occurrences when she rejected her God and her Lord.

Consideration of the immediate reaction of Israel during the descent of the Lord upon Mt. Sinai shows a complete rebuttal and rejection against Him.

While Moses was still on the mount conversing with God, the nation begged Aaron to build a golden calf. They worshipped it instead of the only God and Savior. At the same time, they indulged in lewd heathen dancing.

That was their first rejection.

The second one occurred when the Lord Jesus Christ came, ministered to them, prophesied of the future, showed His signs and then died and rose again. Again, the second time, they rejected Him.

One commentator says that Peter uses a word that shows their rejection of Him was one whereby they had looked into the matter, considered He was the Messiah and then deliberately refused to receive Him.

We look at the verse and comment:

‘... They refused to believe it ...’ GW (1 Pet.2:8).

Literally, “unwilling to be persuaded,” (*apeithēs*) those who refused to believe; who were obstinate or contumacious, The meaning is, that to them he is made a stone against which they impinge, and ruin themselves; they know that they are voluntary in rejecting him.’

CHAPTER 8

The Important Truths To Be Discovered In Daniel 9:24-27

There Is Comprehension Of Daniel 9:24-27

The base of much of the doctrine that has spread so widely is a wrong interpretation of the words given by Gabriel to Daniel in chapter 9. The prophet had set himself to prayer and confession of his own and the sins of his people, that of Israel, the Jews. All of Israel was called 'Jews' even until Christ came. Daniel was given wisdom and understanding about all the events that would come upon the nation in the distant future. May the Lord grant that to us.

The whole portion is set out hereunder:-

Dan.9:24: 'Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city: to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place'; but 'to anoint the most Holy' (KJV).

25 'Know therefore and understand: from the time that the word went out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the time of an anointed prince, there shall be seven weeks; and for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with streets and moat, but in a troubled time.'

More correctly, this translation reads: '... From the going out of the command to restore and to build Jerusalem, to Messiah *the* Prince, shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks' MKJV

Also: '... From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks: and threescore and two weeks' RV

26 'After the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing, and the troops of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed.

27 'He shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall make sacrifice and offering cease; and in their place shall be an abomination that desolates, until the decreed end is poured out upon the desolator' ESV (the desolate in most translations, rather incorrectly).

The general interpretation is that there is a gap of millennia in v.26 and that an antichrist figure will make a covenant with the Jews. This has been taught since

Darby arrived in the U.S.A. and his ideas have impregnated the philosophies of all end time beliefs. It has affected millions.

The mind-set and world view that commonly prevails is a direct influence from Darby's doctrines.

Scrutiny of the portion will produce another meaning that is different from theirs and it is I believe, the correct one.

Verse 24

For Your People And Your Holy City

Seventy weeks representative of a certain number of years, have been 'cut off', 'assigned' or 'determined' by God for Daniel's people. Particularly is it decreed for Israel but it does eventually include all of the people of God, commencing with those of Israel in the Old Testament. Future events will occur for the Jews and it will be through the coming of the Messiah. He will appear not only for the natural Jews but for the spiritual Jews who will be amongst both Jew and Gentile believers in Him and His gospel.

In relation to v.24, the expression 'for your people and your holy city' must be established as a central feature. It is not shown here that this is during a continuous period, or whether for one or two distinct periods of time. There are six notable predictions contained therein. All of them greatly concern the Jewish people with regard to sin, propitiation, reconciliation and righteousness through the atonement of Christ. The time of Messiah's appearance in Israel, would be marked by such occurrences. These would all confirm the visions and prophecies of the Old Testament, bringing a right conclusion to what the prophets had declared. The Spirit's work will be prominent. In the meantime before He arrives, Jerusalem will be rebuilt (v.25).

The First Three Of The Six Purposes

The first and second of the six is as YLT reads: '... To shut up the transgression and to seal up sins'. The term 'to shut up' means 'to restrain'. Restraints were upon the Jews when the time did arrive. John the Baptist and Christ came and ministered to them before the death on the cross and resurrection. Messiah carried the transgressions of His people. Then the Holy Spirit came and by His power, the apostles preached the gospel to Israel. In the main, she rejected this glorious news. In the then holy city, when Christ died on the cross, an end was made of the transgressions of many Gentile believers who then received Christ as Savior. Nations have restraints on them and know something of righteousness never realized before.

The sins were sealed up or hidden from view. This is a translation – 'to put an end to sin' ESV and God does this by hiding it from view, by covering it and sealing it. It is to be the removal of guilt and punishment. No one can charge the forgiven. 'Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies' ESV (Rom.8:33).

Law no longer has a hold. It was nailed to the cross and cannot condemn us.

‘Having blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and He has taken it out of the midst, nailing it to the cross’ EMTV (Col.2:14).

The Ten Commandments, written by the hand of God, brought condemnation to the Jews and also the Gentiles who have it written in their hearts (Rom.2:15). It is of works that we are unable to keep. He forgave us who believe in the Lord Jesus and this Law cannot charge us with guilt. It no longer exists as it was nailed to the cross, permanently. Although good, it brought us nothing but curse. That is eliminated because Christ was made a curse for us, both Jew and Gentile sinners.

David had insight in this regard and wrote: ‘Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered’ (Ps.32:1).

Regarding the third, RSV reads: ‘... To atone for iniquity’ then Rhm states: ‘... And put a propitiatory covering over iniquity’. It is to cover, pardon or forgive. Christ has made atonement for sin and covers it when we believe in the Savior.

The atonement was to cover our sins, or make expiation. It made reconciliation for iniquity and brought forgiveness of sin. All the blessings for sinful man would come through the atonement by Christ. It is only through the atonement (mercy-seat or propitiation) through faith in His blood and not through His kingship. No person will ever receive the blessing of salvation by recognizing Messiah as King. The time of the spreading of the gospel of this propitiatory sacrifice will cease at the coming of the Lord for His own. There will be no further Messiah, no one to be hailed as their King.

Warning is presented in these words: ‘How can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? ...’ (Heb.2:3).

The above three things are specified in regard to sin, which would be done away with, as did occur, on the cross. This is the time of the fulfillment and conclusion for that particular prophecy. The full import was not disclosed to Daniel, despite his certain meditation on the matter. A refusal to accept and acknowledge this now by any Jew, will mean elimination of any hopes of a future for him as an individual or for an Israel as a nation. How then can a national Israel ever qualify in a millennium having regard to Gabriel’s schematic presentation?

The Last Three Of The Six Purposes (v.24)

Number four is ‘to bring in everlasting righteousness’. Clarke gives this rendering, which I myself prefer: ‘The righteousness, or righteous One, of ages’.

It is reminiscent of Jeremiah’s declaration: ‘In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

‘In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness’ ESV (Jer.33:15,16).

The Jews themselves considered the Messiah who was to come as being indicated here and descending from David. He would be the One to bring justice or judgment to first of all the scribes and pharisees and on to the whole nation that rejected Him.

Along with this there would spring up righteousness for His people. The Lord is to be our righteousness, this being the 'great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ'. He is made unto us righteousness, as revealed by Paul:

'It is because of God that you are in union with the Messiah Jesus, who for us has become wisdom from God, as well as our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption' ISV (1 Cor.1:30).

The portion in Jeremiah mentions that it is Jerusalem, the city that will be called by 'The Lord is our righteousness'. This carries over into the New Testament church. Only a person or a people could carry that Name and never an earthly city. It is the city of the living God that is intended. It is the heavenly city of living ones:

'You have come ... to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem ... and to the assembly of God's firstborn children (whose names are written in heaven). You have come to a judge (the God of all people) and to the spirits of people who have God's approval and have gained eternal life.

'You have come to Jesus, who brings the new promise from God, and to the sprinkled blood ...' GW (Heb.12:22-24).

'She is like Jerusalem today because she and her children are slaves. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. GW (Gal.4:25,26).

After the destruction of the natural Jerusalem, there was never any place for an earthly Jerusalem in the New Testament. There is only one Jerusalem and she is heavenly, the one John saw coming down from heaven to the recreated earth.

The fifth one, 'to seal both vision and prophet' relates to the prophets. Lamsa's translation is: '... To finish the vision of the prophets' and Mof: '... To ratify the prophetic vision'. It is as JFB says: 'Literally, "prophet".' To give the seal of confirmation to the prophet and his vision by the fulfillment'. The thrust of Daniel is for the people of Israel, the Jews alone and to indicate the Messiah's arrival and its time as well as the end of that nation. When these events occurred, Daniel's visions would be seen to be true, even though given to him some centuries before fulfillment. Surely they prove the authenticity of God's Word.

This comment is revelatory: 'He came to fill the law, to reveal the full depth of meaning that it was intended to hold' (McNeile). Jesus explains that He came in fulfillment of the law and the prophets: "'Don't ever think that I came to set aside Moses' Teachings or the prophets. I didn't come to set them aside but to make them come true' GW (Mt.5:17).

Then there are these various translations of the words of Jesus that virtually lessened the importance of the old for a replacement of the new:

'The Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets were in effect up to the time of John the Baptist; since then the Good News about the kingdom of God is being told' GNV (Lk.16:16).

'The law and the prophets were in force until John's day. From then on the good news of the kingdom of God has been proclaimed.' Phil - and;

'Up to the time when John appeared it was the law and the prophets that were all in all. Since then it is the kingdom of God that is being proclaimed.' Cass

The outcome of this alteration from following law and prophets to a gospel that is to be followed, would have great application to Israel. It was for the future. Therefore the messages and purposes in the prophets must necessarily be transferred to the kingdom of God. This kingdom would then take precedence. Prophecies in relation to the nation of Israel would no longer be in force.

All hopes for the nation that it held under the prophetic word, would undergo a change. The expectations from vision and prophecy were to give way to those of the kingdom of God. The New Testament became the depository of the secrets of this kingdom of God. The Divine will for the church is to be discovered not in the Old but in the New

The next prophetic word given to Daniel is illuminating. It reveals much about the replacement of the law with the gospel.

This last of the six in Daniel 9:24, relates to the 70th week or the last week, being seven years. This last accomplishment, the sixth, is 'to anoint a most holy place' some translations, or 'to anoint the most holy'. The last phrase is that used by the KJV, ASV, MKJV, LITV, RV and Webster 1833, whereas 'to anoint the Most Holy One' is given by GW.

We do not subscribe to the phrase, 'a most holy place'. Some declare the reference is to the Holy of Holies in the re-built temple in Jerusalem. In this regard, one can only adhere to this certainty that God does not anoint earthly places. He anoints people. Even under the law, God did not anoint the temple or anything in it. He did not anoint the priests. The anointing was done by the High Priest and he used oil. This was in type and not the actuality.

There was One who was anointed above all others. That is the Lord Jesus Christ. All the performance prophesied in Dan.9:24, as in the first five, will be through Him. Therefore it stands to reason that this sixth one is also about that same Person. The proof is in the following verses:

'But he spoke of the temple of his body' (Jn.2:21).

Christ was anointed of the Father with the Holy Ghost, as He ascended out of His baptism in the River Jordan (Mt.3:17).

He said these words in Nazareth: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because He did anoint me; To proclaim good news to the poor ... To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord' YLT (Lk.4:18,19).

He is spoken often as being anointed as in the following:

'Your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed' ESV (Acts 4:21).

'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power' ESV (Acts 10:38).

'You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions' ESV (Heb.1:9).

All the above verses prove conclusively that the 'most holy' who would be anointed is the Lord Jesus Christ. There was no place ever anointed under the old covenant even as none was in the old.

The dictionary meaning of the Greek for 'most holy' includes 'saint'. The saints are holy, individually and collectively, in Him as:

‘For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple’ ESV (1 Cor.3:17).

‘In whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord’ ESV (Eph.2:21).

‘He did choose us in him before the foundation of the world, for our being holy and unblemished before Him’ YLT (Eph.1:4).

‘As the elect of God, holy and beloved’ KJV (Col.3:12).

The believers in Christ come under the blessing of an anointing by Jesus baptizing them with the Spirit, shown in the following verses:

‘Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God’ ASV (2 Cor.1:21).

‘But you have been anointed by the Holy One’; ‘You will be baptized with the Holy Ghost’ (1 Jn.2:20;Acts1:5;2:4).

All six in Dan.9:24, thus concern Messiah. Christ was anointed at the beginning of the last week, when the dove from heaven descended upon Him. He was emerging from the water of his baptism by John. The voice of the Father from heaven said: ‘This is my Son, the one I love. I am very pleased with him’ ERV (Mt.3:17).

The six purposes would be concluded by the end of the stated period of 70 weeks, or 490 years, including the anointing. He Himself was anointed at the beginning of the last week of seven years. After the first period of three and a half years of that week, He died on the cross. Then on the day of Pentecost the church was born. She was anointed at the end of that period. It ushered in the beginning of the last of the week. It was completed when the Gentiles were added at the close of the last week and of the whole period of 490 years.

The main thrust of Daniel 9:24 and indeed of the passage, is the time and purpose of the Messiah being sent to Israel. This verse has made it clear.

What is not included about Messiah in all of the verses, is the fact that He will be rejected. The Gospels relate all the events concerning Jewish refusal to accept the Messiah, the fulfillment of ‘He is despised and rejected of men ...’ (Isa.53:3). Centuries beforehand, the nation and Jerusalem with its temple would be rebuilt during the first seven years as Gabriel shows (v.25)

Judgment is predicted in this vision of Daniel’s. It will be for their rejection of Christ that would be the worst of all of Israel’s centuries old sinning. Final visitation of God’s anger will descend upon Jerusalem, the temple, the people and the whole of the land of Israel. This will eventuate in their end as a nation and the bringing in of the Gentiles to be participants in what the Anointed One presents. The gospel is not mentioned but anointing is. It is left to the prophet Isaiah to disclose that this gospel to be preached:

‘The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is on Me; because Jehovah has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor’ MKJV (Isa.61:1).

The means of the judgment is injected as an interposition in vs.26,27. It will be through Titus and the Roman Army, who also face God’s wrath and it is not included in the time frame of 70 weeks.

If Daniel’s prophecy is to have the effect as stated here, exclusion for any other fulfillment than that presented, obviously must be maintained.

Other events at some future time cannot be discovered in Gabriel's information as given to Daniel. Here is a fact that would disannul current teaching of same.

Verse 25

After Seven Weeks – Jerusalem Rebuilt

Clarity as to when, comes with this translation given here: 'Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.' KJV.

All scholars agree a week is a year. 7 weeks means 49 years and 62 weeks comes to 434 years; seventy weeks 490 years.

There should be no obvious problem for us with v.25. as it deals with the decree by Cyrus and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The exception is that there have been at least three sets of calculations made by different groups of people

I will not intrude into the maze of calculations existing in relation to when both the sixty-nine and seventy weeks do indeed end and the variously given suppositions as to those last weeks. Their dates projected for the various fulfillments differ. We follow the idea that the sixty nine weeks end at the baptism of Christ, that there is no gap and with the seventy weeks ending in Acts 10..

It is sufficient to say that the first seven weeks was a period during which the building of the temple transpired under Ezra and Nehemiah. The sixty-nine weeks after that, bring us to the time of the Messiah. This historically occurred, proving the Bible to be true.

It will prove noteworthy to segregate v.25 in our thinking, as being wholly for the Jews and Israel. There is no provision for any gap in time. It does not include any mention of a foreign prince or army and neither does it speak of the ensuing destruction. There is one mention each, bracketed with the Messiah in vvs.26,27.

The events catalogued in this verse, concern Israel and Jerusalem in relation to its rebuilding, having been destroyed at the beginning of the captivity in Babylon.

The person here, described with 'till one comes who is anointed and at the same time prince' (Heb.). This can only be the Messiah.

The word as in v.25, was sent out by Cyrus to build the house of God at Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1,2). This event marked the beginning of the count revealed to Daniel (ch.9:25). It occurred in possibly 457 B.C. When 490 years are added the whole period would end in or around A.D. 33. Consideration needs to be taken of the fact of the birth of Jesus being 7 or 4 B.C. This is sufficient for our purpose.

The Anointed One of course is Christ. The crucial event to be noted until He comes is the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple that occurred under Ezra and Nehemiah during the first seven years. This signified the importance of the return of the remnant from the seventy years captivity in Babylon. God begins His concern for a remnant of Israel only. Nothing but judgment would be reserved for the remainder of that nation. This applies for all time.

The proposed judgments are not classed with these matters so there is no mention of them here. They stand alone, allowing for a short period before their

commencement, when God ends His dealings with Israel as a nation in grace and mercy. The scene is then set for invading armies and rulers to be used in the terrors yet to come.

From that occasion, extending through to the times of the gospel His concern would be for a remnant. Mention of this is made by Paul: 'So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.' ESV (Rom.11:5).

When Jesus Began His Ministry

Jesus Himself acknowledged Daniel's prophecy at the beginning of His ministry in relation to the time decreed. He introduced the gospel message in these verses:

'Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good news"' (Mk.1:14)'.

He was referring to Daniel's prophecy. Jesus Himself is affirming that the sixty-nine weeks have ended and the last week is commencing. His words undoubtedly set the time clock as being the beginning of the seventieth week.

The number of years prophesied had elapsed to the very day when the Anointed One arrived on the scene. The voice of the Father proclaimed it when the Holy Spirit descended on Him in anointing, at His baptism by John.

Verse 26a

Another Sixty Two Weeks - Messiah Cut Off

Verse 26a shows translations as: 'But after the sixty-two sets of seven time periods' GW 'the Messiah shall be cut off, though there is no crime in him.' Sept

'... Shall be put to death, but not for his own sake' Sprl.

'... Shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing'. ASV

Christ was to be the One cut off by death on the cross. It rightly prophecies 'after' 69 weeks ($69 \times 7 = 483$ years). This brings the periods to the beginning of the last week, the 70th. It does not specify here as to exactly when the death will occur. Such is reserved for v.27b (on the next page of this book).

He, the guiltless, met with doom. It was for others who were the guilty. He had nothing, knowing poverty and not wealth. He, Creator and Possessor of heaven and earth, was reduced to being without. He yet God, no longer had the nation, the people or the temple as He had been rejected. The acclaim and worship of the crowd as they spread branches on the road had been turned to voices that were against Him. They had shouted: 'Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord'. Now He is without that kingdom. He has nothing. Little do they realize that their rulers have crucified the Lord of glory, which glory is to be revealed in Him one day. But for the time being, He has nothing, although this will be reversed by His resurrection.

His willingness to suffer death on the cross was to usher in the glory of the manifestation of His humility. Being Divine, He had this mind. It shines forth in His condescension that He, who is God, humbled Himself to become a man. The purpose was to humble Himself still further to die the death as of a criminal on a

cross for the sons of men who were the sinning ones. He was disfigurement itself in being marred, so that it was no longer that of a man.

Oh, the pathos of the scene on that hill called Calvary. As the anointed one who would be cut off, He who is also Divine, was to meet that death in His human body, passing through it in Life as He Himself is the Life from eternity.

Verse 26b

Judgment For Rejection Of Messiah

The following translation is clear when it signifies the ruler is one who is to come later: 'And the people of a coming ruler shall destroy the city and the sanctuary' GW.

The last portion of v.26 jumps to another subject, from the Messiah to a prince and his invading army and it has proved to be at a future time. These are the words:

'After the 62 weeks, the chosen one will be killed. He will be gone. Then the people of the future leader will destroy the city and the holy place. That end will come like a flood.

'War will continue until the end. God has ordered that place to be completely destroyed' ERV (9:26)

Such grim events must be considered as not being a part of the last half of the last week or of any of the weeks. It is placed there only as the consummation of the Messiah's dealings with the Jews. Its apparent purpose is to reveal in the future that the Anointed One's death will eventuate for them, judgment. It would be the climax of their centuries of sinning and rejection of God their Husband.

They will reject 'the chosen one' who 'will be killed', even the Son. Here in this verse a comparison is placed of His death, with the destruction brought by a future and foreign leader. There are two different persons. A clearer view is presented hereunder:

'... Cut off is Messiah, and the city and the holy place are not his' YLT 'The city and the Temple will be destroyed' GN (v.26b)

When Messiah is killed and because of it, Jerusalem and the temple can no longer belong to the Lord. Christ does not possess them any longer. He has gone. The prophecy then shows the result of that will be invasion by a foreign ruler who will make waste the city and the temple. Messiah dies for the nation. God has departed so a foreign leader comes. Destruction of Israel arrives by another's hand.

It will be for a future time and will not occur during the seventy weeks determined for Daniel's people. The events of a war have been determined but are to be future and outside of the 490 years.

The Romans under Titus while still a prince, were those intended. This prince would come prior to becoming Caesar after his father, Vespasian's death. They would be perpetrators of the final judgment on Jerusalem and the temple. The troops foreseen are the Roman soldiers of Titus. They did destroy the temple and the city utterly. Titus at that time had become General, after his father Vespasian was made Emperor. This was inherited by Titus when he died. Thus when Jerusalem was being wiped out, Titus was still a Prince with his father Caesar and he became such on his father's death for a brief time.

Reference is made to the end of the siege, the atrocities, famine, infighting, murders, rapes, cannibalism, executions and the war did 'come with a flood'. The Jewish Josephus, the Roman Maximilian and Titus have attested to this in their writings. The numbers of the desolations were unable to be counted. There had never been such tribulation.

In relation to the Holocaust, cruel and outrageous as it was, let us remember that those Jews Hitler so hated were not actual Jews by descent. If they were, where are all the records of their genealogy? Jerusalem was burnt to the ground. Such do not exist. Israel was never a nation after the dispersion of those who remained, generally to be sent away into slavery. Hence no evidence remains of listings of births – except in the Old Testament. Such scrolls were with some Jews throughout the Roman Empire.

The whole world, including Hitler, has been persecuting Jews for centuries who were not by rights, Jews at all. Their religion was that of Judaism as well as all of their traditions and much of their culture. We still abhor what Hitler accomplished in his action against those millions of people. God's chosen people would have been protected. These in World War II did not escape.

Regarding the verse v.26b there is a contrast. The first is He who will die for the people as a sacrifice for sin. This is because of His love. The second is someone who will act against the people by destroying their city and temple. Here is someone who hates Israel. Her destiny is to be such tribulation as that nation has never experienced before and never will in the future, according to the words of Jesus.

Similarly, contrast is discovered in the following v.27. Such verse has first of all, Messiah making a covenant with certain Jews because of His love. In the middle of the week, temple worship as God's way ceases. Again, there is good for Israel. The old covenant will end with its rituals of Law. Later on, there is to be the infliction of desolation. As before, it is not a lover of the nation but rather an enemy.

Verse 27a

The Covenant By Messiah

The verse carries the main theme back to Messiah. We must think about this logically even as Daniel was instructed to do:

'... Understand the matter, and consider the vision' KJV (v.23). Thayer's dictionary meaning of 'consider' is: 'be cunning, discern, have intelligence, be prudent and skilful'. Concerning the covenant as declared in Daniel 9:27: 'He shall make a strong covenant with many for one week', it is not antichrist who makes this, as many teachers suggest but Christ who is 'The Anointed'. This translation indicating Messiah, words it: 'And during one week He shall confirm the covenant with many.' Sprl

Any idea of an antichrist as anointed would be blasphemy. God's servants alone are those anointed. The following proves this truth. The translation of the previous verse, in its use of English, absolutely indicates one person for v.26a and another one for v.26b: 'And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war.

Desolations are decreed' (Dan.9:26). 'And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate' ESV (Dan.9:27).

A parallel is clear also, in v.27; one person for v.27a and another for v.27c. The first in each case for v.26a and v.27a,b is Messiah and the second a same person, being foreign prince or leader, v.26b,c and 27c. The usage of the four words 'and' gives this sense. Otherwise, why that number of usage of 'and'? The Anointed comes to bless the remnant who will believe, whereas the prince coming with his army arrives to destroy the remainder. Such is the comparison here. There is no real mention of an antichrist.

Many today make much of a connection from a supposed antichrist here to the one in Rev.13:18. As there is not an antichrist in Daniel 9, the baseless argument falls to pieces. Doctrine cannot exist on one verse alone, that in Revelation. The covenant 'with many' made by Messiah from the time of His anointing as such, was effective for three and a half years. At the end of that period, God dealt with the removal of their sins. Paul later referred to it: 'And this is my covenant unto them, When I shall take away their sins' ASV (Acts 11:27).

The remainder of the week, another period of three and a half, is after the sin has been dealt with. The gospel and Pentecost are in force for the Jews. During this period of the covenant, the anointed followers of Christ conveyed its message to the Jews, as Christ, the Anointed One, had already ascended.

Verse 27b

Temple Worship Ends

'... And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease' Web.

In consideration of: '... For half of the week he shall make sacrifice and offering cease'. This was in conjunction with the putting in place of the covenant that had its start at the time of His baptism and ministry, as stated previously.

He was cut off in the middle of the week. On that occasion, all further sacrifices and offerings were rendered useless to God. This occurred on His death, when the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom by the Divine Hand.

It signified the end of temple worship with its sacrifices and offerings as being acceptable to God.

Another and better sacrifice had been provided by the slain Lamb of God. This was the eternal sacrifice, leaving no room for a resumption of animal sacrifices as taught for a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. May I emphasize that this indeed is for all time and would prohibit any such being established on the temple mount in Jerusalem for a millennial reign by Christ.

Accordance is made with this, written later on in history, when it is stated: 'But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he

entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption' (Heb.9:11,12).

A look at Judaism as it is today world-wide and as it has been for centuries, shows an absence of animal sacrifices. This is despite there having been millions of animals slain during Old Testament times. Rivers of blood had flowed and the stench of those offerings extended far beyond tabernacle or temple. Sacrifice and oblations ceased historically. Will God ever allow sacrifices again?

The difference in Christ's offering is that it had an odor of a sweet smell before God. His blood is the only fountain from which sins are washed away. His blood alone could atone for sin and propitiate our God. We are reconciled by the blood and approach the throne of grace through the way that has been opened by the blood. There is mighty power in the blood of Jesus that is in heaven today in Spirit form so as to avail for us. We drink of that life-giving blood because 'the life of the flesh is in the blood' KJV (Lev.17:11).

The end of v.27b states He was 'to have nothing' and surely this applied to Christ who was 'cut off'. He was not rich and who did not even own a tomb in which to be buried. His body was buried in the sepulcher of another and thus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy that he would make 'his tomb with the rich'.

Verse 27c

Desolations

'... And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate' KJV

A seemingly more correct translations perhaps, is: 'And upon the wing of abominations shall come one that makes desolate; and even unto the consummation, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolator'. RV (Rome was judged some centuries later).

Other translations reveal that on the termination of the prophecy there will come desolation. This accords with the preceding verses. Some are quoted:

'... And upon the wing of desolations shall come one that maketh desolate' ASV

'... And in the train of these abominations shall come an author of desolation ...'

NEB

Then there is: '... And upon ... the pinnacle of abominations shall come one who makes desolate'. Amp

The last phrase reads like this in one version:

'... And that which was decreed shall be poured on the desolator'. It is the MKJV

The person here, the desolator, is not antichrist as many would suggest but the obvious one as has occurred in history, is Rome.

Then here the whole period of the last seven weeks is ended with the words: 'Until a firmly determined end comes down upon the desolation' *Bernick* (Dan.9:27c). Allowance is made for a gap of some kind afterwards that eventually is seen historically to be short.

These desolations have as perpetrators, Vespasian, Titus and the Roman Army. There were also others. Jesus foretold all of these matters and we make this conclusion from the reading of the text in Daniel 9, that of Matthew 24 and of Luke

21 and view the history of the days A.D. 66-70. This maintains as being the case, especially when we particularize these verses from Luke:

"Some of the followers were talking about the temple. They said, "This is a beautiful temple, built with the best stones. Look at the many good gifts that have been offered to God" (Lk.21:5).

"But Jesus said, "The time will come when all that you see here will be destroyed. Every stone of these buildings will be thrown down to the ground. Not one stone will be left on another" (v.6)

"Some followers asked Jesus, "Teacher, when will these things happen? What will show us that it is time for these things to happen?" (v.7)

"When you hear about wars and riots, don't be afraid. These things must happen first. Then the end will come later" (v.9).

"Then Jesus said to them, "Nations will fight against other nations. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms" (v.10).

"There will be great earthquakes, sicknesses, and other bad things in many places. In some places there will be no food for the people to eat. Terrible things will happen, and amazing things will come from heaven to warn people" (v.11).

"You will see armies all around Jerusalem. Then you will know that the time for its destruction has come" (v.20).

"You will see armies all around Jerusalem. Then you will know that the time for its destruction has come" all verses are ERV (v.21)'.
'

A perusal of the above scripture verses defines the whole event as one and that occurring before and during the time of the destruction of Israel, Jerusalem and the temple.

To set most of the events for the end time is tantamount to denying the above prophecies in the gospels from the lips of Jesus.

It cannot be refuted that the temple was razed to the ground in A.D. 70. The armies did surround Jerusalem. The time of its destruction occurred then.

These and all of the other events predicted are cited as history in records from those days.

We have come to the end of the last week and also of the seventieth week. The sixty-nine ran their course and then the prophecies regarding the seventieth week were fulfilled. Thus ended the seventy weeks, without any gap. The gap theory is thus wrong.

Is There A Gap Until The End-Time?

To predicate a gap of centuries after vs.26a,c;27a,b and one still in process over many centuries, until the end time, as is done, lacks evidence. The whole issue lies in the appearance of Messiah at the appointed time, with utmost importance to Israel. There are to be definite results for the Jews and these pertain to blessing for them. Such are detailed in v.24, as the result of v.26a's Anointed Prince being cut off. Because 'the anointed prince' of v.26a comes at the end of 69 weeks as declared: 'until the anointed prince comes') and is cut off (dies) at a time said to be only 'after the 62 weeks', the conclusion is: the death must occur during the next or last week.

Alongside of these blessings, judgment is to fall at the hands of another prince and people. The featured period in the last week (7 years), extends only for one block, from when Messiah is anointed until the completion of His covenant, that has a pre-determined and continuous period of seven years. On the contrary, when judgment would fall is not revealed there or in any of the four verses.

It seems that the projected reason for the seventy weeks being determined for Daniel's people in v.24 is missed. Consider this: 'Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city: to finish ...'. The prophecy states the period of time, that it is a decree for Israel and the holy city but in relation to the ensuing six matters. They do not include the desolation that was to come later.

The remaining verses that include judgment are added. The subject of judgment is not contained in v.24. It is separate and not part of v.24 that sets out the whole purpose of the determination. It is blessing for Israel and not the judgment which is added.

Observation of the judgments prescribed throughout the prophets on Israel, different countries and cities, reveals it is not made effective immediately. Jesus when He came, catalogued the judgments to come in Matthew 24. According to Daniel and verified by Jesus, there would be a period after that before His prophecy would take effect. Jesus said it to those then with Him, as being only 'in this (or their) generation'.

He began a covenant as declared in Daniel, at the beginning of His ministry. After three and a half years, He endured the cruel death on the cross, being cut off. The covenant He had with many of the Jews, the ones who believed in Him, still continued for another three and a half years. The new covenant then took effect and became the property of the one body, comprising both Jew and Gentile in Christ. That began the period of the Gentiles and the completion of Daniel's prophecy regarding Messiah and blessing. Judgment comes later.

Prophecy Was To Point To Messiah's Coming

The importance of the prophecy is that it points to when and why Messiah would come. Daniel's people were the first to be recipients of all the blessings He would bring. The Pharisees and Scribes in Jewry could calculate the years and know the time and also the manner of His appearance. Obviously when the wise men made enquiries, Herod suspected the time was upon them (Mt.2:1-8).

A factor that is regularly missed is that Israel is informed here of her end as a nation because this Israel who is the Messiah, would be given to replace her. He became the Chosen and Beloved, in Whom would be His chosen people, His Bride and church for whom He would make atonement. Reference is not given as to the inclusion of the Gentiles. Along with certain verses found in Genesis and the Prophets, it remained for a revelation to be made to the apostles and to Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

It is evidenced by him that it: 'Was not made known to the sons of men in other generations, as now it was revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit, for the nations to be joint-heirs, and a joint-body and joint-sharers of His promise in

Christ through the gospel, of which I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me, according to the working of His power' LITV (Eph.3:5-7).

Daniel did not signal that there would be a gap of thousands of years, or indeed of any period of time, between the end of the sixty-ninth and the beginning of the seventh week. Yet this is being taught today and the gap idea promotes the gross errors. There is no such centuries long gap as we prove.

Explanation Regarding The Actual Gap

The truth lies here. The last week, the period of the seven years, had begun with the anointing of Christ by the Spirit. In the middle of the week, roughly three and a half years after He was anointed, He was cut off by the crucifixion. This week had commenced with His first appearance as Teacher and Prophet. Thus began the covenant with His people. Christ is the One who makes a covenant and not any antichrist.

The remaining three and a half years of the seven that commenced at the time of the crucifixion began as stated, in the middle of the week, when Christ already had a strong covenant with many of His people (v.27a). This was the new covenant under whom many Jews as in Acts had entered through faith in Christ. It is somewhat of an insertion in the train of events prophesied in relation to the Romans and Titus. The last week comes within the framework of Daniel 9:24. Here there are six marked out blessings for the Jews as a nation. Five occur in the middle of the 70th week (490 years) but the last one in relation to an anointing on Messiah and then His church consisting of believing Jews, reaches across the last half of the seven weeks or years to the end of the 70th week. The six constitute the revelation given through Gabriel concerning the Jews in relation to the Anointed One.

The Messiah will appear to Israel at the end of the sixty-ninth week (483 years), for the last seven years. There is no gap during the whole of the 70 weeks. However, there is a gap between those events and the times of judgment. If we consider vs. 25-27 we must admit that there is a place allowing for a gap. None is really mentioned. This bracket of events regarding judgment is isolated from the period of the covenant with its blessing that Messiah becomes to the nation.

Explanation Of A Puzzle For Some

The thread of Gabriel's discourse to the end of the first point in v.26a accounts Messiah's coming as being determined, along with His death. Then notice is given of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. Indication is provided as to how and through whom the stated war will occur, v.26b, but as to when is omitted.

The problem for many concerns the 'he' in the 26a part of the verse and the 'he' as in v.27a. This is Christ and cannot be the well advertised 'antichrist' of 2 Thessalonians. Any difficulty of comprehension is based on an ingrained predisposition. It is the result of generations of teachers following the regular adherence to Darby's doctrine.

Gabriel returns to the subject of the Messiah about a covenant and Jewish sacrifices in v.27a and concludes with the full end or complete destruction of Israel,

v.27c. He does not particularize about the time of the invading prince, the destruction, war, abominations and the desolation. He has restricted those matters to bald statements without any reference as to when such would be upon Israel. The certitude is that they were not part of the subject, Messiah's coming, anointing, covenant, death and closure of temple sacrificial worship.

The object of his disclosures there was what concerned the Messiah and the purpose of His coming. That was to save sinners. Judgment is not given by Him while He was on earth during His ministry. It will fall after His ascension, from His place of exaltation in heaven as the Son of Man. Jesus Himself has informed us that on this present earth, God's purpose was not for Him to act as judge.

This is verified by the following verse:

'God sent his Son into the world. He did not send him to judge the world guilty, but to save the world through him' ERV (Jn.3:17).

The interposition about an invasion and destructive war, certainly must suggest a gap of some period. We now know it was just less than forty years, or just under a generation, as Jesus had intimated. What it does do is to convey the connection between Messiah and the judgment on Israel then foretold. This would occur from His position at the right hand of the Father.

Daniel had previously seen in vision, the Son of Man, Whom Jesus said He was. Judgment was given into His hands. We note the following verses:

'In my vision at night I looked, and there in front of me was someone who looked like a human being. He was coming on the clouds in the sky. He came up to the Ancient King, and the King's servants brought him before the King.

'The one who looked like a human being was given authority, glory, and complete ruling power. People from every nation and language group will serve him. His rule will last forever. His kingdom will continue forever. It will never be destroyed' ERV (Dan.7:13,14).

As Jesus Himself revealed: 'And the Father has given him the power to judge all people because he is the Son of Man' ERV (Jn.5:27).

That these vvs.26,27 show any reference to an antichrist and in particular, to some end time event, has to be established with evidence. A reading of them gives no indication of such being the case. Neither can we imply that there is any connection with some future appearance of Messiah to a Jewish nation on the Mount of Olives. Such an implication is non-existent.

Gabriel had been sent to Daniel so as to announce the coming of Messiah and the purpose of it that does not include reigning as King on the earth.

CHAPTER 9

Comprehending Daniel 9

– Grace And Mercy

The End of Israel To Give Way For The Messiah

‘For Messiah is the aim of the law, for righteousness, unto every one that believeth in him’ (Rom.10:4).

‘For the promise to Abraham and to his seed, that he should become the heir of the world, was not by the law, but by the righteousness of his faith. For if they who are of the law were heirs, faith would be made void, and the promise of no force’ (Rom.4:13,14).

‘Wherefore, by the deeds of the law, no flesh is justified before him: for, by the law, sin is known. But now, the righteousness of God without the law, is manifested; and the law and the prophets testify of it:

‘even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Messiah, for every one, and on every one, that believeth in him’ (Rom.3:19-22).

‘... They who receive the abundance of the grace, and the free gift, and the righteousness, will reign in life, by means of one, Jesus Messiah’ (Rom.5:17).

All these verses are from Murdock. They show the need for the end of Law given to Israel and with it, the nation itself has to go, unless they believed on the Son of God, which they refused to do. Paul expresses it thus:

‘... The minds of the rest of Israel were closed, as Scripture says, "To this day God has given them a spirit of deep sleep. Their eyes don't see, and their ears don't hear!" GW (Rom.11:7,8).

The grace of God that brought salvation had in mind those Jews who would believe but He was actually reaching out to Gentiles as in:

‘The fall of the Jewish people made the world spiritually rich. Their failure made people who are not Jewish spiritually rich. So the inclusion of Jewish people will make the world even richer’ GW (Rom.11:12).

If we note carefully these verses, we can comprehend something of the grace and mercy of God. We see it in Daniel’s prophecy.

Secrecy And Knowledge Of Daniel’s Book

The last chapter of the book of Daniel discloses this:

‘Daniel, I now command you to keep the message of this book secret until the end of time, even though many people will go everywhere, searching for the knowledge to be found in it’ ERV (Dan.12:4).

Klieforth settles for this meaning:

‘Thus - “Daniel must place in security the prophecies he has received until the time of the end, so that through all times many men may be able to read them and gain understanding (better: obtain knowledge) from them.” The Hebrew word is the knowledge of the ways of the Lord with His people, which confirms them in their fidelity towards God.’

The end of time is the closure of the Jewish economy with the nation. That is the time remaining that will end, as we know, in A.D. 70. Until then, there is a seal placed so that there will be difficulty in understanding what the prophecies mean. Despite this, many will search the book to try to probe its secrets. Doubtless, some would gain a glimmer of light. Then when the end approaches and is on them, many will discover truth in it. Such, for example, were the scribes and pharisees as well as Josephus, the Jewish historian, who left Jerusalem during the conflicts. He had been given comprehension regarding the judgments predicted in Daniel 9.

‘And he said, Go thy way Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end’ Webster (Dan.12:9).

The Hebrew word for ‘time’ here is different from that of v.4. It can also mean ‘the terminus’.

In relation to Daniel, he was given a personal message:

‘But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days’ KJV (Dan.9:13).

There has been some confusion as to the meaning of this verse. It apparently does indicate this meaning –

‘Daniel, you will live until the end of your days. Then you will go to rest and will rise from the dead to receive your inheritance’. It will come to the saints who die in the Lord as promised here:

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

Regarding the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27, in effect, the angel’s main theme was the pronouncement that the nation would come to its close at the end of the seventy weeks. The Jewish economy with its Temple, Law, priesthood, rituals, ceremonies and the keeping of feast days was to end. God had no more necessity for its existence. This is the reason Gabriel begins with the phrases: ‘... From the commandment ... unto the Messiah ...’

Putting into place the grand salvation plan of God foreordained before the world was created, is to have its commencement with the coming of Messiah the Prince. Herein lay the mercy of God.

The purpose for the creation of men would be unveiled. God was to deal with the sin question and provide His Son as Savior. His ultimate reason was so that there would be those who would be in Christ and have Christ in them; God and man in a certain union. He would be in their midst forever as Lord and King. The time of law

would end and the gospel of the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, would prevail.

Jesus came to the Jews as Prince, Heir-apparent to the throne of David, declared thus by Gabriel:

‘Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince ...’ KJV (Dan.9:24).

It was the same angel, Gabriel, when Messiah the Prince would appear, who made the annunciation to Mary that this Child would be born of her.

God Always Acts With Mercy Alongside Judgment

When the Children of Israel were heading for the promised land, God had promised His presence in the Person of the Angel of the Lord (His Son) would go before them. This had been in Exodus 23:20-23.

They sinned in the matter of the golden calf and worship of it instead of leaning on Jehovah. Then the Lord effected a change. Moses cried out to Him and He showed His mercy despite the judgment sent. The following words recount the incident:

‘So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold.

‘But now, if you will forgive their sin--but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.'"

‘But the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book.

“But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them" CEV (Ex.32:31-34)’.

A created angel replaced the promised Angel of the Lord who was the Son. The covenant on which the original promise was based had been broken by the people. God’s presence would not precede them. Nevertheless, the promise of the land of Canaan still remained. That day of Israel’s sin of idolatry ended with three thousand of them slain. Judgment fell but mercy still flowed.

In similar manner, there is the provision of boundless grace, comfort, hope and courage for Jewry despite the horrendous judgments that would fall as prophesied by Daniel (Dan.9:27a). These would be such as had never occurred during the whole of their history. Still there is to be faith in God’s provision of a way of escape, for time and for eternity. Those Jews who would come under the new covenant made by Messiah would be enabled to escape the terrors in Jerusalem. Their final blessing was to be the eternal life with Christ provided by such a covenant.

We Learn From Habakkuk

Habakkuk prophesied before Israel was carried off into captivity in Babylon. He was in great puzzlement as to the purposes of the Lord.

In this prophecy or vision, he cried out these words: ‘O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy’ ESV (Hab.3:2).

Habakkuk was overwhelmed in ch.3 at the remembrance of the Lord's deliverance of the Children of Israel from Pharaoh and out of Egypt. Previously he had prophesied that the Babylonians who had carried Israel into captivity would be punished. We show elsewhere a similar fate was ready for the Roman Empire.

Now he touches on the mystery of Christ. There was a partial redemption in one nation, Israel. This leads him to the matter of redemption provided universally. It was for the remnant of Israel and those Gentiles who would believe in Christ.

Due to her captivity, Israel would need a revival or new life to be performed in her as a nation. So Habakkuk beseeches the Lord to revive His work on Israel. This had to be done so that the Messiah would appear in the fullness of time.

She was a nation that had been created by Him. Isaiah had indicated this in these words: "Thus says the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and the one who formed him: "Ask me of things to come; will you command me concerning my children and the work of my hands?" ESV (Isa.45:11)'.

The Revival Of Israel

No one can command the Lord but His mercy and grace is always available for those who come in faith to the throne of grace in heaven. The Holy One of Israel had such compassion on Israel of old and on the new Israel of God the church, that He even declares we are to ask of Him present and future favors on behalf of His children.

Israel that did go into captivity would be revived to life, even as Ezekiel had spoken to the bones in the valley (Ezek.37). The nation would be reformed and this began to occur on the edict of Cyrus, King of Persia (Ezra 1:2). Also, out of her death indicated as dead bones, later would be birthed the church of Jesus Christ.

She was revived in the sixth century B.C. only to have an end in judgment. The work of God on and in her had been accomplished. The Messiah, Son of David and Seed of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ was born. He is their and indeed our God: "The Messiah is descended from their ancestors according to his human nature. The Messiah is God over everything, forever blessed. Amen" GW (Rom.9:5).

He brought forth the reformed Israel, the Israel of God, His own church for whom He died.

Despite judgment on the nation, grace and truth came to the remnant of her people in the Person of Jesus, their Messiah.

Eternal Life To Jew And Gentile Also, In Habakkuk

There is another point. The prophet pleads that the Lord would do His work 'in the midst of the years'. His work in the mystery of the gospel, is one of salvation through Jesus Christ who would give eternal life to Gentiles, along with Jews

Jesus came when God revived 'in the midst of the years'. The Septuagint translates it as: 'In the midst of two lives you shall be known', the life that now is and that which is to come. Messiah's appearance to Israel occurred at the division of the times. Israel had lived on a national basis before He came. Judgment meant her end. A new life for Israel emerged in the form of a chosen people and nation. The olive tree will have growth. Those Jews who believe in Christ the Redeemer, will be joined

to this tree again. Believing Gentiles that were like a wild branch have been joined to it. This is how the olive tree is presented:

‘... The minds of some Israelites have become closed until all of God's non-Jewish people are included.

‘In this way Israel as a whole will be saved ...’ GW (Rom.11:25,26).

Paul relates that Israel is now an olive tree, consisting of saved Israelites as well as non-Jews. Both Jew and Gentile were dead in trespasses and sin. Christ brought a reviving of the dead in sin. Those dead in trespasses and sin could find salvation by grace through faith. Jesus Christ alone gives this life as He said:

‘I assure you, anyone who hears what I say and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life. They will not be judged guilty. They have already left death and have entered into life. Believe me, an important time is coming. That time is already here. People who are dead will hear the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live’ ERV (Jn.5:24,25).

In the midst of judgment foretold by Daniel, God provides grace and mercy through a new covenant, as stated in KJV: ‘He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week’ or Ber: ‘In a week he shall make the covenant prevail for many’ (Dan.9:27a).

The new covenant is accentuated far above that of the judgment. It covers ‘many’ but not all of them as the majority in Israel repudiated the message of the gospel and met the just destruction due to them.

God’s love for Israel shines forth amidst the desolation that is prophesied. The eternal love to be revealed in Christ was shown here by David: ‘Mercy and faith have come together; righteousness and peace have given one another a kiss’ BBE (Ps.85:10).

There was always a means of escape, even as John the Baptist subtly indicated to the crowds of Jews coming to be baptized by him: ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?’ NIV (Lk.3:7).

In His judgment on Israel, the Son of Man reserved mercy for those of faith in Him.

God Speaks By The Number Of Years

Fascination lies in the fact that the Lord sent His prophets to give this clear knowledge to the leaders of the nation of Israel and through them its people. The prophetic word made them aware that there would be 70 years of captivity. These were spent in Babylon.

Prophets arose during this bondage, promising the return of a certain remnant to Jerusalem. The temple would be rebuilt.

As well, Daniel proclaimed a period of 490 years from when such a return would be decreed. Isaiah had prophesied that a ruler named Cyrus, would issue such a law, a couple of centuries previously.

The prophecies in the Old Testament surely give testimony to being God’s word in the accuracy of fulfillment.

When the period named by Daniel was upon them, certainly the Scribes, Pharisees and the priesthood knew the Messiah's appearance was drawing near. Yet they refused Him when He did arrive even after examining His claims and conceding them right.

The Lord left them with no excuse for their rebuttal of His promises. They knew from the prophets that He had spoken. The timing of events was clearly marked out to the very year. They heaped upon themselves due punishment.

During His time of ministry, Jesus upbraided them with this:

"It will be bad for you teachers of the law and you Pharisees! You are hypocrites! ... And you will finish the sin that your ancestors started!

'So I tell you this: I send to you prophets and teachers who are wise and know the scriptures. You will kill some of them. You will hang some of them on crosses. You will beat some of them in your synagogues. You will chase them from town to town.

'So you will be guilty for the death of all the good people who have been killed on earth. You will be guilty for the killing of that godly man Abel ... Believe me when I say that all these things will happen to you people who are living now' ERV (Mt.24:29,32.34-36).

Is Jesus including the people today who call themselves Jews? This bears solemn thought.

Most preachers and believers clutch on to the above verse in the words:

'This generation shall not pass away' as one example, in the KJV. Of course it means exactly as the ERV puts it. They say it applies to around the time when Israel returns to its own land and there is the great tribulation.

The people referred to were living at the time Jesus gave His prophecies that were pronouncements of doom.

Then there was this incident. After the resurrection as Cleopas and his wife were joined by Jesus on their way to Emmaus, He reproved such disciples with:

'Why can't you understand? How can you be so slow to believe all that the prophets said?' CEV (Lk.24:25).

Nevertheless, Grace Shines Through Judgment

Examination of Dan.9:24 will truly magnify the grace of God as being far in excess of the judgment to come on Israel. The salvation to be supplied for Israel through the Messiah far outweighs the curses she has heaped upon herself. There is an avenue of escape provided.

The foreknowledge of God realizes she will not repent and further that she will crucify the Savior.

Paul aptly provides the principle in these verses:

'Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord' ESV (Rom.5:20&21).

The consequence of Adam's sin for the human race and specifically at this point for Israel is to be dealt with on a cross. Eternal righteousness is to be granted by the

grace of God. His promises as portrayed by the prophets were to be fulfilled. The visions and oracles of the Old Testament would be consummated.

All of this was to be through the Anointed One, the Messiah, who intended to favor His children with the blessings His atonement for sin would unlock.

The mysterious secrets of the kingdom He would come to announce would be opened by Him for the benefit of not only Jews but the Gentiles. These were for the future to disclose.

Behind the message through Daniel was the then generally unknown truth that God had chosen a special people to be in Christ. Before the worlds were created the predetermination had been decided upon by the counsel between the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Further along in that prophecy given to Daniel about his people, was the disclosure that ‘Messiah the Prince’ YLT (or the Anointed one ASV), would invade earth’s scene and that for the purpose of dying a cruel death. Herein lies the grace of God.

As the word was spoken to Daniel, evidence was given that there would be a remnant from this nation chosen by the Lord. They unlike Israel itself, would not in the finality of its history, spurn His widely given grace. This is indicated by the use of the word ‘many’.

Rejecting His gospel grace was to be in the face of the long continuing grace of God upon Israel. In the wilderness before the chosen ones entered the land of Canaan, His grace had been with them.

Their history was one of sinning and then of return to the Lord. A remnant who had been in Babylon in Daniel’s day would later find grace in their deliverance out of captivity. The temple would be rebuilt with a promise of grace as given by Zechariah.

They had been under law but here is the One promised who would bring grace and truth to His own as in the first chapter of John.

The Purpose Of Grace For Israel As A Nation Come To An End

The last seven years still continued after His ascension for another half a week. The grace of God brought salvation to the world but it reached the Jews first of all.

This grace for the Jews alone, continued for the seven weeks or years. It went out first of all in the presentation of Christ first as Servant and as Prophet who began preaching the kingdom of God.

He was shown to be Savior by His death. He then appeared to some hundreds as having risen after His crucifixion at the hands of the Roman soldiers (1 Cor.15:6).

It was the Jews whose guilt was apparent. They cried: ‘Crucify Him. Crucify Him’. However, the nation was still receiving God’s grace when He poured out the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Many received the Messiah and were saved, knowing also the Acts 2:4 experience.

The gospel was directed to that nation only, while the last block of three and a half weeks still remained.

Subsequently the grace of God was revealed as being not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles, with the commencing scenes of Acts 10. This conforms to what

God promised His Son: 'I the Lord have made you the vessel of my purpose, I have taken you by the hand, and kept you safe, and I have given you to be an agreement (covenant) to the people, and a light to the nations' BBE (Isa.42:6). As Christ is 'the Covenant' this new one can never fail.

Thus, the final period of half the seven weeks commenced after the resurrection, without a gap. It continued with His forty days on earth and then on after the ascension that just preceded the outpouring of the Spirit. It encompasses all the events recorded in the book of Acts to the end of chapter 9 and beginning of chapter 10.

This is the manner in which the time of God's old covenant with Israel ends, as well as the one made by Messiah the Prince for seven weeks.

His purposes were always for Jew and Gentile as declared by Paul: 'In order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory-- even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?' ESV (Rom.9:23&24).

Jews of natural Israel can participate in the privilege that God gave them to be His people. As He now has the church of true believers in Christ as the new nation, their inclusion in it guarantees them every spiritual blessing there is for the people of God. Together with believing Gentiles, they become the people of God.

The following translation of Romans 11:21-32 is most enlightening on the whole subject:

'If God did not let the natural branches of that tree stay, he will not let you stay if you stop believing.

'So you see that God is kind, but he can also be very strict. He punishes those who stop following him ... And if the Jews will believe in God again, he will accept them back. He is able to put them back where they were.

'It is not natural for a wild branch to become part of a good tree. But you non-Jewish people are like a branch cut from a wild olive tree. And you were joined to a good olive tree. But those Jews are like a branch that grew from the good tree. So surely they can be joined to their own tree again.' Part of Israel has been made stubborn, but that will change when enough non-Jewish people have come to God. And that is how all Israel will be saved. The scriptures say, "The Savior will come from Zion; he will take away all evil from the family of Jacob.

"And I will make this agreement with those people when I take away their sins."

'The Jews refuse to accept the Good News, so they are God's enemies. This has happened to help you who are not Jews. But they are still God's chosen people, and he loves them because of the promises he made to their ancestors.

'God never changes his mind about the people he calls. He never decides to take back the blessings he has given them.

'At one time you refused to obey God. But now you have received mercy, because the Jews refused to obey.

'And now they are the ones who refuse to obey, because God showed mercy to you. But this happened so that they can also receive mercy from him.

‘All people have refused to obey God. And he has put them all together as people who don't obey him so that he can show mercy to everyone’. ERV

The following comment by Clarke clarifies the whole issue as to how God has not changed His mind about Israel: ‘They are as guilty as the Gentiles and all are classed as sinners, having to accept the mercy He has disclosed to all. It is only by grace through faith in the Christ of the gospel’.

There is classification under the gospel about people, Jews and Gentiles. All are sinners. Some believe and become saints in Christ.

The End Of The Last Week Saw The Times Of The Gentiles Begin

Then the times of the Gentiles began when that of the old covenant for the Jews ended.

These commenced with the conversions in the house of Cornelius and the outpouring of the Spirit upon them (Acts 10). The people there were all Gentiles, the first of millions to experience salvation and the baptism with the Spirit as it had occurred in the second chapter of Acts.

The seventy weeks (or four hundred and ninety years) in this way had their completion so that the times of the Gentiles could commence.

God’s program remains in continuity without any gap of some millennia, until the foreordained number has been reached as stated:

‘Until the complete number of you Gentiles has come in’ CEV (Rom.11:25).

In this manner, ‘all Israel will be saved’. She comprises both Jew and Gentile, according to the revelation of Paul (Rom.11:26).

Summing Up How Daniel 9:24 Was Fulfilled

The pith of the few vs.24-27 is contained in v.24. It is most important to recognize this. Why it is so, is easily comprehended. It is to be read as it is written in a manner that allows the verse to explain itself. It is obvious from KJV and many other translations. However, to make it simpler, we should quote this version:

‘Seventy weeks have been fixed for your people and your holy town, to let wrongdoing be complete and sin come to its full limit, and for the clearing away of evil-doing and the coming in of eternal righteousness: so that the vision and the word of the prophet may be stamped as true, and to put the holy oil on a most holy place’ BBE 1965 (Dan.9:24).

I would like to point out another translation for the last portion because I believe that it carries the true meaning of the last phrase. It is: ‘...and to anoint the Most Holy One’. GW

The obvious understanding is that v.24 alone contains the crux of the matter. The above translation in particular, can lead to no other conclusion.

There have been 70 weeks set for (a) Israel and (b) Jerusalem. For what reason? That is explained exactly by the remainder of the verse. Regarding v.24 it was completely fulfilled, as indeed were the other verses in due course.

Looking at those other three verses, 25-27, we can see they follow on from this crucial statement of v.24 and could be called an addendum or an appendix. They are

necessary due to the fact that they reveal the instrumentality whereby God will accomplish His purposes outlined in v.24.

A Savior must die after He initiates a covenant with Jewish people. Their nation and temple needs to be eliminated by a foreign people who in turn are to be judged.

This will fulfill the prophecies and show God's disregard for His former chosen and His love and grace extended to the new people of God, both Jewish remnant and Gentile believers.

There has to be the introduction of the Anointed One through the gospel along with the anointed people of God who come in through His death and its message.

V.25 is indeed most important as it reveals the number of years given for the events in the verse, 49 and 434 years.

We look at v.26 that is about the Anointed Prince, Messiah:

'Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times' ASV and this is very exact as to the timing.

Then the rebuilding of Jerusalem is declared to occur after the remnant return on the edict of Cyrus.

Concerning v.27, it is about this Messiah Prince (v.26), making a covenant with many Jews as well as in relation to another person who will come and bring desolation and who consequently will receive a just punishment. Titus himself reigned as Emperor for only a couple of years. The Roman Empire also eventually ended, much later.

We quote this version of v.27:

'And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.' ESV

The point that there are two different persons involved, is most obvious. Therefore, he who makes a covenant is not he who causes trouble. Christ as indicated previously, is the only one who makes a covenant that is strong enough to bring the sacrificial system of the Mosaic Law to an end. It cannot be that antichrist is involved.

In relation to v.24, again, we make the following comments:

a. Jesus said that there would come 'an end to the transgressions' of Israel in His statement regarding that generation:

"Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.' (Mt.23:34-36).

Many messengers of the cross who were sent from that time up to AD 70 were certainly killed and persecuted. The Bible speaks of a few but history records hundreds if not thousands more.

Judgment at last eventuated for the whole nation, due to all of its transgressions beginning with the murder of Abel and down through the centuries. They came to an end through judgment and the almost total wiping out of the Jews.

There was no longer a nation after A.D. 70.

There was not one for nearly two thousand years and the birth of a nation of Israel half a century ago cannot be accredited to the hand of God. There has not been any sign from heaven of its having been supernaturally instigated.

b. Sin was brought to an end by the redemption made possible through the shedding of the blood of Christ on the cross.

c. Atonement and reconciliation for iniquity were effected.

d. The kingdom of God came with Christ and righteousness and sanctification became the gift of God to believers in Christ, to the Jews first.

e. Vision and prophecy for the nation of Israel were sealed i.e. the meaning was not disclosed to those who read until the time of the events predicted. Also, records or books by any further God-given seers are non-existent. There were no longer prophets for Israel.

f. The anointing of a most holy place (better, 'most holy'), is indicative of such being the temple of the living God, whose house believers are. This temple had the beginning of its anointing on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is the anointing.

The above brings us to the end of v.24. The portion from v. 24 to the end of v.27 concludes with mention of the pointer that turned out to be the Roman Army abominating the Jewish temple, with its heathen sacrifices. This occurred until the destruction as decreed by God.

It is evident that all these prophecies have been fulfilled. Why are believers still looking for another fulfillment that surely will never arrive?

No Gap In Between Weeks 69 And 70

Proponents of the millennium doctrine say that there is a gap between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth weeks. According to that view, a period of seven years' tribulation will happen on earth, particularly to Israel who will experience the wrath of God.

For years, we believers have only seen blessing on Israel and not the wrath of God. Paul has explained their situation in these words:

'So this is what has happened: The people of Israel wanted God's blessing, but they did not all get it. The people he chose did get his blessing, but the others became hard and refused to listen to him.

'As the scriptures say, "God caused the people to fall asleep." "God closed their eyes so that they could not see, and he closed their ears so that they could not hear. This continues until now." ERV (Rom.11:7&8).'

During the middle of the 'week' (the seven years), it is believed in some quarters, that antichrist is to make a covenant with Israel. It seems obvious that this cannot be a scripturally based view as is the one we have presented above.

For most of my life, off and on, I have been considering all of these end time matters, including the problematic in recent years.

Consultation from many sources has been part of the procedure. The resultant scriptural comprehension is the only one that makes sense because all else remains in the realm of speculation and imagination.

The evidence of the New Testament and history, reveals that the apostles, their immediate followers and most down the centuries, did not subscribe to any of the present day beliefs, including this gap of centuries. They understood the prophecies of Jesus. Scholars were convinced that the announcement of Jesus in relation to 'the time is fulfilled' for the kingdom of God and of heaven, concerned Daniel 9.

They were shown that judgment would come on Israel within the specific generation of the ones listening to His words.

The promises and covenant of God are fulfilled in Jesus Christ and His salvation for His people and finally in bringing them to the heavenly land as their possession. The scene has switched from natural Israel now, to spiritual Israel as a people, descendants of Jesus Christ, His offspring (Isa.53:10). This being the case, why is there such a passionate interest in a natural Israel and an Israel in its own land? Christ's ones are to be heavenly minded and not earthly.

Our sole interest in this Israel should be to evangelize them with the gospel.

An Earthly Gaze

The Israelites demanded a king like all the other nations. God said they had rejected Him from being King over them. They wanted to be like the other nations. That spirit was still in their hearts when they expected the Messiah to come and reign as a national king.

That same spirit is still in the hearts of the present day Jews who reject their Messiah, Jesus Christ as the atoning Savior. They are still waiting for Him to come and be their national king. Unfortunately, much of the Christian church today has joined them in this ungodly hope, looking for a still carnal and worldly kingdom, hoping for prosperity and getting the world ready for Jesus.

The blindness of Israel the nation and even of the disciples of Jesus is a paramount feature in their limited grasp regarding the prophecies they were taught.

It thus is not a marvel that Peter would write later: 'But to disobeying ones, He is the "Stone which those building rejected; this One became the Head of the Corner," and a Stone-of-stumbling, and a Rock-of-offence" to the ones stumbling, being disobedient to the word, to which they were also appointed' LITV (1 Pet.2:7&8).

Isaiah 8:14 is quoted (as well as Ps.118:2): 'And He shall be for a sanctuary, and for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of falling to the two houses of Israel; for a trap and for a snare to the ones living in Jerusalem' LITV.

Peter is warning those who are to receive his letter. He says to them:

‘The people tripped over the word because they refused to believe it. Therefore, this is how they ended up’ GW v.8.

The reason he implores them as he does is found in these words:

‘Jesus became a rock of offence and a stone of stumbling to Israel who rejected Him and His words’.

Believers today, who become disobedient to His word, are to that extent, stumbling over Christ as a rock of offence.

The Jews rejected Him, in the main, because He claimed to be the Son of God and did not appear as an earthly king, rather choosing to die on a cross of shame.

To follow the end time beliefs of the millennium shows a similar trend. Jesus as Savior is accepted but the wish also is for One who has an earthly reign. The heavenly scene is often obscured to such an extent that the glory that awaits us becomes instead an earthly hope. It is preferable; think many, to be on earth ruling over people than to be in glory in heaven with God in the midst.

This perception as being the erroneous is lost in the fogs of entrenched beliefs that cause hopes of heaven to be a faded dream. Its main consideration is that we can hope to go there when we die, because death is a terrible event.

That is natural but we are supernaturally born again from heaven. Our citizenship is there and nowhere on this earth, in relation to our eternal beliefs. He warns us all with these comments:

‘Dear friends, since you are foreigners and temporary residents in the world, I’m encouraging you to keep away from the desires of your corrupt nature. These desires constantly attack you’ GW v.11.

The desires of our carnal natures overwhelmingly tend towards an earthly hope and worldly ambitions. This is where we must put off our old man or carnal nature, by refusing to listen to his words that spring from within us. He is not to be followed.

Instead we are to walk in the Spirit. The Holy Ghost given revelation from the word is to be followed. Any carnally inspired revelation is not from Him.

When we follow such teaching we are being guided by demons as that Paul mentions: ‘But the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and teachings of demons’ MKJV (1 Tim.4:1).

Most Believers That Included Myself, Must Follow Change Of Mind

Jesus predicted judgment upon the nation of Israel was in that ‘generation’. This concurs with Peter’s cry that told the Jews to ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation’ (Acts 2:10). Those who believed in Christ did just that and became citizens of the newly formulated Israel which was to include ‘all that are afar off’.

Importance must be given to the message Daniel received in the vision as being for his people and not for the Gentiles. It was not given for any time after God’s intent relating to Israel, came to an end in accordance with the prophecy.

The fulfillment of the prophecy relating to the crucial ending of the last week occurs in this manner. After the first seven weeks with regard to Jerusalem and the

temple (Daniel 9:25) and at the end of the following sixty-two weeks (v.26), there remains the last week.

This begins with the seven years connected to Israel's Messiah. At its commencement, the Anointed Prince, Christ was baptized in water and the Holy Spirit came upon Him. It was after that He immediately began preaching the kingdom. This was at the beginning of this last period of seven weeks.

Not Anti-Christ

The conclusion that the one making the covenant is antichrist is paramount in the view of millennialists. This part of v.27 relates to the Messiah, about Whom the whole prophecy was put in place.

We quote three translations:

'And during one week He shall confirm the covenant with many'. Sprl

'In a week he shall make the covenant to prevail for many'. Ber

'High covenant he shall make: before another week is done, and with folks a many'. Knox

God is the One who makes covenants with His people. This covenant cannot be made by antichrist as generally suggested and accepted. It cannot be during "the great tribulation". The end of v.26 referring to 'the people of the prince that shall come' KJV is in a sense an insertion. It predicts Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian.

This is not in relation to v.24 that has the subject of the whole portion, Messiah and His redemptive work. It is Messiah, Prince of the house of Judah, who makes the covenant and the many are blessed. He is the One who was 'cut off' in a cruel way by death (v.26a) in the middle of the week. His sacrifice of Himself was 'once and for all'. Because of the spotless purity of that offering and the Father's acceptance of it as 'a sweet-smelling savor', all other sacrifices of animals ceased

Then v.27a returns to mention of Him. He is to make a covenant for a week that is the space of seven years. The statement in 26a that 'after sixty and two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off' makes no reference to a period of a week. Then the prophecy returns to the period after His death in v.27b about the covenant He is to make but when is not stated. We gather from v.27b, He thus makes sacrifice cease in the temple, half way through the last covenant week. Messiah's covenant will be completed three and a half years after His death.

However, v.26b will transpire at some later then unknown date. Similarly, v.27c continues to its complete, unknown date of fulfillment. What will be the outcome is clear: 'And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator' KJV.

The abominations represent the Roman Army with its eagle pennants. Jesus foretold this in: For wherever the dead body may be, there the eagles will be gathered' LITV (Mt.24:28).

They were an abomination to the Temple worship and its institutions. With them was Titus, the eagles gathering around the dying nation of Israel as the carcass. He was to be the desolator upon whom and the empire he represented; there came the judgment of God in their end.

The same pattern of first Messiah and then the invading leader or prince, is followed in v.27 as is seen in v.26, explained in detail in the previous chapter.

The end of Jesus' ministry was followed by the crucifixion, fulfilling the prophecy that the Anointed One was cut off at the end of the first three and a half years. Then came the proclamation of the gospel by the apostles to the Jews.

His choice of national Israel ended at that time. That was for the last three and a half years, consummating with the scene in Acts 10. Following this, Acts records the gospel as being preached to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.

The seventy weeks were never presented to Daniel as being for the church of the gospel times. The inclusion of the Gentiles in the purposes of God could only begin after all the weeks ended.

Daniel's prophecies in chapters 9, 10 and 12 are all regarding the Jewish nation. Chapter 11 deals with events for those nations that historically were in conflict with Israel. Every verse in that chapter was fulfilled in detail as history has shown.

The countries have been identified and even the rulers mentioned turned up as men with a couple being women, one Cleopatra, who was the ancestress of that Cleopatra who married Mark Antony of Rome.

The book of Daniel is dated at 637 BC, nearly three hundred years before all the prophecies of ch.11 began to meet fulfillment.

Gabriel was sent to give a foretelling about the grace of salvation to appear to all men but first of all, to Israel. This involved only the remnant. In essence, God had blessing for them. However, the real process enabling them to obtain this was only for a remnant.

The means of salvation and ensuing installation through the Holy Spirit are all detailed in v.24. There are six benefits.

God Declares His Foreordained Purposes, Daniel 9:24-27.

These matters are the object of God's foreordained plan, before the world began. We dealt with the six purposes in the previous chapter.

In the bringing of the six purposes, there would be two results. Dan.9:26,27 declare them.

They are firstly, that Messiah would be cut off, despite His making of a covenant with the Jews, bringing full redemption. Secondly, the decreed judgment for Israel and the Jews as well as for the desolator who is outside of Jewry, would be certain to fall in accomplishment.

The Lord had stated His purposes regarding the promised Seed to Satan after Adam fell into sin:

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" ESV(Gen.3:15).

He had been ordering events throughout history so that the bruising would become a reality. He sends His angel to inform Daniel what would transpire. The information discloses the means.

In the performance of this, there would be six major purposes.

The Jewish nation had been chosen to bring forth the Messiah who was to be sent into the world. He is the eternal Son whose willingness to leave heaven and come to earth is well described by:

‘Then I said, “Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book”’ ESV (Heb.10:7)?

He would die in accordance with Isaiah’s prophecy:

‘And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

‘Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief;

‘when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

‘Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities’ ESV (Isa.53:9-11).

Despite His covenant being declared to them, the nation would reject the Messiah and in so doing, would invite the judgment of God through a foreign leader and army. A remnant would be saved. Paul describes God’s intention that had endured from eternity:

‘And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay"’ ESV (Rom.9:27&28)?; and ‘Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

‘What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory’ ESV (Rom.9:21-23).

Whether we like it or not, there is undoubted election and predestination.

First of all, He chooses Israel the nation, small and unworthy as she proved to be. Then God chooses a remnant out of her, this remnant existing throughout the Old Testament. They also are small and unworthy.

What sets them apart is the faith that Abraham had. It is obvious from the following:

‘This blessedness, therefore, is it on the circumcision? Or on the uncircumcision? For we say, that Abraham’s faith was reckoned to him for righteousness.

‘How then was it reckoned to him? In circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

‘For he received circumcision, as the sign and the seal of the righteousness of his faith while in uncircumcision: that he might become the father of all them of the uncircumcision who believe; and that it might be reckoned to them also for righteousness:

‘and the father of the circumcision; not to them only who are of the circumcision, but to them also who fulfill the steps of the faith of our father Abraham in [his] uncircumcision’ Murdock (Rom.4:9-12).

Now according to Daniel and Paul, when Messiah arrives and proclaims the gospel, there is to be an elect remnant out of Israel at that time.

These will be joined by the elect Gentiles whom the Father calls and gives to the Son.

The following verses surely substantiate this:

‘He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will’ ESV (Eph.1:5).

‘For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

‘So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

‘For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

‘So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

‘You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?"

‘But who are you, oh man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?"’ ESV (Rom.9:15-20).

Daniel chapter 9:24-27 along with the whole book of Daniel was given to the Jews only.

Everything Daniel wrote ultimately concerned the Jews, his people and their nation of Israel in relation to events that would climax in A.D. 70 or 72. Not one prophecy has a connection with the New Testament Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The people who come in under the New Covenant would have access to Daniel’s writings and would be blessed. They were to be included in atonement for sin that was shown Daniel, even that which on the cross of Calvary by the Lamb of God who took away sin for believing Jew and Gentile. The words in his visions explicitly stated it was all ‘for his people’.

There is not a suggestion to be discovered that there would be a restored Israel. The history predicted would come to a close without any hope for a national Israel. God had something better in His plans. The book of Hebrews in particular discloses the reality of which the Old Testament Israel and its temple were but a shadow.

CHAPTER 10

Right And Wrong Beliefs

The Christian Right End Time Beliefs

There has been teaching on Bible Prophecy by the Christian Right (Fundamentalists, Pentecostals, Baptists and Charismatics) in the U.S.A. that is quite new. Until at least fifty years ago, the general understanding in all the millennial teaching was that the Lion mentioned in the Old Testament was Great Britain and that U.S.A. was a little lion. Today, through this Christian Right with its powerful and popular leaders like Baptist Rev. Jerry Falwell decd. and presently Rev. Hagee and Pat Robertson on television, with many others, the emphasis totally excludes Great Britain and favors the U.S.A.

A couple of years ago there was the idea and it still prevails that God will keep the U.S.A. as His special nation. She is to be used to back Israel because for one reason, the Arab surrounding nations can never be at peace with Israel. They suggest that is in the Bible. I might say I have never read such a thing, even though she is a wonderful nation. It seems that as history unfolds, dramatic changes are made to the theories regarding Bible prophecy, so-called, all in line with what takes place at particular times. President Bush Jnr., believed he had a special mandate from God as head of that nation, second term, 2005.

He took his nation and others into war with Iraq. The power and strength of these present day views regarding the end time in the U.S.A. and elsewhere, to a few of us as believers, is frightening, overwhelming and staggering. Where did God say in the scriptures that He would raise up the U.S.A. to do His work, on their own (maybe with outside help), viz. to see Israel as a natural nation, restored?

All this is supposedly in preparation for the reign of Christ in the millennium! Does God need the nation of the U.S.A. or humans to implement their plans for the doing of His own work? Never. I happen to admire somewhat, certain aspects of the U.S.A. but not to the extent of placing her on a pedestal, in contradiction to the word of God.

Replacement Theology – A Reversal

Today, the erroneous end time beliefs of much of the church have reached tragic proportions. The strangeness of it shows as an attack on the true gospel regarding the church that is recorded in the New Testament. This is done with an unscriptural regard for the nation of Israel. When some state that the church replaces Israel, it is called ‘replacement theology’.

People who say that and who follow Darby's end time beliefs are stating the opposite of Darby's teaching that 'Israel would soon replace the church' – his replacement theology! There is not a hint throughout the New Testament, or indeed the Old, that the church of Jesus Christ would give place to a nationally restored Israel on earth.

Revival Of The Roman Empire

In addition, for much of the last century most writers on end times pointed from their own particular ideas of scripture, to the revival of the Roman Empire. Teachers today, seem to be emphasizing a revival of the Babylonian Empire. The former idea I did read, promulgated years ago, in a book by a Baptist. The other belief seems to have won in popularity, due no doubt to what happened in Iraq, ancient Babylon.

The First Resurrection

There is much error in relation to our first resurrection. We should ask 'When does it actually occur and what is its meaning?' It has to be when the believer participates through the experience of salvation in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, such as: 'Yes, it is because we are a part of Christ Jesus that God raised us from death and seated us together with him in the heavenly places' ESV (Eph.2:6) - also Gal.2:19,20; Rom.6:4,11.

He may later die physically (unless the Lord comes) when his spirit is translated to heaven as part of the first resurrection. According to 2 Corinthians 5:1,2 there awaits believers who die: 'A house, eternal in the heavens'. This has to be some kind of a covering or clothing for the spirit released from its earthly habitation. At the second resurrection, the body will arise out of the grave along with the dead believers, while those living will be changed. Those who have been made partakers of a spiritual resurrection are saved from the power of the second death.

When Christ arose from the dead, it was the first resurrection. Believers were crucified with Him, died with Him and were buried with Him. We have been raised with Him. The scriptures themselves assert this. Here we quote: 'So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God' (Col.3:1).

We are a heavenly people who reign in life with Christ now. There is freedom for the gospel to be taken all over the world in some form or other. Satan's power is broken.

We Reign In Life Now

One belief is that believers caught up in the rapture will reign with Christ on earth, again, for a millennium of one thousand years. However, the Bible refers to that time as being now. Contrariwise it appears we are in that period of a thousand years spoken of by John in Revelation. It is a time when Satan does not have all of his power.

The gates of hell cannot prevail against the church. What a wonderful thing it is that now, 'we reign in life': 'For if by the offence of the one man death reigned through the one man, much more those receiving the abundance of the grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ' EMTV (Rom.5:17).

The meaning from Revelation 20 is that Satan is in prison during this present thousand years and indicates he does not have such absolute power over nations that the gospel is barred from them all. Satan was bound on the cross. He was not dismantled of his power. He is still the Prince of this world and all unbelievers have his spirit working in them. Binding him, as Jesus did, once for all, has left him somewhat paralyzed. He has to go around searching for a prey.

Jesus taught about the binding, because the Pharisees accused Him of casting out demon by the power of Beelzebub, the Devil. He said that would make a house divided and showed how that He alone had power over Satan. When the spirits departed, because of this, the person was purified.

He included these powerful words: 'Or how is one able to enter a strong man's house to plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his household' EMTV (Mt.12:29).

The final end of Satan is to be so bound that he is cast into the lake of fire forever. Jesus entered his house by His defeat over him on the cross itself, even though at the time it was only a binding of him for a period. Peter gave the following injunction: 'Be serious and keep watch; the Evil One, who is against you, goes about like a lion with open mouth in search of food' BBE (1 Pet.5:8).

The Devil now walks around the earth, searching for someone who will not be fully committed to Christ. Then he takes him under such complete control that the person will end up in hell.

Our defense against Satan is not to bind him as Christ has bound him already. We resist the devil and he flees. To us, he comes with heresy and sometimes persecution. If we minister to others who need deliverance, we cast the demons out in the name of Jesus. When such people are outside of the kingdom of God, we share the gospel with them. When they put their faith in Christ, they will be taken out of the kingdom of darkness and placed into the kingdom of the Son.

This is what Jesus said when the seventy returned in triumph having cast out devils:

'And he said to them, "I was beholding the Adversary, as lightning from the heaven having fallen" YLT (Lk.10:18)' confirmed by: 'And he said unto them, I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven' RV

Christ was not saying Satan had been in the heaven of God's abode and He saw him fall. He was using a simile describing Satan's fall, as when one sees a streak of lightening come rapidly from the sky to earth as in a flash.

Because He was God or else used knowledge from the Spirit, He could see the disciples casting out devils, as He said. He knew that Satan was as 'having fallen'. He intimated that as they were out evangelizing He could see the ultimate victory of His coming into the world. To Him, demons being cast out was a mere trifle. His eyes were on Satan's complete defeat and saw it has having occurred.

It was due to the fact that Christ is: '... The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' YLT (Rev.13:8). He is viewed as having been slain even when God was to create the world.

Having occurred is also borne out by the description of His death here:

'He was wounded for our rebellious acts. He was crushed for our sins. He was punished so that we could have peace, and we received healing from his wounds' GW (Isa.53:5).

'He was wounded'. It is seen as having happened. This version regards it as:

'But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed' RV

The reason for this suffering was to bring us peace or *shalom* which is general well-being and blessedness. It was in His being wounded and bruised – for our iniquities. It is all about our sin. God made a covenant of peace with us. The chastisement upon Him was for our peace. Because of the scourging He received, we are healed from the sinful condition we had. This accords with David's prayer:

'I said, O LORD, have mercy upon me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee' RV (Ps.41:4).

Consider these verses as being most appropriate to the subject of Satan having fallen:

'Now is the judgment of this world! Now the ruler of this world will be thrown out!' LEB (Jn.12:31). Jesus at that time was speaking of His death on the cross. Here, Satan's power over mankind is broken.

The defeat was never to be in hell. It was on the cross because Jesus further goes on in v.32 with:

'And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *people* to myself."

It is no wonder that Jesus said rather than rejoice because we cast out demons, to be glad that our names are written in heaven. That denotes complete victory over all of Satan's power and his demons.

We have power over all the power of the enemy. If we listen to winds of doctrine, we are not using that power, rather giving way to doctrines of demons as in 1 Tim.4:1 and 2 Tim.4:4.

It necessitates being on guard but not obsessed by the thought of Satan. We do this by adhering to the word of the gospel and also, by believing the wisdom of these verses, using faith:

'But God shows undeserved kindness to everyone. That's why he appointed Christ Jesus to choose you to share in his eternal glory. You will suffer for a while, but God will make you complete, steady, strong, and firm' CEV (1 Pet.5:10).

Anything we accomplish is not in our own strength. Disallowing Satan to gain a foothold is the result of acknowledging the possibility when or if such time comes, and trusting in the Lord to keep us steady, strong and firm. It is by His power with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. The truth of the word foils his attacks if they come.

There is an overflowing of His grace to us. We have been gifted with righteousness. We are to rule here on earth – not over people but over our spiritual enemies. It is 'in life through Jesus Christ'. The comparison lies between death from Adam and life through Christ.

Having His life, we reign. It is spiritual, not earthly. It may be inexpressible and contains immeasurable power and victory that often we fail to grasp as ours. On dying,

believers enter heaven to reign with Christ for the rest of the 'thousand years'. This will be in heaven until His coming for the saints to receive their resurrection bodies at the second resurrection. Having taken part in the first resurrection, we are to live on earth in victory.

The reigning is mentioned in Revelation 20:8, for an indeterminate period. Then Satan is released. The exact meaning is many times lost to us. Does it refer to the time when the Jews themselves and the Romans were providing severe tribulation? Or is it for some future event?

Certain understanding evades us. Is the meaning that Satan will come against the church and if so is he already acting in this sense? The attacks against the only gospel world-wide are rampant. They come from both outside and inside the organized church including the church as an organism.

The only certainty is the assurance of eventual victory.

There will come the second resurrection. Jesus gives promise of its blessedness with these words:

'But they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

'for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection' RV (Lk.20:35,36).

The apostle John wrote the book of Revelation with its ideas of the first resurrection and second death. He is the one who recorded the words of Jesus concerning the first and second resurrections and the first and second deaths. He also wrote of life in his epistle:

'Jesus said to her, I am the Resurrection and the Life! He who believes in Me, though he die, yet he shall live.

'And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?' MKJV (Jn.11:25,26).

We know it conveys this meaning that is reinforced by John in:

'Truly, truly, I say to you, He who hears My Word and believes on Him who sent Me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but has passed from death to life' MKJV (Jn.5:24); and in his epistle:

'He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life' MKJV (1 Jn.5:12); (both re Jn.11:25); with:

'And shall come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have practiced evil to the resurrection of condemnation' MKJV (Jn.5:29); and also in the epistle:

'Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But we know that when He shall be revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is' MKJV (1 Jn.3:2) (these are re Jn.11:26 as also is 2 Thes.1:7-10 re His being revealed).

Our reign is spiritual and not natural. Many believers fancy the idea of reigning with Christ for a millennium on earth, over people, cities or nations.

Jesus rebuked the mother of the two sons when she desired each be given a position of favor and authority in the kingdom she thought He would set up on earth. Relevant to such an earthly kingdom, His reply was:

‘But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

‘Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister;

‘and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant’ RV (Mt.20:25-28).

She approached him ‘worshipping Him’, thus realizing He was God. At the same time, she failed to grasp the fact that being Son of the God of heaven, His kingdom was heavenly and never of this earth. The Old Testament stated it plainly:

‘This is what the LORD says: Heaven is my throne. The earth is my footstool. Where can you build a house or resting place for me?

‘I have made all these things ...’ GW (Isa.66:1&2).

Alas that today among the servants of Christ should be found a presumptive desire to rule over men in a kingdom of God and of Christ raised on earth and so not centered in heaven.

Old Testament Re Israel Not Transferable To Revelation

A major mistake is that the Old Testament promises concerning natural Israel, Jerusalem, temple and the land are transferred for fulfillment after the great tribulation supposedly intimated in the book of Revelation.

There have been major omissions by not taking certain factors into consideration.

These are firstly, that Jesus was born and came to ‘His own who received Him not’. Secondly the whole of redemption through His death and resurrection as explained specifically by Paul must be viewed not as an interjection in Jewish history. It has vital importance as being fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. These considerations must be embraced wholly as affecting our understanding that the promises have been fulfilled.

The Old Testament prophecies and hopes of the Jews were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The sacrifices pointed to the cross. The feasts had their fulfillment at the cross and the outpouring of the Spirit.

The temple looked for became the temple of His body and His church is now the temple as part of that body. The covenant became the new covenant. The promised King, Son of David, was Jesus.

The people of God became Jew and Gentile believers in Jesus Christ. The holy city (Mt.27:53) became no longer holy and gave place to a heavenly and holy Jerusalem, the heavenly Zion replacing the temple mount (Gal.3:23,25; Heb.12:22,23).

Present Day Teaching

According to current teaching on the millennium, as stated, there is first of all a ‘secret rapture’ when the Lord is to return secretly to ‘catch away’ the saints in a fashion that is not visible to the rest of the world. Included is Revelation 3:3 that cannot be applied to any ‘secrecy’, supposedly meaning that a thief comes so secretly that no one knows.

That translation concerning a thief is also incorrect. The meaning is that it is 'unexpected' in that no one anticipates a thief will come at that particular time. When a thief intrudes, quite often he is seen and the neighborhood awakened at the call of the householder. This negates all time setting.

Then there is supposed to be the 'second coming of the Lord', after the church has been in heaven for seven years. It will come upon all those who dwell on the face of the earth'. However, these verses refer mainly to the 'Day of the Lord' which is a day of darkness and judgment.

After that we supposedly come back to earth again and reign with Christ on this earth for a thousand years. How could millions of believers with glorified bodies, who are then like Christ, mingle with earthly humans? We shall have a body like Christ's and shall bear the stamp of heaven. We read: 'An earthly body made of flesh and blood cannot get into God's kingdom' (1 Cor.15:50). His kingdom is not centered to earth.

It becomes obvious that in such glorified and immortal bodies it would be strange to be among people in this present world and to reign over such. Our resurrected bodies are 'spiritual'.

This being so, how is it possible that in our resurrected bodies, we could ever inhabit this present world for one thousand years? Where would we all live – the hundreds of millions of us?

Will Jesus be living in a palace in Jerusalem? It would be well to really think about these things. Our bodies will be immortal. Immortality can never fit into an earth inhabited by any mortals, which according to the general doctrine held, will be the case. Mortals, they say, Jews in particular, will be here – all still mortal!

The last enemy to be destroyed is death and it is destroyed for us at His coming for His saints on earth, with His saints from heaven, all to receive immortal bodies. This is their rapture. That is when we receive 'the body of His glory'; 'we shall some day have a body like Christ's'. At that time the last enemy, death, is destroyed (1 Cor.15:24-26,49).

In a millennium, as presently taught, the world would be full of still sinful, carnal and mortal men subject to death. In that case, death would not have been destroyed at the coming. Also, how is it possible for glorified saints to live back again amongst this environment, on earth. According to the teaching we are dealing with, the millennium follows the rapture (as some believe) and then the coming of Christ (their rapture).

Looking at scriptures, the scriptural time of the coming, the 'parousia', must be considered the end, the time when Messiah will surrender the kingdom to God. It is here: 'Then comes the end', 'When all things are subjected to him, then the Son ... be subjected to the One ... God all in all' (1 Cor.15:24a;27&28).

At that time, i.e. the coming, death is destroyed and all His enemies are put under His feet, completing His present reign at the right hand of God.

'Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God' (Jn.3:3). Believers now are born again by the Spirit of God. Strangely, Darby relates the kingdom of God to Israel in its own land forever. In view of the necessity of the new birth, how will this verse apply for those on earth during a millennium?

If the Spirit of God has been taken out of the earth, as is taught with this millennium doctrine, how can anybody then experience the new birth? For Old

Testament saints in their day, God passed over their sins and by the Spirit who came upon them, they had a lower type of experience in the new birth. Since the day of Pentecost, we experience the new birth in the form as taught by Jesus.

God always takes His people onwards and makes His revelation progressive. There is always an ever-widening progress in the plan of God throughout the whole Bible. This started with creation, to the Garden of Eden, to the patriarchs, to the Law, to the kings, to the prophets and then through to John the Baptist and finally to Jesus Christ and the gospel. There is never a regression to a former state. With a millennium, there would be a going back and such would be out of harmony with God's ways.

The coming

The Bible speaks of 'the coming of the Lord' 1 Thes.2:10; 3:13; 4:15; Jas.5:7,8; 2 Pet.3:4). 'The' identifies the fact that there is 'one' coming, not two. When Jesus comes again the second time, we will be changed. His first coming was at His birth.

When the church is caught up at the coming she is to be forever with the Lord, when 'God will be all in all' (1 Cor.15:28). There were these promises: 'My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God' (Ezek.37:27). It is quoted in 2 Corinthians 6:16 showing that the passage in Ezekiel relates to the church of Jesus Christ.

The final and eternal fulfillment is stated in Revelation 21:3&4: 'See, the home of God is with men. He will dwell with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more'. This scene projects into the everlasting.

The intent is for an eternal heaven and not on this earth. 'Men' includes all Jewish believers. They with believing Gentiles will find their ultimate joy and delights in this eternal dwelling place of God. It is not confined to a paltry land of Israel in a present earth.

There is also the intent of Isaiah 25:8 that are about heaven and repeated with: 'He will wipe away every tear from their eyes' and 'for the former things have passed away' (Rev.22:1,3; 21:1-4).

The last verses show saints are in heaven, after dying to be with the Lord as well as after the coming . It is forever. 'They shall not hunger or thirst' (also Isa.49:10) is used in the book of Revelation twice to speak of heaven.

We must stand by what the word of Christ says and repudiate the erroneous doctrines of these false teachers who follow such in ignorance. They, like I, have been as it were brain washed by errors from all the many books and preachers, most being godly men.

Revelation 4:1 Through Chapter 20

Revelation 4:1 is taken by the followers of the doctrine as set out at the beginning of this writing, to mean that the church is in heaven from this verse until ch.19 and that in ch.20 is the final battle of Armageddon on earth.

It is well to note that Jesus Christ appeared to John in ch.1 as being in the midst of the lamp stands or the seven churches. That was the vision and nowhere does it suggest that Jesus left His position in the midst of the lamp stands. With a loud voice like a trumpet, Jesus announced His presence. The same Jesus is still speaking to John with 'a

voice' in 4:1. The vision still remains, with Jesus pronouncing the Father's revelation about the church in heaven and on earth (Heb.12:22&23). This follows His special messages to the seven churches that were actually in Asia Minor. Those churches are a representation of the church in the whole of this gospel age.

Revelation 4:1 cannot be the coming of the Lord to take His church up to heaven. Nowhere does John represent the church. John is he who testifies of all that he heard and saw and his role has not been changed. He is still testifying because he hears: 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this'. He is then in the Spirit and he saw into heaven, as he was in the Spirit. He was not there in body.

For these chapters to concern the church after its translation, John would have been there in body to be a type of that church that will be taken up, all having been changed to receive immortal bodies. He was not. Furthermore, Enoch and Elijah were translated while still in their bodies. They are the types of the church to be caught up and translated. John cannot be such a type. In fact, the New Testament does not give types as did the Old with its many typical institutions and other references, as for instance, Jonah in the belly of the whale, explained by Jesus. The New is indeed the fulfillment of the Old.

Another thing the Bible records is that John was in the Spirit when he was told to 'Come up here'. This cannot typify or exemplify the catching up of the church. When that takes place the church believers will not be 'in the Spirit'. They will be 'in the spiritual body bearing the image of the man of heaven' (1 Cor.15:44,49). John bore no resemblance to any believer caught up in the coming. Therefore, the theory that chapters 4 to 19 are about the church in heaven after the coming is proven wrong. It cannot be that the church is 'caught up' in this verse, as the millennium teachers say. John in the Spirit had a view of saints' occupation in heaven with no connection with any rapture.

Scenes John Described

John says: 'Around the throne are twenty-four thrones'. He is not speaking in the future tense of something that will happen when the church is translated. In vision form, he was there viewing a present reality. It was present tense. For us also, it is now. All the way through the chapter he says, 'are' and not 'will be'. If those elders in white robes with golden crowns on their heads were the saints after the church is translated, he would have said, 'will be'.

He continues regaling us with the visions Jesus was showing him as each scene unfolds as an occurrence. Such would also be for the future. It represents a continuous event to him redolent with scenes that would become spiritual realities all through the centuries until the coming of the Lord and beyond. When John saw the vision, Old Testament saints and many saints of the New Testament who had already died, would have been in heaven.

The scenes John sees in heaven also show Christ not yet as 'all in all'. He saw scenes proving otherwise. Demonic forces were still working mightily on earth throughout those chapters. The time for their final overthrow had not yet come. In 2 Thessalonians

1:9,10 there is to be vengeance and eternal destruction ‘when He comes to be glorified by His saints on that day’.

John is not setting such a day but says there will be one here quoted by Paul:

‘And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus comes from heaven with the angels of his power in flames of fire,

‘To give punishment to those who have no knowledge of God, and to those who do not give ear to the good news of our Lord Jesus:

‘Whose reward will be eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his strength;

‘At his coming, when he will have glory in his saints, and will be a cause of wonder in all those who had faith’ BBE (1 Thes.1:7-10).

It is wonderful to note that departed saints in these verses, are before the throne of God, serving him day and night in his temple (Rev.7:15-17). The declaration is clear. They shall hunger no more neither thirst, that the sun shall not strike them and that the Lamb is in the midst of them, with God wiping all tears away from their eyes. This all while there are still other saints on earth.

Heaven’s Present Scene-

This Is Not The Great Tribulation Or After The Rapture

The scenes John sees in heaven also do not reveal Christ as ‘all in all’. He saw scenes proving otherwise. Demonic forces were still working mightily on earth throughout those chapters. There is nothing in the Bible record to suggest that they relate to any time of great tribulation that would eventuate many centuries ahead. Jesus said it would be soon after the revelation was given when tribulation would intensify.

The time for the final overthrow of all these demonic affronts and natural disasters, had not yet come as Jesus Himself declared: ‘Write the things that thou hast seen, and the things that are, and the things that are about to come after these things’ YLT (Rev.1:19).

We are informed there is to be vengeance and eternal destruction ‘when He comes to be glorified by His saints on that day’ (2 Thes.1:9,10). John is not setting the time of such a day.

It is wonderful to note that saints there are here before the throne of God, serving him day and night in His temple (Rev.7:15-17). It is declared they shall hunger no more neither thirst, that the sun shall not strike them and that the Lamb is in the midst of them, with God wiping all tears away from their eyes.

Wrong Millennium Beliefs Began In The Third Century

The Epistle of Barnabas that is not considered part of the Canon of scripture mentions the millennium. However, the hope of an earthly millennium is based from such beliefs found in Phrygia, Asia Minor. Eusebius wrote in the early fourth century that Cerinthus, a Judeo-Christian leader of apparent Gnostic beliefs, was active in teaching this about A.D. 100. Irenaeus says that Papias, a disciple of John, taught an ‘earthly, sensual’ picture of the coming kingdom of Christ in a millennium. His teaching was rejected by most of the Church leaders. It was not at such time, part of the acknowledged body of truth.

The idea of a millennium was originally a most carnal Jewish tradition. They anticipated a reign of a thousand years on earth by the Messiah. Among the first Christians to teach this Jewish tradition was Papias who wrote about A.D. 140. In the preface to his book, he indicates he was not a hearer or eyewitness of the apostles. Obviously he did not obtain this teaching from them as Peter, James or Paul definitely do not teach it. What John wrote was apocalyptic. This was a form of writing then fairly common amongst the Jews of that day and previous. He did not clearly teach any reign of Christ for a thousand years in a literal manner. Papias followed a wrong interpretation of John's vision.

Papias has recorded other accounts as having come to him from unwritten tradition and which are mythical. Among these, he says there will be a period of a thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, when the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this earth. He obtained this through a misunderstanding of apostolic accounts, not realizing that they spoke things recorded in figurative language mystically. He does appear to be a man of very little intelligence, according to history.

He was the reason so many ecclesiastical writers after him held the same opinion, one being Irenaeus. As stated, Paul did not teach this and neither did Jesus. Jesus Christ never considers Himself as a Jew of the Jews, as did Paul previous to his conversion.

Jesus always addressed God as His Father. It was a relationship based on that of a family and never one that was nationalistic. He never acted or spoke as if national Israel had any future hope to be a nation.

Papias had something to say about the supposed influx of the whole human race going to Jerusalem yearly for the Feast of Tabernacles. He says, A.D. 100: 'A grain of wheat will produce ten thousand heads, and each head will bear ten thousand grains, and each grain will yield ten pounds of clear white flour!' Is this a miracle of growth in order to feed the billions?

One wonders where all the 'booths' to house this multitude are to fit! Are those following this belief of the Feast actually doing any thinking?

Hippolytus in the third century promoted the idea of the end of the world coming about five hundred years after the birth of Christ, at the conclusion of the sixth millennium of created history. He then says there would be a thousand-year 'Sabbath' on earth for the saints, as described in Revelation, before the creation of a new cosmic order.

It is obvious that these then errant ideas as far as the bulk of the church was concerned, disregarded the full meaning of the whole tenor of scripture in relation to God's plan of redemption to reach out to the whole world.

We should adhere to what the New Testament and those well informed early church leaders said. It is the only right course to pursue, in preference to regarding present end time beliefs as being truth from the Bible.

About The Roman Caesars

There is an amazing prophecy in Revelation 17 regarding the harlot and the beast. They represented the then Roman Empire.

The fulfillment has been missed by many. V.9 indicates the city of Rome, on seven hills, not in relation to some day future from ours but with regard to some day future from the days of those believers living at the time of that chapter.

V.10 says: 'They are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain only a little while'.

The five emperors of the Roman Empire, appointed by the Senate were – Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius, Claudius, Nero and Vespasian.

The one 'yet to come' and remaining 'only a little while' was Titus. His rule was short as it commenced in A.D. 79 ending in A.D. 81.

V.11 reads: 'As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to perdition'. This one was Domitian who severely persecuted the Christians.

The Ten Horns Are Ten Kings In Past History

Then, v.12 'And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast', the beast being the Roman empire with its. These ten amazingly are found in the Holy Roman Empire, not the Holy Roman Catholic church. They were Charlemagne, Francis II, Otto I, Frederick Barbarossa, Henry VI, Frederick II, Rudolf I, Frederick III, Maximilian I and Charles V.

Modern scholarship informs us that the book of Revelation was written not around A.D. 90 but before A.D. 65. It is about the then coming fall of Jerusalem and Israel. It therefore has little connection to end-time events. The coming of Christ according to His words will be without any sign to us. We are to look for His appearing in the clouds with great glory.

Bible Scholars Have Missed The Mark

Strangely, many Bible scholars have failed to discern the above. The reason is that down through the centuries there have been those who obviously use many other Scriptures to fit in with the preconceived ideas of a millennium. Those who follow such teaching are looking for these kingly figures to appear in the future. What a wonderful fulfilled prophecy we discover in reading history!

To look for future fulfillments of Revelation during the so-called seven years' tribulation is a contradiction of what appears so clearly in the above verses.

It is becoming more obvious that (as a growing number of scholars now admit) the book of Revelation was definitely written prior to A.D. 66 and thus preceding the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70/71.

For those who maintain the writing took place about thirty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, despite what scholars are now saying, should consider this fact.

A view of the history of the nation of Israel can be obtained from the whole of the Bible. The end of the book of Genesis discloses the beginning of Israel as a nation. Each book in the Old Testament is about that nation. We come to the gospels and again each of the four concerns the nation of Israel. The same applies to the beginning of the book of Acts.

After that, the record is all about the new Israel of God, until we come to the last book of the Bible, that deals with Israel's tribulation.

Where is the application of the history regarding the time of its destruction and end? It is nowhere else but in the book of Revelation. There is mention of that anti Christ Caesar, whose number is 666, figures that point to him. Rome itself, as the city of seven hills, comes into the picture. Great tribulation is coming. Churches and Christians have warning and also consolation in the message of the book.

The Lord who had departed from Jerusalem not to return as King, will not leave His gospel believing people without warning and hope. We discover that the writers of the New Testament, even James, know judgment is to come:

'Behold, the Judge stands before the door' LITV (5:9).

The same expression is used as that by Jesus in these two verses:

'So also ye, when ye perceive all these things, know ye, that he is nigh, [even] at the door' Murdock (Mt.24:33); and

'So also you, when you see these *things* happening, know that he is near, at the door.

'Truly I say to you that this generation will never pass away until all these *things* take place!' LEB (Mk.13:29&30).

The above verses speak of the Judge being at the door. The book of Revelation is about the time when that Judge, Jesus Christ in heaven, is beginning to pour out His wrath on Israel.

It stands to reason that God would convey something in His Word about the demise of Israel. John in his vision gives warning to the churches, predominantly those seven that have many Jews, including one with its 'synagogue of Satan'. He speaks about the then present history of Jews undergoing persecution under Caesar. He prophesies in picture form, about the cruel destiny of Israel. This is the end of that nation.

All those believers to whom the prophecies were given, as well as we also, would find faith, hope and rejoicing in the final chapters of Revelation. The evil world is to be no more, with Satan and his angels cast into the lake of fire along with all unbelievers, even persecutors of believers.

Assurance is given of the final overthrow of evil and the final victory of Christ that would extend throughout all of time, to His church, being His bride.

The end of it all would be everlasting presence of God and the Lamb with His people.

Sorrow would be over and unmitigated joy the inheritance. Eternal life in God's heaven is assured. Thus the cry of the Spirit and the Bride: 'Come Lord Jesus'.

Now A Spiritual Kingdom

A spiritual kingdom was inaugurated by the announcements of Jesus Christ Himself (Mk.1:14). The gospel of the kingdom is going out into all the earth, now. The remnant promises have been and are being fulfilled.

Such factors alter our previous views on what is called the millennium. Another thing is that nowhere does the Bible speak explicitly of a secret coming of Christ. The coming itself is portrayed as a vital hope. Until now, the hope of the church has always

been ‘*Maranatha*’, ‘Our Lord is coming’. It appears that the present hope has been re-defined and is different. Recently, a preacher from the Charismatic Move, said in a Pentecostal church: ‘We are waiting for the coming of the Lord and the millennium’. That was not the hope of the early church or of the church in its existence last century but it is the modern expectation.

Believers are more concerned with what is going on in the nation of Israel in preparation for the supposed reign of Christ there, and in being prosperous in this life, than in expecting and hoping for His coming for His church.

Indeed, when the church is caught up at the coming she is to be forever with the Lord, when ‘God will be all in all’ (1 Cor.15:28).

These were promises of: ‘My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God’ (Ezek.37:27). It is quoted in 2 Corinthians 6:16 showing that the passage in Ezekiel relates to the church of Jesus Christ. The final and eternal fulfillment is our glorious expectation: ‘See, the home of God is with men. He will dwell with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more’ (Rev.21:3,4).

There is also Isaiah 25:8 and the intent of these verses being repeated about heaven we quote: ‘He will wipe away every tear from their eyes’ and ‘for the former things have passed away’ (Rev.22:1,3; 21:1-4). The verses picture the worship of saints in heaven, after dying to be with the Lord as well as after the coming and it is forever. ‘They shall not hunger or thirst’ (Isa.49:10) is used in the book of Revelation twice as picturing heaven. Yet this prophecy is used by millennialists and the pro-Israel to refer to Israel as the restored nation forever on earth.

The Book Of Revelation Was For The Church Existing Then

The fact that the book of Revelation was primarily and importantly written for the church of its day is overlooked. John implies events that would soon occur after its authorship. Jesus Himself spoke these words: ‘Write the things that thou hast seen, and the things that are, and the things that are about to come after these things’ YLT (Rev.1:19). The main concern was for the Jewish and Gentile believers who would live under the power of the Roman Empire.

The seven churches and their cities were about to endure grave disasters and persecutions. As part of the Roman Empire, their members and indeed all believers everywhere, would be under threat. The invasion of Israel by the Romans and its destruction in total, would affect believers residing there as well as in all areas dominated by Rome.

Take for instance the natural catastrophes that occurred in Laodicea and Colossae. Those cities were struck by earthquakes around A.D. 62 and even at later dates. Believers living there would have been amongst the dead. Those in Laodicea had been rebuked by the Lord. Jesus gave warning to all believers in this book of Revelation that He received from the Father. Many believers of the church in Smyrna would suffer imprisonment.

The remainder of John’s writing had reference to the impending destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The apocalyptic language should not be used as one giving a

certain meaning to each portion. One should view it as one does a painting. The whole is absorbed.

Sufficient to say that too many fanciful and different ideas have sprung from the diverse minds of scholars and ordinary believers to be able to deliver decided interpretation of each part.

The epistles were written often to correct heresies, wrong behavior and winds of doctrine brought by false apostles and teachers. Even so, the last book of the New Testament was given to the church due to the punishment God would mete out on Israel and Jerusalem, with the Jews and back-slidden believers. They either perished or were taken captive.

All of these books, although directed to those then living, contain the messages the Spirit has given infallibly for the church of Jesus Christ. This is how we should regard Revelation. We discover spiritual truths throughout its pages and it becomes a useless exercise to receive special so-called revelations from the Lord about the meanings of each trumpet, vial or scene.

Some scenes, particularly of heaven and of the last few chapters, as well as the messages to the seven churches, are obvious in that they present actual meanings.

Therefore, all of the varied implications many derive from Revelation, without a true basis, should be disregarded. They do not give us truth – rather myths.

Daniel's Prophecy Of The Four Beasts

In Daniel 7 there is a vision given him the interpretation of which would extend up to the end of that Empire. There is not any other prophetic word in either the Old or New Testament that reveals history after that date. All prophecies came to an end with this one. Any others considered to be for the future do not have a firm or valid basis for such belief. Such have continued to gather a variety of speculative theories.

This was the vision. Daniel saw four beasts coming up from the sea, different from one another. There was the first like a lion, a second one resembling a bear. Then there was another one like a leopard and a fourth, 'dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong' and 'it had ten horns with another little one among them'.

The four beasts represent four empires, those of Babylon, Medo, Persia and Greece. Mention of a little horn representing Antiochus Epiphanes. The ten horns out of the Greek (Alexander the Great) through one General Seleucid down are identified in history.

The interesting point is that in this vision, Daniel saw as recorded in vvs.9-14, the Son of Man coming to the Ancient of Days. He is the Lord Jesus Christ, and as Daniel records: 'And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed'.

Jesus revealed Himself often as being 'the Son of Man'. In Mark 10:33 He reveals the Son of Man will be crucified. He teaches in Luke 18:25 about the kingdom of God and then in v.31 Luke relates how he said to the twelve: '... All things which are written

through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished', tying in the kingdom with the Son of Man. In John 6:27, He says the Son of Man gives eternal life.

At the last supper, John reveals that the Son of Man is glorified there and then, at the beginning of the time of His crucifixion (13:31). They do not see that glory. It occurred under the Father's purposes and led to the Son of Man's being seated after the resurrection as He went to the Ancient of Days, told by Daniel. There He came into His kingdom and began the final judgment on the Jewish nation that ended in AD 73 and on the perpetrators of the crucifixion, the Roman Empire. This Son of Man is Judge from heaven, as well as Savior who came into the world specifically not to judge it but as One who saves.

The Son Of Man In Daniel

A connection between the kingdom and the Son of Man reigning is seen in the following verses: 'For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory; and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. This shows relevance to the establishment of His eternal kingdom beginning with the Gospel Age. 'But I say to you truthfully, "There are some of those standing here who will not taste death, until they see the kingdom of God"' (Lk. 9:26&27).'

Peter in his preaching once declared these words: 'And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead' (Acts 10:42).

Belief of the present kingdom reign of Christ ties in with the vision of Daniel 2 concerning the statue revealing four empires or kingdoms, the last one here also shown as that of the Roman Empire. Then in that vision, Daniel was told:

'And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed ... Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron etc. ...' (vvs.44&45).

This stone is Christ and His kingdom, cut 'without hands', showing its heavenly origin. It is God who has decreed the destruction of those other kingdoms.

Historically,

There is no need for prophecies regarding the historical future. The purposes of God as Jesus said, are hidden with Him. They concern His eternally prepared church of Jesus Christ. All things future are not to be disclosed but remain hidden with the Father.

The Father's future purposes that generally remain secreted with Him regarding the church of Jesus Christ, will be accomplished. Hence the book of Revelation closes its chapters with such in view. Eternity is revealed as being one of bliss, grace, blessing, the presence of the Father and the Son with the river of life. The Bride has been taken up by the Bridegroom eventually to dwell with Him forever in a new heavens and a new earth.

This new Israel, the New Testament message and church, with Christ as its Head, is to live in faith and anticipation of all of the Father's promises and purposes being fulfilled in the future. The believer's position is:

'For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God' ESV (Col 3:3).
Eternal things are hidden from our gaze and understanding.

CHAPTER 11

Answering Many Ideas

There Is One Body – Not Two Peoples

The Spirit, in salvation and infilling, is the inheritance for Jew and Gentile. As shown already, the beginning of this present time of the Gentiles is for when Jew and Gentile would partake together. This message is declared by Paul who tells of his understanding in the mystery of Christ and states it as being this: 'The Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel' (Eph.3:3-6). Christ on the cross effected this. It culminates as individual salvation of the body and spirit with glory for all eternity. This is for all believers in Christ, both Jew and Gentile.

There is one body of God's people and not two, such as national Israel and the church, as Darby and others define it. It is not true that there is an everlasting inheritance on earth for Israel and one eternally in heaven for the church. There is no mention in the scriptures of any different inheritance for the Jew. The Spirit is the first installment of that eternal inheritance promised for believers, Jew and Gentile, who is received now before Christ returns. It can never be changed to something else in a suggested millennium, moreover something never hinted at by Christ or the apostles.

Those Converted During The Millennium

On earth during the millennium are to be those (still with carnal natures) who get 'converted'. I would point out that there would be no general presence of the Holy Spirit on earth. How then could they be converted in a conversion of renewal by the Spirit? They would not experience this. How then could they obey Christ? They have no power from heaven within, just the carnal nature. It is thus an impossibility for them to refrain from sin and rebellion. The teaching is that Satan is bound for the millennium. However, we sin, not because Satan incites us, but because the seed of sin is 'by one's own desire' (Jas.1:14).

To accept all the theories invites depreciation of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ that is the gospel of the grace of God. Only the preaching of this gospel has transformed any society exhibiting morality in its life principles. This is without any harsh penalties of law that were incorporated in the Old Testament with its priesthood and sacrificial system. Returning to any part of such a regime would deprive the world of any salt from the gospel. This assumption must be correct if a Jewish system is installed as predicted under temple worship for the millennium,

The Law killed as harsh penalties were inflicted. It was a necessity for a people not under the grace of the gospel with the power of sin still in control. In a millennium as foreseen, where is the control of the personal incipient sinful nature? It could not be dealt with under law but was by the gospel of grace. Where would the origin be of a provision to provide any kind of solution for that inherent carnal nature? The Holy Spirit would not be in the world as He is said to depart. There is no word from any quarter as to how this will be dealt with in the millennium. Neither Darby nor any of present day proponents seem to have considered the matter.

All these people on earth during this period are said to procreate. In a thousand years, with nobody dying at a young age and apparently there will be little ill health, the population would be multiplied to maybe the trillions! The Battle of Armageddon is mentioned in Revelation apparently to be after and not before the millennium. This would rid the world of millions as the dead will need seven months to be buried! There remains a problem. What of the converted Gentiles especially those who receive a second chance.

On That Day

Showing life to an old age, some use Isaiah 11:8,9 that says: "The weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den, They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain" but they forget the latter part of it: "For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as waters cover the sea". How could there be such knowledge when at the end there is supposedly rebellion? (Rev.20:7-9). Isaiah 11 is not about the millennium.

It is about heaven. That is the only place where there will be no sin, sorrow, sickness or death. There, redeemed will be clad in the white robes of total righteousness, without any tendency to sin. Figurative language is used to give spiritual understanding. The holy mountain is the Mount Zion that is the dwelling place of God amidst His people for eternity. There will be a wonderful knowledge of the Lord in everyone's heart, because we will have been made like Him.

There is no possibility of it occurring on this earth.

This Is Heaven

Here also is an interesting picture: "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years" (Isa.65:20). It should not be taken out of context. The whole of Chapters 65 and 66 uses figurative language about the end of all things and about heaven. It is where God declares: "I am about to create new heavens and a new earth" (v.15). This new creation of the heavens and the earth is for eternity where there will be bliss without anything from this old world remaining. Where would an earthly kingdom of Israel be in this scenario? Totally non-existent.

The Gentiles To Be Included

The thrust of these two chapters in Isaiah is about the Gentiles coming in and such commencement includes this phrase: "... To a nation that did not call on my name" (v.1). We should relate this to God's purposes of salvation for the Gentiles

(Hos.1:10; Rom.9:24-27). This is prophetic of the Gentiles: 'As indeed He says in Hosea: "Those who were not my people I will call "my people," and her who was not beloved I will call "beloved" ESV(v.25)'.

That the chapters relate to heaven where there shall be people from every tribe and nation is evident in these words: 'The new heaven and earth that I am about to make will continue in my presence ...' GW (Isa.66:2). These words are not figurative despite the passages being so. We look in the New Testament to find the answers to both the figurative and literal language. That is the only place that will show us the truth.

One of the scenes John saw in heaven shows the wideness of God's mercy to the Gentiles and also to the Jews. The multitude gathered here is representative of all peoples: "Then they sang a new song, "You deserve to take the scroll and open the seals on it, because you were slaughtered. You bought people with your blood to be God's own. They are from every tribe, language, people, and nation" GW (Rev.5:9)'.

The above verses could never be descriptions of any possible occurrences in a millennium on this earth.

The Messianic Line

Something else that needs to be considered is the genealogy of Jesus set out in Matthew 1. There is a wonderful truth contained therein. It is about Jesus Christ. He is said to be 'the son of Abraham'. This is a remarkable point and one to be taken in contrast to the record of Adam's family (Gen.5:1). Jesus Christ is the second Adam, Head of His spiritually created race as Adam was of that naturally created one. Matthew's list extends until Christ.

After that conclusion, no mention is made of any natural descendant, through Christ the Offspring of Abraham. The reason is that Jesus Christ has only spiritual descendants. All natural progeny in the line of Abraham have no place once Christ appears.

This accords with: '... Even after giving himself as an offering for sin, he will see his descendants and enjoy a long life' ERV (Isa.53:10) as well as with: '... The Lord says, "My servant, who always does what is right, will make his people right with me; he will take away their sins. "For this reason, I will treat him as one of my great people ... I will give him the rewards of one who wins in battle, and he will share them with his powerful ones. I will do this because he gave his life for the people. He was considered a criminal, but the truth is, he carried away the sins of many. Now he will stand before me and speak for those who have sinned" ESV (Isa.53:11,12)'.

Natural Israel has forfeited her position of favor through sin, to be replaced by the Spiritual Israel of Jew and Gentile, that cannot fail because Jesus Christ Himself has been made the Surety: 'So this means that Jesus is the surety or guarantee of a better agreement from God to his people' ESV (Heb.7: 22).

There are three periods of fourteen generations mentioned. The first is from Abraham to David. Then it is from David to the exile. Lastly, the list is from the exile to the birth of Christ in a supernatural way. The covenant with Abraham (Gen.12:2), is fulfilled in Christ. That with David (2 Sam.7:8-16) is fulfilled in Christ, forever.

The exile in Babylon culminated in the return of the remnant to Jerusalem. The remnant inherited the blessings of the covenant, obviously so as to be in tune with the whole plan that finds its fruition in Christ. Christ is the One in Whom everything is centered.

Then the birth of Christ comes about. Here ends the genealogy of the Jewish nation with Christ. No more natural descendants. No more a nation of Israel. All ends in Christ.

Christ Has Children

However, He has spiritual descendants, according to Isaiah 53:10: 'He will see His seed' and: 'I and the children whom God has given Me' (Heb.2:13). What Christ brings is the key. He brings salvation and eternal life. He starts a new people: They (the Jews) stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for (note: not destined to be restored as a nation on earth). Christians are as:

'But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God' (1 Pet.2:8&9).

He is speaking first of the Jews and then about the church, who is to be the bride of Christ, comprising all believers in Him, both Jew and Gentile. To ignore these scriptures is to be carnal and disobedient. The faith of Abraham and God's covenant with him, is to be fulfilled in his offspring, Christ, as outlined in Galatians 3. It shows that law was added as a disciplinarian until Christ came to bring all Jews and Gentiles who believe in Him, to justification by faith.

This is the gospel. It is the only gospel. If anyone looks to another gospel, says Paul: 'Let him be accursed'. There will never be another gospel preached by the command of God.

Ongoing Revelation

The Bible from start to finish, is an ongoing revelation that increases from century to century in the light of such progressive revelation. The purposes of the Old Testament are shown to be in Christ and the gospel. The climax for believers and the church, with indeed all mankind, is found in the last chapters of the book of Revelation. In this book we find God through Christ and His Spirit acting throughout the whole of the church period until the end. This conclusion or finale shows the glorious bride, the church so wonderfully spoken about, with Christ Himself, entering into that heavenly marriage supper. She is endued with luster and glory as God dwells in the midst of her forever.

Many say that secular Israel is still in the plan of God. Its fulfillment, they say, will take place in history during a millennium, then on earth forever. However, there is no revelation of such a thing in the whole of the New Testament. To follow that belief is to go back in time. It is to go back to revelation found in the Old Testament that does not relate to New Testament revelation. This means that we would have to deny that the Bible is an ongoing revelation.

More to the point, Galatians 3:16-22 shows clearly that the promises to Abraham are fulfilled in Jesus Christ and not in the secular nation of Israel. It then reveals that all this is for those who have faith in Jesus Christ, those who believe in Him.

The criterion to participate in all the promises given to Abraham, is not to be a natural Jew but to be a believer in Jesus Christ, whether Jew or Gentile.

May we ask that the reader follow this writing while turning to the Bible? It should be done with concentration, open-mindedness, Holy Spirit illumination that results in this: 'He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught ...' (Tit.1: 9).

There is a general belief about end time events that can be summed up simply as follows: -

The Rapture

Jesus Christ is coming again for His church. This is called the rapture by some but not found in scripture (1 Cor.15:52; 1 Thes.4:16). Its time is unknown but the belief towards the end of the twentieth century was that it had to be around the year 2000, which is the end, as believed, of the six thousand years of man's history.

The Church In Heaven For Seven Years

After the rapture, the church according to their expectations will be in heaven for seven years at the marriage supper of the Lamb. During that time there is to be the time of great tribulation, Jacob's troubles, on the earth. There is a period of seven years that has been calculated. Many differ regarding this period.

Some believe there will be tribulation for three and a half years while others, seven years. The rapture will either take place in the middle of the tribulation (after three and a half years), at the beginning of the tribulation (before seven years) or after the tribulation's seven years.

Drinking The Fruit Of The Vine

Also, it has been taught that when Jesus said at the Last Supper: 'I tell you, I will not drink the fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom' (Mt.26:29). He was referring to the marriage supper of the Lamb. That will be in heaven. Where will literal 'fruit of the vine' come from there? Will we eat natural food?

'Fruit of the vine' above can only be a figure of something spiritual. His kingdom is not of this earth. It is a Spiritual kingdom. It is clear that His Father's kingdom is in heaven and not of this earth, with its physical endowments, such as the vine growing in the field. To gain heaven we must as He said, 'eat His flesh and drink His blood' in a Spirit fashion. How much more in heaven, would we have a Spirit form of the 'fruit of the vine' to sup with Him there?

The Bible From Start To Finish

What exactly do the scriptures say about the times of the end of the world? Can we understand simply and clearly or do we have to be Bible scholars and mathematicians to work it all out? Let us look at it from the following viewpoint.

We should bear in mind that the Old Testament points to the New and is to be fulfilled in the New. Sin and Satan that make their first appearance in Genesis, in the Old, have complete defeat in the New, with Satan thrown into the lake of fire and sin totally gone and a perfectly holy people in heaven. The new Eden is shown to be in heaven, particularly seen in the New Testament in the book of Revelation.

We are reminded of the words of Zachariah (the father of John the Baptist) who was filled with the Spirit and prophesied. He regained his speech after acknowledging the name of his newborn son as being 'John'.

This is what he said regarding the events:

'To show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham ...' ESV (Lk.1:72&73). This was to be through the birth of the Seed, later to make atonement on the cross. He prophesied the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.

God gives a promise in the Old to Abram, that all peoples will be blessed with the promise of the Seed, the Messiah. Even Abraham looked for a city, heaven. It is heaven itself that is proclaimed as the final fulfillment in the New Testament.

Redemption out of Egypt is a type of our redemption bought by Christ in the New. The Mosaic Law leads to Christ and ends there.

All the offerings under the Aaronic priesthood are types of Christ, dying and accomplishing salvation for us. Their fulfillment began on Calvary, on earth but the completion is in heaven. Each of the four offerings related to sin, the need for a sacrificial offering and the shedding of blood. Each was to be a covering for sin pointing to peace with God and service with consecration and worship to Him. Each offering typified to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and showed the different aspects of it in His Person. He was to be both sacrifice and Priest.

Jesus Christ is our High Priest according to the Melchizedek priesthood, centered in heaven. God attests to Him: 'You are a priest for ever, in the order of Melchizedek' (Heb.7:17). This is understood to be in heaven. He is not a High Priest according to the Mosaic on earth. This leaves no room for Christ to be on earth in any millennium. He is High Priest forever, in heaven, never to leave there for an earthly centre or abode.

The covenant of Daniel 9:27 that the Anointed or Messiah made with 'the many' in national Israel, continued to be effective for another three and a half years after the ascension. This was after He had 'made sacrifice and offering cease', God accomplishing this in confirmation by tearing the temple curtain in two, from top to bottom, when Christ died.

Israel Is A Type In The Old Testament

The Old Testament prophecies relating to Israel can only be types of what is to happen under the New Testament whose real and final locations of blessing, are not earth but heaven. Their fulfillment has to be heavenly and Spiritual, in order to follow the pattern set out by the Spirit in the Old Testament, in relation to every part of our redemption. Everything in the Old Testament points to us at the end of the ages, i.e. the New Testament church here. We also regard the fact that it comprises a heavenly people whose citizenship is in heaven and not this earth.

The fulfillment of everything regarding the church found in the Old always has a heavenly basis in the New Testament. Even Christ on earth, was God from heaven and in heaven (Jn.3:13), Immanuel, God with us. He was the Lamb 'slain from the

foundation of the world'. The cross was on Calvary, on earth, where He died. However, its effect was heavenly and in and from heaven.

With these things in mind we should be able to understand all the better, the purposes of God when the Spirit of Christ inspired the prophets to write as they did about Israel. We can only understand properly if we do bear these things in mind.

Fulfillment Not For Today

A notable verse to consider in this context is: 'The law and the prophets were in effect until John came; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is proclaimed' (Lk.16:16). This being what Jesus Himself said, it is obvious that the law and the prophets are not in force today. No one can point to prophecies that await fulfillment in our day and in the future for the nation of Israel. This makes it fruitless to even consider that any of the Old Testament scriptures regarding all matters relating to a restored Israel await fulfillment. It is a useless exercise in the face of this verse of scripture. There came to us all, great deception from the original propagators of these doctrines. May many of us see through it and recognize the truths of the Bible.

If we are preaching the Jesus who will come again, standing on the literal Mount of Olives, to reign on earth for a thousand years, it may well be we are preaching a false Jesus. Paul feared this was in the church in Corinth so it could be in our churches today. He warned with:

'When someone comes to you telling about another Jesus whom we didn't tell you about, you're willing to put up with it. When you receive a spirit that is different from the Spirit you received earlier, you're also willing to put up with that. When someone tells you good news that is different from the Good News you already accepted, you're willing to put up with that too' GW (2 Cor.11:4).

These are solemn words. Many of us have accepted ideas that are different from what Paul preached, viz. the gospel in its entirety. Have we all been guilty of this when we preach the Jesus, not of the New Testament, but one from the Old? Is it not error to preach a Jesus not who is not now solely to be in a heavenly scene? Are we not wrong to preach a Jesus who will reign on earth when His kingdom is not here?

I am afraid we are touched with the sin of preaching another Jesus. So let us repent and do the right works by preaching the Jesus of the New Testament and the gospel. He is the One through whom God now speaks to Jews, Gentiles, believers, indeed the whole world, whether He is heard or not.

The Believers' Expectation Is The Heavenly City

What is to be our expectation? The believer is shown in the scriptures that there is no lasting abode on earth. This would apply to all believers who are born again including those who are Jews. There can be thus no hope of there being an earthly Jerusalem forever. Here lies the truth of the matter:

'For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come' (Heb.13:14). This is in the great faith chapter. There is a gallery of men and women of faith cited throughout.

They were Jews of the Old Testament. About such Jews and all Jews who have faith, even in Messiah, the writer of Hebrews writes these words that pertain not to an earthly country but a heavenly one:

‘All these people were known for their faith, but none of them received what God had promised. God planned to give us something very special so that we would gain eternal life with them’ GW (Heb.11:39&40).

This is to be the expectation of every Jew and Gentile who accepts Messiah Jesus, as Peter declares: ‘In accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home’ (2 Pet.3:13). Where would a restored national Israel fit into this word of the Lord?

Maranatha – The Lord Is Coming

The hope is in the fact that ‘Christ ... will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him’ (Heb.9:28). We are to be ‘waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God’ (2 Pet.3:12). We are to be saying, ‘Maranatha’, meaning, ‘Our Lord is coming’ (1 Cor.16:22).

We are to ‘encourage one another’ with the words:

‘For the Lord Himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will be with the Lord forever’ (1 Thes.4:16-18).

This is never said to be a ‘rapture’. It is said to be connected with His coming that is rightly called ‘the coming’. ‘*Maranatha*’ conveys the word ‘Come’. Therefore when He comes, it is a ‘coming’ and not a ‘rapture’.

Caught Up To Be With The Lord Forever

The verses above that include ‘so we will be with the Lord forever’, are generally used without any importance being given to that phrase. It is part of the verses. We do well to include it in our reading of same. It is obvious here that after we are caught up in the clouds to meet Jesus in the air that ‘we will be with the Lord forever’. That leaves no suggestion that we might descend to earth later. In fact, it obviates such a happening. We will be caught up to be with the Lord forever, praise God.

The last prayer in the Bible is the welcoming call: ‘Amen. Come, Lord Jesus’.

We Are Not Asked To Look For A Millennium

Nowhere in the scriptures is the believer exhorted to wait for a millennium or even to anticipate any millennium. Our citizenship is in heaven.

It is stated explicitly what we wait for and it has nothing to do with a great tribulation, millennium or physical battle of Armageddon. There is no place for such things.

The above scriptures are centered on the coming of the Lord, the great change and new heavens and a new earth and not on any millennium.

Jesus, Peter or Paul never indicated we are to look for a millennium and none of them ever mentioned such a period. We should ask ourselves why this is so. We need

to have open minds and hearts to truth and shut out teachings of men we may have heard that have no real or actual basis in the word of God.

Nowhere, according to the above scriptures, contrary to what some preachers declare, are we to look for a time on this earth, in peace, reigning with Christ in a millennium.

How Can This Be?

There remains concern about the validity of their doctrine in the matter of the White Throne Judgment when all the wicked will be cast into hell. One has to wonder when did all the millions of earth at the final scene there, die, before they came to this judgment? The theories say that during the millennium, people will live to a very ripe old age, then presumably die. Is this to include Jews? If so, they would be missing from the national Israel.

After the millennium and the great battle, there is the question as to what will happen to all the millions still living because they accepted the Messiah. How and when will they receive immortal bodies? In relation to those who did not accept the Christ, will they automatically all die at once?

At last, they say, there is the judgment. When will the dead of the millennium be raised to face the judgment? What will happen to those unbelievers still alive at the end of the Millennium. What of the believers who are still living? There seems to have been no attempt by present-day teachers to look into this matter. This being so, the whole matter should be a deterrent to accepting easily these theories regarding the end time rapture, tribulation, millennium and so on. Let us instead, quickly say, 'Maranatha', 'Even so, come Lord Jesus', as we await His re-appearing in the air.

One Reason For False Doctrines

Many teachers form theories from the scriptures by stringing together certain verses out of the word. The individual places of such verses in the word are generally isolated from the text to be included as part of the theory.

Men are prompted to put a meaning into such a verse that takes it out of context or indeed isolates it from the remainder of the Bible. Instead it becomes a part of the teaching or nowadays, a so-called revelation of someone that many teachers desire to embrace and promulgate. In this way some teachers formulate what is in actuality, false doctrine.

An idea based on a verse or two is firmly grasped. Then verses from elsewhere are added so that they can be made to fit such a doctrine. Such stringing together of verses of scripture has occurred in the teachings about the expected millennium. There are many varieties of beliefs and doctrines throughout the church world wide.

We should always ask ourselves in relation to all varieties of ideas: 'Is there a real basis in the word of God for such teachings?' If so, we must embrace them. If not, we should discard them, despite our desire to cling desperately to what we have listened to for many years and to the books we have studied about these teachings. Are they right or wrong?

CHAPTER 12

What God Has Always Had In Mind

God's purpose is the salvation of the world and the process was begun in the Garden of Eden by way of God's declaration to Eve regarding her seed. When the nation of Israel came into being, it was given the promised land, crossing over Jordan and into the rest which was a type of the real rest (Heb.3:7-11;4:8-11).

Call To Repentance

When he came, John the Baptist summoned the nation to repentance, baptism in Jordan and entrance into a new covenant. Nevertheless, He preached judgment to be upon the chaff, the unrepentant Jews separated from the wheat that typifies the remnant (Mt.3:8-12). As a nation, they rejected Christ (1 Pet.2:4-8-10).

There Would Be Judgment

Paul expresses the judgment that would come upon them beginning in A.D. 66, like this: 'Thus they have constantly been filling up the measure of their sins; but God's wrath has overtaken them at last' (1 Thes.2:16).

Then this version shows it as an amazing prediction of the persecutions that did occur from A.D. 66-73: '... But the wrath of God is about to come on them in the fullest degree'. BBE

God Reformed Israel

Thus God, according to His plans laid before the foundation of the world, reformed His nation, to include all believers. Romans 11:25&26 shows Israel as including the believing remnant of Jews along with all of the saved Gentiles: '... I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved.'

A Jew now is one who has the inward experience of spiritual circumcision:

'A person is a Jew who is one inwardly and real circumcision is a matter of the heart - by the Spirit and not by letter' (Rom.2:29).

The controversial scriptures of Romans 9-11 need not be such. It is clearly stated that there is no longer to be a national Israel:

'Not all Israelites truly belong to Israel, and not all of Abraham's children are his true descendants; but "it is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you".'

This means that it is not the children of the flesh (in national Israel) who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants' (Rom.9:6-8).

Therefore it is all believers in Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile, who are counted as the descendants of Abraham, children of God and the true Israel.

'All Israel' in Romans 9:25 is not a temporal people. It is the renaming of the people of God who consist of the redeemed, first the remnant of believing Jews and then the Gentiles. It concerns the salvation of 'all Israel' meaning Jews and Gentiles who believe. This salvation is through the Gentiles believing because the Jews were hardened. They then become jealous and the only a remnant of them believe.

In this way 'all Israel' will be saved. It is impossible for all natural Israel to be saved, as millions already dead are not saved. Romans 9:6 shows two distinct nations called Israel: '... For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel, and not all of Abraham's children are his true descendants ...'

There is a natural nation of Israel, even today, but God's purposes are with His own created and redeemed Israel who are His people after the Spirit. This accords with His words: 'He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you' (Isa.43:1).

For about one hundred and eighty years, many scholars, Bible Schools and pastors have been so blind that they cannot give a correct exposition of Romans chapters 9 through 11. A clear understanding of these chapters is a refutation of Darby's scheme of eschatology. In fact, it decries such as heresy. There is a case of the 'blind leading the blind' that has been occurring all these years.

Today, his doctrine in extended or diluted forms, is a major force in Evangelical, Fundamental, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches world-wide.

A Double Israel

There is a double Israel. 'And they are not all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, In Isaac will your seed be named. That is, it is not the children of the flesh, but the children of God's undertaking, who are named as the seed' BBE (Rom.9:7,8).

God has election purposes. He called Jacob and rejected Esau. Paul states: 'For He said to Moses, "I will be kind to anyone I want to. I will be merciful to anyone I want to." Therefore, God's choice does not depend on a person's desire or effort, but on God's mercy' GW (Rom.9:15,16). He also shows in exemplification how God hardened Pharaoh's heart.

There is a remnant of Jews that exists to become part of the church of Christ. They are chosen by grace (Rom. 11:5).

For The Gentiles

The Savior goes 'out of Zion' KJV (Rom. 11:26). This is how such occurs. From the church of Jesus Christ, His message of the gospel is preached to both Jew and Gentile for them to be saved. Here is Isaiah's use of that quotation where he uses 'to': 'And a Redeemer will come to Zion ...' ESV (Isa. 59:20).

Surely Isaiah's prophecy relates to the appearance in Zion, Israel, of the Messiah at the beginning of His ministry of presenting the kingdom (Mt. 4:17). Paul makes an alteration, as by the Spirit, he sees it transferred over to the gospel age. Then the

Savior goes out of Zion, the church, to proclaim the message of the kingdom, in individual believers.

The view that Christ comes again to earth, to a national Israel as the Son of Man, using Isaiah as proof, is insubstantial. His eternal purpose has always been the mystery of the gospel that is to bring in the Gentiles to join with the remnant of Jews, those who believe in Christ, to form the new Israel of God. When that occurs 'all Israel will be saved' (Rom.11:26).

We should take into account and never ignore that v.25 commences with 'And so'. This indicates it is written in view of everything that has gone before, i.e. the previous two chapters as well as part of chapter 11. To interpret the passage without so doing is to invite a wrong view, as has been common.

A Remnant Of Israel

That God's purposes were precisely the exclusion of most of the Jews is declared by: 'Though the number of the children of Israel was like the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved' (Rom.9:27).

Paul is quoting from Isaiah 10:22 where Isaiah prophesies regarding the return of a remnant of Israel from Babylon. He uses the word 'saved' instead of 'return' in Isaiah, showing that the first fulfillment was historical and the second and final fulfillment is spiritual. The latter occurs for those, the natural remnant of Israel, who find salvation through Jesus Christ and His gospel.

It would appear our attachment to the idea that Israel will be favorably looked upon by God as a nation in a future millennium is rather misplaced! It can never be. Let me quickly state that I am not anti-Semitic, far from it.

God's Purpose

It was necessary for the Jewish nation to fail, so that the Gentiles could be brought in. For that reason, God hardened Pharaoh's heart and the hearts of the people of Israel. It is seen in:

'For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth". So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills' ESV (Rom.9:17&18 c/f. Ex.7:3) and:

'What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory' (Rom 9:22&23).

God turned away from the nation of Israel for all time, so that His purposes of salvation for the remnant Jews and believing Gentiles would be fulfilled. Most of the Christian Jews in the New Testament never went outside of their Jewish orthodoxy, as Paul clearly shows. It was not possible that a pure gospel from such could be extended to the world of sinners. Paul, a chosen vessel, was called in the womb of his mother to receive the mystery of the gospel and to convey it.

God ordained that: 'Those who were not my people I will call my people'. Of those who were not His natural, national people, He said: 'They shall be called the children of the living God'.

Isaiah 6:10 shows that in the future a remnant only of Jews shall be included in His people. The prophet speaks of the 'holy seed' who consist of all who believe on Jesus Christ. He declares of Him who makes His life an offering for sin:

'He shall see his seed (offspring)'; 'He shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities' (Isa.53:10). This is the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world.

Jesus was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. God loved the world, not just the Jews and purposed that the Gentiles (heathen) would be included in His plans made before the foundation of the world. Can we rely on the judgment of Darby and before him, the Scotch minister, Irving and the Roman Catholic Jesuit of the sixteenth century, Ribera, who propagated these views, in relation to events of the end time?

Irving, who led a group where speaking in tongues was prominent, translated the Jesuit's work into English. Unfortunately, Pentecostals were disposed to ascribe a higher spirituality to Irving than was warranted. They therefore have paid attention in the past to the man and his doctrines.

You may like to read:-

Hosea 2:23; Deuteronomy 32:21b; Isaiah 42:1,4,6,12; 45:22; 49:6; 51:5; 56:7; 60:3;65:17-28.

The Last Days Began At Pentecost

They have also overlooked the fact that the prophecies in Joel and Acts relate to the outpouring of the Spirit for 'the last days'. We are in those 'last days' and have been for nearly two thousand years, or there would not be any outpouring of the Spirit. This is the only period regarded as the last days.

The Consummation Of The Ages

The Greek text of Hebrews 9:26 reads: 'The completion of the ages'. Wuest translates it: 'The consummation of the ages'. This is in relation to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. He made that sacrifice in 'the last days' or in 'the consummation of the ages'.

The 'consummation' or indeed 'last days' reflects the grand truth that the church is living in the last days and experiencing salvation through that sacrifice. In scripture, there is no age to come or days to come after this 'consummation' on this earth.

That immediately removes the possibility of another age, i.e. the millennium, as 'the consummation of the ages'.

The 'age to come' is not of this earth and does not include any millennium. It is clear that the 'age to come' is eternity or the continuation of the church in heaven. John saw the holy city (the bride) coming down from heaven to earth, the new heavens and the new earth. The age to come has no reference to any age covered by a millennium. Ephesians 3:21 mentions:

‘Forever and ever through endless ages’ (Tay), ‘To all ages forever’ (Beck) or: ‘Even to all the generations of the age of ages’ (Con).

This has the obvious meaning that those future ages are in eternity.

These Are Beliefs Of Fundamentals, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Charismatics

The above concisely sets out the common beliefs of the Fundamentalists, Evangelicals and Pentecostals. They subscribe to the theory that Revelation chapters 1-3 represents the church on earth and that from ch.4 on, the church is in heaven. On earth the great tribulation takes place. In heaven, some say the saints will face the Judgment Seat of Christ at that time (2 Cor.5:10).

It has been said that saints will be given areas of government over the earthly nations, according to the parables (Mt.25:19-23,31-34; Lk.19:17-19; Rev.20:4). Also, it is thought we are to judge the world and angels, supposedly in the millennium (1 Cor.6:2,3). At the same time the gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world as a testimony to all the nations by the Jews (Mt.24:14).

In relation to judging the world, as this is the only passage in the scriptures where that statement is made, it cannot be the basis of any doctrine. In addition, it does not mention ‘millennium’, that being man’s concoction. To judge the world would mean the world’s system with its evil as Wuest says.

We do that already: ‘For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life’ (2 Cor.2:15&16).

This is the effect that the gospel has on the two classes of people, the saved and the unsaved. The real meaning of judging the world with its people, is that we are and shall be instruments or a rule of judgment because of the aroma that we are. We believe on Him. Others do not believe on Him and therein lies the rule of judgment.

The scriptures say that Christ is the Judge: ‘As the Father has committed all judgment into His hands’ (Jn.5:22). Regarding that saints shall judge angels, there is no clear indication in scripture as to when this will be and as to what it will be. Also, which angels? There is a verse in Ephesians 3:10 reading:

‘So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places’. It could mean the good angels. Divine wisdom is shown in the different aspects of God’s redemption for us.

We Should Be Blessed By Reading Revelation

The abovementioned beliefs about the book of Revelation sadly undermine the whole purpose of the book for us today. It is a wonderful message the apostle John wrote to the whole church of Jesus Christ. The former messages of apostles are found in the rest of the New Testament. We do a great injustice to what God is saying through Jesus Christ when we simply say: ‘It is hard to understand and it will be fulfilled in the future’. Its purpose is to bolster our faith in trying times, when we read and discover the troubles of earth are all foretold in this wonderful Revelation.

‘Blessed is he who reads and hears the words of this prophecy’ says the Lord. We should be reading it to obtain its spiritual messages for now, in our day and in our generation, as it is for every generation. It shows us heaven’s view of what is

happening on earth, in the purposes of God, throughout the whole world and in every kingdom, democracy or state, good and bad, throughout history.

Heaven's view is that most of the time, judgment is on the nations. The gospel is being proclaimed and souls are being saved, despite the persecution and allurements of the world and Satan's opposition. For the church, there is hope, faith and joy in the knowledge that all is in God's hand according to His plan.

The church has the consolation of the presence of Christ, knowing that it is centered in heaven. Heaven is operating for and in the church. Victory is determined and certain. The ultimate victory occurs for the church at the end of the book.

Then the wicked who have opposed Christ and the church are thrown into hell. The just who live by faith will enter the eternal heaven. It is to be in the new heaven and new earth.

There Is Figurative Language In The Bible

Exponents of the popular millennium view refuse to take anything figuratively but state all must be taken literally. Yet Jesus used figurative language, as enunciated clearly by Him: 'Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father' NIV (Jn.16:25).

The book of Revelation is written in figurative and generally not literal language.

Mention regarding 144,000 is a case in point.

Fundamental/Evangelical/Pentecostal/Charismatic End time doctrine, the Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists, all use it in such a manner.

Also, use of the beast is another example as obviously it cannot be an animal. Another instance is where the Word is spoken as coming out of heaven on a white horse.

Moreover, we notice that this book shows that there are thrones during the thousand year reign, that this is in heaven (not on earth) and that those reigning in heaven (not on earth during the supposed millennium) have souls and not bodies.

It can only be understood to be before the general resurrection of the dead, whereas followers of the popular millennium for the Jew beliefs think it is after the resurrection and on earth. We cannot assume that the thrones are literally there and made of gold.

It surely cannot be believed that some of those in heaven on thrones are those who die during the great tribulation or millennium? If this is so, the whole matter becomes one of extreme complication. Contrariwise, the indication is that these souls have gone to heaven, while the rest of the church is still living on earth. Then there are all the resurrected saints who have supposedly come down to earth to reign with Christ for a thousand years there, judging nations. This scenario is full of imagination and missing any logic or intelligence to give it credence.

CHAPTER 13

The Spiritual Vision

All Fulfilled To The Jews In Christ

Paul in Acts 13:32-34 preached about Jesus, the Savior, to those in Abraham's family, stating that what God promised to our ancestors he has fulfilled for 'us'. These promises centered in Jesus, the seed promised, who was resurrected from the dead, to whom was also given the holy promises made to David.

V.33 reads: 'Has fulfilled unto us, the children'. 'Has fulfilled' is a compound verb, used only here. It is intensive in meaning and is to be understood as 'has completely fulfilled'. In view of this, there can be no millennium on earth where it remains for Jesus Christ to sit on an earthly throne of David. He already is sitting on the restored throne of David and that kingdom has no end. It remains for His coming for His saints in order to see its fullness.

We have an inheritance 'that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for us' (1 Pet.1:4). Abraham had been promised an inheritance on this earth, but we are told that 'he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God'.

Inheritors Of The Heavenly Jerusalem

Paul says: 'Now you, my friend, are children of the promise like Isaac' (Gal.4:28). The promise includes land and a city. It is made to believing Jews and Gentiles. It is not natural Jerusalem, because Hagar *corresponds* to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children (who are not believers). She and natural Jerusalem are and always will be the 'slave woman'. The 'free woman' is the 'Jerusalem above'; 'But the other woman (Sarai) corresponds to the Jerusalem above, she is free, and she is our mother'.

All hopes are to be centered on this heavenly Jerusalem and are for believing Jews and Gentiles. We are children of Sarah and not of Hagar. Believers, whether Jew or Gentile, inherit these heavenly promises. Are such Jews to be excluded so as to live on earth forever? Present teachers of end time doctrine would have to incorporate such possibility.

It is important to note that the first appearance of the Angel of the Lord in the whole of the Old Testament was not to Abraham or one of his descendants, but to one outside of the natural promise and one who could be termed a Gentile. Abraham was given the promises and the covenant with righteousness through faith. Until the time of the first appearance of this Angel of the Lord who is the Eternal Son of God

revealing Himself a few times throughout history, there had been ‘The Lord said’ or when: ‘The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision’. Genesis 15 shows this.

In Genesis 16, the Angel of the Lord appears to Hagar. She was the object and victim of Abram's and Sarai's sins of unbelief and willfulness. Moreover, she and her son were never naturally in the line of the blessings of God through Abraham. The incident proclaims the eternal blessing that would come to Abraham as being Spiritual and not natural. God's promise had been to bless all nations, in a spiritual and not natural manner. Here is the grace, compassion and mercy of God. His grace precedes and then produces His covenant.

God Forms A New Nation

The proclamation bursts forth in Isaiah 26:2: ‘Open your gates, so the righteous nation that safeguards its faith may enter’ ISV; or ‘Open the gates (of Jerusalem the type, the heavenly city the anti-type) that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps faith’. Natural Israel failed completely. She was often an idolatrous nation. The only nation that keeps faith now and ever, is the new nation comprising all believers, both Jew and Gentile, of all ages, that is ‘a holy nation’ (1 Pet.2:9). They only keep faith because Jesus Christ, their Head and Representative is the Surety or Guarantee in this covenant of faith of the gospel. These ones of faith, have entered the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the church of the first-born (Heb.12:22&23). They will enter the holy city that comes down from heaven to earth and live there forever and ever.

Bible Scholars who believe in the millennium show footnotes regarding this verse reading: ‘The redeemed will sing this song of praise during the millennium’. They relate it to a natural city of Jerusalem, on earth, during those thousand years. Their exegesis is incorrect. It is apparent from all these scriptures mentioned that there will not be any natural nation of faith, Jews or otherwise. Also, it would be an impossibility for any earthly people of millions, to enter the gates of that natural city of Jerusalem which does not have a large area.

Instead Of This, God Has A Heavenly City.

Jerusalem from above is the new nation of those who have faith such as possessed by the founder of their spiritual nation, Abraham. Natural Israel was intended to be a nation under God but failed from the very beginning, due to the ‘weakness of the flesh’. In a sense, Spiritual Israel had its beginnings with Abraham and included all those full of faith, who lived in Old Testament times.

God abandoned the Jerusalem temple that represented the city of Jerusalem as centre of the nation, in the Person of Jesus, who went out, never to return to it. He was even crucified without the city walls as declared: ‘So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured’ ESV (Heb.13:12-13). This had been typified by the sin offering where the bullock was burned outside the camp (Lev.4:21).

The writer is calling on the Hebrew believers to leave the camp of material worship as followed by the Israelites. Jesus as our High Priest has passed into the

heavenly realms. We are to go with Him there sharing His shame and aversion by those of this world. We are to have a total disregard for worldliness and for legal, formal and the Jewish material worship of this world in its Old Testament worldly or earthly sanctuary involved in Old Testament temple worship (Heb.4:14;9:1).

Israel Forsaken By God And His Christ

Jesus warned the people that their 'house' would be left desolate. This also meant a loss of their land forever. With God departing at that time from the people or nation as a whole, the pronouncement came decreeing the finish of the nation. God had abandoned the temple as such, when Nebuchadnezzar took the people into captivity. The ark had the Shekinah glory denoting the presence of God. It disappeared forever. The glory had departed from Israel. That glory would never return in a physical form.

Ezekiel's temple in his vision, showed the glory of the Lord returning through the east gate. This typified the new temple of the New Testament, the one spoken about by Peter in his epistle. The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is the knowledge within every believer. The glory of God came back to earth and to Israel in the Person of Jesus Christ. Israel was blind to that glory. Peter writes that those disciples saw His glory and that was in vision on the mount of transfiguration. The fullness of the glory of God awaits disclosure when heaven's domain becomes the home of the redeemed.

So then Israel rejected and crucified their Messiah, as a nation, God departed in the person of His Son, who was crucified outside of their great city of Jerusalem. There can never be another earthly one that He will inhabit. His gaze is focused on the new people of God formed by the Spirit. They have become His newly-formed Israel. Indeed, they have become His temple and will be so forever and ever.

A picture of this comes to our view from Ezekiel's vision:

'And he made me go to the gate, the gate that faces eastward.

And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. And His voice was like the voice of many waters. And the earth shone from His glory.

And the appearance of the vision which I saw was as the appearance which I saw when I came to destroy the city, and as the appearance that I saw by the river Chebar. And I fell on my face.

And the glory of Jehovah came into the house, the way of the gate facing eastward.

And the Spirit took me up and brought me into the inner court. And, behold, the glory of Jehovah filled the house!

And I heard one speaking to me from the house. And standing beside me was a Man.

And He said to me, Son of man, the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, there where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever, even the house of Israel shall not defile My holy name any more, they nor their kings, by their fornication, nor by the corpses of their kings in their high places' LITV (Ezek.43:1-7).

What glory awaits us!

We catch the yearning and heart's cry of our Lord as He departs from the city before His crucifixion: 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you kill the prophets and stone to death those sent to you! How often I wanted to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings! But you were not willing! Your house will be abandoned, deserted' GW (Mt.23:37&38).

How can Israel today be God's special nation? Instead, we have the sheep of the new covenant as expressed in: 'Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant equip you' (Heb.11:20). All believers in Christ, Jew and Gentile, are the sheep mentioned here.

There are two noteworthy points. The first is that the Lord Jesus is the great Shepherd of the sheep. There is one Shepherd and one sheepfold. The second relates to the eternal covenant that never included an earthly king over a kingdom on earth with an earthly people in a temple in Jerusalem. There was always envisaged only the heavenly.

Jesus pointed out to the Jews that they were not the only ones and that there would be one fold and not two as Darby declared. All who follow his beliefs must subscribe to them, even if unwittingly.

Jesus' words were: 'And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd' KJV (Jn.10:16).

Speaking to Jewish Christians, the writer says: 'For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come' (Heb.11:14). He was speaking of the eternal and heavenly city, the New Jerusalem that John saw: 'And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold the dwelling place of God is with man"' (Rev.21:2).' There is no mention or place for an earthly Jerusalem to be the centre of the presence and worship of God.

Spiritual Descendants

Abram was given the promise that his descendants would be numberless (Gen.15:4,5). This of course refers to his spiritual descendants. They would be brought in to the promises through Christ. God's purposes are directed always to the repentant Jews and Gentiles comprising the whole world of sinners.

It is believed that according to Zechariah 14:16, all nations will come up yearly to the feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. This is a physical impossibility, as there could be at least 2,000,000,000 people on earth, who would wish to attend. The Day of Atonement in this feast was fulfilled when Jesus made atonement for our sins. It is past. On that day under the old covenant the High Priest regularly entered into the Holy of Holies. Jesus has entered into that place in heaven itself. All is fulfilled and not to be repeated on earth (Heb. 9:7-12; 10:18-20).

The feast of Tabernacles can be said to be fulfilled already in accordance with the fact that Jesus on the last day of that feast of Tabernacles before His crucifixion,

promised the giving of the Holy Spirit. This did occur on the actual day of Pentecost, a fulfillment of the feast of Pentecost and obviously also as fulfillment of the feast of Tabernacles.

A New Temple

God initiated a new temple, in Christ and His body. Christ revealed His involvement by saying: 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days' (Mt.26:61). It proved the old temple was to be done away with, as 'the' means there is only one, Christ Jesus Himself, as the cornerstone. This spiritual temple includes His believers and is pronounced: 'In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord' (Eph.2:20, 21).

One New Body

There is one new humanity, not Jew and Gentile. 'He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two' (Eph.2:15). In the purposes of God and under the reign of King David, Jesus Christ, there is only one humanity.

Jeremiah's Prophecies

Now we look at God's promises through Jeremiah:

'In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

'In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

'For thus says the LORD: "David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel,

'and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever".

'Thus says the LORD: "If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time,

'then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers.

'As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me" ESV (Jer.33:15-32)'.
 It cannot be literally Levitical priests as such a number could not be.

It is noteworthy that the same promise is given David in God's covenant with him as was given to Abraham in that covenant. It was that the offspring of both men would be as the stars in the heavens and the sands of the sea that could not be numbered. This could never relate to Jews in a natural nation. It is applicable only to the numberless saints, of both Jew and Gentile. These come in under both covenants that eventuate as the new covenant that Jesus brought. It is as the scene in heaven that John recorded:

‘After these things I saw a large crowd from every nation, tribe, people, and language. No one was able to count how many people there were. They were standing in front of the throne and the lamb. They were wearing white robes, holding palm branches in their hands,

‘and crying out in a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the lamb!" GW (Rev.7:9&10)’.

The whole prophecy relates to the times of the Messiah. He is the Anointed One whom Peter recognized by the Spirit, when he said to Jesus: ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God’ (Mt.16:16).

The Branch of Jeremiah had arrived as Messiah. The prophecies were fulfilled in those days, never to be repeated.

Even Zacchaeus who climbed up a tree to see Jesus, heard Him say: ‘This day, is salvation come to thine house’ KJV. Messiah was to enter the world as its salvation, for Jew and Gentile.

Jeremiah in prophecy sees three as coming together. They are the Abrahamic covenant, in the promises to Judah and Jerusalem (his descendants}, the promise to David and that to the faithful Levites of the Mosaic order. We note the Messiah on His throne and the Levitical priests serving forever and numberless.

All are fulfilled in the new covenant. This is what is said regarding believers under it:

‘You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ’ (1 Pet.2:5).

It is important to understand that Jeremiah had such a revelation of the glory of the new covenant, that he could not mean numberless Levites to serve in a rebuilt literal temple during a millennium and one that would be confined to a period of a thousand years and not forever. The glory was to be with numberless priests to our God, knowing glory and throughout eternity themselves to become creatures of glory. These are the believers of the gospel.

We need to know that Jeremiah would understand the form would change. Jesus Christ was the anti-type of the Levitical priesthood that would alter. These priests were mediators under the Law. Jesus is High Priest, Cornerstone and Mediator, once for all, installed by God Himself (Ps.110:4; Heb.5:6).

He is now High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

We are a royal priesthood under Him, kings and priests unto our God. John saw a great multitude which no man could number.

The seed, the recipients of the promises of God, are not the Jewish nation, but us who believe, both Jew and Gentile.

CHAPTER 14

The New Covenant

The old covenant is finished. The new covenant made through the Blood of Jesus Christ has been initiated. There is a new priesthood, that of Melchizedek in the person of Jesus Christ. The old priesthood of Aaron amongst Israel has finished forever.

The finale of the old covenant leaves one in awe. It is as Daniel prophesied. The Messiah would die and effect cleansing, reconciliation to God, the end of sacrificing animals, a new covenant and the destruction of Jerusalem with its temple. This is all confirmed by Jesus Christ Himself in the Gospels.

The old covenant was finished. The Aaronic priesthood ended. The temple was demolished totally. Jerusalem was destroyed. The Romans had desecrated it with their Army. Israel as a nation had come to an end. The Christians who stood for Christ or who had not already been murdered, had fled to safety. Never again would there be a temple, a priesthood, old covenant order or a national Israel under God or His Christ.

The new covenant was inaugurated by the blood of Christ. It took the place of the abolished old covenant. Henceforth there would be no natural nation but a spiritual nation and temple, anointed of the Holy Spirit because redeemed by the blood of Christ.

The ceremonial order with its sacrifices, priests, temple and feasts became obsolete. From henceforth, the service would be spiritual, unto God and His Christ in heaven, under a new order of priesthood, that of Melchizedek, given to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Judaizers, sadly found even today amongst Messianic Jews and many Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic believers, are pursuing the wrong path. Their adherence to these Old Testament demands is a certain falling away from the gospel and the New Testament order.

All such persons should study the books of Galatians and Hebrews to discover their error. We are not to keep feasts at any time or look to the future for any introduction of sacrifices, priests and a rebuilt temple in a falsely taught millennium. Our interest is not to be in the natural order but in that spiritual one of the new covenant.

'Maranatha' is to be a yearning cry.

Under the Old Testament, all Jews were circumcised. They were given the land of Canaan as well as the tabernacle, priesthood, law, ceremonials and rituals. The church

in Jerusalem during the days of the New Testament never left their Judaism. Today there still exists such Judaizers. It is not 'next year in Jerusalem'. That prayer is invalid, because finished forever is worship in a Jerusalem temple. The evidence is in the fact that God Himself tore the veil in two at the death of Christ. The Aaronic priesthood with its rituals came to its end. There is a replacement. It is in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ who is now High Priest under a different priesthood in heaven.

The keeping of the law, ceremonials and rituals have been abolished forever. They will never return. We are not under law but under grace and the promises. The definite indication is that there is no longer to be a natural land of Canaan for any Jews.

We do grievous wrong to those who called themselves Jews and indeed to the whole of the Christian Church, if we engender and foster all those false hopes for a Messiah to reign on this world with its unrighteousness. How dare we take millions of people on a journey of trust in law with a different gospel than that of grace? Why should believers in Christ, who are seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, descend to the position of an earthly kingdom?

Not In The New Covenant

Why is it that some believers still maintain that the promise of the land that included all the other religious promises and efforts, will continue for the Jews after all such under the old, ceased when Christ died on the cross? For the patriarchs, possession of the land was to the eye of faith, a promise, foretaste and pledge of the final occupation of a redeemed and glorified earth of blessing under a new covenant by Christ and His elect seed

Jesus Christ told the woman of Samaria that it was not in the natural Jerusalem that people were to worship the Father. He introduced something new. It was an order not of the earthly but of the Spiritual. The outward forms of Judaism were removed on account of 'its weakness and unprofitableness'.

They are abolished and that includes during the present time and for the future. Indeed the removal is forever. This includes the fact that the earthly city of Jerusalem that was only under the old was part of the abolishment. It also includes hopes lying for the land of Israel where the institutions by God for the former era were once followed. All accomplishments took place and have been replaced by this new order under God.

The old or something similar could never be reinstated in a millennium as taught. Jesus Christ is now High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek. He is High Priest forever, which is from the Greek '*aión*' and means 'an unbroken age, perpetuity of time, eternity', according to Thayer's Greek-English dictionary.

How could He leave heaven for a thousand years to reign on earth when He is High Priest in heaven forever? God's covenant with Abraham included many natural blessings for the Jews. However, this covenant was primarily not for the blessing of the Jews but for all peoples of the world. It was to remedy the sin that entered the world of humanity through Adam. The Abrahamic covenant is fulfilled in Christ. If

fulfillment has been attained there is to be no attempt at any reintroduction in its former earthly form.

Under the new covenant, there is to be no obligation on the true Israel's side. It is now a gift, different from the old covenant, where they were required to keep it but failed to do so. Jesus is the Surety of the new covenant. This new one is an internal form and not external as was the old. For us now it still remains to be seen fully accomplished in the eternal heaven. The evidence of scriptures is that the Jews were under the ceremonial law given as an outward form. This being visible, was temporary.

There is a difference with the new. The laws are written on our hearts through the Spirit (2 Cor.3:3). A covenant made in Old Testament times was a type. The New Testament is the antitype and is fashioned on and foreshadowed by the Old. The new covenant far surpasses the old. The old was a shadow with the new its reality.

Regarding this new covenant, there will come a time, the beginning of eternity, when God will never remember or re-activate the problem of sin. Sin will have been dealt with so fully, that the complete power of the cross of Christ will be forever effective. The word and the Spirit will control the redeemed. Sin will no longer affect us and sinlessness will reign.

Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant, is in heaven waiting for this: 'Until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet'. He is not waiting until He comes down to earth to reign for a thousand years. We are in anticipation looking for Him who shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation. This is the coming.

We quote the ERV version: 'So Christ was offered as a sacrifice one time to take away the sins of many people. And he will come a second time, but not to offer himself for sin. He will come the second time to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.' (Heb.9:28).

The whole passage, vvs.23-28, deal with heavenly matters. He is coming to judge but for those who believe in Him, there is the salvation for eternity upon which they have set their hopes.

Barnes pithily states the long-held Christian belief: 'Let us then live in habitual preparation for his advent. To each one of us he will come soon; to all he will come suddenly (whether at death) or for all in the clouds of heaven to judge the world, the period is not far distant when 'we' shall see him. Yes, our eyes shall behold the Son of God in his glory!'

We should note these verses: 'This made him the perfect high priest, who provides the way for everyone who obeys him to be saved forever' ERV (Heb.5:9); 'That salvation is ready to be given to you at the end of time' ERV (1 Pet.1:5); 'Obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls' ESV (1 Pet.1:9); 'And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God"' ESV (Rev.12:10)'.

This latter verse surely has a total connection with the following:

‘Then *is* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He makes to cease all rule and all authority and power.

‘For it is right for Him to reign until He puts all the hostile ones under His feet;’ LITV (Psa. 110:1; 1 Cor.15:24&25).

The verse reveals one kingdom. It is delivered by Christ to God the Father. It occurs at the time when Christ has obliterated all other, rule, authority and power. Christ has the right of reigning until all enemies, those resisting the will of God, are in submission to Him.

Mention is not made of our being again in this present world or on this present earth. We can see no word about a coming where Jesus would have literally to stand upon the Mount of Olives, which will cleave in two! Is this the same Jesus?

He ascended in a cloud. They were angels as declared by ‘He was borne up’ (Lk.24:51). He will come in a like manner was the message conveyed to the disciples by the two men or angels in white, who remained and stood by them (Acts 1:10,11). ‘Look! He is coming with the clouds’ (Rev.1:7) is the verse used by many to prove a coming as the Son of Man on the Mount of Olives and for them, the second return.

However, clouds are involved in His coming for His church a different way, in the manner of His ascent. Reference by the angels as above, obviously is made to this coming for the church that has nothing to do with a descent on the Mount of Olives (Rev.1:7). The end of the Bible makes the promise by Christ with: ‘I am coming soon!’ This is the coming for all of His own on the resurrection day, to take them to heaven and not to be on earth at any future time, as King or Messiah.

Is The Bible Always Literal?

It is said that the Bible must be taken literally in every case. Yet all read it sometimes literally and sometimes figuratively or spiritually – naturally or supernaturally. As an example we say: ‘Will Jesus Christ literally descend out of heaven on a white horse?’ (Rev.19:11-14)

The Lord speaks to us according to earth’s languages, forms of words, expressions and with regard to the particular writer’s background and environment. He does this so that we can understand spiritual truth. Examples are found in ‘the blast of (God’s) nostrils’ and in ‘eagle’s wings’.

Then we have the communion service that began with His words to the disciples about eating His flesh and drinking his blood. These all are the usage of figurative language, meant spiritually and not to be taken literally. We do indeed imbibe his Divine flesh and blood, His divine body and soul when we Spirit-ually obey this partaking. Jesus had said to them: ‘Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you’ (Jn. 6:53).

We receive the flesh of Christ which is of the nature of Spirit, because it came into being by means of heavenly begetting in the womb of Mary and had the life-giving Spirit flowing through it. Therefore it can be given to us for spiritual benefit. It is the heavenly bread of life as Jesus said (Jn.6:35;54).

This is the Manna that makes us eventually immortal. Eating of this Manna (Christ) in our spirits now, gives us a taste of immortality that will bring about the redemption of the body.

Many things are stated plainly but often we fail to grasp the meaning. One reason is that we tend to take things out of context. We do not read the whole chapter. Another reason is that we have our minds so filled with certain doctrines that we fail to grasp what the word of God is actually telling us.

An understanding is necessary to show the lack of scriptural support for all of the current end time. Our minds need to grasp the full import of the complete revelation of God.

Distinct Forms Of The Old And New

There is a particular comparison shown between the old and new covenants, the giving of the law and the people under Moses compared with God's grace for the people knowing Christ (Heb.12:18-24). Moses went up Mount Sinai that shook as God in the Person of His Son came down. What transpired on that mountain was for the Israelites alone, those who lived in the Old Testament times.

Still standing, is an earthly mountain in the city of Jerusalem where many visit today. They make pilgrimage, to the 'holy city', when in fact, she no longer exists as such. She was forsaken of God when the Savior was cursed and crucified. His presence no longer abides in any temple there.

There remains now only the heavenly Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. We do not approach in fear as did occur at Mount Sinai.

The prophet speaks in Judah, showing God's contempt for the Jerusalem that existed before the dispersion to Babylon. The situation soon became similar not long after the return of the remnant from exile, as for instance, Malachi discloses. This is the lament

'How the faithful city has become a whore! She that was full of justice, righteousness lodged in her — but now murderers!' (Isa.1:21).

Then the Lord reveals, as He does throughout the book of Isaiah, that the new Zion, the eternal and heavenly city of God is the holy one. She is the centre of the gospel age and beyond into eternity:

'And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness' (Isa.1:26&27).

We see this new age in the following:

'In days to come the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it.

'Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem' (Isa.2:2,3).

This connects with the New Testament verse: "The Deliverer will come from Zion" ...' (Rom.11:26).

The book of Isaiah reflects the punishment and restoration of the nation of Israel from Babylonian exile in its days under law. At the same time, the prophet proclaims the future as consisting of the new age of the gospel. He draws the picture of a new heavens and a new earth.

'A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; but the redeemed shall walk there.

'And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away' (Isa.35:8-10).

At the giving of the old covenant, 'His voice shook the earth'. Now we are given promises of another similar event but with a better hope. Such are: '... Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens. This phrase, "Yet once more" indicates the removal of things that are shaken - that is, things that have been made - in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken...' (Heb.12:26-28).

Jewish and other people in a millennium would be barred from this kingdom despite its being the focus of Jesus Himself and of the New Testament.

The Latter House

Haggai was prophesying about the destruction of the Jewish institution, the nation, the mode of worship, the temple and its forms, all being 'things that have been made'. Hebrews brings this out clearly. The Spirit in the Old Testament and the Spirit in the New reveals that with their destruction, there is the introduction in actuality, of the new covenant with its sprinkled blood, the Savior, Jesus Christ and a new kind of worship in Spirit and truth. This is the only one acceptable to God. There is the one church that is heavenly, blessed with things that cannot be shaken because they are spiritual, heavenly and eternal.

The prophet, Haggai, again reveals God's purpose: 'The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former'. The temples of the Old Testament, each called 'God's house', were full of splendor. Many preachers do understand that it related to the Temple to be rebuilt under Zechariah. They then to think of the latter house as being the Spiritual household of God but its treasures in earthly literal terms. The Scriptures reveal that both the Temple and its glory had first of all the natural fulfillment. The spiritual fulfillment would be of the church of Jesus Christ, radian in heavenly and not earthly glory. Obviously, with the removal of the old forms, we should not look to them to be reinstated. Neither should we ignore the whole meaning for us today, as for example those just mentioned from both Haggai and Isaiah and all the prophetic writings.

All of this has nothing to do with a restored Israel, a restored nation or its forms of worship, a rebuilding of a temple and re-introduction of animal worship or anything of this earth that would include a millennium as frequently taught. It is wrongly taught.

That is not what God is saying in relation to the 'latter house'. He would bring our attention to the spiritual implications. Preachers tell us there will be great monetary and worldly economical control in this scriptural church of the last day. The real meaning obviates that conclusion. The fact is a majority of believers and churches worldwide are in grievous poverty.

The emphasis on this economical profiting and even on the fact of an earthly kingdom with the saints ruling over nations and men, and all the earthly doings many anticipate, lends itself to advancing a materialistic church. And that has been the result.

The pulpits now and in recent times are full of preachers advocating prosperity, total healing of every bodily ailment and persuading the believers to be involved in many world-wide natural promotions for the good of the human race. Naturally, none of us thinks poverty, illness, disease and want do not warrant aid. Believers are charitable but the gospel at its core is all about the preaching of the kingdom of God and of heaven – with signs of healing and miracles following as the Spirit manifests His gifts.

Earthly Substituted For The Heavenly

We, however, are advancing the earthly instead of the heavenly. This has taken over our ideas of worship that have become aligned with this world's music and performances. All of these practices have disregard for the commission to teach what Jesus has commanded and not man's doctrines. Many remain oblivious to the Father's desire that our worship is to be in Spirit and in Truth and not in such a carnal manner.

The scriptures speak in spiritual terms using natural types and similes.

We note what the Lord says regarding the true church. This is not the formal one but rather the one that is indeed the true body of Christ: 'You will be Mine ... when I make up My jewels' KJV (Mal.3:16). God is not regarding natural wealth but spiritual wealth. Also: 'They shall shine on the land like the jewels of a crown' CEV (Zech.9:16). According to what Jesus said, we should understand that His kingdom is not of this world.

Moses and his law that brought only death and his institutions that only pointed to Christ, the blood of animals not availing for sinners, have all come to an end. Moses died at the age of one hundred and twenty years, full of health. This showed that the law continued in vital force, with the bringing of death, right to the end of the Jewish period.

Then the period of grace and the Spirit, through the coming, death and resurrection of Christ, brought about the new order. It began supernaturally on the day of Pentecost and will continue here on earth until Jesus returns again. The purposes of God cover a supernaturally inspired church using supernatural forms and prayers. It will have its consummation in heaven throughout eternity.

Jesus said: 'And I also say to thee, that thou art a rock, and upon this rock I will build my assembly, and gates of Hades shall not prevail against it' YLT (Mt.16:18). Dictionary meaning of 'on this rock' is 'a rock, as distinguished from a stone or a

fragment of rock'. The word refers not to Christ as a rock nor Simon a stone but to the latter.

The obvious reference of the word is to Peter. Christ appears here, not as the foundation, but as the Architect: 'On this rock will I build'. Again, Christ is the great foundation, the 'chief corner-stone', but the New Testament writers applied to the members of Christ's church certain terms which are applied to Him.

For instance, Peter calls Christ a living stone and addresses the church as living stones (1 Pet.2:4&5). The names of the twelve apostles appear in the twelve foundation-stones of the heavenly city (Rev.21:14). The church is described in these words: 'Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (i.e. laid by the apostles and prophets). Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone' (Eph.2:20).

The reference to Simon himself is confirmed by the actual relation of Peter to the early church, to the Jewish portion of which he was a foundation-stone'. However, this does not imply any idea of his being the first Pope or in any papal succession.

Peter himself later says here: 'You are built a spiritual house' (1 Pet.1:1). Further on he speaks of them as an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, showing beyond doubt that Peter's use of building a spiritual house is the church of all time.

The meaning of Christ's words are that He would begin to build His church with Peter and then on the Bible apostles and prophets who spoke and wrote His word.

Jesus has spoken of a great spiritual house, Christ's Israel, to which He refers and not the Jewish nation. What is the rock on which Christ will build His vast temple? Not on Peter alone either mainly or even primarily. It is this. Peter was the first to proclaim the gospel and that was the beginning of the church on the day of Pentecost. All the above nullify a papacy.

The gates of hell will not prevail against it. The mystical church, as an organism, would continue to be built, despite persecution, heresies, judaism, gnosticism, new age, worldliness, legalism, false teachers and prophets as well as the following of traditions, forms and cultures that always assail it.

There are two houses, that of Moses to which he belonged and then the house over which Christ is as the Son. We belong to the latter as the former came to an end, with its covenant now giving us the privilege of being in the household of the Lord Jesus as the new. This is the latter house of Haggai's prophecy. It is the one with the greater glory.

Israel is not said in the Scriptures to be 'the glory'. James does affirm so when he says that Jesus is 'the glory'.

CHAPTER 15

God Acting Under the New Covenant

What Certain prophets Said

The prophecies generally are viewed as belonging to a restoration of Israel with the proposal of a Messianic King on an earthly throne for a thousand years. This actually projects into the future of the heavenly and supernaturally born church of Christ under the gospel times. We are to understand them correctly.

About 450 BC, Malachi prophesied regarding God's covenants, including the covenant with the ancestors. At that time God said He would act, and that there was hope for the future (3:17). He said He would send the Messenger of the covenant, the Messiah, the Lord Himself and before Him, John the Baptist. That would be the beginning of the day of the Lord, the day of victory and judgment.

”Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming,” says the LORD of hosts ESV (Mal.3:1).’

This is God the Son, the Messenger of the covenant, speaking and it concerns His own coming to earth as a babe, to dwell in the temple of a body out of the womb of Mary. Jehovah declares it by ‘I send’ and ‘prepare the way before Me’. This would be a special creation of the Holy Ghost who would come upon her and overshadow her.

Zechariah ends on a similar note and it is about ‘that day’ of the new covenant. The last chapters are about the ‘coming age of full redemption’. This is clearly understood because there are his prophecies concerning Jesus Christ that we read about in the gospels as being fulfilled.

He says Messiah is to make a humble appearance, bringing righteousness and salvation to Jerusalem while riding on a donkey. He would be the Shepherd King, a smitten Shepherd. He was to be pierced and betrayed.

This King would have the authority to subdue the nations and establish His kingdom among men. Zechariah clearly is referring to the kingdom Jesus announced as having arrived on his first proclamation of the gospel. The kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and heavenly.

Now we look at Haggai. There it speaks of the visible presence of God appearing in the second temple. Its happening is portrayed with the divinely given understanding that Jesus ‘tabernacled in our midst and we beheld his glory’ (Jn.1:14). One other writer tells us He was ‘the radiance of God's glory, the exact

representation of His being' (Heb.1:3). There is to be a new temple made of living stones, with Christ the cornerstone. This author shows the age as already having begun in the person of Christ. All the prophets speaking in similar strain can be understood in the same way.

God Had Promised Abraham The Land

Now let us ponder on the promise made to Abraham regarding the land (Gen.13:15; 17:8; 24:7):

a. The promise includes 'to your offspring'. The land is 'for the offspring' also. In Galatians 3:16 this phrase, 'to your offspring', identifies the offspring as being Christ, the One who represents all the descendants of Abraham. In Him the promises are fulfilled. He is the Inheritor of all the promises, including the land. No longer is there any natural land reserved for a national Israel. Christ has superseded the nation of Israel as the Heir of the promises, including land. Now it is not for national Israel, natural Jews springing from Abraham. They are not the heirs. The heirs are those who have faith in Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile. They are 'Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise' (v.29).

b. The promise that the land will be inherited has become a promise that the people of the kingdom of God inherit. This includes people of every nation. In Christ, we already possess all things, including 'the world' (1 Cor.3:21). This accords with promises to Abraham and his descendants, when it is stated that he would inherit the world. It no longer can be the land of Palestine but is universal and 'new' and is in relation to the kingdom of God (Rom.4:13).

c. The land we will now inherit, is 'the new heavens and the new earth'. It is no longer a single portion of land, as Palestine, in this present age. The promise now focuses on a universal earth, in the age to come.

Isaiah 65:17-25 is often used as relating to the millennium. That means there is death during that thousand years! However, 'Death has been swallowed up in victory'. The truth is to be discovered in those wonderful scriptures that are used for the coming of Christ, or as believers who love Him fondly say, 'the coming of the Lord' (1 Cor.15:50-56). At this coming, called by some now the rapture, Paul tells us clearly that death is finished! The way these two portions of scriptures are used by pre-millennialists, mid-millennialists or post-millennialists, are at variance with each other. The a-millennialists are the only ones who have it right!

We should read the book of Revelation remembering that it was given for the church of John's day, with its historical and cultural background. It was a hellenistic or Greek society in Asia Minor, under the power and might of Rome. The believers were living amongst a very pagan society that owed allegiance and worship to the Emperor, Caesar. To these people, came the Revelation of Jesus Christ to whom it was given to make known to His servants the things which must soon come to pass. They did occur and also became an unfolding and continuous page of history. 'Soon' is not the future of the verb to be but 'are about to come to pass' and is not about the prophetic necessity but the sequence of events, as VWS remarks.

John gave the vision in a then current Hebrew form of writing. It was symbolic. Thus in chapters 4 through to 18, there is the work of Satan in the world and against the church for them in their day and for all in the entire church age to see and understand. These chapters are not about the coming of Christ. Their antichrist with the number of man, 666, was a Caesar. In every generation some form of antichrist appears, some being more prominent and far-reaching than others, as for example, rulers who martyr millions of Christians, or such as Mohamed, Joseph Smith of the Mormons, Mao Tse Tung, Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin.

Gentiles were under the curse, being outside the Law. The Jews could not keep the Law and were under the curse. This means that both were under the curse. The promise to Abraham, was a covenant to include his descendants, and it included the promise of the land. The purpose was to bring in the Gentiles along with the Jewish believers (Gen.12:3;17:7; 22:18; Rom.11:32; Gal.3:22).

At the time John wrote, the remaining Jews who were not Christians were no longer under the covenant but under the curse. Those who would still be alive after the judgment John foretold would be outside the promised land living among the Gentiles. He wrote before AD66. The revelation concerns the nation of Israel in particular that would meet its doom in AD66-73. When the covenant was withdrawn, at the time of the death of Christ on the cross it included loss of the natural land.

It so happened in order for the establishment of the new covenant. The Gospel church is under the new covenant, replacing Israel under the old. Restoration has come only through Christ, the Seed. The promises to Abraham then are extended to believers in Him.

The curse is removed through Jesus Christ becoming a curse, for both Jew, who were outside the covenant having broken it, and sinning Gentile who also were outside, having never been under it. The purpose is to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant for all people through the promised Seed, Christ. The only way the covenant to Abraham could be fulfilled (including land) for Jew and Gentile is through the Seed, Christ. We who believe are in the Seed and in the promises, not just the believing Jews. Believers from other nations are included in the new covenant.

The covenant changes from being of this world and thus temporary, to the eternal. We receive the Spirit, the foretaste of eternal life, to live not in Palestine but in the New Jerusalem on a new earth. Christ the King as Son of David, reigns in the land, now changed from Palestine to the everlasting heaven. Such is the promise in: 'We don't have a permanent city here on earth, but we are looking for the city that we will have in the future' GW (Heb.13:14).

The issue is as to when we enter the heavenly abode, for at the time we do, it becomes our permanent and eternal dwelling place. All Bible believers would hasten to declare that it occurs either at death or at the coming when we are taken up to meet the Lord in the air. Then He takes us into heaven to be with Him forever and ever.

The above verse evidences that the moment we enter heaven, we have become its permanent inhabitants. We will never depart from it. There is no opportunity here for anyone to suggest a life on an earth for a thousand years. Against all that the word

makes plain here and elsewhere, preachers and believers by the millions, have been led to believe it will be so.

God Had The World Of Sinners In Mind

The purpose of the covenant with Abraham, was not the Jews or Israel. They were merely the instruments. It was to redeem people from all nations. The land promised was not just that of Canaan but the world which is a new heaven and a new earth.

God's promise is: 'I will create a new heaven and a new earth. Past things will not be remembered. They will not come to mind' GW (Isa.65:17).

This was the world guaranteed for Abraham: 'So it was not by obeying Moses' teachings that Abraham or his descendants received the promise that he would inherit the world. Rather, it was through God's approval of his faith' GW (Rom.4:13).

The promises are to Abraham and 'his offspring' (Gen.17:7-14) and we are the offspring of Abraham, we who believe in Christ: 'And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise' (Gal.3:29). The promises now are not to Jews only but to Jews (the remnant who believe) and Gentiles, all who are in Christ. There can never be a revival of law and a temple in Jerusalem.

The new covenant is one of the Spirit. That this is so, is declared in the following verses, given in case there is a need for more scriptural proof:-

Isaiah 4:3; 59:21; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26,27; 37:1-14; 39:9,29; Joel 2:28,29; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Galatians 3:6-14.

The coming of the Spirit is the fulfillment of Jewish hopes for the age to come. The new age has come and is also the fulfillment of the blessing promised to the Gentiles through Abraham. It is the gospel era. The existing and eternal covenant is in terms of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

All is fulfilled in Christ by the Spirit. We are in this new age and with the life of the new covenant, that nowhere includes a millennium or the Jews living in a restored Israel under the reign of Jesus Christ returned to earth. The book of Hebrews, directed to Jews, is indicative of this. The prophecies regarding the Feast of Tabernacles physically and geographically in the Old Testament scriptures are never to be for anything now other than as having a spiritual application.

The Age To Come

We are under the age of the Holy Spirit but the ultimate fulfillment is always spoken of as in the 'age to come', which is ushered in by the return of Christ. Scripture mentions the resurrection of the dead and the restoration of creation together (Rom.8:22,23). We already have the first fruits of the Spirit and our final adoption as sons takes place when through the Spirit our bodies are redeemed. This happens at the resurrection of the dead, when mortality of the saints is changed to immortality. The present natural body is suited to this present age only and not for

the age to come. Neither is the body promised for the age to come suited for this present world.

The new spiritual body belongs to the Spirit and will be glorious in the age to come. Any millennium would not be in such age to come as it has no place for Him. How would those bodies fit in to this present world? Nowhere in the scriptures is a millennium included in this future hope that will happen regarding our bodies.

Problems With A Literal Fulfillment Of Revelation

If the book of Revelation is to have a literal fulfillment of a great tribulation for seven years (or three and a half, depending on which belief one has) there should be taken into consideration the fact that for many millions, some already dead, it has already happened. Consider the early church, with Caesar as the antichrist and all the persecutions they endured. Let us think of the martyrs in the Middle Ages and in many present day countries.

One fact seems to have escaped the notice of Western Preachers and Christians. It is this. There still exist and have existed billions of Moslems. For one thousand years under the rule of that 'antichrist', millions of Christians have either been killed or have had to deny their faith. Moslems have subjugated Christianized lands and their populations have suffered holy wars, slavery and rank cruelty towards women. We could mention Spain, Asia Minor, Yugoslavia, Iran, Iraq, India, central Asia, Indonesia, Africa, other parts of Europe, Gulf countries and Afghanistan, as examples.

For those millions who have suffered, what could be worse? Have they not suffered to the extreme?

Even today in countries, such as Egypt, Pakistan and Middle Eastern countries as well as certain African ones, Christians are persecuted under Moslem rule. It has occurred in 'holy' wars, not to mention the every day persecution and slaying of fellow Moslems. The inhabitants who live in some lands, must have that which could be called 'the mark of the beast' upon them. This has continued for centuries. To receive education, work, recognition, political prominence, financial help and support, even today, particularly in Moslem countries with Moslem political rule, non-Moslems must change their religion and become Moslems. It is currently the practice in Malaysia and all other such countries and has been for centuries. What of India, where persecution has been rife for centuries?

Unknown to many history reveals there was a country of Khazaria that existed for several centuries. It lay north of the Caspian Sea and Armenia, and its religion was paganistic. At some time, a certain ruler there decided the country would accept Judaism. This was around the eighth century. Even the Moslems and countries round about could not conquer them until the Russians finally did so some hundreds of years later. Then the inhabitants, Khazar Jews (called so by their religion and perhaps some ancestry), spread throughout Europe with their learning and economical, trading and artistic expertise.

The whole world except for some historians and scholars has gone down a path of deception in thinking that that they have been and still are, dealing with Jews by

descent only. One exception is in the Islamic world amongst scholars who have access to their historical treasures.

A real reason for hatred of Jews is based in envy. They are generally Jews by religion only as most are descended racially from the Khazars. They are diligent, brilliant and leaders in the financial and economic world. Some have been the bankers of Europe and now the world for centuries. They have married into royalty. Having a religion that marks them out with distinction added to their successes, has garnered strong opposition and detestation. That is human nature.

The fact of Islamic conquests everywhere in Arabia, Northern Africa, Russia, as far as Spain, throughout Central Asia and eastward, through Afghanistan, India and down to Indonesia, is part of history. Their victories and failure with the Khazars is written in Islamic annals. Thus one can only take the view that their hatred persists to this day of those they could never conquer. It is vented on all present Jewry as their migration from Khazaria due to Russian victory, spread throughout Europe and the world. This has led to Arab conflict with Israel and their desire to wipe the Jews off the map.

There is another issue for Islam. Their prophet did make the change in his writings from the Bible's record that Isaac is the heir of Abraham to his being Ishmael, a forefather of theirs and Jerusalem is also their holy city. The paradox is that many are of Abram's descent, through Ishmael.

Also, one need not marvel at the hatred of Islam for Jewry, when their prophet used the true God given Old Testament as part of the base of his writings. He was inspired by three Djinn (demons). This is added to the hatred of Jews that sprang from their failure regarding conquest as above, that most important factor of Islam. It is despite the fact that many lands stretching to Spain, across Central Europe and to the East, even down to India and Indonesia, as well as many in Africa, were subjugated by the Islamic world.

Islam's purpose is to conquer the world and install Shariah law under Allah who is not our God of the Bible. The building of their mosque on the site of the destroyed Twin Towers in New York is an indication that they consider a conquest has been made in that destruction and subsequent erection. That they failed completely to conquer Khazaria surely is bile in their throats.

There has been the mark of the beast for millions of people. In the Roman Empire, there was a certain mark that was the forced worship and offering of sacrifices to Caesar. This was the intended understanding when John penned his writings.

The book of Revelation has been fulfilled and still is being fulfilled in a continuous flow of history. Originally, it was given for the Christians in Asia Minor, concerning the state of their churches and the historical events that were occurring or would occur, for them. Those matters are history.

We can also receive the book in every age as pertaining to on-going historical events, in that God Himself is continuously acting. He has allowed the forces of hell to act in the world and in and against His church. Every part of life in this world suffers those effects. This is under the new covenant whereby His grace in salvation

provides hope. He also manifests providential grace. It is seen from Jesus' words that God sends rain on the just and the unjust.

The Father's interest now is not in a natural, national Israel as such but in the covenant to Abraham being fulfilled in Christ and to His children. His word to Abraham declared he was to have a son of promise through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Following the thread of Paul's thinking conveyed by him, makes it obvious (Gal.3:1-16).

Then there was the covenant of law, for natural Israel, from Sinai, called the Old Testament (covenant). In the allegory, this latter covenant is represented by Hagar who bore Ishmael and had to leave with him to go into the desert (Gen.21:9-11). This was the occasion when Paul wrote: 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son' (Gal.4:30).

Concerning the old, he has stated: 'One originates on Mount Sinai and bears children destined for slavery. This is Hagar: 'For the name Hagar in Arabia stands for Mount Sinai for she is in bondage with her children' (v.24). Therefore the covenant of law with natural Israel and the place, natural Jerusalem are of the flesh, not under the blessing and promise of the covenant to Abraham. Many miss this obvious fact.

We who are in Christ are the children of the free woman, being Sarah. That free woman is the heavenly Jerusalem. Isaac and we, are the children of promise after the Spirit. The allegory reveals that natural Israel, followers of law and with natural Jerusalem are of the flesh and not under the covenant or in the promise. They are likened to being the children of Hagar and according to the flesh. Ishmael did not come through the promise but through the flesh.

Those who are heirs of the promise and even now enjoying it, are the children of Abraham according to the Spirit and as Isaac, son of the free woman was, we also are children of promise. The promise is for spiritual blessings culminating in the heavenly Jerusalem coming down to earth. This is the promised heavenly city where Abraham placed his gaze.

All this being clearly set out by Paul, how is it that we still want to see Jerusalem in Israel the centre of the promised blessing to the Jews, with Christ sitting on a throne there - when it is all of the flesh? This Jerusalem and that Israel is in bondage and always will be in bondage. 'The present Jerusalem, is in bondage together with her children' and being in bondage of the flesh, will never inherit the promise in that way.

That verse alone, on top of all the other verses in the passage, conclusively proves Israel as a nation, existed to be the agent used by God to bring to pass the wider purposes of the covenant given to Abraham. Those promises involved as the purpose, the redemption to come for the whole world. God had the world in mind. Isaac inherited because the covenant promise ran through Sarah and not because of his ethnic identity, which Ishmael also shared. Paul says: 'Now you, my friends, are children of the promise ...' (Gal.4:28) and this is Jew and Gentile.

There is no other fulfillment or promise left for the Jews. The Old Testament order and Law with any Temple has gone forever.

Dealing With Isaiah 40-55

Some use these chapters in reference to occurrences on earth during a millennium but we can determine otherwise from that particular portion of scripture itself. Rather, God's purposes are revealed for His then chosen nation Israel, who are both His people and His servant, being a type of Christ. In this portion of fifteen chapters, God shows His purpose is to retain as His chosen people, Israel, but it is in a new sphere, a spiritual one. It consists of the remnant of the Jews, but into this new form, believing Gentiles are included. These, jointed to Christ the head are called 'Christ' as written by Paul: '... And all members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ' (1 Cor.12:12). We note that the Head is Christ and the members subject to Him.

In the face of this, how could it be possible for the Lord to form His body of people in this age, from Jew and Gentile, taking one into heaven at His coming for the saints. He would then have to particularize the Jewish Nation during a millennium to bring in the whole nation during that time. He would have to include those people at a later date in His people. That goes against all scripture.

The Rest

The promised rest for Israel and now for us, is not the land of Palestine. We read about a rest for the Israelites who came out of Egypt and their failure to enter in (Heb.3:16-19). The first generation died in the wilderness. When Joshua took the next generation in, it was still not the promised rest.

Canaan, the land, typified the rest that remains for the spiritually chosen ones. The rest is not to be a geographical land, neither for Gentile believers nor national Israel. Neither is it so for Jewish believers, because the rest remains and it is for the 'people of God' (Heb.4:9-11).

Israel, the nation, in the form of the remnant believing in Christ of the atonement, is the first and foremost participant in this rest. The fact that Hebrews 3 and 4 up to this point are about her people, proves it so. There are those Jews who come in through 'the rest' of the gospel. There is no blessing of God to be extended in any other way, even to the Jewish people. Jesus as Savior and not as King over any land, is the way into this promise.

This rest is fulfilled in the anti-type, eternal life through faith, culminating in rest in heaven forever. There is also a rest from all natural works and endeavors, now and finally in heaven, as having ceased from all our labors. The following proofs are presented:

'Since therefore it remains open for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he sets a certain day — "today" — saying through David much later, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

'For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not speak later about another day. So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labors as God did from his' (Heb.4:6-8).

Israel Has Fulfilled The Purposes Of God For Her.

Israel already has fulfilled her God-given destiny in the role of being a blessing to the world. This nation gave the Messiah to the world and His birth was the realization of God's promises to Abraham by which through Israel would come the Savior.

Before blessing could go out to the world, the curse on the nation of Israel and indeed on the whole world of those who keep the 'works of the law', had to be removed on the cross. The Jews broke the covenant and the Gentiles were outside the covenant. All were cursed sinners.

Because of the broken covenant, there was no hope for Israel or indeed for the world, until Jesus Christ came to become the curse for all. He came under the law to be Israel's representative. Israel had broken the law and the covenant and were thus outside of that covenant. He became accursed as representing the covenant-breakers. He also came as One who was to redeem them (and us) from the curse.

Introduction Of The New

The Jewish nation was exiled to Babylon as a result of the curse of idolatry and because they did not let the land lie fallow every seventieth year. There were two calendar system in vogue during that period. Suffice to say that around the beginning of the 6th century BC, a remnant returned. The spiritual curse remained. The nation was without a prophet or king and experienced what is known as the four hundred silent years until John the Baptist arrived on the scene preparing the way of the Lord. Jesus suffered the curse into death. At His resurrection, He arose as Surety of the new covenant of God. All believers have risen with Him. The old covenant became the new.

On this basis also, it is unrealistic to visualize a nation of Israel during a millennium, being given a new chance to come under a special covenant with God. There will be no further or former covenants other than the present 'new covenant' that Jesus brought into being with His blood. The Jews are to this day, outside of the old covenant and the unbelieving ones are also outside of the new covenant. It would seem that Messianic Jews are on the fence between the two. The only hope for all, is to believe on Jesus Christ as Messiah in this age. There can be no further chance given anyone.

Scriptures to look at are: Romans 10:4; 14:17; Galatians 1:13,14; 2:3,14-19; 3:10,18,23,24; 4:9,31a; Colossians 2:16,17,20

Noteworthy Fulfillments

The restoration of Israel as promised in the Old Testament, is fulfilled in Jesus (Lk.1,2). We see it has Spiritual and not natural fulfillment. He was born for this reason: '... To give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins' (Lk. 1:77). She failed completely and lost out, according to Paul's writings: 'But Israel, going after a law of righteousness, did not get it. Why? Because they were not searching for it by faith, but by works. They came up against the stone which was in

the way; As it is said, See, I am putting in Zion a stone causing a fall, and a rock in the way: but he who has faith in him will not be put to shame' BBE (Rom.9:31-33).

The consummation of Old Testament hopes for Israel are fulfilled in Jesus Christ in His incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and being enthroned on high. It is not to be re-gathered from exile as a nation, with Messiah as King (Luke 1:54-79). The purpose is: '... To give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace' (v.79).

The hopes of Israel for a Savior from the House of David, are fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Amos 9:11; Lk.1).

Gabriel announced to Mary concerning Jesus: 'He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High and the Lord God will give to him the throne of His ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end'. Zechariah in the same chapter, said: 'He has raised up a mighty Savior for us in the house of his servant David. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham' (Lk.2).

Mary herself prophesied: 'As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever', about the restored and reconstituted nation of Israel that was to appear through the Messiah.

This nation consists of the descendants of Abraham, according to promise and not according to nationality. It is clearly said: 'There is no longer Jew or Greek ... for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise' (Gal.3:28,29).

The promises to Abraham and through Israel are fulfilled in Jesus, we being co-heirs with Him (Gal.3:16).

Zechariah's Prophecies Are Not Meant To Be Taken Literally In Every Case

Zechariah chapters 11 to 14 have some reference to the Messiah as He would appear to Israel. In chap.11 the reference is made to the thirty pieces of silver, by which Judas betrayed Jesus. Ch.12 prophecies the death by which the Savior will die, followed on by chapter 13 that speaks about the opening of a fountain for cleansing, the blood of Jesus shed on the cross.

Ch.14 pursues by allegory, the day of the Lord's judgment, as well as His action and mercy, at the cross. It includes events leading up to it, as, for example, Jesus sat upon the Mount of Olives. At the close of the chapter the universal blessings from the cross are spelt out.

The Mount of Olives always stood in the way of those who needed to escape from Jerusalem in times of war - such as David (2 Sam.15:30). In this apocalyptic reference, God Himself will bring deliverance to Jerusalem, to the one who escapes the old covenant bondage to go to His own heavenly city, the Mount Zion of the new covenant.

Many believe that Christ will stand on the Mount of Olives one day. They follow literally, that the 'Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the mount shall move northward and the other half

southward... the whole land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem shall remain aloft' (Zech.14:4).

Looking at a map carefully, the conclusion to be made is that the moving northward and southward would encompass about thirty kilometers. Where would each leg of Christ be in such a situation? In addition, the whole plain would be low enough for the waters of the Mediterranean Sea to sweep in!

Obviously, it does not have a literal meaning! Such a literal meaning seems preposterous! We should note that twenty-two times in the book of Zechariah, the prophet mentions 'in that day'. He refers to the gospel age.

It would appear that many prophets expose the prophetic intention. It was that: "The mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains... And many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths" (Isa.2:2&3)'. This takes place under the gospel. Then: 'I will make the place of my feet glorious'.

Deliverance Not For the Earthly But For The Heavenly City

However, the main thrust of those chapters is not literal in the sense of detailed fulfillment of every word, indicating totally prophetic material. Rather, those chapters are a mixture of prophecy and apocalypse with figurative language and give an image of end time conflict with God's judgment and the way He deals with the world. It is apocalyptic language.

Deliverance comes to Jerusalem not naturally but in the area of the Spirit. God's intent has regard to the heavenly and gospel Jerusalem – not the natural one. His eternal purposes are focused on what we discover revealed in the New Testament. There is a change in the form of His people in the heavenly Jerusalem who include the remnant of Israel. Jewish and all idolatry is removed in that heavenly city and the day of the Lord is revealed. The end result will be a new created earth and living waters flowing from the new Jerusalem. God's promise is this for all, both Jew and Gentile, who are of faith.

Note verses: Zechariah 14:6-8; Ezekiel 47:1,2;4e8:35; Jeremiah 31:38-40; Isaiah 2:2-6; Revelation 22:1,2.

There is no support in scripture for the idea that the Lord will appear seven years after the parousia and stand literally on the Mount of Olives. One verse of scripture used for this argument, is Revelation 1:7. Darby said that this coming is not the rapture. Rather it is when He comes back to earth with the church to rule and reign. I heard this throughout all the days of my youth.

One good look at this verse proves the belief wrong. It reads: 'Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him: and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him'.

Obviously, the verse has a different meaning. It shows those who pierced Him at the cross, will see Him. They died in the first century. Therefore, they could not be on earth when Jesus supposedly comes again to stand on the Mount of Olives. 'All the peoples of the earth' has to mean every single individual who has ever lived on

the earth in this world's system, outside of Christ. Most have been in the place of the wicked after death. They will mourn. Therefore, this has to be the time of judgment upon the world.

The context of Zechariah 14:4 where such passage appears, bears no indication of any literal event. Jesus Christ Himself makes no reference to such a literal geographic event.

Jesus' Ascent Reveals No Plan Of Reappearance On A Mountain

There is no idea of support for a literal standing and cleavage of the Mount of Olives in these words: '... Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him going into heaven' EMTV (Acts 1:11).

Two angels informed the disciples as they had watched Him disappear how the manner of His return would be. He disappeared from them and in like manner He would appear to them, individually. They could not be in a collective form as millions are scattered throughout the world.

As they watched Him disappear, it was as Jesus, the Messiah King on the Davidic throne, the Son of God, as John declares He is. It was he who recorded much about who He is. He will return as the Person He was before He left. That was Lord and Savior as enthroned King and not as King for this world.

Throughout His time on earth from conception, His nature was that of God. Joined to it but under it, was the nature of man. There were two natures made into one, with the glory of the Divine generally not being manifested. John finalizes his Gospel with these words:

'But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ...' ESV (Jn.20:31).

The Messiah, in the minds of the Jews for centuries past, had indicated He would be 'anointed and include all His offices of prophet, priest and king'. He would not be merely an 'anointed man' (as some preachers are saying today).

This Messiah of the prophets and of the Jews themselves, it was acknowledged, would be 'the Son of God', with relation to the nature of God. This latter they refused to accept when He did appear among them. His resurrection proved He is the true Messiah of Israel. This rising from the dead was with power.

Towards the end of His stay here on earth, Jesus said to His disciples: 'While I was still with you, I told you that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the books of the prophets, and in the Psalms had to happen' CEV (Lk.24:44). The words of our Lord Himself indicate fulfillment.

All the Old Testament prophecies had projected His birth, life, ministry, death and resurrections, as Servant of the Lord, Redeemer, Savior and everlasting King on an eternal and heavenly throne.

The conclusion in Mark shows that the disciples went out preaching the gospel that Jesus had begun to tell. The final words are:

'And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen' EMTV (v.20).

The importance of all gospel activity must lie in the message. As they preached, it was confirmed by the working of the Lord through the signs and miracles that were secondary. The gospel has been established to abide forever. There can never be another gospel.

Its message conveys nothing about a return to earth upon the Mount of Olives. The specifics of His return are always to catch us up to be welcomed in the air and to be present with Him forever. Obviously, this is in glory and not on this present earth.

Jesus Does Not Give Promises To Stand On Olives Mountain

Exponents of the idea always connect Zechariah 14:4 with the supposed coming of Jesus Christ to earth as the Son of Man, after seven years in heaven. He was Son of Man while on earth. Jesus Himself makes no such connection, mention or inference.

Again, we dare not build a doctrine regarding a supposed literal standing by Jesus on a literal Mount of Olives on merely one verse of scripture. Doctrines, as stated previously, must always be supported by three and at the least two verses and that are always in context.

There are diverse opinions as to the meaning of this chapter. One thing is certain and that is the final victory for the church of Jesus Christ with destruction of all enemies, as outlined in the closing chapters of the book of Revelation. Zechariah foretells of this in Old Testament and figurative language. After all, he understood little, as Peter declares:

‘About which salvation the prophets sought out and searched out, prophesying concerning the grace for you, ‘searching for what, or what sort of time the Spirit of Christ made clear within them; testifying beforehand of the sufferings *belonging* to Christ, and the glories after these. (We note ‘the glories as heavenly’).

‘To whom it was revealed that not to themselves, but to us they ministered the same things, which now were announced to you by those having preached the gospel to you in *the* Holy Spirit sent from Heaven; into which things angels long to look into’ LITV (1 Pet.1:11,12).

CHAPTER 16

Jesus, John, Paul And Peter Say Nothing Of A Millennium

No mention of a millennium is made by Jesus Christ or by John, Peter or Paul. If a scriptural truth, why is there nothing said about it?

There is to be 'the period of restoration of all things which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient times', says Peter, without the hint of any period such as a thousand years.

'Restoration' as in Thayer's dictionary is 'the restoration not only of the true Theocracy, but also of that more perfect state of (even physical) things which existed before the Fall.' Jesus Christ is to remain in heaven until that time. Any so-called millennium is not such a restoration. Perfection will always remain hidden in heaven. How then could Jesus leave a perfect heaven to enter an imperfect world of time for a millennium?

Contrary to what is taught the kingdom of God is the same as the kingdom of heaven, seen by reading Mt.4:17 and Mk.1:15. Schofield says the kingdom of heaven is Messianic, Davidic (Schofield Bible, p.1003). The two are one as proved by these scriptures so the Davidic kingdom has already been established. He, taking his cue from Darby, says two gospels are necessary, as do others of the same persuasion. They believe there is the gospel preached now and the gospel of the kingdom to be preached during the millennium. However, there is only one gospel. The gospel preached now for Jew and Gentile is the gospel of the kingdom Jesus brought. Use of 'the' indicates one gospel only. See: Jn. 3:3; 18:36; Mt. 3:2; 4:23; 19:14; Mk. 1:15; Lk. 4:43; 6:20; Rom. 14:17.

The Teaching Of Jesus

What did Jesus teach us about His coming? He said: 'But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father' (Mk.13:32). If no one will know the time, why is there so much speculation? Jesus also stated emphatically: 'It is not for you to know (understand, perceive) the times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority' (Acts 1:7).

Why are we trying to find out something that is not in our power to know, understand or perceive? Should we be always trying to fix a date or time for the coming of the Lord or for the so-called millennium, as well as looking to see what is happening in natural Israel? What is the reason for all of the speculation that goes on decade after decade in its various forms and fashions? Is it not disobedience to the words of Jesus?

We see time in the hands of the Father revealed in these verses. The correct usage is set out as: 'And swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets' ESV (Rev.10:6,7).

'Sounded' is 'declared' in several translations and in the Greek the word is used of declaring the good news of salvation. In the verse just quoted, it is about declaring the mystery of the kingdom. This mystery is referred to by Jesus here: 'And the disciples approached and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" He answered and said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given' EMTV (Mt.13:10,11).

In Acts 1, Jesus was teaching the disciples the importance of the outpouring of the Spirit. They could not realize its spiritual significance. They were thinking along earthly lines. They asked Him if it was at that time He would be restoring the kingdom to Israel. Then He spoke as quoted above. He continued with: '... But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses... even to the remotest part of the earth' (v.8). Jesus was instructing them that what the Father had fixed by His own authority was not theirs to question or know. It was not to be their concern. The time that would elapse before the final establishment of the kingdom would not be revealed. Titus 1:2 shows our hope is 'of immortal life which God, who never lies, promised from all eternity'. All believers live in this hope, without setting dates. We in the church are to be filled with the Holy Ghost and to witness to Christ all over the world. There is one church for all time, of both Jew and Gentile (Eph.2:14).

God's interest is no longer centered on the national Jew. This is obvious from the writing of Paul's that states unequivocally: 'There is no longer Jew or Greek ... for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Gal.3:28). 'No longer' means what it says. Therefore there is to be no program for 'Jews' as such in anything touching them as a people, a nation or in any earthly restoration.

The Jewish Lexicon' states that during the 19th century, a quarter of a million Jews became members of churches. Such a number was a large influx and it was not at a time of any millennium, which is supposedly when Jews convert! The time for Jew as for Gentile, is now, because the word of God says: 'Now is the acceptable time, behold, Now is the day of salvation'.

It takes much grace to admit one's error and such that induces a willingness to change one's interpretation of the word of God from that generally being taught and to sometimes stand alone. We must study the word of God to discover truth.

In the parables from Matthew 21:23 to 22:14 Jesus foretold of His death at the hands of the Jews. He quoted from Ps.118:22, saying: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone" (Mt.21:42). This verse is quoted again in Acts 4:11. Peter when leaving us his epistles, shows clearly Jesus was speaking about His rejection by the Jews and that He Himself would be the cornerstone of the new building (1 Pet.2:7). He points out that we are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people' (1Pet.2:9).

The new building as shown clearly in this verse is His church, when He says: "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom" (Mt.21:23). In vs.33-46 Jesus warns of the loss of nationhood to Israel, with no promise of her being reinstated in such nationhood - e.g. during a millennium! (v. 43).

Believers in Jesus Christ as Savior are the people in Matthew. They also are those whom Paul and Peter present.

If we had never heard the doctrine regarding Israel being God's people for the millennium, we would not hesitate to take up the position that there is to be none.

John In Three Epistles Emphasizes 'Truth' Without Mentioning A Millennium. Now Paul's Teaching

We refer to these words from Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. They corroborate the people Jesus referred to above as being Jew and Gentile believers. The latter are another people as Jesus declared. Paul tells it as: "You are members of the household of God built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone" (Eph.2:19,20).

The doctrine of Christ's coming again Paul shows in the promises of 1 Cor.15:52 and 1 Thes.4:16-20. This was known as the coming fifty years ago but perhaps today not called this. According to some ideas He takes the church to heaven for seven years although not stated so in scripture. He then comes again to stand on the Mount of Olives. What of the multitudes, of particularly Jews and some Gentiles who are to accept the new gospel in the millennium? They would miss out on such a coming.

Looking at 2 Cor.5:15-7:1, it is interesting to note that Paul on the subject of 'reconciliation', right on up to the fact that we have 'these promises', quotes a great deal of Old Testament scripture. He transfers them to the gospel of grace that he and the other apostles preached.

Some: Lev.1:2; Isa. 3-7; 49:22; 60:4; 54:14; 57:13; 60:1-14; 52:11.

From the verses of scripture he used, it is evident that Paul believed Christ brought about the final restoration of the Jews. It occurs under the gospel as reconciliation in His work of redemption on the cross. How blessed! Paul obviously did not expect that the Jewish nation would ever be restored to the land of Palestine.

He brings out through his use of the relative Old Testament scriptures, the fact that restoration and reconciliation for Israel is fulfilled in the atonement of Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself was the ransom for the sins not only of Israel but also of the world of sinners who heed the call. It was in this manner that Israel was restored from exile and reconciled in peace with her God.

The true Israel, of saved Jew and Gentile, has experienced what Paul is speaking about. This whole subject is covered by Isaiah 40 to 66 and we particularly note: 'And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him ... He says, "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" ESV (Isa.49:5,6)'

Acting contrary to the words of Jesus, believers for centuries have been trying to set a date for the end of all things. During the first millennium, some thought it would end in A.D. 1000. In our day we have seen many supposed 'antichrists' who have been named over the years, being international dictators. Also, 1982 was to be a year of great import for the church, when the planets were to line up. Nothing happened. 1988 has come and gone and 1992 has passed without anything occurring.

We are now today, past the year A.D. 2000 when according to many, the end of all things was to be upon us. Firstly, they said, 120 Jubilees will have taken place. A jubilee was every fifty years, according to the Old Testament. Secondly, as certain ones, particularly of Brethren heritage have taught, that supposedly will be the end of the sixth day or 6,000 years. The seventh day, 1,000 years, which is to be the millennium was to have commenced by then! Half a century ago, some Pentecostals were disposed to give favor to the Brethren with the wrong assumption that they knew the word. We followed the doctrine.

Peter's Words Omit A Millennium

The following indicate that by the Holy Ghost, Peter understood there was a heavenly reward waiting. It did not encompass anything of this earth that is to be destroyed: '... Into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time' (1 Pet.1:4,5) and 'For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you' (2 Pet.1:11).

These verses are significant in their explanation as to the future designed for this universe:

'... You should remember the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken through your apostles. First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come ...

'They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world of that time was deluged with water and perished.

'But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the godless ...

'But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed ... leading lives of holiness and

godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire?

‘But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home’. (2 Pet.3:1-13).

CHAPTER 17

Israel Once, Now The Church

God had planned for national Israel to be a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6). This they failed to be. Then God brings into being the true Israel of God, after the cross. They become the royal priests, (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). The spiritual kingdom of kings and priests, (1 Pet. 2:9) has superseded the priesthood that was to be Israel's portion, it being merely in type. Now we have the antitype, God's real purpose. He willed for a body of believers in Christ and in His church. Such remains forever because God has by grace provided them salvation in Christ, our Surety. There is no longer any need for the type that proved to be a failure. Therefore, a national Israel is no longer necessary to fulfill this. Instead, God has put in place forever, the new covenant with the great High Priest of the order of Melchizedek, the Lord Jesus Christ.

New Testament Indictment Of Israel

Strangely, the verses that point out God's anger against the Jews are never quoted or used as sermon material. This is how Paul highlights it:

'Of the Jews, I say, of the men who put the Lord Jesus and the prophets to death, who are persecuting us cruelly, who incur the displeasure of God, and who show themselves to be the enemies of all mankind, seeking to hinder us, as they do, from preaching to the Gentiles, that they might obtain their salvation. And so it is that they must ever be filling up the measure of their sins. Still, the judgment expressing God's anger has now overtaken them for good and all' Cass (1 Thes.2:15,16).

This translation is by Cassirer, who is of Hebrew descent and a Jewish classicist and philosopher. He taught for many years at Glasgow University and at Corpus Christi, Oxford. It is very interesting that in the face of whom he was and what he was that he has given us such a clear and striking translation.

It relates to the fall of Jerusalem and the gruesome judgments that came upon the nation as they gathered in Jerusalem. The false prophecies given at the time were proven wrong. Truly, His death was upon them and their children even as they had roared such a cry before Pilate.

In this connection from Daniel's well-known prophecy we see: 'And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator'. ESV (Dan.9:27).

Regarding this 'abomination of desolation' KJV (Mt.24:15), it pointed to the Roman army that desolated the city of Jerusalem. In turn there eventually came to Rome its 'decreed end', some centuries later. This is corroborated by Jesus' prophecy: 'But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has drawn near' EMTV (Lk.21:20).

This army participated in the greatest calamity and orgy of destruction and death that has ever occurred. The vast majority of the two million inhabitants and refugees died and the rest were taken into captivity to foreign lands. A great many of them were killed by each other either directly due to sectarian infighting or by way of food stolen during the siege.

Moses in his day, prophesied regarding the Roman invasion, even referring to their emblem, the eagle: 'Foreigners who speak a strange language will be sent to attack you without warning, just like an eagle swooping down' CEV (Deut.28:49).

In line with their rejection of the Messiah Jesus they listened to their many false prophets. This caused them to reject the appeals to surrender by both Titus and Josephus. The latter, a famous historian, was a prince and priest of the Jews at the time they had previously been defeated. He had capitulated to Vespasian upon defeat, recognizing by the prophet Daniel the fate that was coming to Jerusalem at the hands of Titus. Vespasian was the father of Titus, becoming emperor some time after Nero died, as we have shown elsewhere.

The tenor of this book is by no means anti-Semitic. In my youth I had a Jewish friend who spoke Yiddish. We had in our Pentecostal church, an Austrian Jewish family. They were Christians and did not follow Judaist practices. We met an Indian Jew and on showing our enthusiasm at his being one, he replied: 'I am not a Jew. I am a Christian'. Last but not least, while once in the States, I had the privilege of laying hands on an Israeli who had accepted Christ, to be baptized with the Spirit. When I heard him speaking in other tongues it was a thrill as it had been when I prayed similarly with my first Chinese brother, in Brisbane. Nevertheless, the blessing is not confined to any set race of people.

The Hope Of Israel Fulfilled In Jesus Christ Who Was Resurrected

Paul in his defense, said he was 'wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel' (Acts 28:20). The hope was Messianic and concerned the resurrection of the dead. He said he was on trial for the sake of the hope that is the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:6).

Also note: 'But this I will say openly to you, that I do give worship to the God of our fathers after that Way, which to them is not the true religion: but I have belief in all the things which are in the law and in the books of the prophets. Hoping in God for that which they themselves are looking for, that there will be a coming back from the dead for upright men and wrongdoers' BBE (Acts 24:14,15).

‘And now I am here to be judged because of the hope given by God's word to our fathers; For the effecting of which our twelve tribes have been working and waiting night and day with all their hearts’ BBE (Acts 26:6).

Acts 2:26-33 shows that the resurrection of Jesus Christ had been foretold by David. This king pointed to a coming prince, the Messiah, as his descendant, called the Son of David. When he prophesied this One would sit upon that throne, the Bible says he spoke of the resurrection that would enable His enthronement. Christ is now upon that throne (Heb. 1:8). It was never meant to be an earthly one. God ordained His Son to ‘sit at His right hand’ on the throne. This was the Old Testament hope Paul also revealed (Ps.110:1; Heb.1:13; Mk. 12:35-37).

The enemies are principalities and powers, rulers of this age, who were defeated at the cross, but who are being progressively destroyed. The last enemy is death. It will be destroyed at the final resurrection of the dead. Then the kingdom of Christ will become part of the eternal reign of God (1 Cor.15:25). There is never a mention of any reign of Christ from Jerusalem.

The hope of Israel was based on the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen.12 and 17), the Sinaiic (Ex.19:1-24:18) as well as the Davidic Covenants (2 Sam.7:12-16). This hope which was enlarged upon and explained throughout the Old Testament, was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It is shown by this text: ‘Now to Abraham were the undertakings given, and to his seed. He says not, And to seeds, as of a great number; but as of one, he says, And to your seed, which is Christ’ BBE (Gal.3:16).

The Promises Is To Israel Have Been Fulfilled

Note the ‘have been fulfilled’. We know this fulfillment is in a spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, which was announced when He was on earth and we are already in that kingdom. Therefore, it cannot be that it awaits fulfillment in a so-called millennium on earth, with a reign from Jerusalem.

This is clear from: ‘I tell you that Christ became a servant of the Jews to show that God has done what he promised their great ancestors.

‘Christ also did this so that the non-Jewish people could praise God for the mercy he gives to them. The scriptures say, "So I will give thanks to you among the people of other nations; I will sing praise to your name."

And the scriptures say, "You people of other nations should be happy together with God's people” ERV (Rom.15:8-10).’

This again fulfils the promise made by Moses in that the Messiah is promised as a prophet to the Jews (Deut.18:18,19). For that purpose He came to Israel, and not to be presented to them as King in His Messianic office that actually is not earthly but heavenly.

It is error to say that the church is a parenthesis and only happened because Jesus was not accepted by the Jews as their Messiah.

According to the New Testament verses above, Christ as a minister to the ‘circumcision’ is in confirmation of the promises made to the fathers. ‘Confirm’ means ‘to establish and bring to realization’.

This covenant was fulfilled, or established, in Christ, (Gal.3:16). The sign of circumcision was given to Abraham as the seal of that covenant (Gen.17:1-21).

Christ is now the minister of the new covenant that confirms the old covenant of which circumcision was the seal. In this He was the Messiah promised to Abraham (Gen.12:2,3). The real purpose of the promise was not to establish a Jewish nation, but to bring in an elect people for God from among the Gentiles also, as well as the believing remnant of Jews.

God's ultimate agenda for Christ as a minister of the circumcision was found in His mercy for the Gentiles as well as for believing Jews, as said by: 'That in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might be imparted to the Gentiles' (Gal.3:13,14).

Old Testament Prophecy Re Restoration Was Literally Fulfilled At The Time

Ezekiel 37:27 (quoted in 2 Cor.6:16) is: 'My dwelling place shall be with them' and 'I will be their God and they shall be My people'. Ezek.37:21: 'I will take the people of Israel from the nations'; v.23: 'never again defile themselves with idols' v.24 'My servant David (King Jesus); v.25 'they shall live in the land'; v.26 'An everlasting covenant' and v.28 'when My sanctuary is among them forever'.

This prophecy was fulfilled naturally with the Jews' return from Babylon. It points to an enlarged spiritual fulfillment for the church. As Son of David, King Jesus now reigns, under an everlasting covenant as mentioned. God will be among gospel believers forever.

The Church Now Is The Temple Of The Living God

The above indication is discovered in these words: 'And what agreement has the house of God with images? for we are a house of the living God; even as God has said, I will be living among them, and walking with them; and I will be their God, and they will be my people.

'For which cause, Come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and let no unclean thing come near you; and I will take you for myself, And will be a Father to you; and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord, the Ruler of all' BBE (2 Cor.6:16-18).

These verses are definitely about the church of Jesus Christ being the temple of the living God. Paul is addressing 'we' believers.

They come from the Old Testament Scriptures on the restoration of Israel, such as that spoken to Israel with: 'I will place my dwelling in your midst' (Lev.26:12). It is now given to us. The dwelling He had amongst them was destroyed in AD 70. This was a necessity for the establishment of His real Spiritual temple and for Him to be the indwelling presence in it. He personally was not in the old temple. It was for Israel the best He could accomplish but it had held His created Shekinah glory and not His actual heavenly glory

'I will be a father to him', is spoken to David (2 Sam.7:11-17). The whole passage in this covenant with David spoken by Nathan, concerns a natural fulfillment, with Solomon. It predicts also, that there would be a descendant in God's house to be built by Him who would have an everlasting kingdom, even the Messiah. There was not and is not to be the raising of David literally from the dead to be king. It speaks

of another, even Jesus Christ, his Greater Son. David's kingdom promise is fulfilled supernaturally and spiritually even as David in type was fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ.

This is also the purpose of the covenant with David: 'Rejoice, ye Gentiles, in company with His people' and 'There shall be a root of Jesse (David) (a scion of the house of Jesse) (the root of Jesse shall come) And he who also rises up to rule over the Gentiles - in him shall the Gentiles trust (the heathen will set their hopes on him)' (Rom.15:9-12). Also, Jesus Christ was 'a minister to the circumcision'. References are found in: 2 Sam.22:50; Ps.18:49; 17:4; Deut. 32:43; Isa.11:10

The New Testament is given to us who are in Jesus Christ, the Greater David as quoted above (2 Cor.6:18). We are in the land of Canaan, the kingdom of heaven or of God, now. We are in the true temple. One day it will be in the actual heaven itself.

Under the new covenant, His sanctuary is among the redeemed people forever and could never be in a literal land of Israel for only 1000 years. In Corinthians the church is shown to be His sanctuary.

Zion Now Not The Mountain; Rather It Is The Church

I would like to quote the following portion regarding the gospel of Jesus Christ, as follows:

'For this cause I will make my name clear to my people; in that day they will be certain that it is my word which comes to them; see, here am I. ('In that day ' is always about the gospel age).

'How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who comes with good news, who gives word of peace, saying that salvation is near; who says to Zion, Your God is ruling!

'The voice of your watchmen! their voices are loud in song together; for they will see him, eye to eye, when the Lord comes back to Zion.

'Give sounds of joy, make melody together, waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord has given comfort to his people, he has taken up the cause of Jerusalem.

'The Lord has let his holy arm be seen by the eyes of all nations; and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

'Away! away! go out from there, touching no unclean thing; go out from among her; be clean, you who take up the vessels of the Lord.

'For you will not go out suddenly, and you will not go in flight: for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will come after you to keep you.

'See, my servant will do well in his undertakings, he will be honored, and lifted up, and be very high.

'As peoples were surprised at him, And his face was not beautiful, so as to be desired: his face was so changed by disease as to be unlike that of a man, and his form was no longer that of the sons of men.

'So will nations give him honor; kings will keep quiet because of him: for what had not been made clear to them they will see; and they will give their minds to what had not come to their ears' BBE (Isa.52:6-15). This goes on to ch.53 concerning the crucifixion and the Savior, e.g. v.3 'He was despised and rejected by men'.

Isaiah 52 above, speaks of Zion, fulfilled as the church. Paul quotes v.7 with: 'As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message" (Rom.10:15,16). It relates to faith in Christ for salvation as provided by the New Testament.

Zion, once a mountain in geographical Jerusalem and now the eternal 'city of God', 'to which we have come' (Heb.12:22), is the centre under the new covenant. From there, Zion the church, the word of God goes out. It is now the heavenly 'mountain of the Lord's house' and many people shall come to it.

It is the heavenly 'city of the great King' as in: 'Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His holy mountain' ESV (Ps.48:1); 'And the peoples will say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will give us knowledge of his ways, and we will be guided by his word; for out of Zion the law will go out, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem' BBE (Isa.2:3).

The law would be that of the Spirit and of love, while the word of the Lord was to be the gospel.

Zion is now the source of the river of paradise, where water (type of the Holy spirit) flows from the temple of the Lord (Isa. 33:21; Ps.46:4; Ezek. 47:1-12). Zion will be the centre of the new creation where perfection reigns as seen in heaven 'And I saw the Lamb on the mountain of Zion' BBE (Rev.14:1)'.

The Heavenly City Prophesied In Isaiah

There is a beautiful picture in Isaiah 60-62 of the heavenly city: 'They will call you the city of the LORD, Zion, the city of the Holy One of Israel' (v.14).

This eternal city is to be filled with the redeemed of earth, who have already come to that city as in: 'You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God' (Heb.12:22).

We find more about this glorious city in: Isa. 35:1-10;65:17,18; Ps. 72:8-11;102:12-22. See also: Rev. 21:1,2; 22:1-5,16,17.

We, The Church, Have All These Promises Fulfilled Now In The Gospel – Spiritually And Never To Be Naturally

Millennialists have been waiting for the restoration of Israel to the promised land. It is very significant that the book of Corinthians shows that the restoration prophesied in the Old Testament began to happen on the day of Pentecost.

We should read 2 Corinthians 5:14-7:1. Some verses are:

'... One has died for all' (5.14). The following read: 'So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!' and '... God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ' (5.18).

The purposes of God are for the new people of God: 'Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation' (6:2). This is the crux of the matter: '... I will live in them and walk among them, I will be their God, and they shall be my people ...' (6:16).

The last verse states: 'Since we have these promises' (7:1), or as Moffatt says: 'Since these promises have been given to us'. What promises? They are the promises given natural Israel of old.

Paul quotes Isaiah 49:8 there, concerning her restoration. Looking at Isa.49:6, God speaks that He will 'restore the survivors of Israel'. V.9 is an imagery of the Exodus and Israel's deliverance; v.12 says 'they will come from the north and the west; v.22 reads 'I will raise my signal to the peoples; and they shall bring your sons in their bosom ...'

Isaiah prophesies concerning the restoration of Israel, first from Babylon and then figuratively Israel in Christ as shown by Paul. He comments that we, the gospel church of the New Testament, now 'have these promises'. They have been transferred from natural Israel to us, believers under the new covenant.

God is among His church. All the verses quoted in the above sections are 'these promises' (2 Cor.7:1). They are no longer for natural Israel. They are for us. They are ours. We have them.

The verses must now be brought forward to refer to the church as indicated in 2 Cor.6:17,18; 7:1 .

We quote some hereunder:

'You are not the same as those who don't believe. So don't join yourselves to them. Good and evil don't belong together' ERV and

'Can God's temple contain false gods? Clearly, we are the temple of the living God. As God said, "I will live and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people."

"The Lord says, "Get away from unbelievers. Separate yourselves from them. Have nothing to do with anything unclean. Then I will welcome you."

"The Lord Almighty says, "I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters" GW (2 Cor.6:14,16-18)?

Therefore we have come in to the promises of the restoration of Israel.

The Old Testament obviously spoke of a spiritual Israel that was to come, of Jew and Gentile, Galatians 6:16, 'the true Israel of God'. This means there is only one Israel for the purposes of God. See Ephesians 2:14-22 where it is declared that there is only one people, particularly noting these verses quoted:

'For he is our peace, who has made the two into one, and by whom the middle wall of division has been broken down,

'Having in his flesh put an end to that which made the division between us, even the law with its rules and orders, so that he might make in himself, of the two, one new man, so making peace;

'And that the two might come into agreement with God in one body through the cross, so putting an end to that division. And he came preaching peace to you who were far off, and to those who were near;

'Because through him the two of us are able to come near in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer as those who have no part or place in the kingdom of God, but you are numbered among the saints, and of the family of God,

'Resting on the base of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief keystone, in whom all the building, rightly joined together, comes to be a holy house of God in the Lord; in whom you, with the rest, are united together as a living-place of God in the Spirit' BBE (Eph.2:14-22).

Caiaphas, the High Priest had prophesied of this. On hearing of the resurrection of Lazarus by Jesus, the leading priest and Pharisees called a meeting of the High Council. Then came a prophecy by the Spirit, despite the unbelief of this High Priest, saying that: 'Yes, he would die for the Jewish people. But he would also die for God's other children scattered all over the world. He would die to bring them all together and make them one people' ERV (Jn.11:52).

Paul boldly declares the truth of the gospel regarding national Israel and the Jews, whose blessing from God after Christ came, was through a remnant only. It is as stated above. There is to be one people of God, both Jew and Gentile. This is in relation to the past, present and future. It is now and for ever more. It pushes aside all ideas of there being a restored national Israel with a Messiah ruling over them during a millennium.

Where Is The Millennium?

Darby, the author of all present day end-time beliefs, as proved, declares the kingdom of God is for Israel on earth forever. In these verses, contrary to his doctrine, saved Jew and Gentile under this present gospel have a place in the kingdom of God. There is no millennium presented here.

The above passage alone, obligates us to follow the only opinion possible. That lies in the truth set out in Ephesians that God has done something differently, is doing it not according to man's ideas and will follow through on His plan as dictated before the foundation of the world. It is here expressed by Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in what we all regard as the infallible word of God.

CHAPTER 18

The True Israel Of God

According to millennium beliefs, 2 Thessalonians 2:6 indicates the Holy Spirit will be removed out of the world, He being the One who restrains until the coming of Christ to take us to heaven. If so, how can millions of Jews be saved during the millennium as is taught, when the Holy Spirit has left? Or will He also come back again? According to Romans 7:6 'we have been released from the Law so that we may serve God in the Spirit'. This principle will apply always for those who come to Christ while on this earth. Were Jews in Israel to come to Christ in a millennium, how could they follow this scripture? They are to be enslaved again by law.

This millennium is supposedly to be for the blessing of the Jewish people who are to occupy the land of Israel, with Jesus Christ sitting on the Davidic throne.

Who actually are 'Jews', or 'Israelites'? Are not we Jews, the church of Jesus Christ, consisting of both natural Jew and natural Gentile? Consider: 'A man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart by the Spirit' (Rom.2:29). We who believe are all the children of Abraham. This is seen as being through the obedience of faith (Gal.3:16; 2Cor.1:20;6:16-18; Heb.13:5,6).

What can be more apparent than the words: 'For in Christ Jesus, it doesn't make any difference now whether we have been circumcised (i.e. Jews) or not; what counts is whether we really have been changed into new and different people. Now peace and mercy be on all who walk by this rule; that is, on the true Israel of God' (Gal. 6:15,16).

The true Israel of God is not about Jews but it consists of those of every nation who have been born again by the Spirit of God. Earthly Israel is cast out: 'But what does the scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman"' ESV (Gal.4:30;5:6)'.

'For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace' ESV (Eph.2:14,15).

'If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the LORD your God, then the LORD will bring on you and your offspring extraordinary afflictions, afflictions severe and lasting, and sicknesses grievous and lasting. And he will bring upon you again all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. Every sickness also and every affliction that is not recorded in the book of this law, the LORD will bring upon you, until you are destroyed. Whereas you were as numerous as the stars of heaven, you shall be left few in number, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God' ESV (Deut.28:58-62).

'They are not all Israel, who are natural descendants' WEB (Rom.9:6,8). This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as 'descendants'.

They, spiritual Israel, inherit all promises, including the land, given to Abraham in Genesis 13:15. This is translated 'forever' in Genesis. It is the word 'olam' that also means 'time', 'a life-time' or 'an age'. Israel was never given the land as an eternal possession.

In Hebrews 11:9,10 Abraham looked for a 'city whose builder and maker is God'. He had his eyes on his eternal inheritance in heaven. He took far more account of that promise. God gave it to him in Genesis 17:8, when he recognized if it were to be everlasting, it had to be the heavenly land. That is where his vision was. It was not the earthly land and prosperity with many natural descendants promised.

Jesus Himself relates how Abraham anticipated the gospel day as being 'the day' of the Messiah's coming as the promised Seed.

There is no other day of the coming of Messiah – only one. The gospel of the atonement was given through Him as embracing the fulfillment of all of God's promises. He said this while rebuking the leaders of Israel: 'Your father Abraham rejoiced that he should see My day, and he saw it and he was glad' EMTV (Jn.8:56).

Despite the gospel proclamation Abraham received (Gal.3:8), much of our church for 150 years has failed to grasp the truth.

There was an occasion after the resurrection that Jesus joined Cleopas and his wife as they journeyed to Emmaus together. His remarks to them reveal to all doubters that there is only one coming to be on this earth. It is one for suffering and not one predicting Him as King. It is seen in these words: 'Was it not necessary for the Christ to go through these things, and to come into his glory?' BBE (Lk.24:26).

After His sufferings there is glory and not a reign on this earth. Glory is associated always with heaven and not our present earth. This glory is 'eternal' or 'everlasting' (1 Pet.5:10). Let us look at this verse that speaks of His glory, but in heaven: 'Now, Father, give me back the glory that I had with you before the world was created' CEV (Jn.17:5).

Isaiah saw His glory and it is described thus: 'In the year that King Uzziah died, I had a vision of the LORD. He was on his throne high above, and his robe filled the temple.

'Flaming creatures with six wings each were flying over him. They covered their faces with two of their wings and their bodies with two more. They used the other

two wings for flying, as they shouted, "Holy, holy, holy, LORD All-Powerful! The earth is filled with your glory."

'As they shouted, the doorposts of the temple shook, and the temple was filled with smoke. Then I cried out, "I'm doomed! Everything I say is sinful, and so are the words of everyone around me. Yet I have seen the King, the LORD All-Powerful" CEV (Isa.6:1-5).

John by the Spirit used these words in his Gospel: 'Isaiah said this, because he saw the glory of Jesus and spoke about him' CEV (Jn.12:41). Could our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, this glorious Being described, remain for a thousand years reigning in an earthly situation?

The promise for believers in the only gospel, consisting of both Jew and Gentile, is set out in these words: 'When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory' ESV (Col.3:4). Would this heavenly glory given us ever be compatible with an earthly scene during a millennium?

Then there are these words of Jesus disclosing the state of the redeemed after His coming that is among angels. It is in heaven forever: 'But in the future world no one who is worthy to rise from death will either marry.

They will be like the angels and will be God's children, because they have been raised to life' CEV (Lk.20:35,36).

He went to heaven 'in glory' as Paul said: 'Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness. He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory' ESV (1 Tim.3:16). Is it possible for earthly people to see this glory?

In truth, this land for spiritual Israel will be the 'new heavens and the new earth' with the 'holy city' coming down from heaven for its situation there (2 Pet.3:13; Rev.21:1-4). The idea of the millennium is based on the previously stated assumptions and on some misleading English translation.

Let us note that 'Olam' is used of God, 'El Olam', first in Genesis 21:33, where it is translated 'the Everlasting God'. It rather shows Him as the God of 'times and seasons'. He works in these times and seasons that 'wax old and are vanishing away' (Heb. 8:13; Eph.3:10,11).

The word 'olam' is translated 'for ever' in Psalm 77:7,8; Isaiah 45:17; Daniel 9:24; Exodus 21:6; Leviticus 25:46; 1 Samuel 1:22,28; Deuteronomy 28:45,46 (re curses); 23:6; 1 Samuel 27:12 (of David, who later died).

'Olam' is translated 'time' or 'old time' in Lev.25:32; 1 Sam.27:12; Josh.24:2; Eccl.1:10; Ezek.26:20; Ps.143:5; Gen.6:4; Deut.32:7; Isa.42:14;51:9. In one place 'olam' is translated 'world', meaning 'in this present age' or 'life-time', Ps.73:12, 'who prosper in this 'world', meaning 'in this present age'.

However, 'olam' can mean of indefinite future, as e.g. in Exodus 29:28. Common sense and the book of Hebrews tell us that Aaron's sons were not to participate in an everlasting (eternal) service.

Therefore, to base the idea that Israel will be returned to the land promised to Abraham, because of the translation 'everlasting' cannot be correct. In any case, this

earth will be dissolved. It will be recreated and become the land promised. In that sense it will be everlasting.

There is a general misunderstanding regarding this verse: 'And so all Israel will be saved ...' (Rom.11:26). The reality is that the true Israel consists of born-again Jew and Gentile. May we consider the matter well.

Who this Israel is can be seen clearly in Ephesians 2:13-20. Paul states there is 'one body' and that we Gentiles are now joined to the Jews, as he says: 'To create in Himself one new man' (v.15). The church of Jesus Christ includes both Jew and Gentile and both are now in the true Israel of God. Considering this fact, there is no basis for thinking that the church, Jew and Gentile, is raptured, while at a later period, Christ will have to take Gentile believers to heaven, those given the 'gospel of the kingdom' and brought to Christ during a millennium.

According to prevalent belief today, this number could include backslidden believers who had been left behind but who would repent again during the millennium. If this were to happen, there would still remain the question of the resurrection body given for all believers to dwell in during an eternal heaven. When would they receive theirs if indeed that is to be their reward. The rapture is past. The resurrection of the body for believers has taken place!

Darby has opted for converted Jews to be on this earth for eternity. Forever they are to be under law with its priesthood, temple and sacrifices. Therefore he is really saying that they will be sinners forever.

In actuality, if some have been taken up to heaven, the door of the 'raptured' church would be closed for any further body of people to enter in, e.g. converted Gentiles or people on earth given a second chance. How would it be possible that during a millennium that those who come to faith in Christ, on a natural earth, are then joined to a heavenly body of people, who are said to be on earth reigning with Christ? What would their situation be? There is an impossibility without a change made in their bodies. When would this occur.

Let us think about it. Say the rapture and second coming have already taken place, according to what we hear taught. Then during the millennium multitudes of Jews and others are converted. Under the present scriptural scheme of things, these Jews and those others repenting, would all have to die and be taken to heaven – without a 'coming'. What of this strange anomaly where Jews and others come to Christ during a millennium, before eternity begins, that at least the Gentiles must be translated to heaven? Perhaps the Jews would come back to earth to live there forever! When would the church return to heaven after the millennium while the Jews reside on earth forever?

There are two Israels in the whole passage of Romans 9-11. In Romans 9, Paul speaks of 'not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel', v.6. Again in vs.8,16,22,23,27, it is clearly shown that there is a natural or national Israel and a spiritual Israel. The latter consists of believing Jews and also Gentiles.

Romans 11:5,6 indicates a remnant by grace and not by race. V. 17 shows: 'Some of the branches (of Israel) were broken off, leaving a remnant to which are added believing Gentiles, all making up the re-formed Israel that is totally spiritual. V.26

mentions 'all Israel shall be saved', referring to the remnant of natural Jews who believe in Christ and the believing Gentiles.

Vvs.17-24 of Romans 11 give a picture of Jew and Gentile in the church, the true Israel, by a process of grafting. In the last paragraph mention is made of a remnant and a cultivated olive tree after some of the branches have been broken off. Others have been grafted in, with the root supporting such branches. In ordinary grafting, the new is grafted into the wild root and stem. They become a 'vital or indissoluble union'. God did something unnatural, according to the allegory Paul uses: 'After all, it wasn't natural for branches to be cut from a wild olive tree and to be made part of a cultivated olive tree. So it is much more likely that God will join the natural branches back to the cultivated olive tree' CEV (v.24). It is supernatural action.

If the grafted branches die, so does the root. If the bringing in of the Gentiles fails, the whole root will wither and die, i.e. the Jewish remnant, who believe. This shows the plan of God is for both believing Jew and believing Gentile, neither one without the other (Rom.9:23,24,26-29). God's ways are supernatural even in the case of Abraham, whose son after the flesh was not the heir. The heir was Isaac, the son of promise, who was born because of the supernatural acts of God.

These verses in Romans 11 are a revelation of the situation in the church in Rome, consisting of Jewish and Gentile believers. Each was a faction, one against the other. The former were proud of being Jews and the latter arrogantly thought that as believers, they had a more special place because the 'branches were broken off because of unbelief'. Paul rebukes both parties. If we understand this we will then know his real meaning.

Gentiles are 'fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household', the remnant of Israel. Thus, Jews have no place of precedence or prominence over Gentiles in the New Testament revelation. Today, they appear to think they have as do some of Christ's Gentile believers! The same applies to the Gentiles who should not boast against the Jews.

Romans shows: 'God has bound all men (Jew and Gentile) over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all' (Rom.11:32). In the showing forth of His mercy in salvation through Jesus Christ and His cross, both Jew and Gentile are shown to be on even ground and to be needful recipients of the gospel. Each was and is an elect body.

'... He chose you to be his own special possession out of all the nations on earth. The LORD set his heart on you and chose you ... You were the smallest of all nations. You were chosen because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors' GW (Dt.7:6-8).

'... Those who have been chosen so that they, too, may receive salvation from Christ Jesus with glory that lasts forever' GW (2 Tim.2:10). Israel was elected by God. So also, are believers in Christ.

God's plan for the world, which is that 'all men' are consigned to disobedience (Jews and Gentiles) so that He may 'have mercy' not only on Jews who believe on Christ, but also on Gentiles who believe. Ephesians 2:12-22 is an exact portrayal of the situation. Jesus Christ has 'in Himself one new man out of the two'.

CHAPTER 19

About Signs In Relation To Christ's Return

Natural And Spiritual

All Christians should be vitally interested in the matter of the promised coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Israel is a major point with most today, we should look at the place this nation stands in relation to His return.

First of all, there cannot be found any verse that implicitly says Israel would be restored after Jerusalem and the temple were totally destroyed in AD 70 and her people killed, enslaved and scattered to the ends of the earth. Jesus did not say such a thing in either Matthew 24, Mark 13 or Luke 21. Paul omitted to say this in Romans 9-11. Peter does not mention it in his second epistle even in relation to the time when he said the earth would be consumed by fire. Its absence as an occurrence is noteworthy. A second restoration for the nation is not mentioned in the whole of the Old Testament. Perhaps most of us have in the past overlooked these aspects.

Jesus told a parable in Luke 12:35-40 to warn all His followers to be ready for His return. He stated clearly that we were all to be ready, for He would be coming in an unexpected hour. This indicates that there are no signs that will point to His return. When Moses prophesied the destruction of Israel, obviously by the Romans, in Deuteronomy 28 and 29, he did not include any restoration afterwards. Prophecies in later times regarding a restoration of Israel were always in relation to a return from the seventy years of captivity in Babylon. Even then only a remnant did return. After that, there never was another king to reign over them until King Herod the Great came on the scene with his evil dynasty. He it was who rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem that was of magnificent splendor as also evidenced by what the disciples said to Jesus in the above three chapters of the Gospels.

Of course, many do take the stand that there will be a second fulfillment. They cite it all as being similar to two mountain ranges. The first, being smaller, is evident but behind it lies a similar mountain range larger in the background. The foremost range types a fulfillment in relation to the first time Israel was judged and taken into captivity. The one in the background is like the fulfillment that will come as Israel has been said to be restored the second time and fully, as a nation. It amounts to the fact of there being two fulfillments for one kind of prophecy. This is a fallacy if we are looking for two natural fulfillments. There can be no similarity in any two natural fulfillments of prophecy. Two fulfillments for the one prophecy cannot be found stated in any part of the Bible.

The point we have missed over the years is that there are indeed two fulfillments but one is natural and the other supernatural or spiritual. We take as an example Ezekiel 36. This was given before Israel's return from exile in Babylon. The first fulfillment was when they returned. The second fulfillment is spiritual. It speaks of the land waiting to be replenished and filled with inhabitants. To understand the spiritual, we need to look at the history of Abraham. He is the Jews' natural father but the believers in Christ have him as their spiritual father as Paul says in Galatians.

Abraham was given the promises to inherit the land, the natural land. However, his eyes were on the supernaturally given heavenly place God had in mind for him and his spiritual descendants. Faith bade him look not at the seen that is but natural and temporal. Rather, faith in the Christ to come carried him into Spiritual realities. He had more regard for his spiritual descendants than for his natural ones. His gaze was on the unseen that is eternal. The Divine principle that what is seen is temporary but what is not seen is eternal must have been etched into his very being by his God, whose friend he was.

Despite dwelling in portion of the promised land, he did not consider that to be the real fulfillment. It was the natural fulfillment. The real one was as disclosed by the Holy Ghost: 'He looked forward to the city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God' (Heb.11:8-10). The foundations of the city are contained in the gospel message.

The city with of course the land, is that eternal one depicted, when John saw the new heavens and the new earth or land. He viewed the holy city, as the bride of Christ that is the New Jerusalem (Rev.21:1,2). It is no wonder that Abraham jumped over the promise that would be fulfilled naturally to gaze at the spiritual. His heart was filled with the revelation of the heavenly city, the temple built of redeemed people, who would become the eternal habitation of their God. We the children of faith also must have this vision.

This is how we are to understand natural fulfillments of Old Testament prophecy where it relates to Israel, Jerusalem, the people and the land.

Before dealing with a repeat of the fulfillment of prophecies, particularly about Israel, first in the Old and also in the New Testament. Let us consider the order of events in creation. Everything is in a state of flux. Nothing is static. Day after day reveals a difference in weather, including times of the natural events such as the rising of the sun and the appearance of the moon and even the daystar. Since the beginning of time, each day, each month and each year throughout the whole earth, produces variation.

Now we look at the rise and fall of nations, of kingdoms and of rulers. Each has had its own specific time and manner of appearance and disappearance. No two have been ever the same.

Consider every human being. Of the billions who have been born, not one is similar to another. The form, nature, personality and place in history is different. Every family has been and always is different from others. Each marriage has its own singular operation. Society and even adherence to culture alters all the time. The history of each life, of each city, of each nation and of each kingdom, is different.

In one's own lifetime, we cannot identify anything that is a reproduction of what has already occurred. There is not one single thing. There is a variableness in every one.

All of time, of nature and of history as well as everything about each person is always in a state of flux. Life never stands still. It always moves on. This occurs in creation. There is never a repeat.

So it is concerning the new creation of God, those born again, each individual assembly, each verse of scripture, all are different in each particular application. In like manner and most importantly for us now, each prophecy in its fulfillment is different and there is never a repeat.

This most importantly applies to prophecies concerning the nation of Israel. There can never be a repeat and yet there is a wholesale view that there will be. The Old Testament prophecies have been fulfilled and there still remains the great hope of many, that numerous ones will have a repeat in history. It is against all the ways that God has worked in the past and is working now.

The scriptures themselves indicate the fact of a once only judgment or event, when we consider among others things, the judgments that fell upon the earth in the Old Testament. First there was that borne by the earth and its inhabitants as a result of Adam's fall into sin because judgment came upon him and through him upon the whole human race. It was a once for all judgment.

We can look at the occasion of the flood when nearly all of the millions of mankind were destroyed and the earth's make-up changed. Never again will it happen and to show us this, God has placed in the heavens His rainbow of promise. There are, however, types of what will happen in the end of time.

Later on there was the judgment that came upon the people at the time of the Tower of Babel. Such a thing was never repeated. We look at the judgments on Egypt and later on, other idolatrous nations.

During those periods, prophecies were given in relation to them as well as with regard to the nation of Israel and then Judah and Israel. These were always once for all time events and judgments. The same thing occurred with their kings and on other occasions. All the prophecies were fulfilled in due course. They were never repeated and never would be.

Why should we then expect a repetition of the fulfillment of prophecies against the nation of Israel that were fulfilled at the time of the captivity in Babylon and the return of the remnant? How is it that there is an ongoing hope for a natural result to occur again in relation to prophecies concerning Israel's final destruction, as it turned out, by the Romans. Those also, having been fulfilled, can never have a repeat performance.

In passing we make the comment that Ezekiel was probably one of those mentioned by Peter who said: 'Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent

glory' (1 Pet.1:10,11). He in particular, with Isaiah, saw the glory in visions given them by this same Spirit.

The visions and prophecies in the Old Testament were always based on the prophet's own personality, national institutions of religion and his known environment and situation. For example, Ezekiel was in captivity in Babylon among the exiles. He was of a priestly family so his prophecy is of priestly things and the temple. His prophecies end with judgment on the temple.

Then there is to be a new society with a new kind of temple out from which was to flow a rivers of water that became deep enough to swim in. He saw in a vision the river of the Holy Ghost in the temple of the redeemed of Christ in the form of the kind of temple he knew. It is momentous that on the day of Pentecost when the river began to flow the disciples were in an upper room of Herod's temple that had features of the temple Ezekiel saw.

He had seen in vision the valley of dry bones after resurrection life from Christ caused life (Ezek.37:1-14). Later he prophesied about Christ, God's servant David, who would be king and the only Shepherd (v.24). 'My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd ...' ESV

Christ came declaring: 'I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep' (Jn.10:11).

God says through Ezekiel that He will make an everlasting covenant, one of peace and that His dwelling place will be with His people forever. He words it: 'I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them.' (v.26).

This points to the new covenant with Christ as Mediator, so aptly described by the New Testament writer: 'By the saying "new," He has made the first obsolete.

And the one becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish' EMTV (Heb.8:13).

Some Fulfilled Prophecy

Daniel, on the other hand was a prisoner in Babylon. He was not a priest, but a prophet only. His prophecies were pure predictions of future kingdoms, rulers and events with the major one being that relating to his people, Israel.

With regard to the book of Daniel its prophecies have been fulfilled perfectly. Because many of us have failed to recognize this, we all have missed out on the privilege of being able to point out the wonder and marvel of such fulfillments. Here is an ineffable wonderment. David also would rejoice in seeing his prophetic word of Psalm 1 come to pass: 'The wicked will not stand in the judgment – for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous'.

The nation of Israel and its institutions were destroyed for ever in fulfillment of the prophecies of Deut.28 and Dan.9 through to 12. This ch.12 of Daniel is still about the destruction of Jerusalem. V.7 even shows a certain man swearing, 'that it would be for a time, two times and half a time', i.e. the time of three and a half years it took, from A.D. 66 to 70. V.11 mentions how the offerings would cease, this in the middle of the week.

We should understand that chaps. 10 and 11 foretold the history that had connections to the Jews until 'the end of those days'. This history reveals there was first of all, the Medes and Persians and the kings after Cyrus such as Xerxes. There then appears Alexander the Great who died at an early age. His kingdom was divided between his four Generals. After that there was Ptolemy to Antiochus the Great. A daughter in v.17 can be identified as Cleopatra. Egypt is in the picture and Mark Anthony. Then arrive Antiochus Epiphanes, the Maccabees and also King Herod the Great, the final one. He was King of the Jews, even though an interloper, the only person who could be called king in the whole list of eminent rulers.

These chapters can never have another natural fulfillment that will justify the belief that there lies a higher mountain range behind this first. That purpose supposedly would show fulfillment of prophecies about a restored Israel in the end-time.

It is a matter of history that Daniel 11 was fulfilled, statement by statement and time after time, in every detail. The chapter covers a period of around four hundred and fifty years beginning from the Babylonian captivity until the reign of Augustus Caesar. This fulfillment literally, is the most amazing chapter in that regard throughout the whole range of Old Testament and even New Testament prophecy. These hundreds of literal fulfillments are enough on their own to prove the infallibility of the Bible for those who refuse its authenticity. Such a very wide scope in Daniel 11 would deny any possibility of further fulfillment in future periods.

The Great Tribulation

Reference is now made to the matter of the great tribulation which many say is to come. Jesus referred to a tribulation that would be great: 'For then there will be great distress, tribulation, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now – and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened' (Mt.24:21,22). This tribulation was fulfilled from AD 66 to 70 under Vespasian and then his son, Titus.

The Jewish historian, Josephus, has recorded correctly many of the events of those days. He describes bestialities, cruelties, tortures, cannibalism, murders and the slaying of many by the Romans and in the end through fire. What he has described is unheard of in other Jewish wars as far as actual atrocities are concerned.

In addition, the number of inhabitants of the whole land was greatly minimized, few being left there. Every trace of Jewish past was totally obliterated. Cities were demolished and in the case of Jerusalem, there was not one stone left, with an area surrounding it to the extent of ten miles, also being laid bare.

Jesus said these words, 'Never to be equaled again' and in the KJV, we find this: 'Then, there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be'. This means there can never be another great tribulation. It has already occurred.

Jesus did not mention two great tribulations. We know it has happened not only from history but from the Christians' obedience to the words of Jesus in the previous verse when He told them to pray so that their flight would be at a good time.

He was speaking to that generation about the Roman army, the abomination that would cause desolation as spoken by Daniel. When they saw the army set down outside the walls of Jerusalem to besiege them, they were to take the opportunity to flee. Most Christians did just that when the siege was raised for a short time. They escaped that terrible great tribulation. History tells us they had about two days only in which to escape.

Can we not see that He said there never would be another great tribulation? This that occurred A.D. 66-70 was the time of Jacob's Trouble that many are looking for in the future. Why indeed would God restore the nation at the end of our gospel age only to pour down upon it again, a repeat of this terrible tribulation that occurred at that time? Jesus actually spoke against this happening in those words above. He did say that in this world there would always be tribulation.

Many are looking for the great tribulation because of a lack of comprehension of Jesus' prophecies and their fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem. Most do not even know that history. There is a looking forward to future natural fulfillments because of our failure to delve into the past.

It seems that the church is repeating the sin of Israel when it looked for a Messiah who would restore their headship, remove the yoke of Rome and rule as their natural King. Because of this belief, they crucified their Messiah. They failed to see the truth. Let us not be guilty of failing to see the truths of the gospel and of the New Testament. The New is contained in the Old and explains the Old. If we wish to know the truths about Israel, Jerusalem, restoration and the land, we need to understand them in the light of the New.

The Wailing Wall

The remains of a wall standing in Jerusalem known as the Wailing Wall was not part of the temple. Dr. Ernest Martin, M.A. in Theology and PhD. In Education, of Associates for Scriptural Knowledge, has been Lecturer, Archaeologist, Writer and Academic Supervisor for 450 college students at the excavation of some walls and a Tour Guide in Israel. He states that the remains there are not of the temple but of Hara mesh-Sharif (the Noble Enclosure). It is 'the modern scholars who are wrong' about this. These stones are not remains of the temple. It was completely destroyed as Jesus said would happen.

Martin remarks: 'He included the stones of the outer walls that enclosed the temple as well as the buildings of the inner temple. He used the word *beiron* that means all of these'.

The Wailing Wall is part of the camp of the Romans that existed, known as Fort Antonia, being to the north of the temple. It is today regarded as the Temple Mount and is in actuality misnamed. The Dome of the Rock is not sited on the mount where the temple stood. It is in the middle of Hara mesh-Sharif (Fort Antonia) and that was the property of Rome. This fort was never owned by Jews.

It seems that the Moslems, the Jews and Christians are all wrong in thinking that area was where the destroyed temple had once stood.

Jesus prophesied the total destruction of the city of Jerusalem, saying there would not be left one stone upon another (Lk. 19:43&44). This also was fulfilled as history reveals. The specific reason was as He said, that they did not know the time of their visitation from God. Simeon had the revelation, saying:

'My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people to see.

'He is a light that will reveal salvation to the nations and bring glory to your people Israel' GW (Lk.2:30-32).

The destruction was prophesied around 700 B.C. It also was fulfilled and reads: 'Therefore because of you Zion shall be ploughed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height' (Mic.3:12). A historian has recorded that as the ground where the whole of the temple, including its walls, had been leveled, a certain person ploughed it up as a field for crops.

The prophecies of Jesus regarding complete destruction were fulfilled.

Pray For Peace Of Jerusalem

The above scenario being the case, there is no scriptural call to 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem' (Ps.122:6). This verse is universally quoted by preachers and believers alike. Let us look at the reason it is fixed in that Psalm.

This is its meaning: 'When the poet thus calls up the picture of his country's "city of peace" before his mind, the picture of the glory which it still ever possesses for him, and of the greater glory which it had formerly, he spreads out his hands over it from the distance of his abode. He blesses it in the kindling of his love, and calls upon all his fellow-countrymen round about and in all places' and 'For although he is distant he remains united in love to the holy city as being the goal of his longing, and to those who dwell there as being his brethren and friends. Jerusalem is and will remain the heart of all Israel as surely as *Jahve* who has His house there, is the God of all Israel' (Keil & Delitzsch). *Jahve* has departed from the temple.

This Psalm is one of the Psalms of Degree, 120-134, that would have been used on festival occasions, particularly for the feast of Tabernacles.

Here in Psalm 122, David reveals his love for the house of the Lord, the tabernacle he built and for Zion, the city of God. As there is no more a tabernacle of David (and never will be) as well as no more temple (and never will be) we find blessing by seeing it as a type of the church of Jesus Christ, of the heavenly city of Zion.

The writer to the Jews declared what it was: 'But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect' ESV (Heb.12:22,23).

To pray for the present earthly city of Jerusalem, that is not holy, is to go against the above verses of scripture. Believers in Christ are not bound to attend any Old Testament festivals. All believers, Jew and Gentile, are not to look for any earthly temple and city of Jerusalem, hill of Zion, as possessing any of our hopes. Our joys

are in the heavenly city to which we have come and whose citizens we are. We await and long for it as our heavenly and eternal abode.

This is the Jerusalem, the Zion we love and that is the object of our prayers, hopes and ministry. It is our house and temple of God indwelt by Him and the place of our delights.

The Inheritance

The New Testament is not about the earthly city of Jerusalem but about the heavenly city. Paul tells us in Gal.4:26: 'But the other woman (Sarah and not Hagar) corresponds to the Jerusalem above, she is free, and she is our mother'. He says in 3:29: 'And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise'. The promise given to Abraham has that spiritual fulfillment.

There was a natural fulfillment in the Old Testament to the promise. It was fulfilled totally. However, once fulfilled, it can never be implemented again in that way.

Instead, the promise carries over into the New Testament under new conditions. These demand that the heirs must come in through faith in Christ alone. There are no other heirs for any promise to Abraham under this new covenant. Instead, the promise to Abraham carries over to a new form. The promise is that of the Spirit and not because of added law to the faith embedded in it for those who could see. The fulfillment is completely spiritual and never to be natural again.

Believers in Christ, as children of Abraham, consist of Jews and Gentiles. All receive the promise to Abraham in the same manner. This is that we are all heirs together of the grace in Christ and the gospel. It is of spiritual concern. We have come into the kingdom of God that is 'not eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom.14:17). This kingdom has now begun. It began on the day of Pentecost. There will be no other kingdom. It is one not of this earth but of heaven. Its alternate designation is the kingdom of heaven. We are born from above.

The inheritance instead of being natural is spiritual. We follow the faith of our father Abraham and we look for a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Our city is the New Jerusalem. The old one was destroyed. Its reconstruction was never ordered by God. The present day Jews in Israel are not there because of Divine commands or supernatural intervention by God.

He is building a different one for believers in Christ, including believing Jews. They need not look for a restoration of their nation, city or land on this earth. There is not to be a restoration but an entirely new city, nation and land. The city is heavenly, the nation is holy in Christ and the land is that new earth that Peter says will be recreated.

When we read Matthew 24 and the other gospels and see what was foreordained for Jerusalem and the country and discover that indeed it did occur according to history, we need not wonder when the writer of Hebrews says: "Our God is a consuming fire". He is a God of love but also a God of holiness and justice.

Severe warning is a prominent feature, implied in this way: 'Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire' (Heb.12:29).

Consideration as to how God judged Israel for all her idolatries and sins and for her greatest sin of rejecting and crucifying their Messiah should fill us with godly fear. He who endures to the end shall be saved.

Signs Of Christ's Coming

We need to realize that Mt.24:1-34 concerns the nation of Israel, the temple and Jerusalem. Jesus indeed made this plain in v.34 when He said: 'Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place'. All those words were for that generation. He said this around A.D. 33. The fulfillment began during that specific generation. Similarly Mk.13:1-30 mainly prophesies for that generation, as also does Lk.21:1-33.

Thus we see there were signs given beforehand as to what would occur during that time and previously. Dan.9-12 is also very specific about such things when what he prophesied was fulfilled in detail during a few centuries B.C. until the beginning of the book of Acts and then up to the period A.D. 66-70.

However, for the coming of Christ, which is a different subject entirely, no signs have been given to let us know when this might occur. This probably comes as a shock to most. I was reared to believe in all those signs mentioned today around the churches. After years of prayer in the Spirit and study, I can see the Bible truth about signs.

Jesus Himself said in Acts 1:7: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority'. He was replying to the question the disciples asked Him about restoration of the kingdom. They were still looking for an earthly kingdom with the Messiah ruling upon a restored Israel.

After Pentecost, their minds were opened and their understanding was invigorated. They retained a certain amount of Judaism. Despite this, never again did they speculate on or make any reference to the restoration of a national Israel with the Messiah as King. We know this by reading their epistles. They were silenced in relation to times and they were given the correct revelation by the Holy Spirit who 'led them into all truth' as Jesus had promised.

They then knew God had a different programme from what they had misguidedly understood. Their opinions had to be revised. We know this by what Peter, James and John wrote and the absence of any reference to such a kingdom restoration

Jesus had earlier said in Mt.25:31 about His throne being one of glory and not of this earth: 'When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory', but obviously they had forgotten it. They had also forgotten that He had said: 'But of that day and hour no man knows, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only' (Mt.24:36). In another verse, He shows His own ignorance as the Son of Man concerning the time, in these words, 'neither the Son of Man knows'. They should not have expected to know.

Disclosure of the hope and future for all believers in Christ is made in these words: 'To them who look for Him, shall He (Christ) appear a second time without sin unto salvation'. This translation reads: 'So Christ, will appear a second time – sin having been done away with – to those who are waiting for him to obtain their salvation' Cass (Heb.9:26).

Wuest even follows the belief that Christ will come to the Jews, as Hebrews is primarily (only) written for Jewish Christians. He makes mere assumptions to bolster his case, as he was connected with Moody Bible Institute that followed Darby's and Schofield's teachings.

We cannot assume. All of our beliefs must be firmly entrenched in the scriptures. That all believers (not Jews) are to look for the Savior to appear is obvious by the following verse that bolsters such knowledge:

'We, however, are citizens of heaven. We look forward to the Lord Jesus Christ coming from heaven as our Savior' GW (Phil.3:20).

This comment indicates from the Old Testament, that the people 'wait' for our High Priest to come out of heaven's Holy of Holies and return:

'Our High Priest is gone up into the Holy of Holies not made with hands, there to atone for us; and as the Israelites stood outside the tabernacle, expecting Aaron's return (compare Luke 1:21), so must we look unto the heavens expecting Christ thence.' JFB

There is also this verse, one of many I might add:

'Christ is your life. When he appears, then you, too, will appear with him in glory' GW (Col.3:4).

The criterion for having Him come for us individually in the coming is 'to be looking for Him'. This continuous action is tied in with the result of our having our spirits, souls and bodies sanctified. It is Paul's desire and prayer with which he closes an epistle: 'May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thes.5:23).

Parables Say, 'Be Ready'

There is no mention of any signs indicating His coming. In fact, Jesus said in the three gospels that there would be no signs.

We present these portions. The first one is Mt.24:36-51. He speaks about His coming, and about even the Son not knowing the hour of His return. He shows the godlessness that will prevail in the world and possibly in the church. Then Jesus warns us all in v.42: 'Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming'. Then He mentions how the thief comes at night at an hour unknown (v.43).

Also He gives a parable about the master and slave left in charge of the household. This slave does wrong. Jesus said: 'The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know'. He emphasizes our lack of knowledge as to the timing of His return by His words as in this version: 'His master will return unexpectedly' GW (v.50).

We look at Mark 13:31-37 that also speaks of His coming. He says as recorded again in v.32: 'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come!'

Can these words be clearer? Not one of us will know the time and yet so many are trying to find out and many preachers make declarations about the return of the Lord. Jesus impresses upon us the uncertainty as to the date of His return.

To show the unexpectedness of His return, He gives a parable comparing it to a man who goes on a journey and who will return unexpectedly.

He admonishes us all in vvs.35-37: 'Therefore, keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to you all: Keep awake!'

His words to us all are: 'You do not know when so keep awake and be ready!'

Again we can find similar words in Lk.21:34-38. He forewarns: 'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man!'

Let us repeat Jesus' words: 'Therefore what I say unto you I say unto all, "Watch".'

We Do Not Know!

About those matters of the winding up of all things, there is little of certainty and understanding given to us in the scriptures. We are told often about these things but as for detail we are left in the dark. Our imaginations would fail if brought to bear upon even glimpses of our eternal future. We should not wonder at this because the Bible says four times: 'The just shall live by faith!'

We are to walk in the Spirit and in faith be looking for the coming of the Lord. As to the matters of earth, Paul says our citizenship is in heaven 'from whence we look for the Savior'. The focus of our attention is to be heavenly and in particular to be looking for Christ Jesus our Savior, to come.

CHAPTER 20

A Summing Up

Apparently no one has thought to visualize what earth would be like if Jesus returned to rule over it for a thousand years even after the supposed desolations of the seven years' tribulation. According to theories, all the judgments and wraths as pictured in the book of Revelation will have taken place. How many years would the infra-structure of many desolate nations take to rebuild?

Prevalent beliefs say that visitations of judgment will have wiped out literally at least one third of mankind, during the great tribulation. One third of the earth and one third of the sea will have been ruined, at least. Carnage, death, disasters, judgments, Satanic invasions and other atrocities, according to the theories, would make the earth an impossible place for Jesus to come and reign over its inhabitants. Can you imagine the Son of God as Monarch in such conditions of earth as would have thus transpired?

Orthodox Jews today do not consider that the recent return to Israel by a few millions of Jews is what the Bible has predicted. They say it has not been at the hand of God and not in the same way He led Israel out of Egypt, with His redemption and signs of His mighty power. How true!

God's Way Of Fulfillment

The only genuine fulfillment of the Old Testament promise is through the divine intervention that has already occurred by Jesus Christ, His Son, in whom God has already spoken.

'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds' KJV (Heb.1:1,2).

This comment by VWS is rather astounding when applied to the inventive future fulfillments we have all been taught. He states regarding 'In times past': 'Better, *of old*, the time of the Old Testament revelation. It indicates a revelation, not only given, but completed in the past'.

All that the Lord Jesus preached and taught is the will of God bequeathed to us. This includes everything that by the Spirit He inspired the writers to pen in the New Testament

The interpretation of the prophetic words as being an Israel at the end of time is not sustainable.

The gift of the Spirit, the proclamation of the gospel, the coming again of Jesus Christ to catch up His saints to be with Him forever in the eternal 'city of God' (the heavenly New Jerusalem) remains the only way for fulfillment of the revealed purposes of God.

On the occasion when the lame man at the Gate Beautiful was healed, Peter preached this: 'That He may send the Christ. Yet He must remain in heaven, until the time when all is restored anew'. All things would not be restored anew at the beginning of a millennium period.

'Then times will come when the Lord will refresh you. He will send you Jesus, whom he has appointed to be the Christ.

'Heaven must receive Jesus until the time when everything will be restored as God promised through his holy prophets long ago.

'Moses said, "The Lord your God will send you a prophet, an Israelite like me. Listen to everything he tells you.

'Those who won't listen to that prophet will be excluded from the people.'
(Solemn words)

'Samuel and all the prophets who followed him spoke about these days.

'You are the descendants of the prophets and the heirs of the promise that God made to our ancestors when he said to Abraham, "Through your descendant all people on earth will be blessed" GW (Acts 3:21-25)'.
'

Peter, probably unknowingly but by the Holy Ghost, indicates the future for Israel and all believers in Christ. First of all, there is to be that length of time when the presence of the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit will be with them. This is for the whole of the gospel age, named as 'these days'.

He lays bare the glorious future about the return of the Lord Jesus. Christ has come as Messiah and it is in Him that there lies all of the future accomplishments about which the prophets spoke. Beginning with Moses and in continuance by all the others, the prophecies were about this Messiah in whom would lie their total fulfillment.

Everything He is to tell natural Israel as descendants of Abraham and also the church is to be obeyed. This alone surely indicates that events of the end time have full disclosure in the New Testament.

Dire warning is given those Jews listening, that refusal to heed Christ in regard to the gospel, will eventuate in exclusion from His people.

As custodians of the prophets and natural heirs of Abraham, they had first right to receiving the gospel message and its benefits. This accords with Peter saying:

'God has brought his servant back to life and has sent him to you first. God did this to bless you by turning every one of you from your evil ways' (v.26).

To acknowledge the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ as Messiah is the only possible manner whereby Israelites could become citizens under a reigning King, their Messiah. In order for this they had to be converted from their wickedness. By and large, this they have failed to do and will continue doing so.

Peter concludes this, his second recorded sermon, by stating the promise to Abraham that was to include Gentile believers. However, at that time, he did not comprehend the grace of God that was to be extended to the Gentiles.

So it is with us. Many are the times we all fail to catch by the Spirit what the scriptures are actually expressing.

The revelations by Peter forbid any understanding other than that Jesus Christ Himself is the fulfillment of prophecies, in all of His past, present and future operations.

God's Old Testament promises to Israel including restoration are fulfilled in Jesus. He is shown to be Israel. National Israel was rejected by God and Jesus was rejected of men as well as briefly by God as our Substitute for sin.

National Israel was rejected by God as already shown. The old nation had its closure. Jesus, the new Israel, forms a new nation of believers, consisting of both Jew and Gentile, the true Israel of God (Gal.6:16).

Therefore, in the plan of God, there is no place for a national Israel to be resurrected by God and to be given a second chance of receiving the Messiah as many believe.

We Are Children Of Abraham

The Jews clung to physical descent from Abraham, although many of them must know it is not the truth. God has children to Abraham from Gentiles. He promised Abraham a worldwide family, one of faith. The promises were to eventuate through Israel.

Law held out for the people who were the agents of promise, the curse which followed their ways. It still existed in the events of the exile and by its continuance after that.

How could the promises to Abraham, now be realized through them? Promises of blessing to Abraham still held but the Law stopped those promises. God dealt with that problem. The curse was taken by Jesus in His death. He brought the gospel bringing in Jew and Gentile to enjoy the promised blessing.

The Spirit Is The Blessing Of Abraham For Us All

The death of Christ means that now the blessing of Abraham can come upon the Gentiles (Gal.3:14) and that they may receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. There Paul writes that 'we' the Jewish Christians, had been under the Law and, not the Gentiles. This is noteworthy, because the Jews were not looking for any spiritual fulfillment in their hopes for a coming Messiah.

Now Paul is revealing that both Jews and Gentiles are candidates for the blessing of Abraham that is spiritual. This indicates both peoples, who are believers in Christ, are thus regarded as his children. They are the inheritors of everything proclaimed by God when He made His covenant with Abraham.

The ultimate fulfillment is supernatural only and never natural. How can believers today retreat to the hope of an earthly Messiah on a throne in Jerusalem, officiating in an Old Testament institution in a rebuilt temple? Is it possible that all those believers world-wide who regularly pray in a supernatural language are content to consider a scene void of the supernatural?

There should be some regard to the fact that the whole of the Jewish institution itself has been abolished. How can these matters concern land and have any agreement with such earthly hopes? The understanding stands in that God set aside the written law, nailing it to the cross.

We discover that Paul includes Gentiles as sinners and inheritors. God promised Abraham a blessing intended for all the world. Law could not bring it. The death of Christ is the means through which the blessing can reach believers from the whole world of Jews and Gentiles.

Judaizers Influenced Galatians

Belief in a restored Israel, with a Messiah on an earthly throne, is a negation of everything the apostle Paul received in revelation from Christ. A rebuilt and redesigned temple as in Ezekiel's vision, with a Messiah ruling over an earthly people, would be *anathema* to him. Such acceptance of Jewish hopes is to be deplored.

The book of Galatians is an important issue. The question between Paul and his opponents in the book of Galatians is: 'To whom do the promises really belong? Who are the children of Abraham?' Paul uses Old Testament scriptures that contain the promises given in the covenant.

The Judaizers thought circumcision showed Jew and Gentile believers in Christ, as belonging to Abraham. Today, church membership and the physical act of water baptism thought necessary for salvation by some believers often replace this circumcision. This is just as wrong as circumcision would be today. Believers' circumcision was with Christ in His death on the cross. We participated in His baptism of death.

Many believers today amongst the Charismatics, Pentecostals and Evangelicals may not be following circumcision but they do retract from Paul's vision for the Galatians. His vision was that Jewish laws were not binding and indicated as being wrong, a pursuit such as the Judaizers ardently took. Judaizers sought an earthly institution and kingdom. They failed to comprehend the full inheritance there is for believers in the Spirit of God.

Having spiritual righteousness, we are to reject all laws and works and look only at the one promise and blessing. This is to look at Christ as our only Savior and not include any works of religion, even those acclaimed by our Jewish brethren. It is not by law but by grace through faith. Old Testament saints also were under the grace of God as they believed.

Faith Is Necessary

The covenant people are shown by their faith. This was the same with Abraham. The faith shown to be necessary in the Old Testament, including by Habakkuk, is

emphasized three times in the New Testament. There it is revealed to be faith in the gospel of Christ that brings salvation. Faith in a Messiah-King is not the requisite.

God's intended way was to be through faith. Law was on the basis of 'doing' what it says. It can never be the means of faith and thus bring life. Paul, who had been the most ardent of Judaizers, was given the revelation regarding law, faith and the Spirit.

He writes: 'But the righteousness that comes from faith says, Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (That is to bring Christ down)' ASV ((Rom.10:6). 'Bringing Christ down from heaven' means to bring about the incarnation. This has already taken place. The Messiah has appeared. It is therefore impossible to hasten His coming as some devout Jews have thought to do by perfect obedience to the Law and repentance for transgression. The gospel of grace is to be preached now. The gospel for the millennium is not one of grace but rather of law. Such would be a rebuttal of the grace of God for salvation. Even Jews and others in a millennium would need grace instead of law.

Circumcision Of The Heart

God now gives circumcision in the hearts of His people so that they love and obey Him. This is the case only in the New Testament. There is a difference from the usual Old Testament way of repentance, sacrifice and atonement under the Levitical system of sacrifices. That had failed. The nation of Israel ended in curse and judgment. How then could this reinstalled system of sacrifices provide that better experience of the heart? It could not. That leaves the exponents in rather a deep predicament!

Effect Of The Curse On The Land

Jesus died as King of the Jews at the hands of Romans. He died, hanging on a tree. This polluted the land. It is no longer holy. There is no place in this understanding for a millennium for the Jews in a 'holy' land. That land is forever polluted. We understand this from the following statements made by Moses:

'And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree,

'his body shall not remain all night on the tree; but burying you shall bury him the same day. For he that is hanged is a reproach to God. And you shall not defile your land which Jehovah your God is giving to you as an inheritance' LITV (Deut.21:22,23).

Peter informs us that Jesus' death was on a 'tree':

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you killed and hanged on a tree" MKJV (Acts 5:30).

Christ was made a curse for us, burdened with sin and guilt. In a way it became His own as if He were that sinner. Inwardly, He is innocent. In the eyes of God, He is guilty with our sin.

A cursed person was outside the covenant and he was expelled. God also would withdraw the covenant promising blessing. This He did eventually, in complete totality, for the whole of the nation of Israel. In the meantime, for any such cursed

people, under law they were put outside the promised land and out among the Gentiles (Deut.21:23). We quote what Moses indicated would occur:

‘Then *men* shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of Jehovah, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt.

‘For they went and served other gods, and worshiped them, gods whom they did not know, and who had not given to them any portion.

‘And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against this land, to bring on it all the curses that are written in this book.

‘And Jehovah rooted them out of their land in anger and wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as *it is* today’ MKJV (Deut.29:25-28).

Having God dwelling in the midst of His people dictates separation from the world of sinners and not being part of it.

Thus we understand Jesus was cursed by God and suffered ‘outside the gate’ (Heb.13:12,13). This means He was put outside of the covenant and outside of the people of God. God left Him, even as He cried on the cross: ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ This occurred because it was the case with all Israelites. God now has no covenant with them and never will.

Instead, He has the new covenant with all who are in Christ, the Surety, including the Jew first and then the Gentile. Christ was the Mediator of the new covenant by His own blood. This new covenant has no room for a Jewish millennium.

In Christ only is the fulfillment of the covenant with its promises. The death of Christ restored the possibility of position in relation to a covenant. Only faith in Him will bring in any Jew or Gentile under His new covenant. We, believing Jew and Gentile, are ‘built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God’.

What God Desired

God’s programme is that the new assembly of believers, not future non-Christian Judaism or national Israel, are the recipients of the blessings and promises formerly given to Israel. The first believers waited in the city of Jerusalem for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In Luke’s Gospel, the very last verse is set in Jerusalem. In this former holiest of cities, but now cursed, God inaugurated His new city from above, His new nation and His new covenant of grace, mercy and the Spirit.

His design is for the Messiah’s world rule to occur through restored Israel who is now the church. This would be in a spiritual kingdom presently in this world, and to be culminated in heaven. This will be throughout eternity in a new heavens and a new earth.

Two Mountain Ranges

Already discussed is that many consider the Old Testament prophets had a message for their own day, but that it was like looking at two mountain ranges. One is close at hand and the larger one is behind it in the distance, both to have similar natural and Jewish national fulfillments. They think that the distant mountains can be compared to the second fulfillment of prophecy, found in the same message. That is supposed to be for the very end time, beginning with the restoration of Israel

followed at some time by the rapture. The earthly scene holds a great tribulation of seven (or three and one half years) and then the millennium.

Rather, any second fulfillment is spiritual, if such idea is to be followed. They overlook the fact of a historical fulfillment that has generally occurred with the new covenant fulfillment in Christ and that which thus concerns the church of Jesus Christ. The prophets used language and environments they were used to, in order to give a picture and type of God's purposes for the future Israel of God, the church of the New Testament.

Many also make the mistake of thinking that every portion of prophecy has to be 'literal' rather than have a 'spiritual' fulfillment. Jesus Himself did not expect us to take many of His statements literally but spiritually, e.g. 'I am the true vine', 'I am the bread of life'. He is 'the bright and morning star', something far from being literal.

If we follow this premise of two mountain ranges, we are faced with tremendous difficulties. For instance, we must admit that only a minimum number of scriptures can be taken out of the numerous in the whole context and can relate to this end time. There also remains the major portion of the prophecies. Why do they not also have applications for the end time? It is obvious that they do not. This being the case, it cannot rightly be decided which verses apply to this period.

The followers of this view of prophecy and there are very many, have overlooked the whole push of Old Testament scriptures towards their fulfillment in Christ and His church. They have failed to see the eternal in the historical purposes of God.

The Natural First Then Spiritual

David's natural kingdom prefigured that of Christ's kingdom which is now spiritual. There was to be another David, Jesus Christ. This was not to be a literal earthly kingdom as was King David's in national Israel. It is borne out by the prophecy concerning the sending of Elijah the prophet before the terrible day (Mal.4:5). That he was not a literal Elijah but one who was to fill the prophetic role of Elijah, is told by Jesus when He said, concerning him;

'And his disciples questioned him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah is behoveth to come first?"'

'And Jesus answering said to them, "Elijah doth indeed come first, and shall restore all things,

"and I say to you--Elijah did already come, and they did not know him, but did with him whatever they would, so also the Son of Man is about to suffer by them".'

'Then understood the disciples that concerning John the Baptist he spake to them' YLT (Mt.17:10-13).

They, like many today, were looking for Elijah to come physically and literally. They did not understand Elijah was a type of the forerunner of Christ. In a similar manner, there is an overstated literal interpretation of many other prophecies.

The Bible Must Be The Base

From all the above scriptures and scriptural evidence it should be obvious to the reader that the usual Brethren, Baptist, Fundamentalist, Pentecostal and Charismatic beliefs about the end time are not founded on the word of God. It would appear that

the beliefs are based on traditions, denominational doctrines, assumptions, Jewish and heretical beliefs and strings of inappropriate scriptures tied together, many following only mathematical ideals. This makes their eschatology not biblical but mythical.

Because of this, many millions of God's saints are led astray into innocent deception that really is named 'doctrines of demons'. They entertain false ideas of eschatology. This influences the expectations and hopes to a fallacious and wrong degree. It is not the truth. The true church should adhere to truth alone.

Who Are The Jews?

Paul has informed us that true Jews are those who have faith in the Christ of the gospel and who worship in the Spirit. They do not boast in 'the flesh'.

Regarding those Jews considered descendants of Abraham, past history shows persecution of Jewish people down the centuries by Christendom and Orthodox churches. This persecution was evil but it should not be any reason for disregarding the scriptures.

It is a strange anomaly that for centuries church and society have persecuted a people who in the main are not Jews by birth. Many writers of history have shown that the majority of Jews throughout Europe and I daresay Asia, are in actuality Khazars by birth.

I remember reading many years ago in the Healing Magazine published by Pentecostal American Gordon Lindsay when he included his own article about the Jews who had returned to Palestine. He, although he believed in all the then current end time beliefs, said that they were not the natural descendants of Abraham. We have dealt with the origin of today's Jews and the failure of their conquest in the many Moslem attacks.

As further proof, we mention the Jewish Encyclopedia X of 1905 wherein a Jewish scholar, Jacobs, published cogent conclusions. He used scientific proof for his support of the fact that the modern Jews have no racial claims to be Biblical Israel. They are not the descendants of Abraham. He admitted to this fact, despite being himself a Jew and knowing full well the furor that might erupt. He had been president of The Jewish Historical Society of England and this was something they would not easily promote. Nevertheless, he wrote of his findings.

There was also another scholar, a medical doctor, Maurice Fishberg, who was a Craniometrist. His findings also were that the majority of Jews today are not Jews by descent, according to that particular science.

The Abrahamic Covenant always was to benefit his descendants Through Isaac. We have already seen that the eventual fulfillment of the covenant would be the Seed, or Offspring, who is Christ. Believers in Christ have the inheritance. As regards natural descendants, there apparently are virtually few in existence. Have genealogical records been kept that preceded at least the last millennium? Possibly there are none.

These considerations make the whole Jewish question invalid. The claims of a restored Israel back to its land and the whole array of hoped for Old Testament prophecies that are to be fulfilled naturally become totally inconsequential. It means

all the believing and preaching that has occurred for decades has been and still is, irrelevant.

Ignorance About The Prophets

We can only assume that there is great ignorance in the church regarding the Old Testament prophets. I myself have been guilty of this and for years realized I had to get to the historical happenings to be able, for instance, to understand Isaiah. I found myself beginning to remedy such ignorance. When we have been taught beliefs to which many scriptures do not attest, we must consider those beliefs can only be wrong.

Truth And Error From Recent Fathers Of The Church

Is it possible that study in areas of history was overlooked by the very able and learned churchmen who have led us all in the Pentecostal, Charismatic, Fundamental and Evangelistic ranks over the centuries?

One can only be amazed and horrified at the apparent ignorance shown by these very same churchmen over the centuries who have led us all who are in these bodies of believers. The majority of them are indeed scholars of repute. How is it that there has been such a profound neglect of study in the areas of history that should have been able to lead to the truth? I am not being unkind in this. In fact, it is obvious all did it in ignorance because of the preconceived ideas of eschatology. The fact that possibly very few obviously studied actual history has played its part.

This was the position of myself and families. We were deceived. When knowledge of deception arises, one should swallow one's pride and be humble enough to acknowledge the wrong ideas and teachings. I was reared, from a child, to the belief in the millennium and its normal eschatological happenings. It took me many years to even believe it could be wrong and still many more years of very serious investigation to find out the flaws in the above generally held doctrines. True doctrine has no flaw. All of scripture will testify to the truth.

Some believed the Lord would return in A.D. 1932 and the Pentecostal preachers said: 'There remains nothing to be fulfilled before His coming'. Then it was the 1940s, and so on, until now it is after A.D. 2000. Many believed they would not die before He came. Nevertheless, one by one, they passed through the valley of the shadow of death.

Language Of Certain Writers

Finally, Apocalyptic - or revelatory - language forms a major portion in the writings of end time events in the Old Testament, in Daniel 7-12, Zechariah 9-14 and in the book of Revelation in the New Testament. Knowing this gives us a right perspective about those books and a better understanding.

Being apocalyptic such are not easily interpreted. There are visions, angels, strange events, heavenly wars, an accounting of numbers, with much that are esoteric and symbolic. To me it seems that there are pictures being painted and that the intent is not understandable by viewing them in pieces. Often understanding arises due to a gaze at the picture as a whole.

Daniel's visions are the easiest to understand once we know the historical fulfillment. This requires delving into accounts in history about the persons and scenes foretold often hundreds of years previously.

Zechariah was obviously presenting prophecies regarding the days of the gospel and should be read accordingly, once we catch the first natural fulfillment regarding the rebuilding of the temple.

As for the book of Revelation, knowing it was penned after A.D. 60, once we are aware of the atrocities and destruction in the whole land of Israel, to its people and its cities, light begins to dawn.

Knowledge as to the history of the times from A.D. 66 to A.D. 73 particularly in relation to the temple and Jerusalem itself and that of the Roman Empire, we must surely agree that it was given as a prophecy. It climaxed with hope for an eternal future, despite the tragic human results it pictured.

We should read the Bible as it is and know that the Holy Ghost has not written something that always our brains have to work out from symbols and numbers before we can understand.

Two Temples Are Said To Be Rebuilt

In 2010, one preacher has said that the Jews will build a temple in Jerusalem on temple Mount where there is now a Moslem Mosque. This is not the actual site of the old temple of either Herod or of Solomon. Archaeology has proved that. Then, when Christ comes, He will build another temple further north. Forever, there will be the daily Jewish sacrifice of the lamb.

This is contrary to both the Old Testament teaching and particularly the New Testament one. Believers and pastors should understand enough of the gospel to realize that there could never be another sacrifice.

Jesus Christ through His own blood entered into the holy place in heaven. It is a 'once only' occurrence. It can never happen again that blood needs to be shed and by an animal. Its blood could never appease God nor take away sin. Even in the Old Testament era, such sacrifices were inadequate. The new covenant has obviated any possibility of animal sacrifices for ever. The shed blood of Christ suffices instead, according to the Scriptures. He will not be building a temple on earth.

How could any Pentecostal or any believer, myself included, follow such wrong ideas? They are Plymouth Brethren and British Colonial inventions originally, with embellishments over the years.

Darby Decrees Two Kingdoms

All should understand that Darby, the originator of all these doctrines that many hold to, believed that there would be Christian believers living forever in heaven, that being in the 'kingdom of heaven'.

Then he teaches that the Jews will live on earth forever in the 'kingdom of God'. This teaching is the basis of all the end time teaching prevalent in numerous churches. Should gospel believers follow such a falsity? Where would Christ be under those circumstances? Would He be with us in heaven or with the Jews on earth? Consideration should also be given to a plan for the believing Jews of the Old

Testament? Where would they be? Then again, where would the believing Jews of the New Testament be? We can all see it is totally ridiculous. Let us remove all these wrong ideas from our thinking and follow what Jesus Christ and the apostles taught.

Most church members are unaware that Darby's system of beliefs is a vicious attack on what should be the cherished gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We have all stumbled in our approach to understanding the true message of Christ and His word.

Christ Has Informed Us

Christ has told us that there are to be no signs of His return. In Matthew 25:31 He said His throne would be one of His glory. No kingdom on earth would encompass such glory. In 24:36 He said only His Father knows the day. In v.42 He warns us to '... Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming'.

In Mark 13:31-37 He instructs us to 'keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come ...'

Therefore the occurrences regarding Israel can never be used to try and estimate the coming of the Lord.

Most of us have misunderstood Acts 1:7 when Jesus replied to the disciples' question as to whether He was restoring the kingdom to Israel at that time. They had never heard Him declare He ever would give such a restoration to Israel. In fact, He had told them that His kingdom was not of this world.

The present threat against Israel by Iran and the other Arab nations of the Middle East, is looming as a possibility of successful end in the destruction of that country. From a political standpoint, one trusts it will not happen. However, were such to be the case, one can only begin to imagine the devastating effect it would have upon millions of thinking Christians whose hopes are firmly set on its continued restoration as a nation. The vista of a subsequent reign of Messiah for a millennium over the earth, would be greatly diminished if not lost in reasonable thought.

We should remember that the Old Testament is full of prophecies and records of 'times' that would occur or did happen throughout the whole history of the nation of Israel. The New Testament fails to provide any such mentions.

Wuest's translation of the reply of Jesus to the disciples' questions shows that Jesus failed to indicate He would restore the kingdom. Contrarily, He presented an alternative to their secular anticipations and knowledge of their nation's history, writing:

'It is not yours to know the chronological events of time which the Father placed within the sphere of His own private authority. But you shall receive power of the kind which God has and exerts after the Holy Spirit has come upon you.'

He invited their zeal to reside on spiritual and not secular concerns.

A new era was arriving. Instead of a history of time's events that showed importance in the Old Testament for the nation of Israel, there would be no such record. There was no importance to be attached to epochs, prophecies including time

and any knowledge given by prophets as had occurred under the old covenant. It would not be necessary. God still was Sovereign in relation to all of history.

They would be entering a new sphere in God's relationship and dealings with His people. Instead of a natural national Israel, that had no Savior as yet born to it and that never had the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, there would be a new kind of Israel, 'the Israel of God' (Gal. 6:16).

Relevancy to times and epochs would not be a requisite in the future, as Jesus had indicated at the beginning of His ministry: 'The time has been fulfilled with the present result that the present moment is epochal in its significance, and the kingdom of God has drawn near and is imminent. But be having a change of mind regarding your former life, and be putting your faith in the good news (gospel)' Wuest (Mk.1:14,15).

That was the introduction to the preaching by Jesus of the gospel. When the church actually began, Jesus has shown times were irrelevant.

The restoration of the kingdom to Israel so longingly looked for by the disciples even after the resurrection, was not even graced with a mention in the New Testament record. The kingdom of God and of Christ is a heavenly kingdom.

In the face of this, we have missed the whole point of Jesus' portrayal of the gospel and His kingdom if we cling to an earthly fulfillment.

A Wrong Slant Of The Old Testament

The times and epochs of the Old Testament, of Israel and of their prophets have ceased. For the future, all such events will remain hidden with the Father and not to be disclosed.

From the moment Jesus spoke as He did before His ascension until time shall be no more, He intends to build His church through the Spirit. The actual residence of this church would not be earthly but rather heavenly as its members are 'seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus'. Their interest is not to be in the historical events that in any case, are never to be foretold but rather in the culmination of all things with the coming of Jesus Christ and the setting up by the Father of His kingdom. This promises a new heavens and a new earth with a Spiritual and immortal people.

Such is indicated by: 'The body that is "planted" is a physical body. When it is raised, it will be a spiritual body. There is a physical body. So there is also a spiritual body' ERV (1 Cor.15:54).

The Seed Of Abraham

The interest switches from Abraham, his natural children and their inheritance in this world to the Seed of Abraham with His Spiritual children whom He is leading to glory. The proposed magnificence for His own is hidden in Him and not particularly disclosed in the scriptures or by present personal revelation. Rather, all knowledge and understanding regarding the present church and future inheritance is to be taught by the Holy Spirit. The source is to be the word that Jesus began to preach and that was continued in the Holy Ghost given revelation of the whole of the New Testament by those whom He ordained to use in this manner. Even so here on earth we can only see through a glass darkly.

The inheritance is neither on this earth nor a regained garden of Eden. It is heavenly in a new scene yet to be created, without an old Adam restored but with the second Adam and His co-inheritors, we who are joint heirs with Christ. Its mysteries are presently not to be disclosed.

We Should Not Speculate

Many speculate from the book of Revelation as to end times. There is no definite program of events laid out therein. Revelation does not state any references to the book of Daniel. In the Old Testament the prophetic books do contain references, one to the other, as in Daniel 9:2 the prophet referred to Jeremiah's writings. Rather, many have merely envisaged a connection with Daniel chapters 7 and 9-13. It is comfortable and easy for humans to have a love for mere myths. A look at chapter 11 as an example, and the exact historical fulfillments in detail of every prophesied event, reveals an amazing understanding that our God is the author of such, through Daniel.

The book of Daniel is in relation to the old nation of Israel. There is only one reference to the church of Jesus Christ. That is to be found in Daniel 9:24 and is possibly so as included in 'to anoint the Most Holy One' GW or 'to anoint the Most Holy' LITV/MKJV

On three occasions the vision includes the words to Daniel, 'for your people'. He wrote during the period of the nation, Israel's captivity in Babylon. The focus was always on that nation. He sorrowed over its plight and prayed. He was vouchsafed a glimpse into the heavenly intervention that would occur in the affairs of Israel. This included God's futuristic plans for those nations.

Chapter 11 ends with the death of Herod the Great who would order the slaughter of the infants at the time of the birth of Jesus. At the end of that period, chapter 12 begins and ends with another prophecy regarding the nation of Israel. Its proposed blessing of grace and then its foreordained plight had been described in ch.9:24-27.

Men with concentrated attention on having gaps in the histories prophesied throughout the book, have always been intent on having Rome included in the few prophecies of future events to occur in the histories of kings and of nations. To suit their ideas they must have a Roman Empire restored. Thus their interpretations of the visions in chapters 2, 7, 8, 9 and 11 wrongly include that belief. History, however, reveals that it was not Rome but the Seleucides. There would not be a future Anti-Christ at the end of the world. Instead there is in history a figure called Antiochus Epiphanes.

The glory and beauty of the book of Daniel lie in the veracity of the fulfillment in history of all those chapters. The history ends in A.D. 70. Salvation has come in the Person of the Messiah who died to bring cleansing for sin and the new covenant. The Jews themselves, as we know, rejected Him. He was cut off and punishment was swift to come. The history of that nation after the ascension of Christ to heaven is one of appalling wars, troubles, tribulations and atrocities. There was continual conflict with Rome.

Then the end was upon the nation. It began A.D. 66 and the time of the great tribulation occurred for three and a half years. A.D. 70 was the peak of all the tribulation such as had never occurred nor would ever occur again. The temple was destroyed. Jerusalem itself destroyed. The people were either dead or carried away captive. The priesthood was gone. Sacrifices as sin offerings no longer existed. There was no longer the institution of the Mosaic order. This was 'the time of the end'.

Surely believers in Christ should be warned when God would bring destruction upon His cherished nation that had become His abhorrence. Israel will never be restored as a nation. There is now the new nation of Israel, the people of God belonging to the new covenant. How can we then pray for the peace of Jerusalem? Its existence was finalised at the end of its time of great tribulation and wrath of God.

It is doubtless a Jewish myth to which we all have ascribed. This calls for a repentance on our part and a seeking after the truth as disclosed in the Bible. We should diligently seek and find that truth.

It is only the 'things that are not seen', the invisible rather than the visible that are eternal. The message Jesus has brought centers on the eternal and not the temporary.

Peter has informed us that even as in Old Testament days there were 'false prophets', so in our day there will be 'false teachers' (2 Pet.2:1&2). Sadly, the prevalence of such teachers (as most of us have been) is so common that it becomes a grief such blindness of heart could continue.

CHAPTER 21

A Spiritual People

New Creations

Everything concerning the promises of God to the children of Abraham, which now comprise us, the believers in Christ, is a new creation. As children of God, we are born of the Spirit. Jesus said it was to be a heavenly birth: 'No one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above' GW (Jn.3:3).

He uses the term, 'kingdom of God'. Here is an illogical strangeness in Darby's doctrine. According to his dogma, only the Jews from the millennium will belong to the kingdom of God with the church having a heavenly calling to the kingdom of heaven. As explained earlier in this book, both of God and of heaven are used by Jesus in relation to the one kingdom. Darby's tenets remain unjustifiable. How can all those Jews be born from above by being born of the Spirit, the same Spirit who has no connection with a millennium? Yet they are in the kingdom of God!

We are the new created Israel. The old has gone and the new has come. In view of this, it is impossible for us to continue to believe in a natural and restored Israel, the building of a temple in Jerusalem, an ordinary restoration of the Jews and in a millennium. Restoration has come to the new Israel, through Jesus Christ. All things have become new.

Jesus Christ clearly states that those natural Jews who call themselves Jews and who do not believe in Christ are the synagogue of Satan. Their synagogues were not houses of God but of Satan. Nothing has changed. They still remain the synagogues of Satan and therefore not God's chosen people (Rev.2:9). All of those Jews and Gentiles who believe in the Son are the elect, the chosen, the people of God, a chosen race and a holy nation, being the true Israel of God.

Glory Of Heaven Revealed

The apostle Peter initially resisted following a gospel inclusive of Gentiles. At one stage he was reprimanded by Paul for his maintaining Jewish customs (Gal.2:11). Despite his earlier and latent slowness of heart to accept a message that was not for Jews alone, he has written some astounding words in his epistles.

First of all, he addressed his first epistle to 'God's elect', i.e. both Jews and Gentiles who believed in Christ. Then he pens wonderful things. He wrote about the prophets of old who were given knowledge that certain salvation lay ahead for a predestined new people. This is how he described it: 'The prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care as they were inspired by the Spirit of Christ and wrote the words they received'.

Peter further writes: 'It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves (and this included their then present historical situation, or their future as Jews in the nation of Israel) but you'. The 'you' represents all believers, both Jew and Gentiles, who have believed in Christ and become 'the elect of God'. Formerly, national Israel was the 'elect of God'. Now there is another body of people termed 'the elect of God'. According to Peter, not one thing prophesied in the Old Testament to be fulfilled from the time of Christ concerned the natural nation of Israel.

Peter then revealed by the Spirit of Christ that these former prophets tried: 'To find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing, when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow' (1 Pet.1:10-12).

'The glories that would follow' signifies Christ as king forever and must be incorporated in any interpretation.

'... So that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed' (1 Pet.4:13).

His glory will be revealed in a heavenly scene and not an earthly one. It is not suited to any millennium scenario. The following verses reveal that God's glory is far above this creation, being eternal:

'The God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ' (2 Pet.5:10).

Jerusalem, the heavenly city, is described by John in a way that is inapplicable to the earthly one. He is able to view and write about its luster only because he is 'in the Spirit' with his experience transcending anything to be conveyed from a sight of Israel's Jerusalem. He writes:

'And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,

'Having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal' ESV (Rev.21:10&11).

It is this heavenly city wherein lies the glory of God and not in the earthly one. So Christ's glory and that of believers who will live forever are destined for heaven and its glory. This would deprive glory for any who are inhabitants of earth's scene.

Paul discloses heaven's glory as something surpassing the widest of all imaginative concepts, when he uses words like this: 'An eternal weight of glory' (2 Cor.4:17). The Greek signifies 'in excess and to excess'. There is a glory of heaven not attainable in this world. Its splendor and magnificence are unable to be couched in human words.

The saints can anticipate being given ‘a crown of glory’: ‘And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory’ ESV (1 Pet.5:4). . Victors are given a crown of ‘the glory’ (v.1).

Jesus received a crown of glory and honor, both being His prerogative. We are to participate in His heavenly glory. There is a preview obtained from the mount of transfiguration. Moses who had given the Law and Elijah, a prophet, appeared in glory on that mountain. Three disciples, Peter, James and John, were aware of the identity of the two men in the vision. It was made obvious to them that the two clothed with glory were conversing with the Lord Jesus (Mt.17:1-5).

Here again is proof that Jesus, the Messiah, had come in fulfillment of what the Law and the prophets had revealed about Him. The two Old Testament saints were living, intelligent and speaking, albeit ‘in glory’. Mankind in a millennium and afterwards on earth would be destitute of such a glory. It is heavenly and reserved for those who will abide in heaven forever.

Jesus told His disciples that He was going to His Father to prepare a place for them. Now on the eve of His crucifixion, He pleads His case for them to be in that heavenly abode to see His glory. So His prayer is:

‘Father, those whom Thou hast given me--I desire that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see the glory--my glory--my gift from Thee, which Thou hast given me because Thou didst love me before the creation of the world’ WNT (Jn.17:24).

These Jewish followers of His anticipated with assurance, that they were destined for the eternal glory of heaven.

The elect are tied in with ‘the grace’ of the gospel that excludes the nation of Israel as a political force. An earthly millennium rule is not in the plan. All is concerning the heavenly Jerusalem and her chosen people. Verification is to be discovered in the following verses:

‘Foreknown, indeed, before the foundation of the world, and manifested in the last times because of you, who through him do believe in God, who did raise out of the dead, and glory to him did give’ YLT (1 Pet.1:20&21). This glory was that which He had before the foundation of the world. It exceeds anything that is in this creation. God’s intent is for His glory to be the centre of His people’s eternal habitation because He Himself will dwell with them in that heavenly city. To this end He has declared:

‘For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.

I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people ...’ ESV (Isa.65:17-19).

None of the above verses is indicative of earth’s scene. Saints of Christ, enveloped in glory forever would know enjoyment never to be the portion of Jews living on earth forever.

Peter has stated definitely that the prophecies of the Old Testament, of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the minor prophets, in a spiritual sense, were not written solely to be fulfilled at any time by a national Israel. The prophets knew the

fulfillment in its entirety was not for the nation of Israel. The Spirit revealed to those prophets that they were writing for a future time. That time, as Peter said was for the church of Jesus Christ. It was for his day and for the age of the entire church - until the return of the Lord and the judgment of the wicked.

Abraham, David, Christ

Matthew began his Gospel with a genealogy of Jesus Christ. This is his beginning: 'A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham'.

The connection is made between the birth of Jesus and the covenant God made with Abraham, as well as that later on given to David, Abraham's descendant.

It means that the fulfillment of those two covenants was in Jesus Christ. All believers would accept this. However, the mistake is often made of forgetting that believers, the inheritors of those promises must have all aspects of both Abraham's and David's promises confirmed for them. We should not take just some parts and relate them to present-day believers and leave the rest to be for Jews in a millennium.

God covenanted with Abraham that he would have a son through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed, that he would inherit the land and would become the father of many nations and peoples. David was promised a house and a descendant who will be over the house God will build. There would be one house only, not two.

If the two covenants are fulfilled completely through the coming of the Son, the Seed, it must be to Jew and Gentile who believe and are 'in Christ'. One of the promises of these covenants shown above is that 'all the nations of the earth will be blessed'.

Therefore, if a thousand year reign on earth by the Greater David, Jesus Christ, is to eventuate, all the participants in the blessings of the covenants must enjoy every aspect of them. If the Jews are to be given the land of Israel for a thousand years, so must all the believing Gentiles who are also included as inheritors of the covenants be given the land of Israel for a thousand years. Jews and Israel are interchangeable in meaning.

The belief in the millennial reign of Christ in a period for the Jews is thus negated. There is no such scriptural belief.

Natural Carries Over To The Spiritual

The natural earth becomes the renewed earth. The Jews as the people of God are now enlarged as Jews and Gentiles, who inherit all the promises. The kingdom of David becomes the spiritual kingdom of David's Greater Son, who is born the son of David, son of Abraham. In view of these verses alone, it is evident that the purposes of God do not include a restored national Israel, or a supposed millennium where the Jews will have pre-eminence as a nation.

The purposes of God are a new people of God. God's elect, both Jew and Gentile, consisting of those who have received and believed the gospel of Jesus Christ, are now his chosen nation. They are thus in the kingdom of God, whose King is Jesus Christ, son of David and son of Abraham.

Abraham's Blessing Is The Gift Of The Spirit

We are promised the blessing of Abraham that is the gift of the Spirit. We 'receive the Spirit by faith'. It refers to the experience of the Spirit in that Paul presented in Gal.3:2-5. This was the baptism with the Holy Ghost that can only be received as we speak in other tongues that are supernatural languages. Such is simply drinking from Christ, receiving results in the baptism whereby we use supernatural languages. It is the blessing of Abraham that is also for the Gentiles and is seen to be based on faith alone. The evidence of faith is the gift of the Spirit who is the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham.

On being born again, we are not given the gift of the Spirit, who does indeed operate in the salvation process. The gift is the seal showing we have already been made partakers of Christ, who brings us salvation. The message of Christ crucified had been given us. Then we received the gift of righteousness in Christ. At that time we did not receive the gift of the Spirit. It was afterwards that this occurred if we believed for it.

Faith in the promise results in our being endued with the power of the Holy Ghost that comes to us personally exactly as occurred on the day of Pentecost with the one hundred and twenty disciples. They spoke in other tongues, or in supernatural languages, on that occasion and often afterwards.

Here again, is a peculiarity concerning the teaching of the millennium. The blessing of Abraham is the gift of the Spirit. They say the land promised to him is to be inherited by Israel forever. There would be that nation, thus, living in the land promised to Abraham apparently forever and ever but where would be the blessing of Abraham be? It would be non-existent!

Christ Became A Curse For Us

The purpose of Christ becoming a curse is in order that in Him the blessing of Abraham might be also for Gentiles and that we by faith in Christ Jesus might receive the promise made to Abraham, which is fulfilled. However, it includes all of the Spirit's presence in all His blessings. Both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, are accepted by God because Christ was made the curse for our sin.

The death of Jesus, on a Roman cross, was a symbol of the curse of sin whereby we were in such a dire state. Believers have been freed from the curse. This being the case, there can be no more place for a national Israel still under the curse, needing deliverance and restoration but refusing the gospel of the atonement. Hopes for a restored nation with a Messianic earthly rule, will never mean the lifting of the curse for them. The curse is only able to be removed through individual faith in the Christ who was cursed on the cross. Such belief is not part of the program thought by many to lie ahead for Jewry. The fact that national and individual curse can only be removed through belief in a crucified and risen Savior, is ignored.

Hebrews Discloses A New Covenant

The new covenant is set out in Hebrews, for a new Israel which is the saved remnant and the saved Gentiles brought in to be formed into one body. This fulfilled

the promises given to Abraham in God's covenant with him. The doctrine regarding Israel, of Messiah on a throne and a temple in Jerusalem, neglects the institution of a new covenant that has been installed forever. There is no provision for any part of this covenant to be employed during a millennial rule. This is another important reason showing that the doctrines followed regarding the end time do not have the support of the scriptures.

The Church Is Zion

There needs to be an awareness as to the real church's position as Zion and the 'true Israel of God'. We are not to glory in any supposed restoration of Israel as a nation. This would mean not giving credence to any exaltation of Jesus as Messiah that strips Him of His atoning work on the cross and resurrection; a Messiah to reign over a secular and natural world from a temple in the city that 'is in slavery with her children' (Gal. 4:25).

End-time beliefs foresee a temple built by hands in Jerusalem with sacrifices of animals. This would be a desecration of the blood of Christ and a rebuttal of all of the virtues and blessings of His death and resurrection.

To go back to the temple scenes envisaged would receive the condemnation of this: 'How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by those who have spurned the Son of God, profaned the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?' (Heb. 10:29).

As believers, we should be obeying Colossians 3:1-4. This is Cassirer's translation that shows in a clearer fashion, the pith of the matter: 'If then, you have been raised up together with Christ, you must lift up your thoughts above, where Christ is seated at God's right hand. Set your minds on things belonging to the higher realm, not on things upon earth (as sadly, so many do). For you have undergone death, and the life which you have is hidden away with Christ in God. And when Christ shall be manifested – he who is our life – then you, too, shall be made manifest, and all in a blaze of glory'.

To Expose Errors

Hopefully this book of 'dynamite' will expose the errors millions of us have followed, smashing them all into atoms that will reconstruct as the eternal truths of the word of Christ and also of the Old Testament.

Of necessity its writing involved the use of numerous verses of scripture and the identification of many reasons as to the errors of the doctrines so widely promulgated. Repetition was deemed desirable in some areas.

The doctrines are set in concrete in the minds of millions and it would only take the word of God coming with a blast that could fragmentize such firm beliefs. It is only by the word through the Holy Spirit that the truth will be allowed entrance as a replacement. There is hope in the thought that God said His word would not return unto Him void.

It is not by the might of the overwhelming numbers of the church nor of intellect, but by the Spirit of God. There does seem to have been a lack of necessary

use of intellect in all things scriptural, when it comes to this subject. Those who desire to know the truth shall be shown it, according to what Jesus said.

It is advantageous to pray much in other tongues, that supernatural language tasting of heaven and to diligently search the word of God.

Let us exalt Jesus Christ and not national Israel. The glory in Colossians quoted above, is our destiny. How could such glory ever be suited to people and things of this earth? It is only suited for heaven, where the glory of God Himself resides. Herein is our magnificent and awesome destiny.

Long Held Beliefs Of The Church From The Beginning

Because of its importance, we quote the following part of a commentary on Revelation 21, by Henry that aptly describes the long-held faith of Christian believers of all ages, beginning with the days of the apostles:

I. A new world now opens to our view: I saw a new heaven and a new earth; that is, a new universe; for we suppose the world to be made up of heaven and earth. By the new earth we may understand a new state for the bodies of men, as well as a heaven for their souls. This world is not now newly created, but newly opened, and filled with all those who were the heirs of it. The new heaven and the new earth will not then be distinct; the very earth of the saints, their glorified bodies, will now be spiritual and heavenly, and suited to those pure and bright mansions. To make way for the commencement of this new world, the old world, with all its troubles and commotions, passed away.

II. In this new world the apostle saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, not locally, but as to its original: this new Jerusalem is the church of God in its new and perfect state, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, beautified with all perfection of wisdom and holiness, meet for the full fruition of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.

III. The blessed presence of God with his people is here proclaimed and admired: I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men.

‘Observe: 1. The presence of God with his church is the glory of the church. 2. It is matter of wonder that a holy God should ever dwell with any of the children of men. 3. The presence of God with his people in heaven will not be interrupted as it is on earth, but he will dwell with them continually. 4. The covenant, interest, and relation, that there perfected in heaven. They shall be his people; their souls shall be assimilated to him, filled with all the love, honor, and delight in God which their relation to him requires, and this will constitute their perfect holiness; and he will be their God: God himself will be their God; his immediate presence with them, his love fully manifested to them, and his glory put upon them, will be their perfect happiness.

IV. This new and blessed state will be free from all trouble and sorrow; for, 1. All the effects of former trouble shall be done away. 2. All the causes of future sorrow shall be for ever removed.

‘V. The subject-matter of this vision is so great that they have need of the fullest assurances of it; and God therefore from heaven repeats the truth thereof. Besides, many ages must pass between the time when this vision was given forth and the accomplishment of it, and many great trials must intervene.

‘Observe, 1. The certainty of the promise: These words are faithful and true; and it follows, It is done, is as sure as if it were done already. If he has said that he makes all things new, it is done. 2. He gives us his titles of honor as a pledge the full performance, even those titles of Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. As it was his glory that he gave the rise and beginning to the world and to his church, it will be his glory to finish the work begin, and not to leave it imperfect. As his power and will were the first cause of all things, his pleasure and glory are the last end. 3. The desires of his people towards this blessed state furnish another evidence of the truth and certainty of it. They thirst after a state of sinless perfection and the uninterrupted enjoyment of God, who has put in them these longing desires. Therefore they may be assured that, when they have overcome their present difficulties, he will give them of the fountain of the water of life freely.

‘VI. The greatness of this future felicity is declared and illustrated, 1. It is the free gift of God. 2. The fullness of it. they inherit all things enjoying God. He is all in all. 3. By right of inheritance, as the sons of God. 4. By the vastly different state of the wicked. Their misery helps to illustrate the glory and blessedness of the saints, and the distinguishing goodness of God towards them. The fearful lead the van in this black list. They dare not encounter the difficulties of religion, and their slavish fear proceeded from their unbelief, those who do not take up the cross of Christ.’

Where is the cross of Christ in a millennium in this world and on this earth?

It is not particularly important, according to Darby and all followers.

We Are To Anticipate Heavenly Glory

The Gospels, the Epistles and the last book of the Bible all declare the glories of another world. It is a heaven that is being prepared for those ‘who look for His appearing’. Our calling concerns nothing of the scenes of this present terrestrial earth and world. Eternity that is in a heaven, is described by Peter in these words: ‘The God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ ...’ (1 Pet.5:11).

Glory relates to a heavenly and spiritual future, rather than one where saints are judging nations and ruling over other people. In heaven, because Christ will be ‘all in all’, no human being will have the capacity or authority to judge others. An earthly scene as envisaged by many is impossible.

I wonder why such a numerous number of believers are neglecting their future as being in the manner dictated by the New Testament rather than that falsely seen by looking at prophecies from the Old Testament?

One dare not make a judgment of any person. All are required to examine the scriptures and prove beliefs said to be used thereof, right or wrong. This we have by the grace of God attempted to do. We are free to pass judgments about the various doctrines and theological arguments. All believers must adhere strictly to the whole word of God as given in both Old and New Testaments.

The proponents of present end time doctrines do not have the backing up of the Gospels or the Epistles. They do use Revelation and Matthew 24, but wrongly. Their premises are based only on calculations regarding the Old Testament prophecies of Daniel, erroneously made. However, this book has the support of scores, maybe hundreds, of verses and passages of scripture. Which doctrine is the correct one? May the word of God itself reveal this.

John saw 'the holy city, the new Jerusalem'. The only holy city revealed for now and the future in the Bible, is that Spiritual one as shown by these words: '... Hagar ... corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the other woman (Sarah) corresponds to the Jerusalem above' (Gal.4:25,26).

The earthly Jerusalem is and always will be 'not holy'. The only 'holy Jerusalem' is that based in heaven now. It is that one full of Paul's gospel believers that John saw. He did not see any earthly Jerusalem ruled over by a Messiah.

It is the Spiritual one disclosed in this verse: 'But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ...' (Heb.12:22). It has no relationship to the present earthly Jerusalem that some vainly believe will have a restored Old Testament worship on this kind of present renewed but not recreated earth, forever.

According to these verses and also the following declaration by Jesus as to the evidence of His being Messiah, there will never be on this earth, a rebuilt temple, Jerusalem, sacrificial system with its priesthood and the reign of a Messiah. The only sign given has already happened when Jesus was born to die on the cross.

The identification of the Messiah and King of Israel is in His words. He indicated it as quoted below, when the Jews questioned His assumption of Messianic authority over temple worship.

This is the account: 'Some Jews said to Jesus, "Show us a miracle as a sign from God. Prove that you have the right to do these things."

Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple and I will build it again in three days." "They answered, "People worked 46 years to build this temple! Do you really believe you can build it again in three days?"

'But the temple Jesus meant was His body.

'After he was raised from death, his followers remembered that he had said this. So they believed the scriptures, and they believed the words Jesus said.

'Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover festival. Many people believed in him because they saw the miraculous signs he did.

'But Jesus did not trust them, because he knew how all people think.

'He did not need anyone to tell him what a person was like. He already knew' ERV (Jn.1:18-25).

The Jews of that day were anticipating their Messiah to appear. Their hopes as to the purpose were misplaced as they waited for one who would rid them of their enemies and establish them as the first of all nations, the head.

This is also applicable to the Jews and sadly, Christians of this time, who demand a Messianic reign on earth for a thousand years.

When He did come, they rejected and crucified Him. Where in the Old Testament is it definitely stated that after He came that time in that generation, that He will come to the nation again?

The truth of the matter is that the prophecies relating to His coming as Messiah were to coincide with His crucifixion, death and resurrection. He was required to die once for our sins.

The great Creator was of necessity to become Messiah and Man so that He could be on this earth as well as the glorified King and Son of Man on His heavenly Father's throne.

The two positions for this Messiah were never intended to be concurrent. Rather, the latter could only unfold on completion of the Savior's obedience to the Father's will.

Our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, is a heavenly King.

Our Hope

'*Maranatha*', 'the Lord is coming' is our glorious hope. We await His appearing. We 'look for Him' and He will appear 'the second time unto salvation'. It is not for us to know the time, the year, the day, nor the hour.

The final message of Jesus to His people is: 'Surely I am coming soon'. He was not referring to any descent to remain on this earth. He is the great Alpha and Omega, the Almighty.

He is the Bridegroom who is to come for His Bride and not for any unsaved person or to deliver any wicked or even any unholy nation.

This is to be the believer's hope and joy.

The Parable Of The Ten Virgins

Jesus related the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. He Himself is the Bridegroom of the church who is His bride as disclosed in the end of the book of Revelation.

The ten virgins all had lamps. This indicates that they at some time had lights from the wicks that fed on oil. Oil in the scriptures is typical of the Holy Spirit, even as Zechariah portrayed (ch.4).

The full number consisted of believers with Jesus Christ within as the Light of the world. Half the number 'took no oil' as Jesus said. This could mean they always had been without the oil of the Spirit or that once having had that oil, they no longer desired it. The oil of the Spirit can only mean a full supply.

All believers have the Holy Spirit but only those baptized and continually filled with the Spirit according to the book of Acts can be said to have a full supply. Many would discount this belief. However, what if it is the correct view?

In any case the salient feature is that when the Bridegroom arrives, half go into the wedding and the remaining ones are shut out.

Jesus concludes the parable with a dire warning. When the five who had gone to find oil arrived and cried, 'Lord, lord, open to us' the reply of the Bridegroom was, 'Truly, I tell you, I do not know you' (vvs.12,13). Then He says to all: "Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (v.13).

We cannot conclude that this parable is irrelevant for our day. We must consider the possibility that not all of the church will be taken up when He comes the second time, due to some having fallen from grace.

The New Testament doctrine does not envisage our looking for or at 'a national Israel' but to be looking for the coming of the Lord. For this event, our cry is to be a continual '*Maranatha*'.

Our gaze is to remain heavenwards.

To Be A Heavenly Not Earthly Minded Church

It is becoming obvious that the world-wide church has become earthly minded instead of heavenly. This is made apparent by the content of preaching, the worldly and carnal so-called worship scenes and the prolific number of modern books and DVDs filling the Christian book-stores.

A close perusal of the last two chapters of the book of Revelation, the end of our Bible and part of the prophecy that cannot be altered, reveals a heavenly rather than earthly scene.

It does not disclose a Jesus come to save the earth, to rule earthly people or to have any kind of kingdom that reflects carnal ideals.

Firstly, there is to be a new heaven and a new earth, created because the first one has 'melted with fervent heat'.

Secondly, God is going to make a new heavens and a new earth. This cannot be while mankind is still living in Israel as said on television by a famous 'Israel' orientated preacher. It can only be at the end of all things, viz. the end of the world, which definitely will occur. This is as God declares in the Old and repeated in Revelation 21:5: 'For see, I am making a new heaven and a new earth: and the past things will be gone completely out of mind' BBE (Isa.65:17).

An examination of 2 Peter 3:4-14 would seem to reveal that at the end, God acts simultaneously. Look at: 'But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements, burning with heat, shall be dissolved, both the earth and the works that are in it shall be burned up' EMTV (v.10). Time is in the Father's hands and knowledge only.

There is mention seemingly at the one time, of 'His coming' (one coming), 'the day of judgment', 'the day of the Lord', 'will come like a thief', 'heavens pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire', 'all to be dissolved', 'the coming of the day of the Lord' and of 'a new heavens and a new earth'.

Thirdly, it is not known whether the sea would not have evaporated into a Genesis 1 order of the waters according to the first creation as believed by many from:

'And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so' (vvs. 6&7).

Peter's Warning

We should take note of this that remains part of the one and only gospel:

‘And saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers died, all things continue as from the beginning of creation."

‘For this they willingly forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth, consisting out of water and through water, by which the world at that time perished, being flooded by water; but the present heavens and earth, having been stored up by His word, are being reserved for fire until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

‘But in this let it not escape your notice, beloved, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

‘The Lord does not delay concerning His promise, as some reckon slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

‘But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a rushing noise, and the elements, burning with heat, shall be dissolved, both the earth and the works that are in it shall be burned up.

‘Therefore, seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what sort of people 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, being set of fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements, burning with heat, shall melt?

‘But according to His promise, we 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 or blemish; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them about these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the scriptures.

‘You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on guard, lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being carried away by the error of the wicked. EMTV (2 Peter 3:4-17)’.

V.12 of this portion reads as follows in the ASV and other translations: ‘Looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?’

These verses are rather startling. Peter is not asking us to be looking for a blessed time, one of an ingathering of harvest or of many souls (which of course will occur) or for us to anticipate ruling on this earth with Christ. Rather, he is exhorting us to earnestly desire the time when the elements of this world will melt away. His vision from the Lord is one of a new heavens and a new earth. We should obey his words.

This revelation obligates us to follow and disregard as for today the following verse that is often used as being during a millennium:

‘When the good news about the kingdom has been preached all over the world and told to all nations, the end will come’ CEV (Mt.24:14). See also Mark 13:1-17.

This verse in reality applies to the destruction of Jerusalem and not the end of our present world. The world of that day consisted of the Roman Empire and the nations scattered around it. To use this verse in accordance with the end time prophetic views is not correct. The gospel was preached all over that world of the Roman Empire. Then the age of the Jewish economy came to an end in A.D. 70. (People's New Testament and others).

Herod gave command for 'the whole world', meaning the Roman Empire as follows: 'And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed' KJV (Lk.2:1).

However, Jesus did command His church to go into all the world and preach the gospel. We take this as an application for our times and thus obey those words today also.

Here is what Barnes says, correctly I believe: 'For a witness unto all nations'- 'This preaching the gospel indiscriminately to "all" the Gentiles shall be a proof to them, or a witness, that the division between the Jews and Gentiles was about to be broken down. Hitherto the blessings of revelation had been confined to the Jews. They were the special people of God. His messages had been sent to them only. When, therefore, God sent the gospel to all other people, it was proof, or 'a witness unto them', that the special Jewish economy was at an end.

'The Ethiopic version of the Bible and others confirm this. 'Then shall the end come' – The end of the Jewish economy; the destruction of the temple and city'.

In view of Jesus' prophetic words having been fulfilled in every detail, all believers should be encouraged if the truths of the word of the Lord, being proclaimed. At the same time, on consideration of that and Peter's we should grow stronger in faith.

Hatred of Israel Is Abhorrent

The cries of hatred against Israel are appalling. The screams of 'Kill the Jews' and 'Israel must go from the face of the earth' are horrendous. We trust there will be safety for the present Israel from their enemies. Our regard is towards them. We should realize also that whatever occurs for or against that small nation, will affect the West and the whole world.

At the same time, one marvels at this. Many Jews and Rabbis welcome the attention, the visits and the finance from Christians and yet they do not welcome our Christ. It is granted that Christendom with its church as well as the Crusaders, have inflicted atrocities on Jewry for centuries – sadly and despicably. Our message for Israel must be: 'Your Christ came into the world over two thousand years ago and is offering personal salvation for many today'.

Who Are The People of God? Is There One Or Are There Two?

Paul left all believers and the Jews these messages:

'It cannot be said that God broke his promise. After all, not all of the people of Israel are the true people of God.

'In fact, when God made the promise to Abraham, he meant only Abraham's descendants by his son Isaac. God was talking only about Isaac when he promised' CEV (Rom.9:6,7).

‘For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman.

‘But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise’ (Gal.4:23,24).

‘Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise’ (Gal.4:28).

It is obvious that believers in Christ are like Isaac and it is they who are ‘children of promise’ and not national Israel or its Jews. They are born of the flesh and do not inherit God’s promise to Abraham. The promise is not fulfilled naturally but by the Spirit, i.e. it is in the spiritual manner only.

‘And if you try to please God by obeying the Law, you have cut yourself off from Christ and his wonderful kindness’ CEV (Gal.5:4).

‘Anyone who tries to please God by obeying the Law is under a curse. The scriptures say, "Everyone who doesn't obey everything in the Law is under a curse" CEV (Gal.3:10)’

One Rabbi has remarked that we Christians base our faith in for one thing, the Ten Commandments that came under the Law of Moses. He and believers need to acknowledge the truth of what Paul penned. Paul showed the pain in his heart for his fellow countrymen in these words:

‘My little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you’ ESV (Gal.4:19).

He was addressing Judaizing Jewish and Gentile believers. That should be our concern also. ‘The following conveys the heart and emotions of Paul for Jews:

‘That I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself to be accursed from Christ on behalf of my brothers, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, of whom are the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the law-giving, and the worship, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom Christ came, according to the flesh, He who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen’ EMTV (Rom.9:2-5).

We Are To Focus On Christ And His Gospel Not On Israel

Jesus Christ is to be honored as God over all and the Christ who has already come. He is our Israel (Isa.49:3-6).

These words are also worthy of our full attention:

‘So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

‘But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

‘For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

‘There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

‘And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise’ ESV (Gal.3:24-29).

'The Lord's Doing'

IT IS MARVELLOUS IN OUR EYES

During the middle of May, 2011, I became somewhat shaky in relation to the writing on *'dunamis'* and that of the book, 'Israel, The Jews And The millennium'. This was due to the fact the millions of Charismatics and Pentecostals, judging by what I know, do not yet understand the implications of *'dunamis'* in Acts 1:8. Rather, they consider it refers to 'signs and wonders'. Then again, hundreds of millions of believers have their eyes set on Israel, on the Jews and are looking to participate in the millennium.

Then the Lord was gracious to me and also to Peter. My husband is not a dreamer and has never before had a dream from the Holy Ghost. The other night such happened.

He dreamt in a most real fashion, that He was looking at Jesus who was kneeling in prayer among the clouds, of glory. It was a beautiful scene like a sunrise, with the cloud materializing into the figure of the kneeling Jesus praying. He appeared to be rising as the trumpets appeared in the vision. Then he saw the Lord blow on the group of three-in-one trumpet that seemed to have three long horns like a herald's, to it. He was able to make a drawing of it for me.

I thought on this dream. I myself am also not prone to receiving Spiritual dreams, having experienced maybe just a few in a lifetime, with some visions and prophecies. Thinking upon the dream, it was strongly apparent to me that the Lord was praying for me – and Peter. After all, He is our Intercessor in heaven but I had never before seen this in such a strikingly vital and personal manner. I realized that the prayers and indeed the blowing of the trumpet concerned three of my books – 'Truth, Grace And Power', 'The Holy Spirit Came' and 'Israel, The Jews And The millennium'.

The Lord was revealing that He Himself was in these books, being in prayer regarding them and also that He Himself was blowing the trumpet of the three I had penned. He is the Author inasmuch as they are firmly entrenched in His word. The scriptures are the main source and the books are entrenched in those very numerous portions of the word of God. He is the Author, by His Spirit, of such truths. It seems that He has used me to convey His word of truth, despite human inadequacies and surely my fallibility.

So now I am emboldened and encouraged as I in full assurance of faith, send out these books to whoever will read and heed – by the grace of God and the operation of the Holy Ghost. It is the Lord!