

ESCHATON

A STUDY OF THE ESCHATON

BY WAYNE CLARK

Eschaton – Table of Contents

THE ESCHATON – A PROLOGUE.....	4
THE ESCHATON – A BIBLICAL SURVEY OF THE END TIMES	6
THE PROMISE OF A MESSIAH.....	6
THE PROMISE OF A MESSIAH.....	7
THE PROMISE OF A MESSIAH AS SEEN PRIOR TO THE PROPHETS	7
ADAM AND EVE	7
NOAH.....	8
ABRAHAM, ISAAC & JACOB	8
JOSEPH.....	8
JUDAH.....	8
MOSES	9
DAVID AND THE “SON OF DAVID”.....	9
THE PROMISE OF A MESSIAH AS SEEN IN THE PROPHETS.....	11
ISAIAH.....	11
ZECHARIAH.....	13
MICAH	13
DANIEL	14
MALACHI.....	14
DAVID (AGAIN)	15
THE PROMISE OF A PREEMINENT ISRAEL	19
THE PROMISE OF ISRAEL’S PREEMINENCE AS GIVEN TO THE PATRIARCHS	19
ABRAHAM.....	19
REBEKAH.....	20
ISAAC.....	20
THE ISRAELITE PEOPLE.....	20
THE PROMISE OF ISRAEL’S PREEMINENCE AS GIVEN TO THE PROPHETS	20
DAVID (AGAIN)	20
ISAIAH.....	20
EZEKIEL	21
MICAH	21
ZEPHANIAH	22
HAGGAI	22
ZECHARIAH.....	22
MALACHI.....	22
THE PROMISE OF THE RE-GATHERING OF ALL ISRAEL	23

THE FIRST COMING OF THE MESSIAH.....	26
THE DESPOILING OF SHEOL AND THE OPENING OF HEAVEN	29
SOUL SLEEP	31
THE SECOND COMING OF THE MESSIAH - THE TRIBULATION AND THE ANTICHRIST	36
THE SECOND COMING - THE TIMING AND THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE.....	40
THE SECOND COMING OF THE MESSIAH - RAPTURE AND RESURRECTION	43
THE DAY OF THE LORD – THE WRATH OF GOD	48
ISAIAH CALLS IT A DAY OF WORLDWIDE TERROR, COSMIC UPHEAVAL AND JUDGMENT.....	50
THE BOOK OF REVELATION – CHAPTER SUMMARIES	56
THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF JESUS UPON THE EARTH	61
THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT.....	69
THE END OF TIME AND OF THE WORLD AND THE BEGINNING OF “HEAVEN”	73
APPENDIX I: A TIME, TIMES AND A HALF TIME	78
JULIAN CALENDAR CALCULATION.....	82
MODERN CALENDAR CALCULATION.....	82
APPENDIX II: RAPTURE THEORY AND ITS HISTORY	85

The Eschaton – A Prologue

The word “Eschaton” is of Greek derivative and means “end times.” From it we get the terms eschatology and eschatological referring (according to Webster) to things associated with the end of the world or the Second Coming of Christ.

Spiritual understanding and resultant belief is obtained, not through logical argument or intellectual persuasion, but rather through revelation. It is God-given and unmerited. As such it is available to the old as well as the young, to the brilliant as well as the simple, to the “good person” as well as the flawed, to the pre-modern man and to today’s scholars. Mostly, it comes to the receptive and the seeker. The Holy Spirit is like water. He comes down from above, takes the path of least resistance and freezes when He meets a cold reception. He is passionate to inform us but is a “Gentleman”, a respecter of our free will. He does not compel understanding or support the well-intentioned but misguided control issues of others.

The presentation contained herein will not prove to be persuasive to the unbeliever although it might add to the curiosity of the seeker. It is not intended to persuade the skeptic, the agnostic or the atheist. It is intended to provide support to the evangelical, the student of the Bible who requires that all truth find support in the word of God to be believed. Its purpose is to show that the historically understood eschatology is well-supported in Scripture and that support is both broad and deep, coming from many Biblical writers and from every age.

The Eschaton is organized in the following fashion. **A Biblical Survey of the End Times** is presented, bringing to bear multiple sources including the Patriarchal testimony of Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and David as well as the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, Joel, Daniel, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi among others. We also see the support in New Testament leaders including: John the Baptist, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Peter, Paul and Mary (☺ couldn’t resist) as well as James, Jude and their older more important brother, Jesus of Nazareth. Then is presented a line-by-line exegesis of the prophetic books of Haggai and Zechariah, followed by several explanatory appendices. After these things we return to the exegetical study of Daniel and the book of Revelation. In all of this we see evangelical support for the Eschaton that is both Old and New

Testament and encompasses the writings of many, if not most, of the writers and key players of the Bible.

Good people can and do disagree about important issues. All of us hold our beliefs firmly in our hearts, as well we should. However, none of us is infallible and since we have all modified our understanding over time, we are likely to be more clearly illumined as time goes on. We see here, after all, “through a mirror dimly.” What is found in this writing is the accumulated understanding of one man’s lifetime of study. It is sincerely and deeply held but is humbly submitted for the scrutiny of any who would find it useful. When the Perfect comes, we will all see clearly for we will be like HIM (1Cor 13:12). In all probability, we will all spend some time in eternity comparing fully revealed truth to our doctrinal positions and explaining to one another what we got wrong on our “term papers.” We will, nonetheless, it is suspected, be glad that we did the profitable and important searching recommended by Paul, the Apostle to his young disciple, Timothy (2 Tim 2:15). May this work be a blessing to its readers.

The Eschaton – A Biblical Survey of the End Times

A study of the Eschaton (the last days or the end times) must take into consideration a list of topics without which the concept makes no sense or fails to be fully comprehensible. Those topics function as an outline for this study and are as follows:

The Promise of a Messiah

- I. The promise of a Messiah as seen prior to the Prophets
 - a. Adam and Eve
 - b. Noah
 - c. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
 - d. Joseph
 - e. Judah
 - f. Moses
 - g. David and The “Son of David”
- II. The promise of a Messiah as seen in the Prophets
 - a. Isaiah
 - b. Zechariah
 - c. Micah
 - d. Daniel
 - e. Malachi
 - f. David (again)
- III. The promise of a preeminent Israel
 - a. The promise of Israel’s preeminence given to the Patriarchs
 - i. Abraham
 - ii. Rebekah
 - iii. Isaac
 - iv. Israelites
 - b. The promise of Israel’s preeminence given to the Prophets
 - i. David (yet again)
 - ii. Isaiah
 - iii. Ezekiel
 - iv. Micah
 - v. Haggai
 - vi. Zechariah
 - vii. Malachi
 - viii. John, the Revelator
- IV. The promise of a re-gathering of all Israel
- V. The First Coming of the Messiah
- VI. The Despoiling of Sheol and the Opening of Heaven

- VII. Soul Sleep and Sheol, the Place of the Dead
- VIII. The Second Coming of the Messiah – Tribulation and Antichrist
- IX. The Second Coming – The Timing and the Parable of the Fig Tree
- X. The Second Coming – Rapture and Resurrection
- XI. The Book of Revelation – Chapter Summaries
- XII. The Millennial Reign of Jesus upon the earth
- XIII. The Great White Throne Judgment – the Sheep versus the Goats
- XIV. The end of time and of the world and the beginning of Heaven

The Promise of a Messiah

The promise of a Messiah begins vague and undefined in the Garden at the Fall, develops in the Abrahamic Covenant and in the prophetic word of Moses. It escalates in intensity and definition through the revelation of the prophets of the Old Testament, is supported in the New Testament by Jesus, Peter, Paul and John and finds final definition by the Book of Revelation.

The Hebrew word for Messiah (*Ha Mashiach*) is literally translated as “the **Anointed One.**” In Greek, it is translated as “Christos.” Because of confusion in the Greek-speaking world with a more common usage of “christos” in medicine and cosmetics, Paul clarified the understanding of “Christos” for first century Gentiles by substituting as his day to day descriptor for the role of Jesus the Roman phrase “Dominus et Soter” meaning **Lord and Savior.** This was a term he and everyone in the first century could understand because it was located on the back side of some Roman coins referring to the Roman emperor. It is this terminology for Messiah that has passed down to the Gentile church even to the modern era. It is also why Paul was often accused of speaking treason.

Jesus, for political reasons having to do with the timing of His revelation to the world as the Messiah, referred to His Messianic work and calling by referring to Himself as the **Son of Man**, a term freighted with Messianic meaning taken from Daniel 7:13. When at the “right moment in time” He acknowledged to the Sanhedrin more clearly His Messianic calling, it resulted in His almost immediate crucifixion.

The Promise of a Messiah as Seen Prior to the Prophets

Adam and Eve

The promise of a Messiah to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15 represents the first mention of a Savior. In the midst of the catastrophic fall from

grace, it is barely noticeable, but in retrospect it is certainly a good beginning. Paul points backwards to it in Galatians 4:4.

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel. (NAS)

Noah

God's very willingness to save the sons of Adam from their sins is evidenced by His raising up of Noah to rescue mankind from total destruction by the Flood. It shows His Messianic mindset.

Abraham, Isaac & Jacob

Abraham (like Noah before him and Isaac and Jacob after him) represents the Messianic Kinsman-Redeemer whose obedience to God and self-sacrifice empowers him to lead his people to the Promised Land, rescue them from their enemies and rule over them as both priest and king. This Messianic tribal leader had to be kin (a blood relative) and also be capable of redeeming his people. Isaiah, and later Paul, reduced this Messianic term to the more familiar term – Redeemer. Abraham, the prototypical kinsman-Redeemer to Lot in Genesis 14, “believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.” It also empowered Abraham to miraculously save Lot and his family. This central message of Jesus and Paul had been revealed some 2,200 years before either of them was born and 700-800 years before the Mosaic Law.

Joseph

Joseph tells us that his suffering was utilized by God to save Israel from starvation. (Gen 50:19-21)

Judah

Judah and others filled the Kinsman-Redeemer shoes and functioned as “types of Christ” in the Old Testament in spite of their obvious humanity and shortcomings. Judah was promised that the Messiah would come from his loins.

Gen 49:10-12 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. 11 "He ties his foal to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, And his robes in the blood of grapes. 12 "His eyes are dull from wine, And his teeth white from milk. NAS

Moses

Even Moses contributed to the Messianic promise pool when he was preparing the people for a long term relationship as God's chosen ones. He saved Israel from God's wrath on more than one occasion. He promised Israel that God would send another significant Kinsman-Redeemer in time.

Deut 18:15-19 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. 16 This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' 17 "And the LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well. 18'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19'And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

While numerous men and women have worn the Mosaic mantle in part down through the ages, only Jesus fulfills the calling of Moses, the man who parted the waters, defeated their enemies and represented them face to face before their God. That was the considered opinion of Peter, the Apostle who said:

Acts 3:18-25 "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 "Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; 20 and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, 21 whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. 22 "Moses said, 'The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you. 23'And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 "And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days. NAS

David and the "Son of David"

David prophesied that the Messiah would sit on his throne. The Messiah was in Jesus' day often spoken of as the "Son of David." Those needing Jesus' healing cried out to Him as such and the crowds on Palm Sunday proclaimed Him to be just that. Even Jesus' enemies used "Son of David" in this manner. (Mt 9:27, 12:23, 15:22, 20:30, 21:9) John demonstrates the validity of this when he identifies the Messiah in this manner in the Book of Revelation. (Rev 3:7, 5:5, 22:16)

Luke 20:41-44 And He (Jesus) said to them, "How is it that they say the Christ is David's son? 42 "For David himself says in the book of Psalms, The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at

My right hand, 43 Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet. " 44 "David therefore calls Him 'Lord,' and how is He his son?" NAS (Mt 22:40; Mk 12:36)

Acts 2:32-36 (Peter said) "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. 3 "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. 34 "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, 35 Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet. "' 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified." NAS

Matt 21:6-11 And the disciples went and did just as Jesus had directed them, 7 and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid on them their garments, on which He sat. 8 And most of the multitude spread their garments in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees, and spreading them in the road. 9 And the multitudes going before Him, and those who followed after were crying out, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" 10 And when He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?" 11 And the multitudes were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee." NAS

The crowds on Palm Sunday responded to Jesus on that day as the long-promised **Messiah/Son of David** as prophesied by Zechariah in 520 BC.

Zech 9:9-17 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. 10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth. 11 As for you also, because of the blood of My covenant with you, I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. 12 Return to the stronghold, O prisoners who have the hope; This very day I am declaring that I will restore double to you. 13 For I will bend Judah as My bow, I will fill the bow with Ephraim. And I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece; And I will make you like a warrior's sword. 14 Then the LORD will appear over them, And His arrow will go forth like lightning; And the Lord GOD will blow the trumpet, And will march in the storm winds of the south. 15 The LORD of hosts will defend them. And they will devour, and trample on the sling stones; And they will drink, and be boisterous as with wine; And they will be filled like a sacrificial basin, Drenched like the corners of the altar. 16 And the LORD their God will save them in that day As the flock of His people; For they are as the stones of a crown, Sparkling in His land. 17 For what comeliness and beauty will be theirs! Grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine the virgins.

It was because they misinterpreted His First Coming as the Messiah to be the long-promised Second Coming of the Messiah that they were heard less than a week later calling for His crucifixion. We also sometimes fail to

understand the difference resulting in a church that looks for salvation but not sanctification. (More on that to follow.)

The Promise of a Messiah as Seen in the Prophets

The prophets were better positioned than the Patriarchs in time and experience to understand more fully Israel's (and mankind's) need for a Messiah. By 800 BC the world had demonstrated its depravity over thirty-six centuries of trial and failure to live up to the calling and promise of its creation in God's image. Israel had fared no better since its inception as a chosen and divinely delivered people six or seven centuries earlier. Fallen man was incapable of obeying God and keeping His law.

Prophets are called for two purposes: they are sent to "afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted.." In the process, they sometimes foretell the future. They are sent by God to convict the world of its sin and to warn the world of coming judgment. Having delivered these sobering, devastating and horrifying pronouncements of judgment, and when the remnant with repentant "seeing eyes and hearing ears" have fallen on their knees in repentance and remorse, the prophets switch hats and promise those repentant ones a divine deliverance.

Redemption is sometimes promised in the form of immediate or near-term rescue from trouble, but sometimes the redemption is promised to arrive in the future lifetime of the people and of their descendants. Prophecy is often fulfilled in layers – some now, more later and ultimately at the end of time, the last days or the Eschaton. It is in this context that they foretell the future and in this context is found the promise of the Messiah in the prophets. What follows are some of the promises of these prophets of the Old Testament that are received as such by New Testament teachers and preachers including John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter, Stephen, Paul, Apollos, Prisca and Aquilla, the writer of Hebrews, Jude, James and John the Revelator. For this reason, they have been embraced as Messianic prophecies by Polycarp, Irenaeus, Athanasius, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Wesley and countless others for 2000 years.

Isaiah

The prophet most renowned for his Messianic prophecies is Isaiah, but he is by no means the only one. Time after time, Isaiah foretells the coming of the Messiah. He often referred to the Messiah as God's "Servant." An example of his writing follows here along with New Testament support for the claim.

Isa 9:6-7 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of {His} government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. (NAS) (Luke 1:32)

Isa 40:1-5 "Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God. "Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins." A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God." Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see {it} together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." (NAS) (Luke 3:3-6; Mark 1:1-6; Mathew 3:1-6; John 1:19-34)

Isa 9:1-2 But there will be no {more} gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make {it} glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them. (NAS) (Mathew 4:13-16)

Isa 61:1-2 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners; To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, (NAS) (Luke 4:18-19)

Isa 52:13-53:12 Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted. 14 Just as many were astonished at you, My people, So His appearance was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men. 15 Thus He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; For what had not been told them they will see, And what they had not heard they will understand.

Isa 53:1 Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 2 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. 3 He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Isa 53:4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the

iniquity of us all To fall on Him. 7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living, For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due?

Isa 53:9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. 10 But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors. NAS (Jn 12:37-43, 1:11; Lk 23:18; Mk 15:4-5, 27-28; Mt 27:57-60)

Isa 50:5-7 The Lord GOD has opened My ear; and I was not disobedient, nor did I turn back. I gave My back to those who strike {me,} and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting. For the Lord GOD helps me, therefore, I am not disgraced; therefore, I have set My face like flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. (NAS) (Mathew 26:67)

Zechariah

Perhaps no prophet is more to the point on the Eschaton (the end times) than Zechariah. He has several Messianic promises supported in the New Testament.

Zech 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout {in triumph,} O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (NAS) (Mt 21:1-9; Mark 11:7-11; Lk 19: 21-40; John 12:12-19)

Zech 12:9-10 "And it will come about in that day that I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem." And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born. (NAS) (John 19:34; 20:27)

Micah

Micah was another prophet whose Messianic promise is supported in the New Testament.

Micah 5:2-4 "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, {too} little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity. Therefore, He will give them {up} until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren will return to the sons of Israel. And He will arise and shepherd {His flock} in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will remain, because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth. (NAS) (Luke 2:4, 5, 7)

Daniel

Daniel had much to say on the overall topic of the Eschaton, including the timing of the comings of the Messiah.

Dan 9:25-27 "So you are to know and discern {that} from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince {there will be} seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end {will come} with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations {will come} one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." (NAS) (Luke 2:1-2, Luke 19:28-44)

The first sixty-nine weeks of years (483 years) referenced here are the time frame between Daniel and the First Coming of the Messiah and His crucifixion. The last week of years (seven-years) refers to the end time, the seven-year rule of the Antichrist just before the Second Coming of the Messiah. (For further Biblical support of this calculation, see Appendix I.)

Malachi

Malachi was the last recorded prophet of the Old Testament. He, too, had Messianic prophecies that were supported by the words and life of Jesus Himself.

Mal 3:1 "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear 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. (NAS) (Luke 7:24)

Mal 4:5-6 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD." And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to {their} children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse." (NAS) (Mathew 11: 13-14)

David (again)

Although David is not usually counted among the prophets, he is widely recognized for being prophetic. Concerning the promise of a Messiah he had much to say that was supported heavily by New Testament teachers, especially Psalm 22 in which he describes events associated with the crucifixion to an extraordinary degree of accuracy, almost as if he is an eye witness. Some of his prophetic verses follow here.

Prophecy: Ps 78:1-4 Listen, O my people, to my instruction; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not conceal them from their children, but tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. (NAS) (Mathew 13:34-35)

David predicts Jesus' use of parables to speak to the people.

Fulfillment: Matt 13:34-35 All these things Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable, 35 so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world." NAS

Prophecy: Ps 8:1-2 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Thy name in all the earth, who hast displayed Thy splendor above the heavens! From the mouth of infants and nursing babes Thou hast established strength, because of Thine adversaries, to make the enemy and the revengeful cease. (NAS) (Mathew 21:15-16)

Jesus claims that David's prophetic words above are fulfilled at the Triumphal Entry of Christ (see below).

Fulfillment: Matt 21:15-16 But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they became indignant, 16 and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babes Thou hast prepared praise for Thyself?'" NAS

Prophecy: Ps 41:9 Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. (NAS) (Luke 22: 47-48)

David predicts that the Messiah is betrayed by a close friend with whom he breaks bread.

Fulfillment: Luke 22:47-49 While He was still speaking, behold, a multitude came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. 48 But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" NAS

Prophecy: Ps 22:1 My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. (NAS) (Mt 27:46)

Fulfillment: Matt 27:46-47 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? "that is," My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? " NAS

Jesus is not in despair. He has not lost faith in the Father's love for Him. That would be totally out of character for Jesus and even sinful, exposing doubt. He is praying the prayer of the suffering Messiah from Psalm 22. It is totally pertinent to His immediate and present experience.

Prophecy: Ps 22:6-8 But I am a worm, and not a man, a reproach of men, and despised by the people. All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, {saying,} "Commit {yourself} to the LORD; let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, because He delights in him." (NAS) (Luke 23:35)

Fulfillment: Luke 23:34-36 And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One." NAS

Prophecy: Ps 22:16-18 For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. (NAS) (Mathew 27:35)

Fulfillment: Matt 27:35 And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots; NAS

The dividing of the garments and the casting of lots for His clothing should be clearly seen in the soldiers' behavior concerning Jesus' clothes. "Dogs" is a Jewish euphemism for Gentiles. Jesus Himself used it in conversation with the Syrophenician woman.

Fulfillment: Mark 7:26-30 Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 And He was saying to her, "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 28 But she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs." 29 And He said to her, "Because of this answer go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." 30 And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having departed. NAS

Prophecy: Ps 69:7-9 Because for Thy sake I have borne reproach; dishonor has covered my face. I have become estranged from my brothers, and an alien to my mother's sons. For zeal for Thy house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach Thee have fallen on me. (NAS) (Romans 15:2-4)

Fulfillment: Rom 15:2-4 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. 3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached Thee fell upon Me." 4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. NAS

In Romans (above), Paul claims that this scripture is fulfilled in Jesus. Historically, Jesus' brothers and sister did not follow Him until after the resurrection. They can even be seen as attempting to reason with Him. His response is to stiff-arm them publicly.

Fulfillment: Matt 12:47-50 And someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You." 48 But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" 49 And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers! 50 "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." NAS

Prophecy: Ps 34:19-20 Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. (NAS) (John 19:32-36)

John says that the scripture above was fulfilled at the death of Jesus.

Fulfillment: John 19:31-37 The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him; 33 but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; 34 but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. 35 And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. 36 For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken." NAS

Prophecy: Ps 16:10 For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. (NAS) (Mark 16: 6-7)

Peter tells the crowd at Pentecost that this scripture was fulfilled in Jesus and only Jesus.

Fulfillment: Acts 2:22-31 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- 23 this Man, delivered up by the

predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. 24 "And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. 25 "For David says of Him, 'I was always beholding the Lord in my presence; For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26"Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; Moreover my flesh also will abide in hope; 27 Because Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, Nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. 28"Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; Thou wilt make me full of gladness with Thy presence.' 29 "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 "And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon his throne, 31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. NAS

Paul also makes the claim in Pisidian Antioch that this scripture (Psalm 16:10) was fulfilled in Jesus.

Acts 13:29-38 "And when they had carried out all that was written concerning Him (Jesus), they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. 30 "But God raised Him from the dead; 31 and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people. 32 "And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, 33 that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art My Son; today I have begotten Thee.' 34 "And as for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no more to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.' 35 "Therefore He also says in another Psalm, 'Thou wilt not allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.' 36 "For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay; 37 but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. NAS

Mathew (as well) as the other three evangelists) testified that Jesus was raised from the dead and that His tomb was empty. This fulfills the scripture that the Messiah's body would not "see decay."

Matt 27:62-28:6 Now on the next day, which is the one after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, 63 and said, "Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I am to rise again.' 64 "Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, lest the disciples come and steal Him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first." 65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how." 66 And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone. 28:1 Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. 2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. 3 And his appearance was like lightning, and his garment as white as snow; 4 and the guards shook for fear of him,

and became like dead men. 5 And the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. 6 "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.

NAS

The Promise of a Preeminent Israel

Embedded in the promise of the Messiah was another covenantal promise – that Israel would once again become the pre-eminent kingdom of peoples in the world. The coming of the Messiah would bring not only a Savior (Redeemer) but a King who would sit on David's throne and rule and reign in the earth. In this we can see again the dual Messianic natures of Lord and Savior). All the nations who come up to Jerusalem, his throne city, would not only bow to Him but also would honor and make restitution to his people, Israel. In order for this to come to pass, Israel must be re-gathered and restored in a day when Jesus is simultaneously physically ruling and reigning in the earth. This can only happen in the Millennial Reign.

Before His Second Coming, Jesus is not physically found on the earth, nor does He physically rule the nations. Even though Israel has been re-gathered after a fashion since 1948, it does not enjoy worldwide respect, honor and stature. Nor will the nations bring restitution to Israel until they do so at the command of Israel's king.

The Promise of Israel's Preeminence as Given to the Patriarchs

Abraham

Gen 17:6-8 "And I will make you (Abraham) exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. 7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. 8 And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." NAS

Gen 18:17-19 And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18 since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? 19 NAS

Rebekah

Gen 25:23 And the LORD said to her (**Rebekah**), "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples shall be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger." NAS

Isaac

Gen 26:3-5 And I will multiply your (**Isaac**) descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5 because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws. "NAS

The Israelite People

Deut 15:6 For the LORD your God shall bless you (**Israelites**) as He has promised you, and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; and you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you. NAS

Deut 26:18-19 And the LORD has today declared you (**Israelites**) to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments; 19 and that He shall set you high above all nations which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the LORD your God, as He has spoken. "NAS

Deut 28:1 "Now it shall be, if you (**Israelites**) will diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. NAS

The Promise of Israel's Preeminence as Given to the Prophets

There are two main themes in all of these scriptures. They are that (1) Israel will become visibly preeminent among the nations, and (2) it has not happened yet. Therefore, we can expect it to happen in the Eschaton.

David (again)

Ps 47:2-4 For the LORD Most High is to be feared, A great King over all the earth. 3 He subdues peoples under us, And nations under our feet. 4 He chooses our inheritance for us, The glory of Jacob whom He loves. NAS

Isaiah

Isa 2:2 Now it will come about that In the last days, The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. NAS

Isa 54:2-3 "Enlarge the place of your tent; Stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, spare not; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your pegs. 3 "For you will spread abroad

to the right and to the left. And **your descendants will possess nations**, And they will resettle the desolate cities. NAS

Isa 60:1-3 "Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. 2 "For behold, darkness will cover the earth, And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you, And His glory will appear upon you. 3 "And nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising. NAS

Isa 60:11-16 "And your gates will be open continually; They will not be closed day or night, So that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, With their kings led in procession. 12 "For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish, And the nations will be utterly ruined. 13 "The glory of Lebanon will come to you, The juniper, the box tree, and the cypress together, To beautify the place of My sanctuary; And I shall make the place of My feet glorious. 14 "And the sons of those who afflicted you will come bowing to you, And all those who despised you will bow themselves at the soles of your feet; And they will call you the city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. 15 "Whereas you have been forsaken and hated With no one passing through, I will make you an everlasting pride, A joy from generation to generation. 16 "You will also suck the milk of nations, And will suck the breast of kings; Then you will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. NAS

Isa 61:4-7 Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations, And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations. 5 And strangers will stand and pasture your flocks, And foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers. 6 But you will be called the priests of the LORD; You will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, And in their riches you will boast. 7 Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, And instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, Everlasting joy will be theirs. NAS

Ezekiel

Ezek 34:27-29 Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bars of their yoke and have delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. 28 "And they will no longer be a prey to the nations, and the beasts of the earth will not devour them; but they will live securely, and no one will make them afraid. 29 "And I will establish for them a renowned planting place, and they will not again be victims of famine in the land, and they will not endure the insults of the nations anymore. NAS

Micah

Mic 4:1-5 And it will come about in the last days That the mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, And the peoples will stream to it. 2 And many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion will go forth the law, Even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 3 And He will judge between many peoples And render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer

their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they train for war. 4 And each of them will sit under his vine And under his fig tree, With no one to make them afraid, For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. 5 Though all the peoples walk Each in the name of his god, As for us, we will walk In the name of the LORD our God forever and ever. NAS

Zephaniah

Zeph 3:19-20 "Behold, I am going to deal at that time With all your oppressors, I will save the lame And gather the outcast, And I will turn their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. 20 "At that time I will bring you in, Even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I restore your fortunes before your eyes," Says the LORD. NAS

Haggai

Hag 2:6-9 "For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. 7'And I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations; and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. 8 'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' declares the LORD of hosts. 9 'The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts,' and in this place I shall give peace,' declares the LORD of hosts. "NAS

Zechariah

Zech 2:10-13 "Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," declares the LORD. 11 "And many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. 12 "And the LORD will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem. 13 "Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD; for He is aroused from His holy habitation." NAS

Zech 8:20-23 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'It will yet be that peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities. 21 'And the inhabitants of one will go to another saying, "Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I will also go." 22'So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD.' 23 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you. ""' NAS

Malachi

Mal 1:11 "For from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name will be great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts. NAS

Mal 3:10-12 "Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the LORD of hosts. 12

"And all the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land," says the LORD of hosts. NAS

The Promise of the Re-Gathering of all Israel

The ultimate re-gathering of all Israel back to God and the Promised Land is another Biblical foundation and immediate precursor of the Eschaton. While some "re-gathering scriptures" speak mainly (even in some cases exclusively) of the return to Jerusalem of the Babylonian exiles in the sixth century BC under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, many (if not most) refer directly or logically to an ultimate re-gathering of God's people by God's hand for the purpose of kingdom restoration under the Messiah. This is why the 1948 re-gathering of Israel in Palestine has electrified Judeo-Christian evangelicals and fed an expectation of the soon-coming of the Messiah. Whether or not the 1948 restoration of Israel is a bellwether event as some believe, the Bible has much to say about a pre-eschatological re-gathering of Israel.

Deut 30:3-4 If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. NAS

Neh 1:8-9 Remember the word which Thou didst command Thy servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples; 9 but if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.' NAS

Isa 11:11-12 Then it will happen on that day that the Lord Will again recover the second time with His hand The remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, And from the islands of the sea. 12 And He will lift up a standard for the nations, And will assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. NAS

Isa 43:4-9 "Since you are precious in My sight, Since you are honored and I love you, I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life. 5 "Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, And gather you from the west. 6 "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.'
Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth, 7 Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made. " 8 Bring out the people who are blind, even though they have eyes, And the deaf, even though they have ears. NAS

Isa 54:7-8 "For a brief moment I forsook you, But with great compassion I will gather you. 8 "In an outburst of anger I hid My face from you for a moment; But with

everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you," Says the LORD your Redeemer NAS

Isa 56:8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, "Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered." NAS

Isa 60:1-4 "Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. 2 "For behold, darkness will cover the earth, And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you, And His glory will appear upon you. 3 "And nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising. 4 "Lift up your eyes round about, and see; They all gather together, they come to you. Your sons will come from afar, And your daughters will be carried in the arms.

Jer 23:1-4 "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!" declares the LORD. 2 Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel concerning the shepherds who are tending My people: "You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not attended to them; behold, I am about to attend to you for the evil of your deeds," declares the LORD. 3 "Then I Myself shall gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and shall bring them back to their pasture; and they will be fruitful and multiply. 4 "I shall also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD NAS

Jer 29:11-14 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD,' plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. 12'Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13'And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. 14'And I will be found by you,' declares the LORD,' and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the LORD,' and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.' NAS

Jer 31:7-9 For thus says the LORD, "Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, And shout among the chiefs of the nations; Proclaim, give praise, and say, 'O LORD, save Thy people, The remnant of Israel.' 8 "Behold, I am bringing them from the north country, And I will gather them from the remote parts of the earth, Among them the blind and the lame, The woman with child and she who is in labor with child, together; A great company, they shall return here. 9 "With weeping they shall come, And by supplication I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters, On a straight path in which they shall not stumble; For I am a father to Israel, And Ephraim is My first-born." NAS

Jer 31:10-11 Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, And declare in the coastlands afar off, And say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, And keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock." 11 For the LORD has ransomed Jacob, And redeemed him from the hand of him who was stronger than he. NAS

Jer 32:37-41 "Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath, and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety. 38 "And they shall be My people, and I will be their God; 39 and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good, and for the good of their children after them. 40 "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. 41 "And I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul. NAS

Ezek 11:16-17 "Therefore say, "Thus says the Lord GOD," Though I had removed them far away among the nations, and though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone. " 17 "Therefore say, "Thus says the Lord GOD," I shall gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I shall give you the land of Israel. " NAS

Ezek 20:33-38 "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. 34 "And I shall bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; 35 and I shall bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I shall enter into judgment with you face to face. 36 "As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord GOD. 37 "And I shall make you pass under the rod, and I shall bring you into the bond of the covenant; 38 and I shall purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I shall bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD. NAS

Ezek 20:41-42 "As a soothing aroma I shall accept you, when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered; and I shall prove Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations. 42 "And you will know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the land which I swore to give to your forefathers. NAS

Ezek 28:25-26 "Thus says the Lord GOD, "When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and shall manifest My holiness in them in the sight of the nations, then they will live in their land which I gave to My servant Jacob. 26 "And they will live in it securely; and they will build houses, plant vineyards, and live securely, when I execute judgments upon all who scorn them round about them. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God." "NAS

Ezek 34:13-16 "And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. 14 "I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down in good grazing ground, and they will feed in rich pasture on the

mountains of Israel. 15 "I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest," declares the Lord GOD. 16 "I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken, and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment." NAS

Ezek 36:24-28 "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land. 25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. 28 "And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. NAS

Ezek 37:21-22 "And say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD," Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; 22 and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations, and they will no longer be divided into two kingdoms. NAS

Ezek 39:27-29 "When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations. 28 "Then they will know that I am the LORD their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them again to their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer. 29 "And I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel," declares the Lord GOD. NAS

Zeph 3:19-20 "Behold, I am going to deal at that time With all your oppressors, I will save the lame And gather the outcast, And I will turn their shame into praise and renown In all the earth. 20 "At that time I will bring you in, Even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I restore your fortunes before your eyes," Says the LORD. NAS

The First Coming of the Messiah

Advent – the word means “a coming” from the Latin *ad veno*; i.e., to come. When we think of Advent we think of the forty day season before Christmas when we celebrate and anticipate the coming of the Lord – that is, the First Coming of the Lord.

The prophets foretold the coming of the Lord, but they described it as a two part experience. On the one hand, the Messiah was expected to eventually come as a warrior in the defense of His people and a King to rule over them in a new kingdom. This event has come to be known as the Second Coming of Christ. Jesus promised to return “like lightning from one

end of the sky to another” and angels promised the disciples that it would happen.

But the prophets also had much to say about another advent or “coming” of the same Messiah, one designed to cleanse us of our sins. Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament until John the Baptist came out of the desert, said it this way:

Mal 3:1-6 "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear 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. 2 "**But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.** 3 "**And He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness.** 4 "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD, as in the days of old and as in former years. 5 "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien, and do not fear Me," says the LORD of hosts. 6 "For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. NAS

It was because the men and women of Jesus' day were focused on the Second Coming that they missed the First Coming. We, too, are capable of overlooking our need for redemption and sanctification because we are too fervently seeking a rescue; i.e., salvation. It was not because of a lack of information, revelation or warning that they (we) missed the first advent of Jesus. The Biblical prophetic record is there for us all to see, if we will.

On Palm Sunday the week before Jesus was crucified, the Jews welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as the coming Messiah. They were stirred by the recent resurrection of Lazarus and also by the image of Jesus riding into town on the back of a donkey. They were tuned into the prophecies of Zechariah in this regard. So they greeted him with Messianic praises *saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!"* (Mt 21:1-9) What they were expecting was the Second Coming Messiah, but what they were getting was the First Coming Messiah. When Jesus disappointed their expectations, the same crowd was found five days later crying out for His blood. They missed the First Coming because they focused on the Second Coming scriptures. They should have read closer and listened better. The First Coming Messiah's transport was a donkey, the foal of a colt. The Second Coming Messiah will come on the back of a horse of war. (see Rev 6:1-2 below)

Zech 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. NAS

Rev 6:1-2 And I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come." 2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him; and he went out conquering, and to conquer. NAS

Rev 19:11-16 And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him, which no one knows except Himself. 13 And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies, which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." NAS

It wasn't as if they had not been given clear information to process. Both Isaiah and King David were explicit. The Messiah would be God's Servant and would suffer much to redeem us from our sins.

Isaiah 53:2-12 2 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. 3 He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. 7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living, For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? 9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. 10 But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death,

And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors. NAS

Although David is not usually counted among the prophets, he is widely recognized for being prophetic. Concerning the promise of a Messiah he had much to say that was supported heavily by New Testament teachers, especially Psalm 22.

Ps 22:1-18 My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. 2 O my God, I cry by day, but Thou dost not answer; And by night, but I have no rest. 3 Yet Thou art holy, O Thou who art enthroned upon the praises of Israel. 4 In Thee our fathers trusted; They trusted, and Thou didst deliver them. 5 To Thee they cried out, and were delivered; In Thee they trusted, and were not disappointed. 6 But I am a worm, and not a man, A reproach of men, and despised by the people. 7 All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, 8 "Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."

Ps 22:9 Yet Thou art He who didst bring me forth from the womb; Thou didst make me trust when upon my mother's breasts. 10 Upon Thee I was cast from birth; Thou hast been my God from my mother's womb. 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near; For there is none to help. 12 Many bulls have surrounded me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. 13 They open wide their mouth at me, As a ravening and a roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And Thou dost lay me in the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; 18 They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots. NAS

David understood that the Messiah would die. He spoke of it in Psalm 16:10. We know David is referring to the Messiah (Thy Holy One) because both Peter and Paul say so in sermons to Jews. (Acts 2:27; 13:35)

Ps 16:10 For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. NAS

The Despoiling of Sheol and the Opening of Heaven

Jesus did not come to save only the disciples of His day. He came to save all men in every age, including the time before He was born. How this was accomplished shows that God can figure out how to bring all people - in every age, on every continent, in any circumstance - to Jesus for salvation.

Acts 10:34-35 And opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, 35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him. NAS

Before the crucifixion, all of the souls of the dead went to Sheol (Hades) not to be confused with either Heaven or Hell. Paradise was the name of the section of Sheol where the righteous dead "slept" and was also referred to as the bosom of Abraham.

John 11:11-14 This He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awaken him out of sleep." The disciples therefore said to Him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep. Then Jesus therefore said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead," (NAS)

Soul Sleep

Every man must die and face the Judge of all the earth to account for his sins. The Bible speaks against reincarnation. Each person dies one time and then comes to judgment.

Heb 9:27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment. NAS

The **righteous dead** go immediately into the presence of God at the moment of their death and, more importantly, into the presence of Jesus, the Christ. All of us are found guilty of sin, but those of us who have our names written into the Lamb's Book of Life will not be judged according to our deeds, but according to Jesus' righteousness. Satan accuses us to God and justifiably so. But Jesus imparts His righteousness to us. He gives us His bloodstained cloak through which God cannot see our sins. His righteousness not only is imparted to us (**given as a gift**) but is imputed to us. That is, the blood of Jesus causes us to become like Him and God will remember our sins no more.

Heb 8:12 "For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And I will remember their sins no more." NAS

The **unrighteous dead** go to Sheol where they "sleep" until the end of time. Sheol is the Old Testament place of the dead. It is sometimes in the scriptures referred to as a prison, a pit, the grave or a place of sleep or mindless dreaming. The Greek name for it is "Hades" (not to be confused with Hell which is another place altogether).

Ps 146:2-4 I will praise the LORD while I live; **I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.** 3 Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. 4 His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; **In that very day his thoughts perish.** NAS

Death as a condition of sleep ("soul sleep") or mindless dreaming is not received by all believers over time, so an explanation with Biblical support is offered here. Sleep as a euphemism for death is common in both the Old and New Testaments. Job complains to God that if God allows him to go down into Sheol, he (Job) will not be capable of praising God. The theology of Job and most other Old Testament men and women held that there was no conscious moment in the grave.

Job 14:12 So man lies down and does not rise. **Until the heavens be no more,** He will not awake nor be aroused out of his sleep. NAS

Eccl 9:5-11 For the living know they will die; but **the dead do not know anything**, nor have they any longer a reward, **for their memory is forgotten**. 6 **Indeed their love, their hate, and their zeal have already perished**, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun. 7 Go then, eat your bread in happiness, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works. 8 Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head. 9 Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life, and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun. 10 Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; **for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going**. NAS

Job 14:10-14 "But man dies and lies prostrate. Man expires, and where is he? 11 **As water evaporates from the sea, And a river becomes parched and dried up, 12 So man lies down and does not rise**. Until the heavens be no more, **He will not awake nor be aroused out of his sleep**. 13 "Oh that Thou wouldst hide me in Sheol, That Thou wouldst conceal me until Thy wrath returns to Thee, That Thou wouldst set a limit for me and remember me! 14 "If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my struggle I will wait, Until my change comes. NAS

(Job's high theology expects an after life somehow and sometime after Sheol.)

Ps 13:3 Consider and answer me, O LORD, my God; Enlighten my eyes, **lest I sleep the sleep of death**. NAS

Is 38:18 For Sheol cannot thank thee. Death cannot praise thee. Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for thy faithfulness." NAS

Jer 51:39 **(Concerning the judgment of Babylon)** When they become heated up, I shall serve them their banquet And make them drunk, that they may become jubilant And **may sleep a perpetual sleep And not wake up**," declares the LORD. NAS

Dan 12:2-3 "And many of those **who sleep in the dust of the ground** will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. NAS

Matt 27:49-53 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. 51 And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split, 52 **and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many**. NAS

Acts 13:36-37 "For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, **fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay**; 37 but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. NAS

1 Cor 15:6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but **some have fallen asleep**; NAS

1 Cor 11:28-30 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and **a number sleep**. NAS

1 Cor 15:16-26 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 **Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished**. 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. 20 But **now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep**. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. NAS

1 Cor 15:51-52 Behold, I tell you a mystery; **we shall not all sleep**, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised imperishable**, and we shall be changed. NAS

1 Thess 4:13-18 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, **about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope**. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, **that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep**. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. NAS

2 Peter 3:3-4 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? **For ever since the fathers fell asleep**, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." NAS

David, Solomon and Isaiah also describe Sheol as a vague dream state or a place of unconsciousness. (Ps 6:4-6; 31:17; Eccl 9:10; Is 38:18)

Jesus referred to Lazarus as being asleep when he died. When the disciples misunderstood the terminology, Jesus tells them plainly that "Lazarus has died." Jesus pointedly waits four days until Lazarus is stinking before He goes to wake him from the dead. He wants it to be clear that we all know Lazarus has died. (John 11:11-15)

There is a significant difference between resurrection and re-animation. Only Jesus has been resurrected from the dead so far. The rest of the righteous dead will be resurrected and receive their glorified bodies at the Second Coming. Lazarus and all others in the Bible who were "raised from the dead" were re-animated in their physical bodies and had to die again later. That is not true resurrection. Logic defends "soul sleep" for these people. Are we to suppose that these many people were called back from Heaven or Hell? No, they were called back from Sheol, the place of the dead.

Heaven and Hell were both closed for "normal traffic" until Jesus died for us on the cross. The fall of Adam and Eve had shut Heaven against us. With the possible exception of Elijah and Enoch (who are listed in the Bible as "taken up into Heaven"), no humans had yet gone to Heaven until Jesus opened the gates and took a host of "captives" with Him. According to the Bible, no one is yet in Hell. Hell does not become operative until the Second Coming. (Rev 19:20-20:3)

Immediately after the crucifixion, Jesus went to Sheol and awakened the souls of the righteous dead, preached the Gospel to them and took their souls to that Heaven where God dwells (third Heaven according to 2 Cor 12:2) not to be confused with the second Heaven where Satan and his angels dwell since they were cast out of Heaven or the first Heaven, which seems to refer to our outer space.

For almost 2000 years, the traditional Apostle's Creed acknowledged Jesus' visit to Sheol saying "...He was crucified, died and buried. **He descended into Hell.** On the third day He arose again. He ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father from which He comes to judge the living and the dead...." The word "Hell" here actually is Hades, the place of the dead, not Hell the place of eternal judgment. Because of this mistranslation based on the King James Bible, the line has been dropped from many (but not all) readings and oral presentations. Nonetheless, it has been a central doctrine of the Apostle's Creed that Jesus went to Sheol between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning to proclaim Himself to the righteous dead of the Old Testament.

Eph 4:8-9 Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men." (Now this {expression,} "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?)

1 Peter 3:18-19 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; 19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, NAS

After Jesus died and went to Sheol. He preached to the righteous dead and on the way through second Heaven, He defeated Satan in his own realm making a public spectacle of him. The unrighteous dead were left “sleeping” in Sheol (Hades).

Col 2:14-15 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him. NAS

Ps 68:18-27 Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captive {Thy} captives; Thou hast received gifts among men, even {among} the rebellious also, that the LORD God may dwell {there.} Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, the God {who} is our salvation. God is to us a God of deliverances; and to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death. Surely God will shatter the head of His enemies, the hairy crown of him who goes on in his guilty deeds. The Lord said, "I will bring {them} back from Bashan. I will bring {them} back from the depths of the sea; That your foot may shatter {them} in blood, the tongue of your dogs {may have} its portion from {your} enemies." They have seen Thy procession, O God, the procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary. The singers went on, the musicians after {them} in the midst of the maidens beating tambourines. Bless God in the congregations, {even} the LORD, {you who are} of the fountain of Israel. There is Benjamin, the youngest, ruling them, the princes of Judah {in} their throng, the princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali. (NAS)

Ps 24:1-10 The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers. Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood, and has not sworn deceitfully. He shall receive a blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Thy face-- {even} Jacob. Selah. Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is the King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift {them} up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah. (NAS)

The souls of the believers now go directly to Heaven, bypassing Sheol, because for the believer “to be absent of the body is to be present with Christ.” The souls of the unrighteous continue to populate Sheol until the Great White Throne judgment, also referred to in Mathew 25 as the judgment between the sheep and the goats.

2 Cor 5:5-10 Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. 6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord-- 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight-- 8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and

to be at home with the Lord. 9 Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. NAS

The Second Coming of the Messiah - The Tribulation and the Antichrist

The Bible tells us that prior to the return of the Lord, there will be a seven-year period of Tribulation upon the earth culminating in the Second Coming of Christ. A world leader will emerge who captures the imagination of all nations. He is popularly known as the Antichrist (1 Jn 2:18; 2:22; 3:43; 2 Jn 7), but the Bible also calls him the Beast (Rev 13) and the man of lawlessness (2 Thess 2:3). He exhibits signs and wonders and has a very persuasive tongue. He convinces Israel to trust him and is thought by many Jews to be the coming Messiah. He appears to bring long sought after peace to the Middle East and the promise of worldwide tranquility. He rises to world dominance and the nations follow after him. Empowered by Satan (the Dragon), he exercises authority in both political and religious spheres and installs a religious leader to assist him. This second leader is known as the False Prophet. For three and one-half years, the Antichrist seems to be fulfilling his promises toward Israel, but in the midst of the seven-year period he breaks his covenant with Israel and brings intense persecution upon all Jews and believers. It is in response to the desperate and sincere prayers of the persecuted Jews that Jesus appears as their Messiah.

Dan 9:27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." NAS

(For technical reasons related to the apocalyptic genre in which this was written, the "week" above means "a week of years" or seven-years. Consequently, the middle of the week is three and one-half years.)

The coming of this Antichrist was predicted with specificity as far back as the Book of Daniel in chapters seven and eight. Many have been skeptical about his apocalyptic writing and its connection to the Eschaton, but among those who have supported this construct are Jesus, Paul and John the Revelator. Before we see what they had to say about Daniel's prophecies, let us first understand Daniel. In the first year of Belshazzar's reign (553 BC), Daniel had a vision about four beasts. Daniel provided the

explanation about the historical explanation for these beasts in chapters two and seven of his prophetic book. The first three beasts are Babylon, Media/Persia and Greece. The fourth beast represents the physical Roman Empire and its spiritual successor, the one world government of the Eschaton. Jesus evokes Daniel's images in His end-time explanations as does John in the Book of Revelation. In fact, Jesus often refers to Himself as the Son of Man, a Messianic term born in Daniel 7:13.

Dan 7:1-6 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it. 2 Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. 3 "And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another. 4 "The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle (Babylon Ez 1:1-14). I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. 5 "And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. (Medea/Persia) And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!' 6 "After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, (Greece) which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. (**Alexander and his four generals – Lysimachus, Ptolemy, Seleucus and Cassander**). (See Rev 13:1-5 below)

Rev 13:1-5 And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. 2 And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; 4 and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" NAS

Dan 7:7 "After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 8 "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts. (Rev 13: 5-6; 2 Thess 2:1-4)

Dan 7:9 "I kept looking Until thrones were set up, (Rev 1:4; 3:21; 4:2-10; 5: 1-13; 6:16; 7:9-17; 8:3; 12:5; 20:11-12 GWT) And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow, And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. 10 "A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon

myriads were standing before Him; (Rev 5:11-14; Heb 12:22) The court sat, And the books were opened. (Rev 5:1-10; 10:1-11) (Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12-15)

Dan 7:11 "Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; (Rev 13:5-6; 2 Thess 2:1-4) I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. (Rev 19:20; 20:14-15; 21:8) 12 "As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time. 13 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming (Rev 1:7; Mt 24:30; 26:64; 1 Thess 4:17), And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 "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. (Rev 1: 6; 5:13; 11:15)

Dan 7:15 "As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. 16 "I approached one of those who were standing by and began asking him the exact meaning of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: 17 "These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth. 18'But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.' (Rev 5:9; 1:6)

Dan 7:19 "Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet, 20 and the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts, and which was larger in appearance than its associates. (Rev 12:3; 13:1-3; 17:3-16) 21 "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them 22 until the Ancient of Days came (Rev 11:7; 12:7-17; 13:7; 17:12-15), and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom. 23 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms, and it will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 24'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 25'And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. (Rev 12:14; 11:2; 12:6; 13:5; Dan 9:27; 12:11)

(For more clarity on the fourth beast, go to the Bible study notes in Daniel and Revelation.)

Dan 7:26'But the court will sit for judgment, (Rev 20:10-15) and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. 27'Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people

of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.' NAS

Dan 8:22-26 "And the broken horn and the four horns that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power. 23 "And in the latter period of their rule, When the transgressors have run their course, A king will arise Insolent and skilled in intrigue. 24 "And his power will be mighty, but not by his own power, And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree And prosper and perform his will; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people. 25 "And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; And he will magnify himself in his heart, And he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken without human agency. (Rev 20:1-3) 26 "And the vision of the evenings and mornings Which has been told is true; But keep the vision secret, For it pertains to many days in the future." NAS

More important to us than the coordination between Daniel and Revelation are **the words of Jesus Himself** as recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke in their Gospels.

Matt 24:3-31 And as (Jesus) was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" 4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. 5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. 6 "And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. 7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. 8 "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. 9 "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name (Dan 7:20-25). 10 "And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. 11 "And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. 12 "And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13 "But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved. 14 "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.

15 "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), (Dan 9:27; 12:11; 11:31) 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; 17 let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; 18 and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. 19 "But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! 20 "But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; 21 for then there will be a great, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. 22 "And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short. 23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. 24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will

show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. 25 "Behold, I have told you in advance. 26 "If therefore they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. 27 "For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, 30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. 31 "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. NAS

2 Thess 2:1-12 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. NAS

1 John 2:18-19 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us. NAS

The Second Coming - The Timing and the Parable of the Fig Tree

The ultimate timing of the Second Coming according to Jesus is associated with the "ripening of the fig tree." Since the fig tree is a Biblical symbol for Israel (Hos 9:10; Joel 1:6-7), many have taken this as a

reference to the 1948 restoration of Israel as a nation in Palestine. The promise is often interpreted to mean that the generation that witnesses this event (the ripening of the fig tree) will not all pass away before the Second Coming of the Lord. **If true**, this would mean that those born as of 1948 (the baby boomers) will not have all died before the Second Coming.

Luke 13:6-9 And He began telling this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any. 7 "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' 8 "And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; 9 and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.' "NAS

Matt 24:23-31 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. 24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. 25 "Behold, I have told you in advance. 26 "If therefore they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. **27 "For just as the lightning comes from the east, and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.** 28 "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

Matt 24:32-44 "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; 33 even so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. 34 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away. 36 "**But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.** 37 "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. 38 "For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; **so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.** 40 "**Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left.** 41 "**Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left.** 42 "**Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.** 43 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 "For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. NAS

The events represented in Mt 24:40-42 will occur at the Second Coming of Christ and are often referred to as the Rapture. In spite of popular fiction to the contrary, this event occurs after the seven-year Tribulation but before the Wrath at the Second Coming of Jesus. (1 Cor 15:23)

1 Thess 5:1-11 Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 3 While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; 6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. 7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we are awake (alive) or asleep (dead), we may live together with Him. 11 Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing. NAS

Acts 2:17-21 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams; 18 Even upon My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy. 19'And I will grant wonders in the sky above, And signs on the earth beneath, Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. 20'The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come. 21'And it shall be, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' NAS

2 Peter 3:3 Know this first of all, that **in the last days, mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?"** For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." 5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. 7 But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment (**The Great White Throne Judgment**) and destruction of ungodly men.

2 Peter 3:8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, **that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.** 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

The destruction of the earth by fire referenced herein will occur after the Great White Throne Judgment and after the Millennial Reign of Christ upon the earth.

2 Peter 3: 14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, 15 and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness, 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen

The Second Coming of the Messiah - Rapture and Resurrection

At the Second Coming of Jesus, the righteous will be given glorified bodies; i.e., resurrected. They will not be just re-animated in their old pre-death physical bodies like Lazarus (Jn 11) or Jairus' daughter (Lk 9:49-56). There is a significant difference between resurrection and re-animation. Only Jesus has been resurrected from the dead so far. The rest of the righteous dead will be resurrected and receive their glorified bodies at the Second Coming. Lazarus and all others in the Bible who were "raised from the dead" were re-animated in their physical bodies and had to die again later. That is not true resurrection.

At the Second Coming, born-again believers will receive the type of bodies that Jesus received at His resurrection (1 Cor 15:35-44). His body could walk through closed doors (Jn 20:19-29), appear and vanish at will (Luke 24) but it could also eat fish (Lk 24:41-43; Jn 21:13) and it could be physically touched (Jn 20:26-29). It was at times corporeal and at other times could do noncorporeal things. It was similar in appearance to the way Jesus looked before His resurrection, but somehow different enough in appearance to require some focus to recognize Him (Lk 24: 30-32; Jn 21:12).

1 Cor 15:22-26 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. NAS

1 Cor 15:51-53 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.** 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. NAS

The saints of God who have already gone to be with God (died) will return with Jesus. The born-again believers in the earth at the time of his coming will be **caught up** to meet Him in the air, an event known as the Rapture (from the Latin “raptura” translated as “caught up.”). This word is also used to describe several other Biblical events; e.g., the catching up of Philip in Acts 8:39, the catching up of Paul in 1 Cor 12:2-4, and the catching up of the Male Child in Revelation 12:5.

1 Thess 4:14-18 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, **even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.** 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. **17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,** and thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. NAS

Jesus Himself spoke of this event as a literal event in time and space.

Mt 24:29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, 30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. 31 **And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.** NAS

A more detailed history of the Pre-Trib and Mid-Trib Rapture doctrine can be found in Appendix II. Contrary to popular opinion, this “Rapture” will occur at the Second Coming of Jesus, not in any “Pre-Tribulation” or “Mid-Tribulation” period. **Definition:** The Tribulation period is the seven-years immediately prior to the Second Coming of Jesus. Jesus tells us that they will be VERY difficult days (see Mark 13 below).

Mark 13:19-20 **For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, and never shall.** 20 "And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect whom He chose, He shortened the days. NAS

During this time the world will come under the sway (even control) of a dynamic but deceptive leader the Bible calls the Antichrist, the man of lawlessness and the man of iniquity. Daniel prophesied that this period would last seven-years and that the first three and one-half years would be a time of a false worldwide peace and a false covenant between the Antichrist and the people of Israel. **In the middle of the seven-year Tribulation period**, the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and launch an attack of genocidal proportions and intent. It is this sustained three and one-half year attack upon the people of Israel that will cause them to cry out to God in desperation for the coming of the promised Messiah. God's answer will be the Second Coming of Christ.

Mark 13:24-27 "But in those days, **after that tribulation**, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. 26 "**And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory**. 27 "And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of heaven. NAS

There has been much speculation and supposition concerning many events and scenarios associated with this period. Some have speculated that God will perform a miraculous rescue of all born again people on the earth to prevent them from having to endure this Tribulation in whole or in part. Some have suggested that this "Rapture of the believers" will occur at the beginning of the seven-year Tribulation period. This theory is known as the **Pre-Tribulation Rapture** theory. Others surmise that this "Rapture of the believers" will occur in the middle of the seven-year Tribulation period. This theory is known as the **Mid-Tribulation Rapture** theory. Although this speculative theory is popular, it is not Biblically supported as will be demonstrated herein. The "Rapture" of the believers as this event is known actually occurs at the Second Coming of Christ AFTER the Great Tribulation.

1 Cor 15:20-26 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 **But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming**, 24 then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. NAS

2 Tim 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. NAS

1 Thess 4:13-18 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. NAS

Jesus' comment in the three gospels concerning "two men in a field and one is taken" is erroneously used to support a Pre-Tribulation or Mid-Tribulation Rapture. However, in spite of popular fiction, this event occurs after the seven-year Tribulation but before the Wrath of God at the Second Coming of Christ.

Matt 24:36-42 "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. 38 "For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 "Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. 41 "Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. NAS

Matt 13:24-30 He (Jesus) presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 "But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. 26 "But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. 27 "And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' 28 "And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' And the slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' 29 "But he said, 'No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. 30'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'" NAS

At the time of the end, the church (body of Christ) will be purged of all unbelievers and lukewarm attendees. The tares (weeds) will be taken out so the church will be purified, strengthened and prepared to endure the Tribulation. In fact, it is usually persecution that causes the unbelievers and the lukewarm to abandon the pretense of Christian commitment. Jesus tells them that only at the time of the harvest can one truly

determine what is wheat and what is weed. Up until that time, they often look the same. So when He speaks of “waiting until the Harvest to separate the wheat from the tares”, he is talking about the purging of the eschatological church, not the Rapture. The lukewarm churchgoers will be vomited out of His mouth as He tells the Laodicean church. (Rev 3:14-16)

Finally, we need to see that both Jesus and John the Revelator have a single theme embedded in their messages. **They both tell us to be prepared to endure.** They do not tell us to be prepared to be rescued. The purpose of all eschatological prophecy is **to encourage us to endure.** This precludes the purpose or need for a Pre-Trib or Mid-Trib Rapture.

Matt 24:9-13 "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. 10 "And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. 11 "And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. 12 "And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13 "**But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.** NAS

Matt 24:42-51 "**Therefore be on the alert,** for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 43 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, **he would have been on the alert** and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 "For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

45 "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 "**Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.** 47 "Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48 "But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' 49 and shall begin to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; 50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, 51 and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; weeping shall be there and the gnashing of teeth. NAS

1 Cor 4:11-13 To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; 12 and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, **we endure**; 13 when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now. NAS

2 Thess 1:3-4 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; 4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions **which you endure.** NAS

2 Tim 2:8-13 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, 9 for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. 10 For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. 11 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; 12 If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself. NAS

Heb 11:23-26 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict. 24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; 26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. NAS

James 1:2-4 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. NAS

1 Peter 2:20 For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. NAS

The Day of The Lord – The Wrath of God

One of the most significant events of the Eschaton is “The Day Of The Lord.” It is a point of focus by both Old Testament prophets, New Testament writers and of Jesus Himself. It begins at the Second Coming of Christ and the Rapture of God’s people. It is a time of the most significant worldwide judgment since Noah’s flood and is compared to it in scope and intensity. It is a period of time in which the people of the world will be judged for their sins and in which the people of Israel will be purged from sin. It is period of the Wrath of God upon the earth. When the Day of the Lord is finished, there will be a new heaven and a new earth and the Millennial reign will begin.

2 Peter 3:8-18 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

God has been (and often is) faulted for allowing the sin of man to go on and on and to progress in both evil and scope. Why, they ask, does God not come back and clean up this mess and punish the evil ones in the world? Peter tells us that God is not asleep or inattentive but that He is

VERY patient so that more people can be saved and share His Heaven. To God, a thousand years is just like one day to us. In the scope of eternity, Jesus' delay in returning is not really a long time. Our children cry out in anxious longing for Christmas to come or summer vacation to begin. To them the wait seems interminable. Yet we know that it is really not a long time, that there is much to accomplish until then and that our children lack patience. So it is with God and the Second Coming. He is patient because He wants all of the foreknown saved ones to have time to repent. However, when He **IS** done with waiting, Jesus will return with awesome terrifying judgment upon the earth and its people. The Wrath of God will be poured out as never before in fiery destruction in a short period known in the Bible as "The Day of The Lord." When it comes, it will catch EVERYONE by surprise.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

There is a great cosmic disturbance associated with the beginning of the Day of the Lord. The Bible speaks of it here and in numerous other passages. It will have the scope of Noah's flood, but it will be associated with fire, not water. As with Noah's flood, it will eliminate most but not all of the world's population. Its function will be to cleanse the human race, not destroy it. It will allow the world to start over again under the "second Adam" when, in its aftermath, Jesus begins His Millennial Reign upon the earth. And it will come when the world is not expecting it, suddenly, surprisingly like "a thief in the night." Jesus Himself explains it thus:

Matt 24:37-39 "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. 38 "For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. NAS

In 2 Peter 3 which we began to discuss above, Peter goes on to tell us we should anticipate the Coming of the Lord because the scriptures have clearly foretold it and that we should live righteously in anticipation of its eminence. We should think of God's patience as a mechanism of salvation, not slipshod or careless management of God. We should avoid the faulty, arrogant

teachings of men that both impugn God's stewardship and distort the truth about these events. Jesus is coming again soon. He will Rapture His church when He does come and His coming will usher in the Day of the Lord, the most horrible judgment ever seen, the Wrath of God upon unbelieving and unrepentant mankind. (see the following.)

2 Peter 3:14-18 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, 15 and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness, 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. NAS

In this next section, we will talk about the Day of the Lord, the Wrath of God, the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Christ all of which are coterminous in time. We do Christians a great disservice by suggesting anything other than this as it relates to the Rapture. For although the church is not "appointed to Wrath", it will have to endure the Great Tribulation and to needs to prepare itself by holy living.

What does the scripture say about the Day of the Lord? The prophets foretold it. The New Testament writers confirmed their belief in it and Jesus addressed it as a most important future event that we must anticipate and for which we must prepare.

Isaiah calls it a day of worldwide terror, cosmic upheaval and judgment.

Isa 13:6-12 Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. 7 Therefore all hands will fall limp, And every man's heart will melt. 8 And they will be terrified, Pains and anguish will take hold of them; They will writhe like a woman in labor, They will look at one another in astonishment, Their faces aflame. 9 Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it. 10 **For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises, And the moon will not shed its light.** 11 Thus I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud, And abase the haughtiness of the ruthless. 12 I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold, And mankind than the gold of Ophir. NAS

In the Day of the Lord every man's heart will melt (worldwide terror), and men will writhe like a woman in labor. Jesus and Paul both use this analogy from Isaiah in talking about the event leading up to the Second Coming. (Mt 24:8, 1Thess 5:3). He will exterminate sinners and punish the world from its evil. He will put an end to arrogance and make men scarcer than gold. There will be a great cosmic disturbance in that day.

Ezekiel calls it a day of battle, of doom for the nations (Ez 13:3; 30:3)

Joel calls it a day of "destruction from the Almighty"(Jo 1:15). The nations will tremble before the great army of God at the sound of the trumpet. Joel uses images later used by Jesus, Paul and John, images of fire consuming the earth, a thief in the night and a cosmic disturbance in the heavens. These are the images of the six trumpet judgments of the Day of the Lord in Revelation eight and nine.

Joel 2:1-11 Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the day of the LORD is coming; Surely it is near,
2 A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, So there is a great and mighty people; There has never been anything like it, Nor will there be again after it To the years of many generations. 3 A fire consumes before them, And behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them, But a desolate wilderness behind them, And nothing at all escapes them. 4 Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like war horses, so they run. 5 With a noise as of chariots They leap on the tops of the mountains, Like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, Like a mighty people arranged for battle. 6 Before them the people are in anguish; All faces turn pale. 7 They run like mighty men; They climb the wall like soldiers; And they each march in line, Nor do they deviate from their paths. 8 They do not crowd each other; They march everyone in his path. When they burst through the defenses, They do not break ranks. 9 They rush on the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, **They enter through the windows like a thief.** 10 Before them the earth quakes, The heavens tremble, The sun and the moon grow dark, And the stars lose their brightness. 11 And the LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, And who can endure it? NAS

In the Day of the Lord, Jesus will shelter his people (the Rapture of the church) and fight for His people Israel.

Joel 3:12-16 Let the nations be aroused And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations. 13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. 14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. 15 The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars lose their

brightness. 16 And the LORD roars from Zion And utters His voice from Jerusalem, And the heavens and the earth tremble. **But the LORD is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel.** NAS

Amos (like **Malachi** after him) tells Israel they should not cry out for the day of the Lord so eagerly, because it will be day of purging. It will not be fun.

Amos 5:18-20 Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD, For what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light; 19 As when a man flees from a lion, And a bear meets him, Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall, And a snake bites him. 20 Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, Even gloom with no brightness in it? NAS

Mal 3:1-6 "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear 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. 2 "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For **He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.** 3 "And He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness. 4 "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD, as in the days of old and as in former years. 5 "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien, and do not fear Me," says the LORD of hosts. 6 "For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. NAS

All men must be cleansed of sin in order to enter into the presence of God. If we accept Jesus as our substitutionary sacrifice and take upon us His righteousness, we will be made clean. But if not, we will face Him in the Day of the Lord. The Raptured church will have accepted Him and thus they will be **saved FROM** the Day of the Lord. Israel will not accept Him until they cry out for His deliverance so they must be **saved IN** the Day of the Lord.

Obadiah tells us that the nations will reap what they have sown in the Day of the Lord.

Obad 15 "For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head. NAS

Zephaniah tells us that the Day of the Lord will be a time of wrath upon the nations.

Zeph 1:14-18 Near is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. 15 **A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress**, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 **A day of trumpet and battle cry**, Against the fortified cities And the high corner towers. 17 And I will bring distress on men, So that they will walk like the blind, Because they have sinned against the LORD; And their blood will be poured out like dust, And their flesh like dung. 18 Neither their silver nor their gold Will be able to deliver them On the day of the Lord's wrath; And all the earth will be devoured In the fire of His jealousy, For He will make a complete end, Indeed a terrifying one, Of all the inhabitants of the earth. NAS

Malachi tells us the Day of the Lord will be “great and terrible” and will mark the return of Elijah. Zachary was told by the angel in the temple that his son John would come in the spirit of Elijah and prepare the way for the Messiah (Luke 1:17) in fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy. Jesus said that John the Baptist came in the Spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for his First Coming (Mk 9:11-13). Elijah is expected to come again before the Second Coming as well. On the Mount of Transfiguration, the disciples saw Jesus and Moses and Elijah talking to one another about the Second Coming.

Mal 4:5-6 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. 6 "And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse." NAS

Paul agreeing with the prophets tells us that the Day of the Lord will come “like a thief in the night”, that it will be a time of great distress, even “birth pangs” and that the world will not escape its wrath.

1 Thess 5:1-3 Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 3 While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. NAS

Peter also quotes the prophets concerning the details of the Day of the Lord, the suddenness of its coming and the cosmic disturbances.

2 Peter 3:10-13 But **the day of the Lord will come like a thief**, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to

His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. NAS

Jesus Himself bears witness to the prophets and their words. The Day of the Lord will come “like a thief in the night.”

Matt 24:42-44 "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 43 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 "For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. NAS

Jesus tells the people in Sardis in Revelation 3:3 that He is coming suddenly like a thief to judge sin in the earth, including in the church. In Rev 16:15 he speaks of “the day of God” as a day of war in which He will come like a thief.

The Day of the Lord will follow immediately upon the Second Coming of Christ and the Rapture of the church that occurs “at His coming. It will be a day of great Wrath of judgment upon the earth.

The wrath of God is His righteous anger that breaks out against all sin and to defend and protect God’s holiness. In the Eschaton, the Wrath is a period of time and activity wherein God brings judgment down upon the Antichrist, his followers and all who have rejected Christ. While there is no Biblical reason to believe that Christians will be spared the Tribulation, the scripture does tell us that the church is not appointed for wrath. Jesus tells us that while we are in the world, we will have tribulation (Jn 16:33). He tells us we must endure the tribulation.

Matt 24:9-14 "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. 10 "And at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. 11 "And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. 12 "And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13 "But **the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved**. NAS

He tells us it is the worst tribulation the world has ever seen or will ever see again. Mercifully, Jesus will cut those days short for the elect, hence the Rapture at the Second Coming.

Matt 24:21-22 for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. 22 "And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but **for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short**. NAS

At that point the cosmic disturbance associated with the Day of the Lord will occur, the trumpet will sound, Jesus will appear and the Rapture will happen.

Matt 24:29-31 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, 30 and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. 31 "And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds. NAS

Paul says we are not meant to flee from or avoid tribulation, because it produces good things in us; i.e., perseverance, character and hope.

Rom 5:3-5 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. NAS

Paul goes on to say that tribulation cannot separate us from the love of God. He is with us in all circumstances and uses it for our benefit. In fact, Jesus Himself showed us how to endure tribulation.

Rom 8:35-37 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. NAS

These sentiments and many others are contrary to the notion of a Divine rescue mission from tribulation. Jesus told the church at Smyrna that they would have a short period of tribulation, but that if they would be faithful unto death, he would give them a crown of life. Rev 2:10. The church will not escape the Tribulation, so we should prepare for it by holy living and by building spiritual muscle to withstand and to endure.

However, we will not suffer the Wrath of God. Tribulation is caused by the Antichrist, the world system and by Satan. The Wrath is caused by God and occurs at the Second Coming of Jesus. We are not destined for Wrath.

1 Thess 5:9-11 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep,

we may live together with Him. 11 Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing. NAS

Rom 5:8-9 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, **we shall be saved from the wrath of God** through Him. NAS

Eph 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things **the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience**. NAS (not upon God's people)

1 Thess 1:9-10 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is **Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come**. NAS

All of this brings us to some clear information about the timing of the Rapture of the Church. Based on what we have seen in the scriptures, the Rapture will occur **AFTER** the Tribulation, **BEFORE** the Wrath and **AT** the Second Coming.

The Book of Revelation – Chapter Summaries

The Book of Revelation offers a unique encapsulation of the events leading up to and including the Eschaton. A summary of the chapters is offered here in order to provide perspective and to help the reader find the evangelical support that is the main purpose of this entire exercise. When taken in conjunction with the other scriptures offered herein, the Book of Revelation becomes easier to understand and provides structure for eschatological prophecy as a whole. (For a more in-depth study of this topic, see the Bible study of Revelation attached.)

- I. Rev 1:1-20 - John has a vision of the throne room of God
- II. Rev 2: 1-3:22 – Letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor
 - a. Ephesus – the “First Love” church – **repent and renew**
 - b. Smyrna – the “Good” church - **just endure**
 - c. Pergamum – Balaam & the Nicolaitans - syncretism–
repent

Syncretism is the idolatrous process of blending pagan religious concepts, rituals and thinking into Christianity or Judaism. It attempts to persuade true believers to adopt religious practices and culture contrary to those approved by God. Balaam taught the Canaanites to defeat the Israelites through syncretism when they could not defeat them in battle.

- d. Thyatira – Jezebel & Gnosticism – deep teaching – **repent**

Gnosticism was and is heresy that claims to have “special knowledge” or deep teaching necessary for salvation. The claim is that this knowledge is revealed to only the elect and not available to all. Gnosticism (from the Greek word meaning “to know”) purports that its knowledge supercedes or obviates traditional orthodoxy. Included in this are theories such as the Sacred Feminine, The Gospel of Mary Magdalene, The Da Vinci Code, the Gospel of Judas, etc.

- e. Sardis – the “Dead” church – a remnant will be saved – **just endure**
- f. Philadelphia – the “Powerless, Persecuted” church – **just endure**
- g. Laodicea – the “Rich, Lukewarm, Vomitous” church – **repent**

III. Rev 4:1-11 - The Throne of God

- a. Four Living Creatures – defenders of God’s holiness and worship
- b. Twenty-four elders – Twelve Tribes and Twelve Apostles
- c. Seven Lamps/Spirits – Messengers – The Spirit of God who has seven attributes (Is 11:2)
 - i. Spirit of Wisdom
 - ii. Spirit of Understanding
 - iii. Spirit of Counsel
 - iv. Spirit of Strength
 - v. Spirit of Knowledge
 - vi. Spirit of Fear of the Lord
 - vii. Spirit of Delight in God
- d. The Sea of Glass – the righteous dead awaiting the Second Coming

IV. Rev 5:1-14 – The seven sealed book opened by the Lamb/Lion of Judah

- a. the commissioning of Jesus
 - i. the beginning of the Second Coming

V. Rev 6:1-8:5 The seven seals and the release of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse – The Great Tribulation

- a. Seal one – a white horse – conquerors over time and the Antichrist
- b. Seal two – a red horse – war

- c. Seal three – a black horse – scarcity of food but not oil or wine
 - d. Seal four – a pale horse ridden by Death, followed by Hades. One fourth of the earth is slain by sword, famine, pestilence and wild beasts
 - e. Seal five – the martyrs of the ages calling for justice
 - f. Seal six – a great earthquake, a blackened sun and a blood red moon, falling stars, fear among all men for the Wrath of God (Jer. 30:7) The wind is stilled. The mountains fall into the valleys – (Rev 16:17-21)
 - g. An interlude to allow for the sealing of the 144,000 Jews on their foreheads for protection from the Wrath to come and the Rapture of the Tribulation church. The Second Coming is delayed until all have “come in.” (2 Pet 3:8-13)
 - h. Seal seven – The Wrath of God is thrown down upon the earth - thunder, lightning and an earthquake followed by the commissioning of seven angels with seven trumpets. This is the point at which the Lord comes back and the Rapture occurs.
- VI. Rev 8:6-11:19 - The seven trumpets – The Wrath of God begins. This is round one. The bowls make up round two.
- a. Trumpet one – hail, fire mixed with blood burns one third of the earth, a third of the trees and all of the grass – recalls the plagues of Egypt
 - b. Trumpet two – a burning mountain is thrown into the sea turning one third of it to blood, killing one-third of the fish and destroying one third of the ships.
 - c. Trumpet three – a burning star, Wormwood falls on the earth turning one third of all rivers and springs, bitter killing many – chemical accident?
 - d. Trumpet four - sunlight, moonlight and starlight are reduced by one-third, shortening daylight and making even the nighttime darker. Mt. Pinatubo comes to mind. Three woes come.
 - e. Trumpet five (First Woe) – Apollyon (Abaddon or Lucifer) looses the fallen angels from the bottomless pit (Abyss) to torment all who do not have the seal. He releases great clouds of smoke filled with locust-like creatures that sting like scorpions. All who are stung by them are tormented for five months but not killed, nor can they find death when they seek it. The locusts look like little armored horses with golden crowns on their heads and faces of men, hair like

women and teeth like lions, breastplates like iron and tails like scorpions.

- f. Trumpet six – In an effort to engender worldwide repentance, four demons from the Euphrates are released to kill one-third of mankind using 200 million horsemen with fiery breastplates, riding horses with heads of lions breathing deadly fire, smoke and brimstone and tails having snakes' heads with which to do further harm. This is the Second Woe.

VII. Rev 11:1-14 – Two witnesses - The Gentiles tread on the Holy city for forty two months, the Two Witnesses prophesy from Jerusalem for 1260 days (Great Tribulation) clothed in sackcloth, destroying their attackers with fire from out of their mouth, shutting down the rain, turning waters into blood and smiting the earth with plagues. They represent the Law and the Prophets by which the unsaved world will be judged. Perhaps they are Moses and Elijah. After that the beast (Antichrist) will kill them, leaving their bodies in the street for three and one-half days for taunting. Then they will be resurrected and caught up to heaven causing an earthquake in Jerusalem that destroys one-tenth of the city and kills 7,000 people.

- a. Trumpet seven (Third Woe) – the coming of Jesus and the Wrath of God including an earthquake and a hailstorm.

VIII. Rev 12: 1-17 – In the middle of the Tribulation there is a spiritual battle in the heavens and a great dragon with seven heads and ten horns (Satan) is thrown down onto the earth and persecutes Israel full force for three and one-half years.

IX. Rev 13:1-10 – The Antichrist defined - seven heads, ten horns, empowered by the dragon (Satan), blasphemous, persuasive, receiving a fatal head wound, risen from the dead by Satan (the legend of **Nero Redivivus**), worshipping the dragon (Satan), and having authority for forty two months. He makes war on the saints and is worshipped by all of mankind that is not sealed for God.

X. Rev 13: 11-18 – The False Prophet defined - two horns, speaks like the dragon (Satan), creates an image of the Antichrist to be worshipped by all and gives the image breath and voice, does signs and wonders in the presence of the Antichrist such as calling down fire. He requires all to take the mark on their head or right

hand and forbids all to buy or sell without the mark. The number of the Antichrist is 666.

- XI. Rev 14:1-13 The Lamb is now in view and is accompanied by 144,000 believers. Three angels make announcements. They are:
 - a. The appointed number has now come in,
 - b. Babylon is fallen, and
 - c. Anyone who takes the mark of the beast will suffer the Wrath and be eternally damned.

- XII. Rev 14:14-20 - The Second Coming of Jesus, the harvesting of the saints (Mt 13:38-43), THE RAPTURE of the church (15-16) and the Wrath of God on the earth (round two) (17-20). "Blood to a horse's bridle for 200 miles" represents the enormous "quantity" of judgment

- XIII. Rev 15:1-16:21 – The seven bowls of Judgment (the finishing touches of the Wrath of God)
 - a. Bowl one – loathsome and malignant sores on those with the mark of the beast (like Egyptian boils)
 - b. Bowl two – the sea is turned into blood and everything in it dies
 - c. Bowl three – all rivers and springs are turned into blood and everything in them dies (again reminiscent of the plagues of Egypt)
 - d. Bowl four – the sun scorches unrepentant mankind with fire, heat and sunburn
 - e. Bowl five – the Antichrist's throne is attacked, his kingdom darkened and they all gnaw at their tongues in torment (again like Egypt)
 - f. Bowl six – The Euphrates is dried up to allow the coming of the kings from the east to march upon Jerusalem. A demonic trinity of demons go out from the mouths of the dragon, the Antichrist and the false prophet to gather the kings of men to battle, luring them with signs and wonder, calling them all to Armageddon (the Plains of Esdraelon and Megiddo)
 - g. Bowl seven – lightning, thunder, the greatest earthquake of all times. Babylon is split in three parts, all the cities of the earth fall down, all islands disappear and all mountains fall down (pangeia restored – begun in Rev 6:12) and there is a plague of hailstones from heaven
 - h. Rev 17:1-18:24 – Babylon (the Harlot) is explained, destroyed and judged
 - i. She lured the men of earth away from God
 - ii. She feasted on the blood of the martyrs

- iii. She reappeared in new forms in every age
- iv. She was overcome by faith, hope and love over the ages, by Jesus and his saints in the end
- v. Her demise was sudden, horrible and final. Although we are not yet done with Satan at this point, we are done with Babylon

XIV. Rev 19:1-20:15– Final events

- a. Jesus is acknowledged in Heaven
- b. The Marriage Supper is called
- c. The Second Coming is explained
- d. The Antichrist and the False Prophet are thrown into Hell
- e. Satan is bound for 1,000 years
- f. The Millennial Reign
- g. Satan is released after 1,000 years to test mankind
- h. Satan is thrown into hell forever
- i. The great White Throne Judgment - all who do not belong to the Lamb are judged from the beginning of time to the present. There is a separation of the “sheep and the goats” from the Millennial Reign. All unbelievers are thrown into Hell for eternity. Death and Hades are also thrown into Hell.

XV. Rev 21:1-22:5 - The Millennial Kingdom explained

XVI. Rev 22:6-21 – Concluding words of encouragement

The Millennial Reign of Jesus Upon the Earth

The necessity of a Millennial Reign upon the earth is embedded in the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden. In His First Coming, Jesus came to cleanse us from our sins. In His Second Coming, Jesus will accomplish what the first Adam failed to do. Paul calls Adam a “type” of Christ. This means that **we can discern what Jesus was supposed to do by understanding what Adam was given to do.**

Rom 5:14-15 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of **Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.**

Paul also called Jesus the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45). After Jesus, there would be no other “Adams.” Jesus is, in other words, the ultimate Adam. In contrast with Adam, Jesus would be obedient to the Father and not sin. In contrast

with Adam, Jesus would steward the earth, ruling properly and reigning over its people to the glory of God

God's plans cannot be thwarted in the long run even by the abuse of man's free will. Isaiah tells us that **the word of God will not fail to accomplish the purpose for which it was sent.** It is not conceivable that the Garden and Adam's calling should be a failed experiment for God just because they were failed experiences for Adam and Eve.

Isa 55:11 So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth, It shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it. NAS

For 6,000 years evangelical Jews and Christians have expected to see the Messiah rule and reign in the earth – a Messianic Utopia. Some Christians believed that the Millennial Reign had already begun and was represented by the governance of the church in the earth. The expectation was that the church would eventually convert all men and cause them to become sanctified at a very high level. This theory, known as **Post-millennialism,** became harder and harder to support by actual experience over time. Most others held that the Millennial Reign was yet to come and would begin after the Second Coming of Christ. Known as **Pre-millennialism,** this has been the most prevalent theory among evangelical Christians down through the ages. It is only since the 1900s in the age of modernism that the concept of the Millennial Reign of Christ was abandoned as a literal time period. But after one world war “to end all wars” followed shortly by the second one, disillusioned Christians began to take all of the scriptures that had been used to describe the Millennial Reign of Christ in the earth and push them forward into “Heaven.” They spiritualized obvious references to human existence as best they could and threw their lot in with a divine rescue mission in the form of a Pre-Tribulation or Mid-Tribulation Rapture. They envisioned the world in a downward spiral which not even God could fix. This theory is known as **Amillennialism.**

Modernism's poison ate away at the fabric of faith and trust in God.

Christians quit preparing their children and themselves to stand and endure in the face of Satan's onslaught and began to teach them to expect a retreat to the safety of the Marriage Feast of the Lamb by means of a Pre-Trib or Mid-Trib Rapture. They abandoned God's call to holiness and its resultant spiritual authority and power in favor of popular psychology and self-help teaching. They gave the Evil One so much credit that they developed a functional dualism. In their eyes, God and Satan became

equal combatants and the outcome was still hanging in the balance. God's best hope was a supernatural retreat and Jesus' best move was a rescue mission. They began to believe that the "dark side of the force" might indeed be stronger, at least in this world.

In the face of modernism and its resultant secularity, the idea of a literal Millennial Reign of Jesus upon the earth became unthinkable, even silly. And, come to think of it, so did the idea of a literal creation as described in Genesis. Academic Biblical scholars, seeking the praises of men rather than the approval of the Father, subjected the scriptures to historical criticism and joined the secularists in labeling much of the Bible as metaphor and myth. It had been a very long time since they had actually experienced the power and presence of God. They assumed that, just because He was not speaking to them, He was, therefore, not speaking to anyone. They discounted 6,000 years of Judeo-Christian testimony as some "vast right wing conspiracy" or some monolithic, long and enduring self-delusion, as if only recently had people become intelligent or rational.

The problem is this: **If you give away the Bible at its edges (Genesis and Revelation), you will soon be fighting for it at its core**. The edges and the core are interdependent. Believe both or you will eventually believe in neither. Sure enough, today's intelligentsia are denying the virgin birth, the resurrection, the sinlessness of Jesus, His miracles, His substitutionary sacrifice for us and even the historical existence of Christ. Furthermore, they are ridiculing anyone who has the temerity to believe differently and challenging our very right to teach evangelical truth to our children.

Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. If we believe God, we will be saved. Jesus believed in the Creation story and the Millennial Reign as did His disciples, Paul and the other writers of the New Testament. **Jesus and these others quoted the prophets as if the prophets spoke literal truth**. If we are going to trust our eternal well-being to the truth, wisdom and revelation of Jesus and His immediate followers, it would be irrational to also assume that they were unenlightened or deceived about Creation and/or the Millennial Reign. It would also be inconsistent with belief to think that they were "winking at Heaven" when they used myths and legends while teaching the truth of the ages to unenlightened people they encountered in their day. If modern thinking were required to access God's revelation, Jesus just as easily could have been born in this age. When push comes to shove, we are "in for a penny, in for a pound."

Paul, like Isaiah, Ezekiel, John the Revelator and a few others, tells us that he has actually seen the Heaven of the hereafter (1 Cor 12 2-4). He further tells us he is not permitted to share the details of the heavenly realm. Finally, he tells us that **the “eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man” what God has laid up there for His people** (1 Cor 2:9). From that we can deduce that Heaven is a place very different from this earth and is very different in structure and experience from anything we “have ever seen or heard.” Jesus tells us that the human marriage does not exist there. **Our bodies have to be redesigned to exist in that realm.** So what do we do with the pages and pages of references to a human existence in a peaceable kingdom with animals, birth, death, healing herbs for sick people, rivers, mountains, people who rise up in rebellion after the release of Satan from the abyss, a final battle (long after Armageddon) and so many other physical components? The answer is that we can either treat them all as allegorical and metaphorical or **we have to allow for the Millennial Reign of Christ upon the earth.**

Evangelicals are never going to convince unbelievers that the Millennial Reign is literal nor is it the purpose of this treatise to convince unbelievers. However, evangelicals do want to see such a claim supported in scripture, and that **IS** the purpose of this writing. What follows is Biblical support for a literal Millennial Reign of Christ upon the earth in time and among humanity.

The primary source of Biblical support for the Millennial Reign **comes from the prophets.**

Isaiah 11:1-16 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2 And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. 3 And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; 4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And **He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.** 5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist.

Isaiah 11:6 **And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the kid, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;** And a little boy will lead them. 7 Also the cow and the bear will graze; their young will lie down together; And **the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 And the nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.** 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11:10 Then it will come about in that day that the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious. 11 Then it will happen on that day that the Lord will again recover the second time with His hand The remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, And from the islands of the sea. 12 And He will lift up a standard for the nations, And will assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. 13 Then the jealousy of Ephraim will depart, And those who harass Judah will be cut off; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, And Judah will not harass Ephraim. 14 And they will swoop down on the slopes of the Philistines on the west; Together they will plunder the sons of the east; They will possess Edom and Moab; And the sons of Ammon will be subject to them. 15 And the LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; And He will wave His hand over the River with His scorching wind; And He will strike it into seven streams, And make men walk over dry-shod. 16 And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant of His people who will be left, just as there was for Israel in the day that they came up out of the land of Egypt.

Isaiah 12 :1-6 Then you (**Israel**) will say on that day, "I will give thanks to Thee, O LORD; For although Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, And Thou dost comfort me. 2 "Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For the Lord God is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation." 3 Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation. 4 And in that day you will say, "Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; make them remember that His name is exalted." 5 Praise the LORD in song, for He has done excellent things; Let this be known throughout the earth. 6 Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. NAS

Isa 65:17-25 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind." But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem {for} rejoicing, and her people {for} gladness. "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in My people; and there will no longer be heard in her the voice of weeping and the sound of crying." No longer will there be in it an infant {who lives but a few} days, or an old man who does not live out his days; for the youth will die at the age of one hundred and the one who does not reach the age of one hundred shall be {thought} accursed. "And they shall build houses and inhabit {them}; they shall also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. "They shall not build, and another inhabit, they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the lifetime of a tree, {so shall be} the days of My people, and My chosen ones shall wear out the work of their hands. "They shall not labor in vain, or bear {children} for calamity; for they are the offspring of those blessed by the LORD, and their descendants with them." It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. "The wolf and the lamb shall graze together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain," says the LORD. (NAS)

Jer 3:14-19 'Return, O faithless sons,' declares the LORD; 'For I am a master to you, and I will take you one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.' "Then I will give

you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding." And it shall be in those days when you are multiplied and increased in the land," declares the LORD, "they shall say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' And it shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they miss {it,} nor shall it be made again. "At that time they shall call Jerusalem 'The Throne of the LORD,' and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of the LORD; nor shall they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart." In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and they will come together from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers as an inheritance. "Then I said, 'How I would set you among My sons, and give you a pleasant land, the most beautiful inheritance of the nations!' And I said, 'You shall call me, My Father, and not turn away from following me.' (NAS)

Ezek 47:1-12 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, from south of the altar. 2 And he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate by way of the gate that faces east. And behold, water was trickling from the south side.

Ezek 47:3 When the man went out toward the east with a line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he led me through the water, water reaching the ankles. 4 Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the knees. Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the loins. 5 Again he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not ford, for the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be forded. 6 And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me back to the bank of the river. 7 Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river there were very many trees on the one side and on the other. 8 Then he said to me, "These waters go out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah; then they go toward the sea, being made to flow into the sea, and the waters of the sea become fresh. 9 "And it will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there, and the others become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. 10 "And it will come about that fishermen will stand beside it; from Engedi to Eneglaim there will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish will be according to their kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many. 11 "But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. 12 "And by the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing." NAS

Zech 14:1 Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. 2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. 3 Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. 4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the

east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. 5 And you will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then **the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!** 6 And it will come about in that day that there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. 7 For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light. (see also **Rev 21:23-25 and 22:5**) 8 And it will come about in that day that living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter.

Zech 14:9 And **the LORD will be king over all the earth;** in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one. 10 All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. 11 And **people will live in it**, and there will be no more curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security.

Zech 14:12 Now this will be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth. 13 And it will come about in that day that a great panic from the LORD will fall on them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another. 14 And Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance. 15 So also like this plague, will be the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey, and all the cattle that will be in those camps.

16 Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 17 And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. 18 And if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 19 This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 20 In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "HOLY TO THE LORD." And the cooking pots in the Lord's house will be like the bowls before the altar. 21 And every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the LORD of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts in that day. NAS

Rev 5:9-10 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood {men }

from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” And **Thou hast made them {to be} a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.**” (NAS)

Rev 21:1-22:5 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, 4 and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” 5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." 6 And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. 7 "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. 8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Rev 21:9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. 12 It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are those of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. 13 There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And the one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. 16 And the city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. 17 And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. 18 And the material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. 22 And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple. 23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. 25 And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; 26 and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 27 and nothing unclean and no one who

practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Revelation 22:1 And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him; 4 and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever. NAS

The Great White Throne Judgment

Every man must die and face the Judge of all the earth to account for his sins. The Bible speaks against reincarnation. Each person dies one time and then comes to judgment.

Heb 9:27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment. NAS

The righteous dead go immediately into the presence of God at the moment of their death and, more importantly, into the presence of Jesus, the Christ. All of us are found guilty of sin, but those of us who have our names written into the Lamb's Book of Life will not be judged according to our deeds, but according to Jesus' righteousness. Satan accuses us to God and justifiably so. But Jesus imparts His righteousness to us. He gives us His bloodstained cloak through which God cannot see our sins. His righteousness not only is imparted to us (**given as a gift**) but is imputed to us. That is, the blood of Jesus causes us to become like Him, and God will remember our sins no more.

Heb 8:12 "For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And I will remember their sins no more." NAS

The unrighteous dead go to Sheol where they "sleep" until the end of time. Sheol is the Old Testament place of the dead. It is sometimes in the scriptures referred to as a prison, a pit, the grave or a place of sleep or mindless dreaming. The Greek name for it is "Hades" (not to be confused with Hell which is another place altogether).

Ps 146:2-4 I will praise the LORD while I live; **I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.** 3 Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. 4 His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; **In that very day his thoughts perish.** NAS

Death as a condition of sleep (“soul sleep”) or mindless dreaming is not received by all believers over time, so an explanation with Biblical support is offered here. Sleep as a euphemism for death is common in both the Old and New Testaments. Job complains to God that if God allows him to go down into Sheol, he (Job) will not be capable of praising God. The theology of Job and most other Old Testament men and women held that there was no conscious moment in the grave.

Job 14:12 So man lies down and does not rise. **Until the heavens be no more,** He will not awake nor be aroused out of his sleep. NAS

Eccl 9:5-11 For the living know they will die; but **the dead do not know anything,** nor have they any longer a reward, **for their memory is forgotten.** 6 **Indeed their love, their hate, and their zeal have already perished,** and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun. 7 Go then, eat your bread in happiness, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works. 8 Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head. 9 Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life, and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun. 10 Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; **for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.** NAS

Job 14:10-14 "But man dies and lies prostrate. Man expires, and where is he? 11 "**As water evaporates from the sea, And a river becomes parched and dried up, 12 So man lies down and does not rise.** Until the heavens be no more, **He will not awake nor be aroused out of his sleep.** 13 "Oh that Thou wouldst hide me in Sheol, That Thou wouldst conceal me until Thy wrath returns to Thee, That Thou wouldst set a limit for me and remember me! 14 "If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my struggle I will wait, Until my change comes. NAS

Job’s high theology expects an afterlife somehow and sometime after Sheol.

Ps 13:3 Consider and answer me, O LORD, my God; Enlighten my eyes, **lest I sleep the sleep of death.** NAS

Is 38:18 For Sheol cannot thank thee. Death cannot praise thee. Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for thy faithfulness.” NAS

Jer 51:39 (**Concerning the judgment of Babylon**) When they become heated up, I shall serve them their banquet And make them drunk, that they may become jubilant And **may sleep a perpetual sleep And not wake up,**" declares the LORD. NAS

Dan 12:2-3 "And many of those **who sleep in the dust of the ground** will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. NAS

Matt 27:49-53 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. 51 And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split, 52 **and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many.** NAS

Acts 13:36-37 "For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, **fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay;** 37 but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. NAS

1 Cor 15:6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but **some have fallen asleep;** NAS

1 Cor 11:28-30 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and **a number sleep.** NAS

1 Cor 15:16-26 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 **Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.** 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. 20 But **now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.** 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. NAS

1 Cor 15:51-52 Behold, I tell you a mystery; **we shall not all sleep,** but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised imperishable,** and we shall be changed. NAS

1 Thess 4:13-18 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, **about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope.** 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, **that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.** 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds

to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. NAS

2 Peter 3:3-4 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? **For ever since the fathers fell asleep,** all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." NAS

David, Solomon and Isaiah also describe Sheol as a vague dream state or a place of unconsciousness. (Ps 6:4-6; 31:17; Eccl 9:10; Is 38:18)

Jesus referred to Lazarus as being asleep when he died. When the disciples misunderstood the terminology, Jesus tells them plainly that "Lazarus has died." Jesus pointedly waits four days until Lazarus is stinking before He goes to wake him from the dead. He wants it to be clear that we all know that Lazarus has died. (John 11:11-15)

There is a significant difference between resurrection and re-animation. Only Jesus has been resurrected from the dead so far. The rest of the righteous dead will be resurrected and receive their glorified bodies at the Second Coming. Lazarus and all others in the Bible who were "raised from the dead" were re-animated in their physical bodies and had to die again later. That is not true resurrection.

Logic defends "soul sleep" for these people. Are we to suppose that these many people were called back from Heaven or Hell? No, they were called back from Sheol, the place of the dead.

At the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ on the earth (about 1000 years after the Second Coming) a judgment will occur at which time all of the souls of the unrighteous dead will be awakened in Sheol and brought before the Lord for sentencing along with the good and the evil people who lived during the Millennial Reign. This is known as the Great White Throne Judgment (see below). The righteous dead, having already been judged when they died and having ruled and reigned with Christ for 1000 years, will be witnesses. The righteous living at the time of this Great White Throne judgment will be judged and make up the group referred to in Mathew 25 as the sheep. After this judgment in which Death and Hades give up their prisoners (inhabitants), the souls of the unrighteous dead (the goats in Matthew 25) will all go into Hell, the Lake of Fire, to join the Antichrist and the false Prophet, the first two residents of Hell, followed 1000 years later by Satan, the third resident to arrive there.

Rev 20:7-15 And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. 11 And I saw a **great white throne** and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. NAS

The End of Time and of the World and the Beginning of “Heaven”

The ultimate end of the earth occurs after the Millennial Reign when the earth and the heavens are consumed by fire.

2 Peter 3:2-7 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." 5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. 7 But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. NAS

2 Peter 3:8-11 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. NAS

Once we put the millennial reign scriptures into the Eschaton where they belong and take them out of “Heaven” where they have been erroneously misplaced by many in recent years, we find that there is little that we know about Heaven itself.

Paul says about Heaven that “eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him.” He also tells us he has seen Heaven but is not permitted to describe much of it.

2 Cor 12:2-4 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-- whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- such a man was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know how such a man-- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows-- 4 was caught up into Paradise, and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak. NAS

One thing that we know about Heaven is that it contains the throne room of God. Several prophets have been given a vision of it and Jesus verifies this point in Mt 5:34. Their descriptions of God's throne are consistent with one another in many ways and may indeed be literal. Or they may be metaphorical. In either case, they reveal a very different world than the Millennial Reign scriptures describe.

Isa 6:1-8 In the year of King, Uzziah's death, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. 2 Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." 4 And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. 5 Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined!, Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, with a burning coal in his hand which he had taken from the altar with tongs. 7 And he touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is forgiven." 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" NAS

The throne room of God is a place of holiness and of judgment. Spirit beings of all kinds come and go, but no one remains there who is corrupted. **We are told it is located in Heaven.**

Ps 11:4 The LORD is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; NAS

Ps 103:19 The LORD has established His throne in the heavens; And His sovereignty rules over all. NAS

Stephen in Acts 7:49 and Jesus in Mt 5:34 both quote Isaiah 66:1 in this matter when Isaiah, speaking for God, says: “Thus says the LORD, ‘Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.’” NAS

Matt 5:34 "But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,

In Ezekiel's vision (Ezek 1:4-28), the throne of God came to him at the banks of the river Chebar on a cloud. This vision contained some of the same elements found in the other visions: the four living creatures, the cherubim, the throne of God and the Lord Himself in the form of a man. Again in the entire tenth chapter of Ezekiel he witnesses the same portable throne room rendering judgment on the city of Jerusalem at the hands of the cherubim.

Daniel also tells of a vision of the throne of judgment of the whole world. Jesus makes several corroborating comments. In conjunction with John's comments in Revelation it is apparent that this will occur AFTER the Millennial Reign.

Dan 7:9-10 "I kept looking Until **thrones were set up**, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow, And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. 10 "A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened. NAS

Matt 19:28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration (**the resurrection**) when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. NAS

Matt 25:31-33 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 "And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. NAS

Rev 20:11-15 And I saw a **great white throne** and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven (**the physical heavens**) fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. NAS

That Jesus, the Messiah and the Son of David, will sit on an adjacent throne at the right hand of the Father is a frequent theme in the scriptures,

especially in Hebrews. (Ps 110:1; Mt 22:44, 26:64; Mk 16:19; Act 2:25-36; Ps 16:8-11; Acts 5:31, 7:55-56; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:19-23; Col 3:1; 1 Peter 3:22; Heb 1:3,1:13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:22)

Heb 8:1 Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest (Jesus) who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, NAS

Heb 12:1-2 Therefore, since we have so **great a cloud of witnesses** surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. NAS

This "**great cloud of witnesses**" brings us to another revelation about who or what is to be found in Heaven. It is the location of the dead in Christ. For the believer, since the resurrection of Jesus, to be absent from the body is to be present with Christ (2 Cor 5:6-9). Prior to the resurrection of Jesus, the righteous dead dwelt in Sheol in what was known as the Bosom of Abraham or Paradise. Psalm 24 speaks about the process of Jesus "ascending to the holy hill" of God and throwing open the gates of Heaven which had been closed to us since the sin of Adam. Heaven is full of our dearly departed who walked with the Lord. At this point they exist in a spiritual state only, awaiting their own resurrection and glorified bodies at the Second Coming of Christ (1 Cor 15 :20-24).

1 Cor 15:20-24 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. NAS

It is John the revelator who gives us the most developed and extensive looks into the Throne Room of God. He describes it, its inhabitants, and its "culture" in chapters 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21 and 22.

Jesus tells us that there is no human state of marriage in Heaven, but that in Heaven we are like the angels.

Matt 22:29-30 But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God. 30 "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." NAS

Heaven is by definition in eternity and not in time. Eternity is not a long time, but rather it is a different state or condition of existence. Physical bodies of any sort would be unable to function in that world.

1 Cor 15:39-44 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. 40 **There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another.** 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 **it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.** If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. NAS

Frankly, Heaven is a different world about which we know very little. It contains God (a spirit), the angels (also spirits), Jesus (a resurrected body), the saints who have gone on before (all spirits at this time) and will contain the resurrected bodies of the saints eventually. There is no Biblical reason to expect “mansions of gold on streets of silver” in the sweet by and by. These constructs are metaphorical. What Heaven is really like only Heaven knows 😊.

Appendix I: A Time, Times and a Half Time

The Aramaic word for “time” (‘iddan) as in Daniel 7:25 means “a set period,” technically, a year. Context is then used to determine the length of that period. In Biblical prophecy, a “time” is considered to equal a year. In Hebrew the same word for prophetic “time” (mo’wed or mo’ed) as in Daniel 12:7 clearly means a year.

Dan 7:24-25 'And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. NAS

Dan 12:6-7 And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?" 7 And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed. NAS

A comparison and correlation of prophetic scripture in both the Old and New Testaments removes all doubt as to the timeframe being discussed. This is accomplished by the logic of equivalencies.

- I. Rev 12:13-14 tell us that the Antichrist will wage war on the saints for **A Time, Times and a half Time**. The Greek word for “time” (kai’ros) also means a set period of time the length of which is determined by context. Other interpretive words could be “a season” or “a while.”

And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. 14 And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for **a time and times and half a time**, from the presence of the serpent. NAS

- II. Dan 7:23-27 agrees with that assessment indicating that Daniel and John are using the terms in the same way.

"Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms, and it will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 24' As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. 25'And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the

saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for **a time, times, and half a time**. 26'But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. 27'Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.' NAS

III. Rev 11:1-11 indicates that **a time, times, and half a time** is equivalent to **forty-two months** and **twelve hundred and sixty days**.

And there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship in it. 2 "And leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and **they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months**. 3 "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and **they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days**, clothed in sackcloth." 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if anyone desires to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their enemies; and if anyone would desire to harm them, in this manner he must be killed. 6 These have the power to shut up the sky, in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. 7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. 11 And after the **three and a half days** the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were beholding them. NAS

IV. Rev 12:6-7 reconfirms the equivalency with **one thousand two hundred and sixty days**.

And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for **one thousand two hundred and sixty days**. And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for **a time, times, and half a time**; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed NAS

V. Rev 13:3-7 reconfirms the equivalency with forty-two months.

And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; 4 and they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" 5 And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

VI. An explanation of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel and its likely calculation is also relevant to this discussion.

Dan 9:24-27 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. 25 "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26 "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come (**the Antichrist**) will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. 27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." NAS

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel prophesied in Daniel 9:24-27 is a much discussed passage. The challenge is to understand the metaphor. As a literal, scientific, non-metaphorical statement, it makes no historical sense. It implies that Jerusalem and the temple would be rebuilt in about sixteen months (sixty-nine literal weeks) from the decree to rebuild and then be destroyed again. That did not happen. The Messiah would have had to come and be "cut off" in about fourteen months (sixty-two literal weeks). This would not be very comforting to Daniel, and yet comforting Daniel is the purpose of Gabriel's visit. These constructs are inconsistent with all historical data and with Daniel 11. It would have made the comments of Jesus, Paul and John meaningless, not to mention erroneous.

The "Seventy weeks" are not actual weeks. They are weeks of years. That is the literal Hebrew meaning of shib' iym (70) shabu'iym (sevens, weeks or heptads). The prophecy is a combination of things that are clear and things that are not. The seventy years of the Babylonian captivity is clear in

the Hebrew language. Jeremiah 25:11 uses the phrase shib` iym (seventy) sha'neh (years), a term meaning 70 actual years. Jeremiah 29:10 uses the same phrase for seventy years. The seventy weeks in Daniel 9:24 clearly means 490 years based on the language. Seventy weeks is shib' iym (seventy) shabu'iym (sevens, "weeks" or heptads). The phrase means 70 sevens or 490 time periods. (years). It is interpreted "70 weeks of years" in both sacred and secular usage of Daniel's day. Context has led scholars over time to interpret this as 490 lunar years.

The starting point of the 490 lunar years is open to **MUCH** debate. There are twelve or thirteen workable theories leading to two major interpretations. One theory is that the starting point for the 490 years is based on Cyrus' decree that allowed the Israelites to go home. This causes the 490 lunar years to end NOWHERE in particular. The closest possible interpretation is the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and that theory has been received by many as a likely interpretation. However, that theory doesn't work for Jesus, Paul and John, so it doesn't work for me. They all have the Antichrist as future to themselves and Jesus has the Antiochus Epiphanes events as already come and gone. (Mt 24:15)

Matt 24:15-18 "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; 17 let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; 18 and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. NAS

The much more likely imperial decree referenced in Daniel 9:24 as the starting point of the 490 years is the degree by Artaxerxes I, stepson to Esther and friend to Nehemiah, the man who God sent to restore Jerusalem. In about 445 BC Artaxerxes I issued the decree for Jerusalem to be rebuilt and the temple restored. By adding 483 lunar years (sixty-nine weeks of years) to those dates, the timeline would have the Messiah "cut off" at about the time that Jesus was crucified. Adding more support to the eschatological interpretation is the description of what the Messiah in question would actually accomplish when He comes at the end of the sixty-nine weeks. Let's look again at verse 24 from above. He would

- a. finish the transgression,
- b. make an end of sin,
- c. make atonement for iniquity,
- d. bring in everlasting righteousness,
- e. seal up (fulfill) vision and prophecy, and
- f. anoint the most holy place.

As Christians we are committed to the idea that only Jesus by His passion, death and resurrection in circa 29-33 AD could accomplish this whole list.

Once again, the calculation of the 490 lunar years is found in the Hebrew words used as outlined above. There will be sixty-nine weeks of weeks (483 lunar years) until the First Coming of the Messiah. There will be one more week of weeks (seven lunar years) until His Second Coming. That's 490 lunar years between the "now" in Daniel 9:24 and the culmination of all things (Dan 9:24). The last week (seven lunar years) concerns the activity of the Antichrist. According to Daniel (and Jesus) the first three and one-half "weeks" of his reign is a period of deceitfulness, followed by a second three and one-half weeks of broken covenant after the abomination that makes desolate (Dan 9:26).

Julian Calendar Calculation

Most scholars agree that the death of Christ happened at the Passover in the month Nisan, in the four thousand seven hundred and forty-sixth year of the Julian period. Four hundred and eighty-three years, reckoned back from the above year, leads us directly to the very month and year in which Ezra had his commission from Artaxerxes Longimanus, King of Persia, (see Ezra 7:9) to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. See the commission in Ezra 7:11-26.

Modern Calendar Calculation

The 483 years begins 1 Nisan 445 BC (March 14, 445 BC according to Nehemiah 2:1-9) and ends 10th Nisan 32 AD (Palm Sunday April 6, 32 AD according to John 11:55-12:1-16) which period is 173,880 days. Between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth week is a mystery hidden from the Jews --that is, the Church Age, the mechanism by which the Gentiles might be saved (Eph 3:3-12). After this age comes the seventieth week of Daniel. The vision of the seventy weeks of Daniel tells of both the First and the Second Coming of Christ with no comment on the gap in between. (Gen 49:10-11, Isaiah 53:1-12, Micah 5:1-15, Mal 3:1-5, Zech 9: 9-10, 1Peter 1:10-12)

Two final comments might be helpful. First, the reason for the perceived separation between the sixty-ninth week of Daniel and the seventieth week of Daniel is found initially in the information given Daniel by the angel in Daniel 9:24-27. It is he who designates the separation of the last week from the other period. This is further supported by Paul's revelation that the Gentile church age was a mystery hidden in ages and that God would in time re-graft Israel back into the vine.

Eph 3:3-7 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. 4 And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; 6 to be specific, **that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel**, 7 of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. NAS

The mystery hidden in ages from the Jews was the existence of the Gentile church. It was actually prophesied by many prophets and by God to Abraham, Moses and others, but the Jews had "eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear."

Rom 11:25-29 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that **a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in**; 26 and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob." 27 "And this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." 28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. NAS

Rom 11:17-24 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." 20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; 21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. 22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? NAS

Second, the reason that many scholars and students of prophecy have been convinced that the Antichrist will come from the people based in the old Roman Empire is found in Daniel 9:26-27. The prince who is to come is the Antichrist and his people are those who would destroy Jerusalem in the day that the Messiah would be cut off. It was the Roman General Titus who destroyed Jerusalem in 66-70 AD.

26 "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come (**the Antichrist**) will destroy the city and the

sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. 27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come **one who makes desolate**, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the **one who makes desolate**." NAS

Appendix II: Rapture Theory and Its History

The “Rapture” is a Biblical doctrine that is the source of no little controversy in the modern church. That the Bible speaks of a Rapture is indisputable for evangelicals (Bible believers). Support for this concept is provided in depth in the chapter entitled The Second Coming – Rapture and Resurrection. While it is true that liberal scholars may challenge the literal nature of the Rapture, they also have been known to challenge the literal nature of the Creation story, the Millennial Reign of Christ upon the earth, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection of Jesus and the divinity of Christ. Our work neither seeks to convince liberals nor to exhaustively address their thinking. We seek only to provide evangelical laymen Biblical support for concepts related to the Eschaton (end times).

The controversy among evangelicals is not that there is a Rapture, but when it will occur. The Rapture is a feature or a subset of the Resurrection of the Dead. Traditionally and historically when the church has addressed the Rapture at all, it was seen as an event occurring at the time of the Second Coming of Christ. According to 1 Cor 15: 21-24, Paul taught that resurrection of the righteous dead (and the Rapture) occurred “at His coming.” He is even clearer in 1 Thess 4:14-18 telling us that all the righteous dead will return with Jesus for the purpose of resurrection and that those living at that time will be “caught up to meet him in the air. The Latin term for “caught up” is *raptura* from which we get the term Rapture. Paul tells Timothy that he is ready to die and go to be with the Lord and that he expects to receive his crown “at His appearing”(2 Tim 4:8). For 1800 years of church history, that is how the church read the scriptures on this subject.

In about 1830 a doctrine arose in Britain suggesting that the Rapture would occur at the beginning of the Tribulation. It was promulgated by Margaret MacDonald, John Darby and the Plymouth Brethren to support the idea that God would not allow his beloved children to suffer the seven-year Tribulation period. This became known as Pre-Tribulation Rapture theory. It found no broad support and would probably have gone nowhere except that it was picked up by Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, the author of an extraordinarily popular reference work on the King James Version of the Bible in 1909 and revised in 1917. It then received the support of Pre-Trib rapturists in Bible conferences, Bible colleges and Fundamentalist seminaries. It began to be espoused by John Walvoord, John Ryrie and Dwight Pentecost, men of influence and character.

In the 1940s, men began to preach a compromise known as Mid-Trib Rapture theory. It suggested (correctly) that God would not subject his church and his people to His Wrath. They taught the wrath would fall upon the earth during the entire last 3.5 years of the Tribulation and, therefore, necessitated a Mid-Trib Rapture of the saints. Our study of the scripture persuades us that the wrath of God falls upon the earth at the Second Coming at the end of the seven-year Tribulation period pushing the Rapture back to that same time.

For 1800 years the fathers of the church believed in a Post-Tribulation Pre-Wrath Rapture. These included even the more modern reformers and church fathers such as Wesley, Calvin, Spurgeon, Knox, Hus, William Carey, George Whitfield, Wycliffe, Bunyan, A.B. Simson and many others. The concept of a Pre-Trib or Mid-Trib Rapture is relatively new and does not stand up under scriptural scrutiny by open-minded investigators. For an in depth discussion of this subject, I recommend The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church by Marvin Rosenthal. He is a leading Messianic Jew and a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary. Unlike this work, his is a scholarly treatise that covers the thinking of numerous other scholars in the field over time. In addition to making a solid case, he offers an in-depth bibliography. I am indebted to his work to help me in my own studies.