

Last to Leave

LAST TO LEAVE



WHAT THE BIBLE REALLY
SAYS ABOUT
THE END OF TIME!

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BOB HIGHLANDS III

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Last to Leave

*What the Bible really says about
the End of Time*

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Contents

INTRODUCTION	6
LAST TO LEAVE TURN OUT THE LIGHTS	10
CHECK THE FOUNDATION	26
MARKS-A-LOT	46
DIGITS IN GOD'S COMPUTER	61
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT	81
THE ANTI-CHRIST, REPLACING JESUS	94
THE THIRD TEMPLE	100
THE BATTLE THAT NEVER HAPPENS	110
HEAVEN, HEAVEN, OR HEAVEN?	119
ONE LAST CHAIN OF EVENTS	132
THE MILTON MESS	138
THE GOSPEL TO THE WHOLE WORLD	145
MATTHEW 24 & 25 THE OLIVET DISCOURSE	148
THE BOOK OF REVELATION	189
THE SATAN MESS	236
LAST TO LEAVE FINAL THOUGHTS	274
END NOTES	277

Introduction

*“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*¹ Jesus of Nazareth

This book is not designed to answer every question about every prophecy. It is designed to lay a foundation that will allow the reader to have the necessary knowledge to discover the truth, ultimately allowing the person to discern truth from confusion and lies. Some would say it does not matter and would ask why study theology at all. It is as Ben Witherington III wrote in his commentary on Revelation; “bad theology leads to bad ethics, and bad religion leads to immorality.”² The downfall of nations is based upon what they believe or what they fail to understand and perceive. Without God based standards anything goes. Examine the culture and its morals, and you will know if those people truly believe and serve God or themselves and their own base passions. In such a society unborn babies may be aborted for convenience and murderers let go free in some reversed and warped sense of compassion. Alternate lifestyles will become social choices, and personal happiness will trump the directions and moral code of God. To examine the end time events is to be aware that the final destination and adjudication of each person’s final destination is not a matter to be overlooked or taken for granted. In other words, theology and what a person believes and how they live does matter. Bad theology leads to bad decisions. This is also true for the believer who follows the teachings of man over the Word of God.

Most of what is believed today about the end of time does not come from the Holy Bible but from the way it is put together by bad theologians and, in our modern time, movie producers. What amazes me the most is how many believers read the Word and don’t pay attention to what it says and what Jesus taught about the end of time and his kingdom. These same individuals are willing to swallow

Last to Leave

anything put up on a movie or TV screen as valid, and in their minds, this becomes Biblical truth.

Again, and again, you will have to make some tough decisions if you read this book and pay attention to what is laid out here. Either you will have to believe what you have heard somewhere, possibly even in a church, or you will have to believe the Son of God and the inspired scriptures. If you stick with the popular narrative that is being taught today, you will have to blot out the words and teachings of Jesus or twist them to mean something far different than what he said. If you dig deep within the Word of God and use the four simple rules of interpretation³ to keep you on track, your life will be changed, and you will discover the truth many are ignoring.

There is one really tough thing you will need to learn about truth. It is not always kind or on your side. Truth is on the side of Jesus and often runs contrary to the teachings and logic of humanity.

As I prepare this manuscript, the movie NOAH starring Russell Crowe is playing in movie theatres around the world. I had read the reviews and thought I was ready for the movie. I even saw the ad for it in World Magazine.⁴ It says the movie was “inspired by the epic story of hope, courage, and survival.” That was encouraging. It also says, “The film is inspired by the story of Noah. While artistic license has been taken, we believe that this film is true to the essence, values, and integrity of a story that is a cornerstone of faith for millions of people worldwide.” I wanted to see the movie so last Saturday I went while my wife was at work. She said she was not interested. I bought my ticket and decided I was going in with an open mind. I wondered when it would depart from the Bible version or how far it would depart. The previews played; there was nothing to interest me there.

Then the movie started. It was not two minutes into the movie when suddenly there were rock monsters helping

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Adam and Eve after they were thrown out of the Garden of Eden. These rock monsters, or angels encased in lava, ended up helping Noah build the ark and fought off the masses of people who tried to storm the ark to save themselves. I lost count of all the “artistic licenses” that were taken. Except for the names of Noah, his sons and the fact they built an ark, I did not recognize the story at all. I did not know whether to laugh, leave or shout? In the end, I sat there for two hours and twenty minutes and watched as the vegetarian Noah acted more like Jack Nicolson in the Shining as he prepared to kill his family and while Rock Monsters that looked like they were created for the movie Sinbad the sailor stomped around helping Noah build his boat.

Everything Biblical and truthful was lost. The sinfulness of man was replaced with an environmental message mixed with overpopulation and the evils of eating meat. I kid you not. The message of hope and redemption in those who are obedient to God was gone. The ark which represents salvation and a second chance was turned into a madhouse where the patriarch of the family is an angry man plotting the end of humanity. The picture of baptism and the church as the ark of salvation as depicted in the story of Noah in God’s Word were wholly lost.

This is what has also happened to the message of the end of time and the great victory of Jesus on the cross. It has been turned into a story anyone who reads the word of God will not recognize. I challenge you to take the time to read this book and see if you don’t begin to discover that you have been listening to a story where “artistic license has been taken” to explain the end of time and the agenda of Jesus. I believe if you are shown the truth it will set you free and bring you closer to Jesus and His kingdom.

The Purpose of this book

There is no way to cover every angle of the questions around the end of time. Every time I turn around something new is being thrown into the mix. One year it is

Last to Leave

the miracle of the red heifer. The next year it is the sun, earth, and mars lining up or the phenomenon of the blood moons. Every time there is an earthquake, war or genocide someplace, someone is saying it is a sign of the end of time. They say this; even though Jesus was clear, there are only two signs of the end of time and a whole list of signs about when the temple was going to be destroyed. This book is designed to be a foundation of truth helping the believer with key points that should set them free from much of the confusion surrounding the end of time. Jesus was clear that the truth will set you free.

I have avoided the use of as many theological terms as possible. I am writing this book to help those who sit in church on Sunday morning trying to figure it all out and understand what the end of time is really about.

I do not cover the book of Revelation until almost the very end of this book. This is done to lay a foundation of understanding and proper Biblical interpretation before digging into the most talked about book in the world. There are volumes of detailed commentaries that cover the material in great detail. These commentaries often are dissecting every line of the text and the Greek words for some hidden meaning. There are as many ways to study the Bible as there are days of the year. I humbly submit a simple approach to the book, hoping it will set many free from the confusion of theological terms and endless speculation. This book is about what the Bible says about the end of time and the return of Jesus.

Last to Leave Turn Out The Lights

Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.

Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

Matthew 24:40-42

I can still hear my father calling us into the house. We were in the back yard playing when we heard, “un, due, tre, sono venuti qui.” (My father called us one, two, three, come here quick) I do not know where or why we responded to the Italian phrase, but we knew it was time to drop everything and get to where ever it was my father had called us to. This day he was standing in the living room, and we all appeared before him.

He asked. “Do any of you see anything wrong in this room?”

We looked around the room, and then all shook our heads no.

“Now boys,” he said, “make sure you take a good look.”

We looked around. I was looking for a broken object, or possibly something that had been spilled. We stood there quietly, at a loss.

“Take one more look, you three.”

Then one of my brothers saw what was wrong. “The light is on.”

Last to Leave

“That’s right. Now, what is the rule about lights?” He asked.

We all knew it. “The last one out of the room turns out the lights.” We all said together.

My father turned out the lights and let us all go back to playing.

.....

She stood there with her husband. They had been given verbal instructions. They both knew what they could and could not do. They could eat all they wanted. They were not to eat from one particular tree. Eat from that tree, and they would die. They were not sure what to die was, but it did not sound good. No one had ever died; in fact, there was no one else. There were just one woman and one man. Eat of the tree of knowledge, and it was curtains. Simple enough, do a little gardening, and they could eat from all the trees except one. One rule, one punishment, how simple could it be?

Then with the very first question came the very first doubt. "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" asked the enemy.

“We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die,'" replied Eve.

"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.

She ate from the tree labeled, ‘Off limits.’ Her husband was standing right beside her. She had been doing all the

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

talking, but he was right there. Now he ate some of the fruit and then it happened. Just what you expected, they both:

- Fell over dead
- Had heart attacks
- Were struck by lightning
- Were run over by stampeding elephants
- Had their heads cut off by archangels
- Were given cups of fruit drink laced with arsenic
- Actually NONE OF THE ABOVE

The Lord God had said clearly, “when you eat of it, you will surely die.”

“So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which they had been taken. After he drove them out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim (a special branch of angels) and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.”

“Death” is to be separated from God. You may be alive and going about your business, but you have experienced the death of your soul. That was what happened to Adam and Eve. They had committed the very first sins and were the very first ones to die. They were the very first ones to be separated from God. They had lost what was most important, and for what? The overpowering consequences of disobedience followed the brief enjoyment and thrill of sin. With one passing bite from the tree that produced death, they had been separated from God. They had now become the world’s first sinners.

That is how it all began. Death came into the world through one act of disobedience. Suddenly everything

Last to Leave

changed. Eve had said the fruit looked good for food; it appealed to her eye, and she thought it would bring wisdom.⁵ Instead, it brought separation, a spiritual death from God.

Earthly spiritual death can, and in most cases is, eventually followed by physical, eternal death, or forever being separated from God. The living man, who is separated from God by his sin(s), can respond and have the outcome removed and not have to face the coming eternal separation (death). This can only happen through a personal relationship with Jesus.

Jesus came to earth to make this possible through His death in our place. That leaves us with the knowledge that humanity is divided into two groups, those going to live with God forever, and those who will be separated from God in eternal punishment.

Even as there was a beginning of time so there will be an end of time. "Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings.⁶

"Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down."

The temple was a magnificent building that was visible from all over Jerusalem and the surrounding area. Every Jew held it in high esteem and saw it as the very center of their beliefs and evidence of God's love for their nation. It had taken almost 50 years to build. Jesus uses this magnificent building to get his students (disciples) to ask Him questions about the end of time.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?"

Here in Matthew the 24th chapter the stage is set for Jesus to teach all the ages about the end of it all. The disciples have asked Jesus three distinct questions. First, they wanted to know when the temple is going to be torn down? Second, what would be a sign of the coming of Jesus to set up his kingdom? Third, when will the end of time come? They wanted to know what to watch for so they would have some idea when these things were going to happen.

Jesus responds to all three of these questions in great detail. The first He answers in verses 4 through 34.⁷ When will the temple be destroyed? He sets the stage for the coming of the Roman army under the leadership of Titus. The army of Titus ends up setting the city of Jerusalem on fire, including the temple. The gold melted into the cracks. Titus orders the temple ripped down, every ounce of gold retrieved, and the temple mount and most of Jerusalem covered with a layer of salt to keep anything from growing there. He wanted to leave it bare and desolate as a reminder to all those who would consider defying Roman rule. Jesus dates this portion of the prophecy by stating that "this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened." This included the disciples standing there listening to Jesus. The temple was destroyed in 70 AD, well within the lifespan (generation) of those hearing Jesus that day.

Jesus then turns to answer the next two questions. "What will be the sign of your coming," is the second question

Last to Leave

and the third, "What will be the sign of the end of the age?" Jesus answers these two in verses 35-51.

They did not understand that the return of Jesus and the end of time were the same things. They wanted to know when Jesus was coming back and when God was going to end it all. The disciples had asked the questions in such a way that showed they believed that the sign of His coming and the end of time were directly linked. Jesus answered them as separate questions. Answering the third question Jesus says:

"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.

Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."⁸

Only the Father knows, at least that is what Jesus said. This is the greatest secret of all time. The best way to

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

keep a secret is to tell no one. Look who doesn't know. The angels in heaven who are with God the Father all the time do not know. The son, Jesus, who has taken on a human body, does not know. Jesus said no one but the father knew the answer to their question about the end of time. That leaves out a whole lot of ministers and authors who preach and teach that they have discovered the secret that Jesus did not know.

Jesus does give us several indicators that we can watch for. He refers us back to the great flood and Noah. Noah was building a boat, a very large boat to save himself, his wife, his three sons, and their wives. They, along with a whole lot of animals, were to get into this large boat and ride out the flood that God was going to send because of the sinfulness of the world. Everyone not in the boat with Noah was going to drown in the flood. None of them knew they were going to drown. It was a complete surprise. They got up one morning, and it started to rain, and it rained, and rained, and rained for forty days and forty nights. There were several things happening just before the flood that Jesus says will happen just before the end of time.

Here are the clues that Jesus gave. He may not know the day or hour, but He says to watch for these events and the end of time could be close behind. Jesus says they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage.

I checked with several friends today. They all had breakfast. One had eggs, bacon and orange juice. I opened the paper last Sunday, and 14 couples had gotten married. Their pictures were in the paper. I looked at them closely. I have a theory that 75% of the people who get married marry someone who looks like them. Look at the pictures sometime. But of even greater value, Jesus

Last to Leave

says this will be happening just before the end of time. No wonder the devil is working so hard to eliminate marriage. He knows it is one of the signs of the end of the age.

Jesus is not setting a date; he is making it clear what he has already stated, that no one knows when the end of time will be. He did not know while He was here on earth when the end of the world would come. He did know what it was like just before the flood. People were going about their everyday lives, getting up and eating breakfast; going through their daily lives, getting married and planning to live long lives. They were going to have kids who they could give away in marriage, and then someday they would have grandkids. They were going to live long productive lives, and the last thing they expected was the world to come to an end. It did come to an end for everyone except the eight who were on the boat, and I guarantee not one person had a real clue. How do I know that?

Jesus said, *“They knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away.”* They were clueless, completely caught off guard. They had no idea, and then it was the last day. It started to rain, and it was too late. It was just like Gomer Pyle⁹ used to say, “SURPRISE, SURPRISE, SURPRISE!” Noah, who had been building the boat, did not know that was the day. God had him get in the boat with the animals. God closed the door, and it started to rain. It is a lot like that for Christians today. We are making preparations for the end of time, yet we do not know when it will happen. Instead of getting into an ark, we are getting saved and becoming part of the church.

Several years ago, here in Washington State, we had an earthquake with the epicenter just 7 miles from my

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

home.¹⁰ I was home sick with the flu, and my wife was at work. My son was across town at college, my daughter was at a conference 60 miles away in Seattle, and my youngest son was in his high school class. I was surprised as one moment everything was normal, and the next moment the house was shaking. Cups were falling; pictures were being thrown from the wall. The whole house was jumping up and down, and I was terrified. Now, if I had known it was going to happen, I would have had my family close, and I would have done things differently that day. I was living like it was any other day, but it was not. That is how it was when the flood came, and how it will be when the end of time occurs. Everyone will be going around doing what they do on any other day, and then it will happen. Instead of the earth shaking, the sky will split, and everyone will be suddenly surprised by the return of Jesus with all those who have died believing in him. People will be shopping, working, cooking, and somewhere, someone will be in the bathroom when the end of time comes. I know one person who was in the bathroom when the earthquake hit. It will be totally unexpected and for some very embarrassing. Not because of where they are but because they will have been caught without Jesus as their savior.

There are no warning signs. Two of the four key rules¹¹ of interpreting the Bible are “The simple interprets the difficult” and “Jesus is Boss.” You need to know all those scriptures that you have heard that show when the end of time is coming having nothing to do with the end of time. How do I know that? Jesus said so; in plain language, he says it as simply as it can be said. He says the only signs are that everyday life continues with people getting married and others eating their daily meals. Oh, and everyone will be caught off guard because no one knows when it will happen.

Last to Leave

Jesus says, “*That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.*”

When the end of time comes, two will be doing their jobs working beside each other. Then suddenly one will disappear, and the other one will be left. Two women will be shopping when suddenly one will be gone, and the other one will be left there in the store. That is how it will be on the last day when Jesus returns. Some people will be taken, and some will be left here.

The question that Jesus does not answer here is “who is taken first?” Will it be the Christians leaving all the sinners behind for a tribulation period, or will it be the sinners taken first leaving the Christians behind?

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

"The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

"An enemy did this," he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

"No," he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First, collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

*be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn."*¹²

Jesus told this parable before a large crowd and His disciples. He had been teaching all day long. Early in the day, the disciples had asked Jesus why He spoke in parables? He told them, "*The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.*" He was teaching them and hiding the information from the masses. He spoke in parables because those who believed and followed him were being taught, but this information was not accessible to just anyone. You needed to be a follower to understand what Jesus was teaching. That is why later when "*he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."*

They had heard but did not understand, now, here alone with Jesus they wanted to know what the parable represented.

He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.

The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.

The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

Last to Leave

They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.¹³

Jesus breaks the whole thing down for them. If He had a blackboard, he would have put it up this way.

Sower = Son of Man
Field = world
Good seed = sons of Kingdom
Weeds = sons of evil one
Enemy sower = devil
Harvest = end of the age (time)
Harvesters = angels

Jesus is explaining to the disciples what will happen at the end of time. Now He does not say anything about when, because only the father knows that, but He does explain in detail what will happen.

Jesus shows a brief history of the world from the beginning to the end. God created everything good, the devil introduced evil, and it will be that way until the end of time. Then at the end of time, the evil ones will be punished, and the believers will be rewarded. There will be a great separation of the evil from the good. The evil ones, or weeds, will be thrown into a place of burning and punishment. The believers will be taken to a place of light with the Father.

Now, I had read that so many times and thought I understood just what Jesus was saying. Then one day as I read it, I had to stop and read the whole thing again and

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

again. It was one of those moments when a mental light bulb goes off over your head, and you know you have learned something significant. I read it one more time slowly and there it was in the words of Jesus. He had explained the parable. He had broken down every detail. I had just read it without paying attention. He had put the answer right in front of us. We Christians had it all wrong, and Jesus who is boss, had told us how it was, but true to form we were too busy with our theology and preconceived ideas to pay attention.

Who is going to leave this world first, the Christians or the non-Christians (sinners)? Listen carefully to the directions given to the angels. Jesus said. *“First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.”* Remember that this is about the end of the age, the final curtain, the Day of Judgment. The angels are the harvesters and are being sent out into the world to gather for judgment all that is evil and reward all believers who are still living at the end of time. The gates of heaven are opened, and the angels come out with the instructions, *FIRST COLLECT THE WEEDS*. They are told first to go and get all the sinners that are alive and bring them in. Now, two are working at a muffler shop, one is a Christian, and the other is not, suddenly one is gone. Who is gone? Jesus said the sinner (weed) is to be picked up first. The guy who is last to leave is the Christian. It will be that way all over the world. No one will expect it. Suddenly billions will be gone. Every sinner will be picked up *FIRST*.¹⁴ *“The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.”*

A number of years ago when I first discovered this, I had just taught it to the small church that I was pastoring. I lived in a community in the south that had 27 small

Last to Leave

churches scattered over the surrounding area. Of the 27 churches, I was the only one of the pastors who did not teach millennialism.¹⁵ I was sitting in a coffee shop on a Tuesday morning having my soda (I am not a coffee drinker) when a group of the other pastors came in and sat down to have coffee and talk. They had just been at the *end of time conference* that morning and decided to have some fun with me. The conversation went something like this.

“Bob, you don’t believe like us about the end of time do you?”

“No, I don’t.”

“Will you do me a favor?” one of them asked me.

“Yes, if I can.”

“When the end of time comes, and we are all gone,” he pointed to the other preachers, “will you go down to our churches and tell them where we went.”

(It was one of those moments that I will always remember. It was like getting set up for a great punch line. I was busting out with laughter inside. Somehow I held it together.)

“Sure,” I said trying to hold back a smile and a laugh, “I’ll be glad to tell your church where you went, that is, if that is what you want me to do. I mean, go and tell them where you went.” I had started to grin from ear to ear, and I had spoken with irony in my voice.

“What do you mean by that?” he asked me.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

“Well, as I study Matthew the 13th chapter, it says the ungodly are going to be taken first. So if you all leave first, then I will go down and tell your churches where you all went.” I wanted to fall out of my chair laughing, but I held it together and just took a drink of my soda. Now I honestly think I made them mad. The next thing I knew they all got up and left without saying a word to me.

Now, I believe that when the Lord comes those ministers would not go first. They would be among those who are last to leave. They are part of the wheat that includes all the followers of Jesus. They would see all the sinners go, and then they would wait for the angels to return to take them to their eternal home.

Decisions are made every day that affect us for eternity. Those who deny Jesus in their lives are among the walking dead. They are separated from God by their sins and unchanged hearts. It does not have to be that way. Jesus said, *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*¹⁶

Man separated by the first sin can make preparations to be the last to leave, and at the same time make reservations in heaven. If you have not done so before now stop and ask God to include you in His kingdom. He will forgive you.

I still remember that as a small child I was taught that the last one out of the room is supposed to turn out the light. Every time I leave a room I turn out the lights. We as Christians are going to be the last to leave this earth. Let every light switch you see remind you that we are to be last to leave, and the last thing we will need to do is ‘Turn out the Lights.’

CHAPTER SUMMARY

KEY POINTS:

- Death means to be separated from God. This happens spiritually and will happen eternally if we do not accept Jesus as our personal savior before our physical death takes place.
- Only God the Father knows when he has planned to end time. Angels do not know; Jesus did not know, the preacher who predicted a date, or time or season does not know.
- There are no clues or signs for the end of time except people will be eating regular meals, and people will be getting married. That means all the signs are in place and it could be today, or it could still be 10,000 years off. It will be a surprise just like the flood was back in Noah's day or the earthquake was here in Washington State.
- Jesus taught that at the end of the age (time) the weeds (sinners) would be picked up by the angels FIRST and then burned. The wheat (Christians) will be picked up SECOND (after the weeds) and taken to the barn (heaven).
- The Christians will be **Last to Leave** and will be responsible for turning out the lights.

Check the Foundation

*But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."*¹⁷

Travel to the country of Italy, and go to the small town of Pisa, and the first thing you will want to see is their famous bell tower. It is known today as the Leaning Tower of Pisa and is world famous. It did not start that way; back in the twelfth century, bell towers were all the rage, and prestigious for towns. The plans were simple, build one of the tallest towers in the world with bells on top so people would hear about your modern, growing town and come there to do business. It was an advertisement for the chamber of commerce. It would have a new design that made it taller with a very shallow base. It was to be seven stories high and have over 200 columns with a bell chamber on the top. It was to be a modern marvel. Instead, it turned into a perfect example of Murphy's Law. What could go wrong did go wrong, again and again for most of the next eight centuries.

Construction began in 1173 in the little Italian town of Pisa, and things went badly right away. When the 2nd floor was finished, the tower was already leaning to the north. The builders made some changes on the third floor. The walls on the north were made longer, and the walls on the south were made shorter. This made the top of the third floor level with the ground, but the bottom two

Last to Leave

floors were still leaning to the north. Nothing had been done to deal with why the tower was leaning. They just forged ahead with their plans.

The tower had been built on waterlogged silt clay and sandy soil. Political unrest and hopes that the weight of the building would compact the foundation meant that it would be 90 years before any more floors would be added to the building. Starting in 1272 and ending in 1284 more floors were added on top of the level top of the 3rd floor. This added weight began to make the building lean to the South. While adding floors and seeing that the building was leaning the other way, they just made adjustments as they went along. This time on the 5th floor they lengthened the southern walls and shortened the northern ones. This caused the top of the 5th floor to be level with the ground. The top was level, but the building was beginning to look like a banana the way it curved upward. The seventh floor was finally finished in 1319.

Then in 1372 the bell tower was finally added, and the tower was at its full height, but it would now take on a life of its own. The tower continued to creep toward the south so that over the next 350 years or so it moved to be over 14 feet off center. It was now known around the world as the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

Finally, in 1933, a commission was set up to save the tower and to stop it from tipping over any more. They drilled over 360 holes in the ground and pumped in 1,800 tons of concrete to stabilize the tower. Instead, it just added to the weight of the tower, causing it to tip 5 or 6 times faster than it had been before it was fixed.

Starting in 1992, a series of steps were taken to save the tower. The second floor was banded around the outside.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

This was done to keep the floor from exploding under the weight of the twisted tower. Next, 75 8-ton weights were attached to the north side of the tower, to counter the shift of the tower and help compress the soil. The tower stopped leaning. Then in 1995, they attacked the real problem. Those in charge of saving the tower began removing the foundation soil of sand and slime, removing the water and replacing the foundation. Now with the tower on firm, dry soil they hope it can support the building without leaning any further. In 2007 the lean had been stopped and slightly reversed. This was a \$40 million project. Finally, they removed the weights and much of the concrete that had been poured as a new foundation. The weights were putting more pressure on the tower walls, and the added weight of the concrete in the base was again causing the tower to lean dangerously toward collapse. No one knows for sure if this will be a final fix or merely a temporary solution to the leaning tower. The Italian government could have torn it down and moved it for less money except the leaning tower is one of the largest tourist attractions in the world.

The tower leans to this day. It leans not because of poor construction, but because it was built on shifting sand. To keep the tower from falling over has taken some of the best minds of the past 650 years, yet the tower is still leaning.

Just in case it doesn't work, people are still sending in suggestions to help save the tower. People have suggested an identical tower to lean up against the first so that they could hold each other up. Someone wanted to run cables to the mountains several miles away and use them as an anchor to hold up the tower. Then there is the suggestion that helium balloons be attached to the roof to make the tower lighter and less likely to lean.

The Foundation of it all!

Now the soundness of the tower is no better than the foundation on which it sets. Jesus understood that, and he did not speak of the soundness of the house but the foundation on which the house sets. Here is where we need to look if we are going to understand the *End of Time* and decide what is the biblical truth and which is the house built on the sand of deceit.

We are going to start with the basics, or the foundation, and go from there. It does not matter how you interpret the book of Revelation, or Matthew 24, or 1 Thessalonians, or wherever. These scriptures are all floors in the building, floors that we will look at later in this book to see if they too have had to have adjustments to hide the lean. But first, let us look at the foundation of all *end of time* teachings. There is one teaching that 'all' *end of time* teachings are based on in Daniel.

²⁴ "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.

²⁵ "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.

²⁶ After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.

²⁷ He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

Daniel 9:24-27

This is the “ABSOLUTE FOUNDATION” of all *end of time* scriptures. Everything else is built on this scripture. If it is misinterpreted, then all that is built on it will lean and have to be adjusted to fit the problems of the foundation. Here is where you go to get started in any real study, so this is where we will go to take a close look to see if we find sinking sand that cannot withstand the winds of truth.

Here we have to break down each verse to understand what is being said here. Let me help by explaining these verses.

Daniel 9:24-27

Daniel is given a grand vision of the future and the coming of salvation. In verse 24 it is said that 490 years were given to accomplish the following list of items:

- *to finish transgression,*
- *to put an end to sin,*
- *to atone for wickedness,*
- *to bring in everlasting righteousness,*
- *to seal up vision and prophecy*
- *and to anoint the most holy*

Last to Leave

A quick break down will help us here

First, in Daniel's vision is an overview of seventy sevens.
 $70 \times 7^{18} = 490$ (verse 24)

Then he breaks it up into three parts

Seven sevens or $7 \times 7 = 49$ years (verse 25)

Sixty-two sevens or $62 \times 7 = 434$ years (verse 25)

One seven or $1 \times 7 = 7$ years (verse 26)

Now that totals to $70 \times 7 = 490$ years

The key we need to see here is that the period of time that is set in this scripture and prophecy is 490 years. A key is vital. It unlocks doors, or in this case, it unlocks the truth. This 490 year period is vital to understanding all end of time teachings. Get this right, and everything else is much simpler, get it wrong and everything we believe will be leaning every which way.

Do we believe scripture when it says a certain number or not? This scripture is given to us from God as part of his Bible. God who is all knowing and all powerful, who can see the future has said it would take 490 years for this all to happen. We look at verses 24 through 27, and there is no hint of anything other than 490 years.

Verse 25 says "Know and understand this:

From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' ($7 \times 7 = 49$ years) and sixty-two 'sevens.' ($7 \times 62 = 434$ years)

It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench but in times of trouble. Solomon's temple was destroyed by King

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

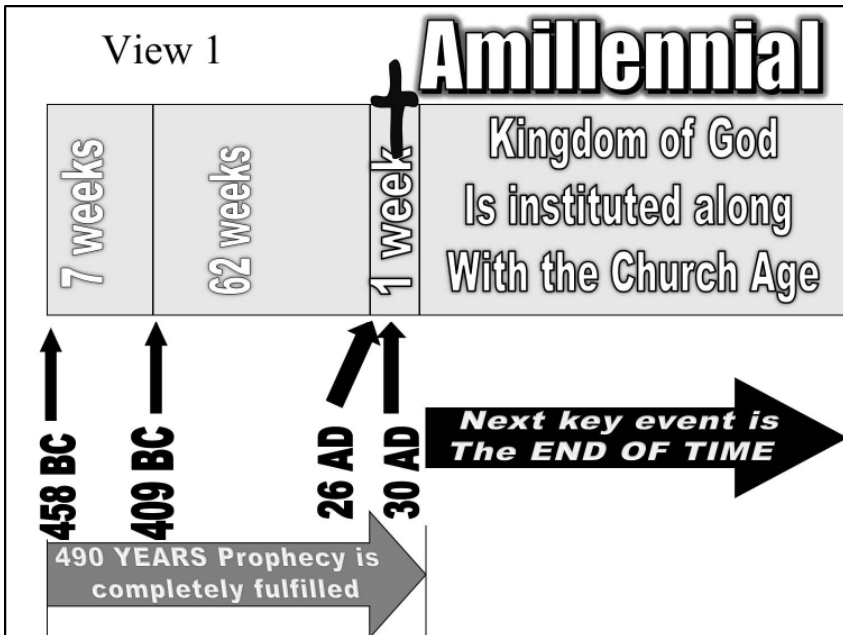
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon when he captured the city of Jerusalem in 587 BC.

The starting date of the prophecy is approximately 458 BC. The exact date is not known as the exact day of Jesus birth is not known. The key is that it would be 483 years until the anointed one, the ruler, comes. (This anointed one is Jesus Christ.) In the New Testament, there are two words used to describe Jesus as the 'anointed one.' They are the *messiah*, and the *Christ*, both of these mean anointed one.

Verse 26 sets the stage for the conflict surrounding the life and ministry of Jesus along with the rejection of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Jesus is the anointed one who is cut off by his death on the cross. The ruler who will come is the Roman army under the leadership of Titus who surrounded Jerusalem in 67 A.D. and destroyed the city and the temple in 70 A.D.

Verse 27 is directly linked to the ministry of Jesus which lasted 3 to 3½ years. At the death of Jesus, the veil in the Temple was split, and the need for sacrifice was done away with as Jesus died once for all. Jesus ministered for 3 1/2 years or 1/2 of a week of a prophetic week.¹⁹ Isaiah 53:8 *“By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.”*

The key is that there are a continuous 490 years that was prophesized by Daniel as represented in the following diagram.

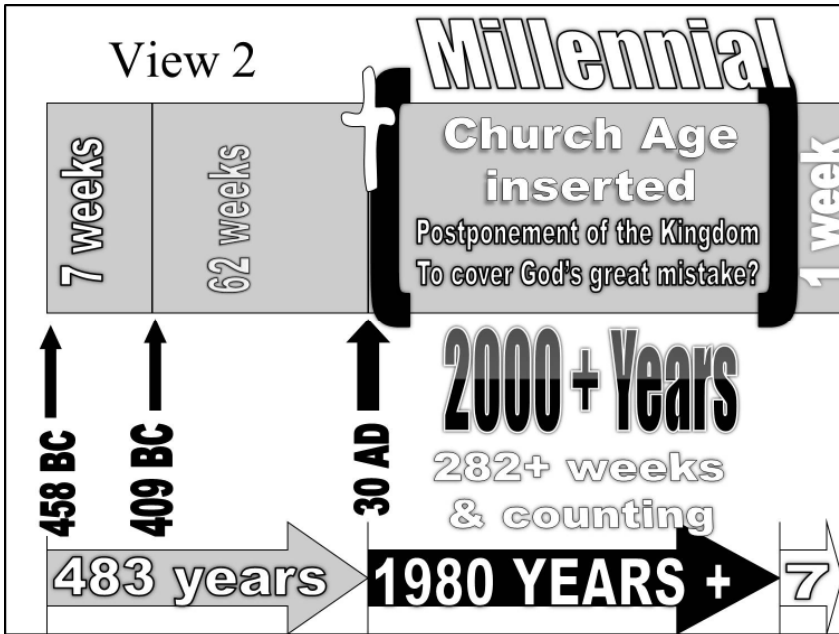


VIEW ONE SHOWS THE PROPHECY WITH 70 CONTINUOUS WEEKS FOLLOWED BY THE CHURCH AGE THAT LEADS TO THE END OF TIME.

The first seven weeks is followed by the second period of 62 weeks which is followed by the final week. That is 70 weeks of years or 490 years. This is followed by the current church age that is now over 2000 years and counting. We are waiting for the End of Time, not the 70th week. Or another way we can look at it is that since the scripture was completed and the 70 weeks finished it has been over 285 prophetic weeks. We are living 2000 years after this prophecy was completely fulfilled with the death and resurrection of Jesus. This scripture was completed with the death of Jesus who was cut off during the last week. This point of view allows for the 490 years being uninterrupted. This is extremely important. Nowhere can you find any place in the scriptures that say God intended this to be anything other than 490 years.

THE GREAT PARENTHESIS

Contrast this point of view with the one shown next. The first 69 weeks of years from Daniel are continuous, but then there is a break. This break is known to theologians as the “GREAT PARENTHESIS”²⁰ or “POSTPONEMENT.”²¹



VIEW TWO SHOWS THE PROPHECY WITH 69 WEEKS INTERRUPTED BY THE CHURCH AGE THAT WILL BE FOLLOWED BY THE 70TH WEEK AND THE EARTHLY KINGDOM.²²

According to this teaching, instead of the church age being the period of time leading up to the end of time, the church age was inserted into the prophetic time of Daniel between the 69th week and the 70th week. This teaching means that there is a break, a “parenthesis” or “postponement between the 69th and the 70th and final week of the prophecy. This means the time covered by the prophecy has now been extended to over 2,500 years and

Last to Leave

counting. That is over five times as long as the 490 years the prophecy originally called for.

This teaching brings us to the point of making a decision. Did God intend for this period of time to be 490 years or over 2,500 years and still counting? The question simply is: "Did God make a mistake?" Did God not know that the last week would need to be postponed as taught by Scofield, Blackburn, and Ironside, and filled in with the Church age?



CHART SHOWS THE TWO POINTS OF VIEW IN PERSPECTIVE.

Let me share this point of view more clearly. The teaching is that the first 69 weeks happened just as God knew and planned, but instead of Jesus establishing his earthly kingdom he had to change his plans and die for the sins of humanity, and hence had to POSTPONE His earthly Kingdom until an unknown time in the future. They teach

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

that this postponement was so he can later establish the Kingdom and save the Jews by reestablishing the animal sacrifices in the temple. According to this teaching, sometime in the future, the 70th week will take place followed by Jesus setting up an earthly kingdom.²³ This even though Jesus said his kingdom was not part of this world. This teaching which is known as the millennial point of view is dependent upon the postponement of the 70th week until sometime in the future. They base this teaching on the belief that 70 weeks of prophetic time are described as not being exact. This is saying that God did not know about the need to postpone what was to happen in His prophecy to Daniel about the 70th week. According to this teaching, God had to insert the church age that we are now in to fill the period of time *between* the 69th week and the 70th week. The Bible clearly says:

“Seventy weeks are determined...”KJV

“Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed...”NIV

“Seventy weeks of years are decreed...”RSV

“God has decided that for seventy weeks...”CEV

Scofield says in his footnotes on the 24th chapter of Daniel of his Bible commentary that this prophecy and the 490 years “*is obviously an indeterminate period,*” and “*a period not fixed.*” NOT FIXED? Either it is, or it is not 490 years! God said it was 490 years, but Scofield says “*Prophetic time is invariable so near as to give full warning, so indeterminate as to give no satisfaction to mere curiosity.*” Indeterminate, if you miss a prophecy by over 2,000 years, that is more than a little indeterminate. That would make God wrong. SEVENTY WEEKS ARE DETERMINED, DECREED, DECIDED; at least according to all the versions of the Bible I have been able to get my hands on. It is in the footnotes, put there by men, we have the words

Last to Leave

of modern preachers and teachers that say *indeterminate*, *not fixed*.

OVERVIEW OF THE MILLENNIAL TEACHING



THIS VIEW SHOWS THAT THE MILLENNIAL PERSPECTIVE WANTS YOU TO FOCUS ON THEIR TEACHINGS INSTEAD OF THE ONE GREAT MISTAKE ON WHICH THEY ARE FOUNDED.

You have to know that the return to animal sacrifices of the third temple²⁴, the 1000 years reign of Jesus, the earthly rule, even the rapture²⁵ are based on the belief that God had to postpone or delay and insert the GREAT PARENTHESIS into the 70th week of Daniel's teaching until some undetermined time in the future. The entire teaching of the millennial reign and earthly kingdom are based upon the principle that God made a MISTAKE. You have to believe that God had to postpone with the GREAT PARENTHESIS the 70th week of Daniel for 2000 years and

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

counting because he did not know something was going to happen.

I do not believe that the 70th week of Daniel is coming in the future, but I do believe it was fulfilled with the death of Jesus Christ. The CHURCH AGE was always part of God's plan. It was not added until Christ can come back and set up His future kingdom. This means the prophecy from Daniel 24 is now history for us and was completed over 2,000 years ago. We can look back and examine the events that took place to fulfill what the angel Gabriel told Daniel.

You check the foundation to find out if a house is sound. The leaning tower of Pisa is an excellent example of the millennial teachings. The millennial teachings are based upon this shaky teaching that the 70th week is coming in the future, and God made a mistake and had to postpone this 70th week of the prophecy. People are intrigued by the leaning tower, even though it is the sand it was built on that made it lean. People are fascinated by the millennial teachings but few of them know about the sand it is built on. Sand that says, God made a mistake and had to postpone the 70th week of his prophecy for an indeterminate period of time.

The millennium is built upon the footnotes and teachings of men like Scofield, Ironside, Blackstone, Lindsey, LaHaye, Jenkins, and many more.

The simple truth is that the word of God says "Seventy weeks of years are decreed..."RSV. There is no Great Parenthesis, only sinking sand, or the truth that 490 years expired and we wait for the end of time not the 70th week of Daniel.

One Example

The builders of the tower of Pisa had to make adjustments for the lean of the tower continually. Some walls were longer, other shorter to make the ceiling level with the ground. This is much like the adjustments made in the teachings of millennialism. Here is one example.

Jesus is answering questions asked by His disciples when He says, *“I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.”*

Hal Lindsey, who believes the 70th week is in the future, wrote about this in his book *‘The Late Great Planet Earth’*²⁶ in 1970. A key to his understanding of the prophecy was the interpretation of the word generation. Lindsey writes:

“What generation? Obviously, in context, the generation that would see the signs – chief among them the rebirth of Israel. A generation in the Bible is something like forty years. If this is a correct deduction, then within forty years or so of 1948, all these things could take place.”²⁷

Now using Hal Lindsey’s interpretation of the length of time of a generation we see that forty years from 1948 would be around 1988.

Given that he said this prophecy should have been fulfilled by sometime in 1988. That means at the writing of this book he has missed it by over two decades and we are still counting. Hal Lindsey has put up one wall of this millennial tower in his interpretation and said it was forty years or so. That was written in 1970.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins are more recent writers on the subject of a generation for the millennial point of view. They say in their book, “Are We Living in the End Times?”²⁸

“As my friend and prophecy scholar Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum has written, “The Bible nowhere limits the period of a generation simply to forty years.... Actually, the term generation can mean 20, 40, 70, 80, or 100 years.”²⁹

Here are millennial writers putting up the other wall of the tower of millennialism which needs to be longer to correct the lean. Instead of saying 40 years or so now they say 20, 40, 70, 80 or 100 years. The other wall of their teaching is longer, that is how you hide the fact that the building is tipping over because it is built on sand, or teaching, that says God made a mistake. Just like the people in Pisa, Italy, the millennial teachers, preachers, and writers have to cover for the ‘Great Parenthesis’ of sinking sand that the whole thing is built on, so they keep making adjustments to keep the floor level.

Everything in 70 weeks

Daniel 9.24 is the overview or what Dallas Meserve calls “the summary of the entire prophecy.”³⁰ There are six items that are listed in verse 24. These are all supposed to happen within the 490 years of the 70 weeks.

1. **to finish transgression**, The people of Israel had been outside the will of God for most of their lives. God had to keep bringing them back through discipline so he could accomplish his purpose in Jesus and fulfill all prophecies just

Last to Leave

as he said he would. Jesus recognized this when he said, *“Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!”*³¹ This came to a climax with the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus by the Jews using Roman law. This was the final straw and the completing or finishes all transgressions, this ended their protection under the Old Covenant. In Matthew 21.33-46 Jesus told a parable about the tenants that killed the landowner’s son. The tenants represented Israel who rejected Jesus. When asked what would happen to the tenants they replied, *“He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants.”*³² The Jewish rulers knew this parable was about them. When they crucified Jesus, they finally finished transgressing against God by rejecting his Son. This is why Jesus said to them, *“I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.”*³³

2. **To put an end to sin**, Jesus fulfilled this on the cross. The writer of Hebrews states, *“But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself... so Christ sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people...”*³⁴ People will continue to sin. This verse is not dealing with that, but it is saying that now sin is paid for with the blood of Jesus and not just covered up through the sacrifice of animals.
3. **To atone for wickedness**, *“He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his blood, having obtained eternal redemption.”*³⁵ The word redemption means to pay the full price to

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

get an item back. This is the concept behind *to atone for wickedness*. Jesus paid the full price (redeemed us) with his death on the cross. This was necessary because of our sins. Literally, this means Christ Jesus is our Mercy Seat where we go to meet God and receive forgiveness.

4. **to bring in everlasting righteousness.** The problem was that left alone we can never reach God's standards. We find this only possible through Jesus. "*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*"³⁶
5. **To seal up vision and prophecy,** The Old Covenant (or contract) was filled with visions and prophecies surrounding God's goal to restore humanity into an eternal relationship with HIM. These prophecies had to be fulfilled or sealed to be completed. "*All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the Prophet.*"³⁷ Without the Old Covenant prophecies, we would not know who Jesus is or that he was sent from God.
6. **And to anoint the most holy,** Jesus is the most holy. The demons recognized him as such, "*I know who you are – the Holy One of God!*"³⁸ The angels called him the "*holy one,*"³⁹ the disciples recognized Jesus as "*the Holy One of God.*"⁴⁰ Jesus even testified and said, "*The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.*"⁴¹ This was in direct reference to Isaiah 61.

All six of these items were to be completed in 490 years or the seventy uninterrupted weeks of Daniel's prophecy. It does not matter that it was not until the actual 70th week

Last to Leave

of the prophecy that Jesus fulfilled them; it is important that they all were fulfilled in the time prescribed by God.

The choice is clear and simple. You can choose to believe God made a mistake and had to put a GREAT PARENTHESIS between the 69th and 70th week of the prophecy in Daniel chapter nine OR You can choose to believe that God does not make mistakes and knows how long 490 years is and that He accomplished everything He promised in the allotted time of 70 weeks of years.

The foundation of the tower of Pisa was the problem. Where you build does make a difference. This is also true when it comes to Biblical truth. The teachings on which you build your theology will affect everything else that comes after that. Build on the belief that God missed prophetic time by thousands of years and you get the millennial tower that is continually being corrected and leans in every direction. The simple truth is that 490 years have long since expired and we now wait for the final event in Biblical prophecy which is the END OF TIME not the 70th week of Daniel. Build on the truth, and there is no need to make corrections or to insert parenthesis or postponements because God got it right. We are waiting for the time when we are to be the LAST TO LEAVE and will get to TURN OUT THE LIGHTS!

We need to think it through carefully, or we will overlook the obvious. If we believe in a postponement or parenthesis in time, then we have to believe that God made a mistake and did not know what he was talking about when he directed Daniel to write that it would be 490 years. Now if you believe God can make one mistake, what stops him from making another, and another and...? Well, you get the point. Everything would be in question, including salvation, heaven, forgiveness, eternal life, and

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

the Holy Spirit. We would be at the mercy of a constantly changing belief system that had to be adjusted every time we found out that the all-knowing God was not all-knowing.

We need to listen to the words of Jesus. *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”*⁴² We can trust the word of God for it is the solid rock that we build on. When God says 490 years it is 490 years. Not 2,500 years and counting. God does not make mistakes. The church was always His plan to follow the 490 years set forward in Daniel.

This means the next event in Biblical prophecy will be the end of time. The items we have covered here in Daniel 9 are no longer prophecy but history that was complete with the death of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D.

We need to remember that salvation is still available, *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*⁴³ God continues to hold off the end of time so individuals may call on the name of Jesus as their personal savior. He is the anointed one who can put an end to their personal sin and bring them into everlasting righteousness.

The second thing we need to remember is that time is running out. *“For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.”*⁴⁴ God will call for an end of time. Then *“the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the*

Last to Leave

*dead in Christ will rise first.*⁴⁵ The angels will fan out around the world to first gather the weeds or the sons of the evil one out of the world together for their judgment.⁴⁶ The angels will return and gather all the wheat or believers in Jesus together for our reunion with him. *“Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.”*⁴⁷

CHAPTER SUMMARY

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

KEY POINTS:

- The Tower of Pisa leans because of the foundation soil it was built in, not because of poor construction of the floors.
- The seventy weeks of years in Daniel 9 total up to 490 years as 'determined' by God himself.
- The great parenthesis or the postponement says God made a mistake and had to insert thousands of years to cover up what He did not know would happen.
- The next event in prophetic time is the end of time, not the setting up of an earthly kingdom during some postponed 70th week.
- The current church age has always been part of God's plan and was not added later to cover up for God's mistake. The church age is not a place holder for a postponement until God can correct his error.
- Those that believe in the parenthesis or the postponement of prophetic time will always have to keep making changes to cover their basic mistake of believing God made a mistake.
- Everything in Daniel 9 was fulfilled in the 490 years prophesied and without the need for a postponement or a parenthesis.
- If God had made a mistake with this prophecy could He be trusted to get anything else right?

Last to Leave

This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666. Revelation 13.18

I cannot begin to name all the individuals who have been identified as the one who is the beast and deserves the number 666 on the world. Just today I was able to find on the Internet the following individuals that have been so identified:

Yasser Arafat, Jimmy Carter, Bill Gates, Adolph Hitler, Billy Graham, Mikhail Gorbachev, John Kennedy, Michael Eisner, Henry Kissinger, Bill Clinton, Martin Luther, Martin Luther King, Benito Mussolini, Saddam Hussein, Larry Flynt, Anwar el-Sadat, Theodore Roosevelt, Donald Trump, Pat Robertson, Ronald Reagan, Bob Dylan, Pope John Paul II, George Bush, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Regis Philbin.

The list, I am sure, is much longer. Then there is the way each one was identified as the beast set forward in Revelation 13. Usually, every letter of the alphabet is given a numerical value. Then there are certain letters that have no value or have a double value because they are the first letter. These are added, subtracted, divided, and multiplied until finally, all the letters can equal 666. Using this method it would be possible to prove anyone, and everyone is the Beast that spreads the dreaded 666.

Many of those named on this list have already died, some are ill and will die soon, and a couple of them may be evil, but that does not make them the Beast with the 666.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

People have been trying to “CALCULATE” the number of the Beast throughout time. Today, fear runs rampant whenever some new system is developed to recognize individuals. Social Security numbers, national identity cards, implanted computer chips, face recognition software, these are all seen as being the method that will be used to number and control the world by the Beast. The verses usually associated with this are the last three verses of Rev the 13th Chapter.

He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666. ⁴⁸

There is a number, and there is a mark, and that is beyond argument, but to understand it will take more than the current methods. To understand this great picture and all it represents in the book of Revelation, we must look at the same images from the Old Testament.⁴⁹ Here we will be able to see the foundation of what God wants us to see.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your

Last to Leave

*children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your **foreheads**.* Deuteronomy 6:4-8

This was a way of marking God's people and causing them to remember daily their place as God's chosen and holy nation. They were to remember who was guiding their lives and whom they belonged to.

The second image from the Old Testament is a vision that God showed Ezekiel. This vision dealt with the judgment of God upon the nation of Israel. Though they were called by His name, many had turned away. God shows Ezekiel how He will know His people.

*Now the glory of the God of Israel went up from above the cherubim, where it had been, and moved to the threshold of the temple. Then the LORD called to the man clothed in linen who had the writing kit at his side and said to him, "Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a **mark on the foreheads** of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it."*

*As I listened, he said to the others, "Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. Slaughter old men, young men, and maidens, women and children, but **do not touch anyone who has the mark**. Begin at my sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were in front of the temple.* Ezekiel 19.36

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

God gives Ezekiel a great vision of the coming judgment he is going to bring upon the nation of Israel for their disobedience. The picture is one of an angel or messenger walking through Jerusalem with a marking kit. The angel will know who is genuinely sorry for their sins and the sins of the nation. These will receive a mark on their foreheads. This mark is to show who is on God's side so they will be spared in the coming judgment.

Next God sends another angel to go behind the first angel and kill anyone that does not have the mark showing they are on God's side. Ezekiel is told, "*do not touch anyone who has the mark.*"

The next time there is any mention of marking anyone on their foreheads in the Bible is in the book of Revelation, but it is not the mark of the beast.

*"Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the **foreheads** of the servants of our God."*⁵⁰

This mark is not the mark of the Beast but the mark of God upon His servants.⁵¹ It is the same picture of God marking His people that we saw in the book of Ezekiel. God is marking His people so they can be told apart from those who are living in sin and disobedience. God is preparing to punish evil in the world, but first He marks His own just like he did in the Old Testament.

Now that God has marked His people, He gives the same instructions as he gave in Ezekiel. Judgment starts and God sends out His angels to bring punishment upon the earth. God has made preparations to take care of his servants. In the eighth and ninth chapters of Revelation God is sending out angels who blow trumpets and bring

Last to Leave

judgment and punishment upon those who do not have his mark on their foreheads.

The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth.

*They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their **foreheads**. They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man.⁵²*

We do not have to understand all the symbolic language here to see the picture. These angels are to torture and cause all to suffer who do not have the “seal” or “mark” of God on their foreheads.

God’s people are marked early in the book of Revelation. He knows who they are and wants to protect them. Just as He did in the book of Ezekiel God marks His servants and then brings punishment to those all around.

The book of Revelation is about a great Spiritual battle that takes place between good and evil. God marks His servants so he can protect them. Then Satan decides he had better mark his servants so he can control, dominate,

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

and show God how many he has on his evil side. That is where we read those words.

*He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his **forehead**, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.*

This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666. ⁵³

Now, remember that God has already marked all of his followers on their foreheads. That means Satan marks everyone he can mark, but he cannot mark those who have been marked by God. They are on the side of Christ Jesus. These have been marked and are protected from the torture and pain of the punishment of God.

Satan forces everyone not marked by God to be marked as his servants and then, in the very next verse we see that God is gathering those who have his mark to Himself.

*Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their **foreheads**.⁵⁴*

These are not the only ones on God's side. These are the ones who are gathered before the throne from the twelve tribes who have the mark of God. There are so many more they cannot be numbered.

Last to Leave

After this, I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.⁵⁵

We must not be afraid of the enemy; we are marked and sealed in the blood of Jesus Christ. When we become Jesus Christ's servants, we are marked and protected from the judgment and punishment of God. We join a great multitude that carries the seal and mark of God. We are instructed that with wisdom we can calculate the number of the beast. This will not be accomplished by adding or subtracting numbers but through the careful understanding of truth.

This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.⁵⁶

To understand the mark of the beast, we will need to clearly identify the three evil spirits in the following two verses.

Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.⁵⁷

First, let's look at the dragon spoken about in this verse. This dragon first appears in the book of Revelation and dominates chapter 12.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

*Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red **dragon** with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.⁵⁸*

This chapter is the picture of the birth of the Church and its struggle against the forces of the pagan Roman Empire. The dragon is pictured as trying to destroy the male child born to the woman, but He is snatched up to God. The woman then has to hide from the dragon.

This shows how pagan Rome was used by the enemy to try and destroy the church and the message of Christ from its very birth. Here we have the soldiers of pagan Rome searching for Christ from His birth. We can see them nailing Him to a cross and trying to keep Him in his grave with guards and a Roman seal. Instead, God rises Jesus to life, and He ascends to heaven where He waits for the final judgment of humanity.

The pagan religion of the Roman Empire was dominated by the teachings of man and the rejection of God. Pagan religions once ruled through Rome but were overcome by the teaching of Christ. They exist almost everywhere today. They worship the earth, the stars, man himself, but they deny the one true God, and His son Jesus. They are a religion that worships man and man's knowledge and rejects God.

The dragon is followed by the Beast, who dominates the first half of the 13th chapter of Revelation.

All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.⁵⁹

Last to Leave

This Beast is the False Church that arose out of pagan Rome. The true church struggled mightily against the pagan teaching of the Roman Empire. Then in 312 AD Constantine, the Roman emperor, converted to Christianity after he had a dream in which he was told to place the symbol of the Christians on the shields of his men just before a decisive battle. He did place the cross on the shields, won the battle and declared himself and the Roman Empire, Christian. Constantine consolidated both political and religious power in the Roman form of government. The true church that had fought against the Great Red Dragon of pagan Rome now found itself swallowed up and hidden from sight by a church dominated by the teaching of man that replaced the teaching of Christ. The true church had not ceased to exist; they had their names written in the book of life. The true church now had a new enemy, the False Church of the beast. The teaching of man dominated this False church. This false church would dominate but not crush the church until Dr. Martin Luther, Prof. of Moral Philosophy, nailed his 95 Theses against the practice of selling indulgences to the door of the Church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517.⁶⁰ I want to be careful here and understood. I am not speaking against organized religion; I am speaking against religion that is based upon the teachings of man rather than on the word of God. Dr. Martin Luther's goal was to reform the church, to restore it. The Reformation was a protest against the religion that was man-centered. It was a call to return to be the church Christ Jesus died for. The difficulty is to understand that within the same walls of the church existed the true church and the manmade one.

This False Church would not go away; like Paganism it will continue until the end of the age. This False Church continues teaching salvation through means other than a

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

confession in faith in Jesus as savior and the Son of God. This is another form of the religion of man, with man's rules and man's way of salvation.

The Beast which is the False Church is followed by the False Prophet.

Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.⁶¹

This beast tries to look like the lamb, a reference to Christ who is the Lamb of God, but sounds like the (*pagan*) dragon, having the appearance of the church but it is not. The teachings give it away as another part of the great lie to deceive and keep individuals from receiving the forgiveness of Christ and the mark of God. This second beast, or false prophet, represents all the cult groups that have emerged as the next part of Satan's attack on the church.

The Christian cults⁶² are those groups who want you to believe they are the Church. They use all the words, and symbols of the True Church, but their teachings do not lead you to Christ as your savior, but to man as his savior. This is just the same as the Pagan Rome Empire and the false church. This is religion built upon the teachings and beliefs of man. The truth of God is ignored or changed to fit the desires of man. It is a manmade religion.

The cults are spiritual predators. Feeding on the weak and confused, these cults enslave individuals in a religion

Last to Leave

that instead of setting them free makes them slaves to Satan and places his mark upon their lives.

These false religions of Satan work together against the true church. The past few years have shown a growing movement to unite pagan religion, false churches, and the cults into a fellowship. A recent advertisement in a local paper invited the community to a night of unity where a witch would be joined by a local Christian minister of a homosexual church. The list of the organizations that were sponsoring the event read like a who's who of religion. Pagans, churches and cult groups were all listed as joining together in this "celebration of unity." In reality, it was a "celebration of evil spirits" that was long ago written about. These are the ones with the mark of evil upon their foreheads.

Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ⁶³

What a picture of evil. Evil spirits are hopping about looking like green slimy frogs. Look where these evil spirits come from. They come out of the dragon or paganism. They come out of the beast or the church that is drunk on power and tradition. They come out of the false prophet or from all the cults and false religions that are trying to represent the Church. Clearly, they are identified as evil spirits. These are the ones marking individuals for hell. These teach salvation of works or man, and who deny Christ Jesus as the only way. These join together to declare there are many ways to God. They are slimy, evil spirits being used by Satan to mark on the foreheads and the hearts of the unsaved, they are the religions of man.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

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We live in the CHURCH AGE, the period of time when the church has been freed to proclaim the message of truth. We must not forget that to stop the church the enemy will join his forces of evil together against the true church.

This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666. ⁶⁴

Now it time for us to *calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number.*

The number for man in scripture is six because man was created on the sixth day.

First, it is the number of all pagan religions. These religions center on man and his teachings and worship of the creation instead of the creator. The number for the pagan religions is the number of man because it is another man-centered religion. The number is 6

Second, it is the number of the False Church, those churches who use the name and symbols of Jesus. These churches deny those who follow their lies access to salvation. They teach salvation through works. They teach that church membership is the same as salvation. They teach salvation through a host of programs and practices that lead in an endless circle of confusion and lies. The number for the false church is the number of man because it is another of man's religion. The number is 6.

Finally, (third), it is the number of cults. The cults try to look and act like the church, but pervert the truth with

Last to Leave

new revelations, false books, and lies designed to deceive all who would follow. The cults are a religion of man, designed by man, for man. The number for the cults is the number of man and his religion of worshiping self. The number is 6.

The beast is manmade religions and man's rejection of God and all truth. The beast that wants to be worshiped is man. He wants to do it through paganism, false churches, and the cults.

The dragon (6), the Beast (6), and the False Prophet (6): they are the religion of man. To accept their teachings, to enter into these groups and to accept their ways is to accept the mark of the beast.

Let us calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number, and the number of man is 6...6.....6....

The enemy is marking his servants, and we must remember that Jesus is marking his, too. Those who receive the mark of the enemy will receive punishment, torture, and judgment separating them from God forever. Those who receive the mark of Christ will be rewarded as his followers:

*They will see his face, and his name will be on their **foreheads**.*⁶⁵

PRAISE THE SAVING NAME AND BLOOD OF CHRIST JESUS. *Amen*

Now we have been marked upon our foreheads with the mark of Christ Jesus. We wait until the end when we shall be among the Last to Leave and shall turn out the lights and live with him forever and forever.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

KEY POINTS:

- A lot of people have been identified as the beast who gives the 666 mark. You can prove it is anyone you want to and you will be wrong.
- To understand the mark, you must see that God marked his followers in the Old Testament during the time of Ezekiel.
- In the Book of Revelation God marks his followers on the FOREHEAD first. This is for their protection just like in Ezekiel.
- Satan forces his followers to be marked. He cannot mark anyone who has the mark of God.
- The mark of the beast (666) represents all the religions of humankind without Jesus. These are pagan *dragon* (6) false *beast* church (6) and the cults run by *false prophets* (6).

Digits in God's Computer

*Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.*⁶⁶

Numbers in the word of God (the Bible) are everywhere. In some places, they are just that, numbers. Like when Moses was counting the number of soldiers, he had in his army. “*The number from the tribe of Reuben was 46,500.*”⁶⁷ This is just a count of the number of soldiers in the tribe of Reuben; it has no special or secret meaning.

In other places numbers are codes, symbols, with special meanings. These need to be deciphered and translated so the reader can know what and why they are there. One excellent example of this is the 144,000 that are found standing on Mount Zion in the book of Revelation. We will return to them at the end of this chapter, but first, we need to explain how symbolic numbers work in the word of God.

Numbers have a basic meaning in the Word. First, we will look at these and then explain how they serve as symbols with deeper meaning that can be easily interpreted.

Number ONE

The number ONE is the number for God and also the number of unity in scripture. Paul said, “*there is only one God.*”⁶⁸ The Bible is about this One God. This has been true from the beginning when “*God created the heavens and the earth*”⁶⁹ right up until time comes to an end with the declaration by this one God with the words “*It is done.*”⁷⁰

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Paul knew *“there is only one God.”*⁷¹ James went even further when he wrote *“You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.”*⁷² One of the numbers that refer to God is one.

One is also the number of unity. *“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*⁷³ The concept that unity is represented by one is in the key that one is complete and the simplest of numbers and that there is only one God who is whole and complete.

An excellent example of the concept of the unity of one is in the way the scriptures describe a married couple. *“For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”*⁷⁴

The number one appears over 2,200 times in scripture and sometimes is just “one,” the number. Other times it is the number that represents God, or it is the number for unity.

Number TWO

The number two is the number of strength and testimony.

“Two” represents strength as it demonstrates how individuals can help and support each other. Two can do more than one can. They can combine their strengths, and both can be stronger because of it. The book of Ecclesiastes highlights this point when the preacher says, *“Two are better than one because they have a good return for their work.”*⁷⁵ Here is the productive increase of two

Last to Leave

over one. One person alone may freeze to death, but “*if two lie down together, they will keep warm.*”⁷⁶ Here is the increase and strength of two working together. A person fighting alone will have no one to cover their back but “*two can defend themselves.*”⁷⁷ This strength is not just any two getting together, but it requires the willingness to share. The preacher asks, “*Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?*”⁷⁸ This is not so much a question but a lesson on the need to want to be together and share their strength.

Enemies do not work together. They do not lie down together to keep each other warm. They do not watch each other’s back. They do not walk together unless it is a trap. The strength of two as a number is seen in the sharing and trust required in the most challenging times. That is the strength of the relationship between Jonathan and David. One the son of the king, the other the one anointed to replace the king. They were so close that “*Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.*”⁷⁹

The number two is also the number of testimony.⁸⁰ It takes at least two to serve as a witness. Even as Jesus taught, “*every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.*”⁸¹

Two witnesses are set on the earth as a testimony by God. They are first mentioned in the prophecies of the Old Testament when Zechariah is shown a vision that includes “*two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.*”⁸² Their meaning is not made clear until they reappear in the book of Revelation. “*And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.*” *These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of*

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

the earth."⁸³ These two are here for one purpose. They are to remain until ". . . *they have finished their testimony.* . . ." ⁸⁴ Here, they are the two who serve as witnesses giving testimony until they are killed.

Even as God gives two witnesses to prove what is being said is true, it is required that there are at least two witnesses to give testimony for or against an individual.

Number THREE

The number three is the number that represents testimony and a sign of proof. Three joins two in being linked to testimony because "*every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.*"⁸⁵

The concept of needing at least two to serve as a witness to prove guilt or innocence is reinforced with the proof of three being absolute proof. It is because of this; three is used in scripture by God to show proof or absolute testimony. When the Lord appeared to Abraham to tell him that Sarah, who was ninety years old,⁸⁶ would get pregnant and have a son, the scriptures say that "*The LORD appeared to Abraham...*"⁸⁷ Abraham did not see the one God but "*Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby.*"⁸⁸ To prove the message was true, God appeared as three.

Three also is the number of proof. This is demonstrated by a link between the Old Testament prophet Jonah and Jesus in the New Testament. Jonah was disobedient and tried to run away from following directions given him by God.⁸⁹ He was eventually thrown into the sea by the crew of the ship he was on⁹⁰ and swallowed by a great fish where he remained for three days and three nights.⁹¹

Last to Leave

Jesus was confronted by some teachers and Pharisees who wanted him to provide a sign or proof that he was who he said.⁹² Instead of some miracle, Jesus said the only reason they wanted a sign was because they were part of a “*wicked and adulterous generation.*”⁹³ The only sign or proof Jesus said he would give them was “*as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*”⁹⁴ Here again, is the number three serving as absolute proof from God.

One afternoon while lunch was being prepared, Peter went up on the roof to take a nap.⁹⁵ While asleep “*He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”*”⁹⁶ Peter was a Jew, and the message went directly against his teachings. “*Surely not, Lord!*” Peter replied. “*I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.*”⁹⁷ Peter had what I call ‘foot in mouth disease.’ This means he kept putting his foot in his mouth by saying what he should not. The only reason he opened his mouth sometimes was to change which foot he had inserted. Here he is directly telling the Lord no. This happened a total of three times as proof to Peter: it was a sign from God. The Lord told Peter “*Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.*”⁹⁸

Next, Peter is asked by messengers from a gentile named Cornelius to come to his house.⁹⁹ This is in direct violation of his Jewish beliefs. Remember there was no clear division between Christians and Jews yet. All the first Christians were Jews who saw Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. Peter is being asked to cross a barrier that was keeping the majority of humanity from the salvation experience of Jesus. God sent Peter a vision three times

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

that would serve as the proof needed to break down Jewish religious barriers. From that vision, Peter reaches out to the gentiles for the first time and can say “*God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.*”¹⁰⁰ Once again God used three as absolute proof of his will and his purpose.

The number three stands for testimony and proof.

The number three appears over 420 times in scripture and most of the time it is just the number three.¹⁰¹

One further note is needed here. The number three is not a Biblical number used to represent God. We know that God is triune in His very nature or Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This would lead us to think of three as a number for God, yet when examining scripture, the number three is not used to speak or represent God. God is one, and not three.

Number FOUR

The number four represents judgment.

We learn in the book of Exodus “*If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.*”¹⁰² The second part where it requires judgment against a thief of restoring “four for one” is demonstrated in several places. First, there is the instance in the Old Testament when Nathan comes and confronts David about killing Uriah and taking Bathsheba as his wife. Before David knows that he is the thief Nathan is talking about in his clever story of the one stolen sheep, David becomes angry and passes judgment and declares “*He must pay for that lamb four times over. . .*”¹⁰³ David passed judgment on

Last to Leave

himself and in so doing brought punishment to his family. Four of his sons died violent deaths because of his sin and the judgment that it carried.¹⁰⁴

Then we also see this judgment in the New Testament with the repentance of Zacchaeus who “*was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.*”¹⁰⁵ Tax collectors were notorious for collecting extra taxes for themselves. This was permitted by the Romans who they were collecting taxes for, just as long as they got their required amount. That he was rich has a lot to do with his declaration that “*if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount. . .*”¹⁰⁶ This also indicates that he was more than likely a Jew working for the Roman government. He knew the Old Testament requirement of judgment and restoration.

The number four is important in understanding the resurrection of Jesus’ friend Lazarus “*On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.*”¹⁰⁷ The Jews believed that a soul remained with the body for three days before it was taken away by God, never to return. This was the final judgment or separation of the individual from the living. That is why when Lazarus came hopping out of the tomb everyone was astonished. The reason he was hopping was “*his hands and feet [were] wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.*”¹⁰⁸

In the book of Revelation, we are told that “*around the throne, were four living creatures*”¹⁰⁹ who are continually praising God “*Day and night [and] they never stop saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.’*”¹¹⁰ The only thing they do besides praise God is to introduce judgment from on high. They are the ones who show us the white, red, black and pale horses of

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

the apocalypse who bring judgment upon the earth.¹¹¹ Later we are told that “*one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever.*”¹¹² When these four creatures are not praising God, they are delivering judgment upon the earth.

The number four continues the judgment theme when it is combined with a zero to be forty. We will examine that later in this chapter.

The number four appears around 200 times in scripture, and most of the time it is just a number.

Number FIVE

Five is the number that represents separation or division. It is not a strong number or one that often has this meaning.

We can see this in the Old Testament in the directions given for the building of the tabernacle. “*Join five of the curtains together, and do the same with the other five.*”¹¹³

Jesus spoke by using the number five representing division when he said, “*From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other,*”¹¹⁴

This division is representative of the separation that will take place at the end of time. “*At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.*”¹¹⁵ Here Jesus is showing that there will be a division between the good and evil in the world with the good separated for eternity from the evil.

Last to Leave

Five represents division and separation and appears around 150 times in the Bible, but usually, the number five represents the number between four and six.

Number SIX

The number six represents man.

The first time we come to the number six in scripture, it is the sixth day and the creation of man. Then “*the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*”¹¹⁶ Man was created to work. The directions were, “*Six days you shall labor and do all your work. . .*”¹¹⁷ The number six is associated with man and his labor. All the efforts of man are associated with the number six. When Joshua was directed to “*March around the city once with all the armed men, do this for six days.*”¹¹⁸ Here were the efforts of man represented by six days of nothing happening. Then on the seventh day, the day of God’s victory, they marched around the city seven times, and when they blew the trumpets following the directions of God, the walls of the city came down¹¹⁹. Six days of labor could not accomplish what God could accomplish on the seventh.

In the book of Revelation, we find the sixth day as the Day of Judgment and conflict. “*I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind.*”¹²⁰ The sixth cycle in the book of Revelation is a repeating cycle of conflict before the final judgment upon humanity.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Knowing that the number for man is six makes understanding scriptures easier. *“This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.”*¹²¹ This was covered in detail in chapter three but here is a brief description. The religions of man are at war against the true church and bride of Christ. These religions of man are designated as the pagan religions, the false church, and the cults. Each one of these is the religion of man. So each of these is represented by the number 6, that makes the number of all man's religions together would be 666.

The number six is the number of man. The number six appears around 120 times in scripture, and most of the time it is just a number.

Number SEVEN

The number seven represents rest and completion.

Throughout scripture, the number seven serves as a way to show completion and a time of rest. This starts in the book of Genesis as God has created all including man during the first six days. *“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day, he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.”*¹²² This day of rest is God's seventh day, but it is man's first day. Throughout scripture, God reminds man of the need to rest and remember his maker.

Even in the battles of the book of Revelation the majority of them happen on the sixth day, but the seventh is the day of rest, the day of completion.

Last to Leave

*“I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last because with them God's wrath is completed.”*¹²³

*“When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.”*¹²⁴

Here we see that these seven plagues are the ones that complete everything. They are called the last plagues because with it God will call time and all life to an end. The first six are about man and judgment, but the seventh brings silence and rest. This is made clear when John writes, *“But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.”*¹²⁵ Here are the completion and the end.

This completion is the final chapter in the merging of the spiritual, eternal world with the believers who have not yet died but who are about to be changed. *“The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever.”*¹²⁶ Jesus instituted his kingdom at the time of his resurrection. We need to remember that this is not a physical kingdom. *“Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.”*¹²⁷ This is a spiritual kingdom that extends from heaven to earth, and that is being united into one as time is brought to a close.

This seventh cycle is the last and, with it, all comes to an end. *“The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, “It is done!”*¹²⁸

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

The number seven appears over 320 times in scripture, and most of the time it is just the number seven. Other times it is about completion, like the two times Jacob had to work for a complete seven years to get Rachel¹²⁹ and ended up with Leah as his wife¹³⁰ and then had to work another seven years to finally get Rachel.¹³¹

Number EIGHT

Eight is the number for a New Beginning.

The covenant with Abraham was a change and a new beginning in the relationship between God and humanity. As a way to demonstrate this and to remind them of this covenant, God required the circumcision of male children on the eighth day. *“For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring.”*¹³²

When God decided that he would not tolerate the sin of humanity any longer, he chose to restart with a small group from his first creation of man. He had Noah build the ark to save them from the coming flood. *“In it, only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,”*¹³³ This new beginning of humanity was done with eight people.

The number eight only appears 38 times in scripture. It represents a new beginning on a few occasions, but it usually just is the number eight.

Number NINE

Nine is the number that represents to forget or be unthankful, to be defeated and alone.

Jesus healed ten lepers as he was traveling down the road. He sent them to Jerusalem. He told them to “*Go, show yourselves to the priests.*” As they went, they were cleansed.”¹³⁴ One of them stopped and came back to thank Jesus for healing him. “*Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?”*”¹³⁵ The other nine were unthankful and forgot to come back to Jesus when they saw they were cleansed.

As Jesus was dying on the cross “*At the sixth-hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”—which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*”¹³⁶ It was at the ninth hour that he felt forgotten or alone and separated from God.

Even the number of times that nine appears in scripture is evidence of its meaning. Nine appears the least amount of any number in the scriptures. Nine only occurs 17 times in scripture, and even then it is usually just the number nine.

Number ZERO

Now, I know somewhere my old math teachers have rolled over in their graves, or are ready to break out of the old folks home to correct me. I can hear Mr. Anderson saying, zero is not a number but a digit. Whatever zero is, whenever zero is added to any number that number becomes complete, and the more zeros, the more complete that number becomes. This will become more apparent as this chapter goes on.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

When zero is added to one, it becomes ten and represents or makes that number complete.

Ten represents everyone who calls themselves believers. Jesus used the number in the parable of the ten virgins. *“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.”*¹³⁷ We know that these were divided into groups of five. Five represented the faithful and five represented the unfaithful or unprepared. Ten represents all the believers.

Jesus talked about all those who will be touched by his ministry. They were represented by the number ten. *“As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him.”*¹³⁸

Even in the Old Testament ten was a number for completeness. *“He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two stone tablets.”*¹³⁹ Here the Ten Commandments represent the outline for the whole law.

The number ten, or one with a zero to complete it, represents completeness. The number ten appears around 180 times in scripture, and most of the time it is just a way to count.

Number FORTY

Forty represents temptation, testing, and proof.

Forty represents judgment for the first time when we read that *“The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.”*¹⁴⁰ Because of this God decided to *“wipe mankind, whom I have*

Last to Leave

created, from the face of the earth.” This judgment of God came when “rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.”¹⁴¹

We see this same judgment when the Hebrews in the wilderness sent in spies to check out the land that God had promised them. *“At the end of forty days, they returned from exploring the land.”¹⁴²* They brought back a bad report and showed they did not trust in God. God saw this as a lack of faith and brought judgment upon them for that. *“For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.”¹⁴³* Here the number forty represented judgment.

Moses was called up to Mt. Sinai by the Lord. This was a time of testing for Moses. *“Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.”¹⁴⁴* This testing time lasted forty days and was followed by God rewarding Moses with the Ten Commandments.

Jonah was sent to the city of Nineveh to preach to them. They were given a choice. They were being tested, and if they did not respond, they would be destroyed by God’s judgment. *“On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.”¹⁴⁵* They were given forty days to see if they would respond to the message from God or face His judgment.

Jesus was starting his ministry when he *“was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.”¹⁴⁶* This time of testing represents a complete time of testing and a period of temptation that had to be overcome. We know

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

that [Jesus] *was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan.*"¹⁴⁷

Jesus died and resurrected on the third day. "*After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.*"¹⁴⁸ This time of proof was represented by the complete time that God often used.

Forty is the number for judgment, testing, temptation and proof of the power and presence of God. The number 4 represents judgment, but when a zero is added to it, you have a clearer picture or a complete number.

Number TWELVE

Twelve represents God's covenant or contract with the saved.

This is shown in his covenant with the Hebrews that is shown through "*the twelve tribes of Israel,*"¹⁴⁹ These twelve tribes are one of the key Old Testament symbols of God's people.

Then in the New Testament Jesus "*called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:*"¹⁵⁰ These twelve represent the new covenant and the church that Jesus was going to establish. These twelve tribes of the Old Testament and the twelve apostles represent all the people of God of the Old and New Covenants.

These are represented in the book of Revelation as the images of eternity and those who will spend it with God. Speaking of the city of God in John's vision we learn that "*It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with*

Last to Leave

twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel."¹⁵¹ Here is the symbol of the Old Covenant and the preparation God had made to save humanity.

Then we see that *"The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."*¹⁵² This is the New Covenant represented in heaven. The twelve apostles represent the new contract that was made through the blood of Jesus.

ADDING Numbers

God uses math to demonstrate his use of numbers. One way he does this is by addition.

All the leaders who have served God from both covenants are represented before the throne of God. Remember that there were twelve tribes in the Old Testament and twelve apostles in the New Testament that represented each covenant. When we look at the images from heaven in the book of Revelation there *"Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads."*¹⁵³

When you add the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles, you get 24 or the number of elders that surround the throne of God. They are before God representing all believers. *"And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God,"*¹⁵⁴

MULTIPLYING Numbers

God also uses multiplication when it comes to numbers. We know that $12 + 12 = 24$ through the properties of

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

addition. We should also know that $12 \times 12 = 144$. Remember that when you add zeros to any number you make it more complete. This is also true of 144 which with three zeros makes it 144,000.

“Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.”¹⁵⁵

Here we have a number representing all the saved from the Old Testament who stand before God.¹⁵⁶ The number here is symbolic of all believers who had died from the time before the resurrection of Jesus and does not limit the number who will stand before God. This is a number that is TRIPLE COMPLETE. It is multiplied, and then it has not one or two, but three zeroes behind it.

“And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.”¹⁵⁷

There will be more than 144,000 that live eternally with God. This is prophetic language used to represent all who were saved from the twelve tribes of Israel in the Old Testament.

ADDING and MULTIPLYING Numbers

“Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.”¹⁵⁸

The image is of so many angels that they have to be described first by adding them and then by multiplying them.

Last to Leave

$$1,000s + 1,000s = 2000 \text{ plus}$$

$$10,000 \times 10,000 = 100,000,000 \text{ plus}$$

BEYOND numbers

“I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.”¹⁵⁹

This promise to Abraham was spoken as a prophetic vision to help him be able to see the vastness of God’s promise. Here we have more than 144,000 that are part of the promised family of faith that God will grow from Abraham and Sarah.

The promise to Abraham has its fulfillment in the vision that is presented in the book of Revelation. Here, speaking of all those who are part of the eternal family of faith, John writes, *“After this, I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”¹⁶⁰*

There is ONE God. He chose TWO (Abraham and Sarah) to start with. They grow to twelve tribes that represent all the believers from the Old Testament. Then twelve disciples are added, and together they become twenty-four elders before the throne of God. They are surrounded by over 100,000 angels who are joined by 144,000 believers. Then we see the true vastness of the promise to Abraham and the completeness of the plan of God and the results of the death and resurrection of Jesus. There is *“a great*

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb."¹⁶¹ God adds and multiplies until the number is so large no human could count the number of believers.

God uses numbers to show the greatness of his plans. He uses numbers in the Bible to teach us lessons and as symbols to help us see a bigger picture. He wants us to understand the difference between what numbers mean and when numbers are just numbers. Numbers are digits in God's computer.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

KEY POINTS:

- Numbers in the Bible can have deep meaning, or they may just be numbers.
- God adds, multiplies and extends numbers until they are so large that no one can count.
- Numbers in the Bible are digits in God's computer.

Rules of Engagement

I am a fan of a place in our local mall where they make some of the coolest slushies' in the world. When I was a kid a guy would come around in a truck with crushed ice, and we could pick a flavor that he poured over the top, and it was called a snow cone. Well, this place at the mall takes the crushed ice, adds juice, fruit and frozen yogurt puts it all in the blender and makes one of the greatest adult 21st-century snow cones drinks you can imagine. My favorite has pineapple juice, strawberries, bananas, frozen lemon yogurt blended with crushed ice. I usually have a brain freeze headache from drinking it so fast. Here is my point: they start with all the different ingredients and create something new and entirely different. This works great for making a drink but it is a terrible way to interpret scripture.

This blender theology is very popular today. Take any Bible prophecy, add something Jesus said, throw in some verse from Paul, and you have a theological belief. Using this method you can prove or create anything you want to. This is especially true when it comes to prophetic languages and teachings. There are four basic rules of engagement or ways to interpret scripture that every believer needs to know and apply. These will keep the believer from being misled and from false doctrines created by man which are not part of God's plan.

Some books have dozens of ways to interpret scripture. They are made up of rules and exceptions that should be applied and followed. They are complicated and often contradict each other. It is not as hard as they try to make it. After years of teaching people how to understand scripture I am convinced that there are only four rules

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

that we all need if we are going to understand and correctly interpret scripture.

The second half of this problem is that people do not know their scriptures. There is a funny story I heard years ago and have seen in several forms over the years. It illustrates scripture blender theology, ignorance and having just enough knowledge to be dangerous. It goes something like this:

"A church council was examining a candidate for membership. One of the questions they asked him was, "What part of the Bible do you like best?" "I like the New Testament best," he replied. "What book in the New Testament?" "The book of Parables." "Would you kindly relate one of those parables to us?" So the uncertain candidate bluffed as follows:

"Once upon a time, a man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, and the thorns grew up and choked him.

And he went on and met the Queen of Sheba, and she gave him a thousand talents of gold and silver, and a hundred changes of raiment. And he got in his chariot and drove furiously. And when he was driving along under a tree, his hair got caught in a limb and left him hanging there.

And he hung there many days and many nights, and ravens brought him food to eat and drink. And one night while he was hanging there asleep, his wife, Delilah, came and cut off his hair, and he dropped and fell on the stony ground; and it began

Last to Leave

to rain and it rained forty days and forty nights, and he hid in a cave.

And he went on and met a man who said, "Come in and take supper with me," but he said, "I cannot come, for I have married a wife." And the man went out into the highways and byways and compelled him to come.

He went on and came to Jerusalem, and he saw Queen Jezebel sitting high up in a window. When she saw him, she laughed. And he said, "Throw her down out of there," and they threw her down. And he said, "Throw her down again," and they threw her down seventy times seven times, and of the fragments, they then picked up twelve baskets full. Now, whose wife will she be in the day of judgment?"

No one in the council felt qualified to question the candidate further for each council member suspected that his own unorganized Bible knowledge was as sketchy as that of the candidate. The man was voted into the church."¹⁶²

There are two simple things a person should do to avoid ending up with similar theological problems. The first is, they must read the Bible to know what it says. The second is that the person needs to apply four simple rules when reading scripture so that they can understand and apply it to their lives.

RULE ONE: NOTHING OUT OF CONTEXT

The story is told of a depressed man who wanted a sign from God, so he picked up his Bible and began to flip

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

through the pages. Then he said, “Lord I have tried hard, and I have endured so much, I don’t think I can take anymore. Show me a sign from your word.” He put his finger in the bible and read, “*It’s been useless.*”¹⁶³ Shaken he asked, “Lord, how do you see me?” Sticking his finger back in the bible he read, “*without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal.*”¹⁶⁴ He was even more shaken and ask, “What should I do Lord?” He flipped through the pages and again put his finger in. He read, “*he went away and hanged himself.*”¹⁶⁵ “What, I don’t understand; do you really want me to hang myself?” Then one last time he flipped through the bible and read, “*What you are about to do, do quickly,*”¹⁶⁶

This is taking scripture out of context. These verses were never intended to be used or read in this fashion. This is an extreme example, but it is exactly what some people do in trying to use scripture to prove their theological points.

First, to make sure that scripture is not taken out of context you have to make sure that the surrounding story or situation is not forgotten when reading any text. This means if the text is about Judas going out to betray Jesus it has nothing to do with giving direction to a depressed man.

Second, to make sure that scripture is not taken out of context it should be put into historical context. You must be careful not to make something from another time say what it was never intended to mean.

Third, to make sure it is not out of context you should know what the word(s) means. This is so much easier today with computer Bibles and internet reference to the original meaning of words. You can also often figure it out by using several good translations side by side.

RULE TWO: SCRIPTURE INTERPRETS SCRIPTURE

“*All Scripture is God-breathed,*”¹⁶⁷ and it is His intention for us to learn about him from them. God has put the Bible together like a puzzle that needs to be properly assembled so we can see the whole picture clearly. When the pieces are properly arranged, we can see the bigger picture. Some people have preconceived ideas about what the picture is. They will use scripture to produce what they want instead of what God intended. It is like a small child putting a puzzle together. When one piece did not fit he picked it up, bit off the corner and then forced the piece into the hole. We are not the designers of the picture. God has made it, so all the pieces fit together. When properly placed one part interprets another so we can understand it and see the bigger picture.

If you were to read in the Bible about the ‘fear of the Lord’ you might wonder exactly what it means. Are you, as a believer, supposed to be afraid of God? And will this bring benefits to your life? We read that “*the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.*”¹⁶⁸ It is also the “*beginning of knowledge*”¹⁶⁹ and “*the fear of the LORD brings wealth and honor and life.*”¹⁷⁰ Those are items I want to have in my life, but am I supposed to have a fear of God as if he is some big bad monster who is watching me just waiting for me to make a mistake? The question is what does it mean to fear the Lord? Now, using the principle of Scripture interprets Scripture, we can look for the answer. We find the answer in Proverbs 8.13 where it says, “*to fear the LORD is to hate evil.*”

That puts a whole new light on what it means to ‘*fear the LORD.*’ If a person rejects evil, literally hates evil, that will make a difference in their life. Hating evil makes a person wise, leads to additional knowledge, will bring wealth

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

through right living and should extend your life. Fearing the LORD is not about being afraid of God, but it is about rejecting evil as part of your life. How do we know this? Well, scripture is used to interpret scripture.

RULE THREE: EASY INTERPRETS THE DIFFICULT

The book of Revelation is a wonderful picture of the struggle between good and evil. It is also a place where many fear to go because they feel that it simply cannot be understood. Now, I am not saying I understand it all. I am saying it is a great book to read and it has some remarkable clues buried there for our help in understanding the meaning of some of the images God used to describe what would happen.

“I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone “like a son of man,” dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.”¹⁷¹

A great image is painted here in the early part of the book of Revelation. Here is an image of Jesus walking among seven lampstands and he has seven stars in his hand. BUT, what are the seven golden lampstands and what are the seven stars?

Rule ONE: Nothing out of context. This is found in the book of Revelation. John has just been told to write a

Last to Leave

message to the seven churches. The context is in the first century, and this is something they will need to understand.

Rule TWO: Scripture interprets scripture. We know that God has placed answers in his book for us to find. Some of them are hidden and hard to find; others are simple and should jump out at us. So we will look for the answers to the lampstands and the stars in the Bible.

Rule THREE: Easy interprets the difficult. If you keep reading in the first chapter of the book of Revelation, you find that God was so anxious for them (and us) to understand the mystery of the stars and the lampstands mentioned here that he spells it out in plain and straightforward language just a few verses later.

“The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”¹⁷²

Here we have the answer. The seven stars are the seven angels or messengers. Using the context rule, you need to know what that word means. We almost always see angels as winged beings sent from heaven to earth, but the word has nothing to do with wings. The word angel means “messenger.” The word would be better translated here as messenger than angel because it is speaking of human messengers and not those sent from heaven. In scripture, some messengers have wings and are sent from heaven, and other messengers serve as pastors of local churches. Each pastor or messenger is assigned to a church. Each church is one of the lampstands that Jesus is about to speak to.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Knowing these two facts should improve the reading about the seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation.¹⁷³ So when we read, “*To the angel [pastor] of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars [pastors] in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands [churches].*”¹⁷⁴ We should be aware that this is written to the pastor of the church that is located at Ephesus. Imagine the impact that must have had on those pastors and their churches to receive a message directly from Jesus. Read those messages with that personal perspective or context, and you will see the power of what is said and how it must have inspired and hurt them.

RULE FOUR: JESUS IS BOSS

I have on my bookshelves in the garage (too many books to fit in the house anymore) a large number of books on the end of time. I find it interesting that most of them are written by people who do not believe in Jesus or at least do not believe what Jesus said. They claim him as their lord and savior, but they often break the most crucial rule of understanding or interpreting scripture. They do not believe Jesus is boss or that what he says supersedes everything else people teach or write.

In the first chapter, I showed you that when the end of time comes there will be a great separation of the wicked and the righteous. The wicked will sit on Jesus’ left-hand side, and the righteous will be put on his right-hand side. The wicked are compared to goats and the righteous to sheep.¹⁷⁵ This final judgment is called “the end of the age.”¹⁷⁶ Jesus described this event saying, “*No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*”¹⁷⁷ When Hal Lindsey wrote about this in his book ‘The Late Great Planet Earth’¹⁷⁸ in

Last to Leave

1970 he had set the date of the end time events to start in 1988. He did not know the hour or the day, but he claimed to know the year. Let me ask you a simple question here. Who is right here, Hal Lindsey or Jesus? I looked back at 1988, and right there on day one, there was the disaster I expected to find. 'Miami beats Oklahoma for the college football championship.' Yep, that was the end of the world, well not quite, but when you are rooting for Oklahoma, it is not how you want to start the year. I check to see if anyone had a report of the end of the world or Jesus coming back. NOPE, it was not there. So I guess Jesus was right.

Right now many Christian believers are looking forward to Jesus coming back to earth and setting up an earthly kingdom. When Jesus was here, he said, "*My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.*"¹⁷⁹ Who are we to believe, those who say that the Kingdom will be earthly or should we believe Jesus when he says it is not of this world?

Here is one more example that may help you. Speaking about the end of the age, Jesus said, "*Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.*"¹⁸⁰ This is called by many "the rapture," and they claim that those who are taken here are the Christians. But what did Jesus say about this event? The fact is, Jesus told his disciples about this in a parable that he explained to them.¹⁸¹ He said the weeds are the wicked ones and the wheat are the righteous. He was quite clear that this was about the end of the age.¹⁸² Now when this happens, the angels (heavenly messengers) will be sent out from God to reap the harvest of everyone still alive. First, the weeds will be gathered and burned (hell) then

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

the wheat will be gathered into the barn (heaven).¹⁸³ Here is Jesus telling a parable and then explaining it. Jesus says that it is not the Christians that leave first. It is the non-Christians or the weeds. Here is the question you have to answer. Do you believe Jesus or are you going to believe someone else who disagrees with Jesus?

We have used all four rules here. Scripture is used to explain scripture, we have looked at the context, the simple or plain (Matthew 13) is used to explain the difficult or unclear (Matthew 24), and we are relying on Jesus. When Jesus speaks all believers should remember that he is boss and his word is the final authority for what we should believe.

There was a wedding in Cana of Galilee¹⁸⁴ that Jesus and his mother attended. Because of poor preparations they were running out of wine. Jesus' mother asked him to help out the wedding couple. Jesus's mother told the servants at the wedding, "*Do Whatever he tells you.*"¹⁸⁵ Otherwise, they were to believe and do whatever he said they were to do. Jesus turned water into the finest wine anywhere.

Jesus is Boss! We should take his word above all others. He even went so far as to change the standards and to override some of the Old Testament Law teachings and commands. Here is an example from the teachings of Jesus:

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ***But I tell you*** that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin.

Last to Leave

*But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."*¹⁸⁶ (emphasis added)

First Jesus quotes the Ten Commandments that were given to Moses. These are the same Ten Commandments that have been removed from schools and public buildings because they are too religious or radical for our children to see. These are the outline and the cornerstone of all the Old Testament Law. "Do not murder." That is pretty straight forward. Then Jesus uses one of the most powerful words in the world. Jesus says 'but.'

Tell your wife she is the prettiest one in the world, that you love her cooking, and that she is the best mom your kids could ever hope to have and then say 'but'... I guarantee she will be listening intently to everything that comes after the 'but' in that sentence.

"*You have heard...*" "*...but I tell you.*" Either Jesus is the boss, and he can change the standards, raise the bar, or we need to ignore everything he says. You have to live on one side of the 'but' or the other. Either you are all about 'do not murder' or you are aware you live by a new higher standard set by the one in charge, JESUS.

- "**You have heard** that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' **But I tell you...**"¹⁸⁷
- "**You have heard** that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' **But I tell you...**"¹⁸⁸
- "**You have heard** that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' **But I tell you...**"¹⁸⁹
- "**You have heard** that it was said, 'Love your neighbor* and hate your enemy.' **But I tell you...**"¹⁹⁰

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

We need to properly understand the scriptures and know *“that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”*¹⁹¹ We need to remember that in every generation there are false prophets that make themselves part of the fellowship of God's people. They introduce destructive heresies.¹⁹² Sometimes they even go so far as to say they know what the Son of God does not know. Instead of teaching scripture truth they blend it up into new teachings. We need to know *“in their greed; these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up.”*¹⁹³

There are four simple rules you need to know as you study scripture:

- Nothing out of context
- Scripture interprets Scripture
- Easy interprets the difficult
- JESUS IS BOSS!

After Jesus had resurrected from the dead, the disciples still needed a lot of help to understand everything that had happened. During this time *“he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.”*¹⁹⁴ If you apply the simple rules, you will find that you too can understand the Scriptures with the help of Jesus.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

KEY POINTS:

- Blender Theology can prove anything except the truth.
- There are four simple rules you need to know as you study scripture:
 - Nothing out of context
 - Scripture interprets Scripture
 - Easy interprets the difficult
 - JESUS IS BOSS!

The Anti-Christ, replacing Jesus

“Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this, we know that it is the last hour.”

1 John 2.18

IMPERSONATORS

I have a picture of my wife being hugged by Elvis Presley. I was there when it was taken. My three kids were there when the picture was taken. There are a lot of people who may have had their pictures taken with Elvis. So what is so remarkable about my wife having her picture taken with Elvis? Well, when she had her picture taken with him, Elvis had been dead at least ten years. The guy was an Elvis impersonator. He made a living doing a show being Elvis. We were outside after the show and got a picture of him standing there hugging my wife.

He was not the real Elvis; he was trying to make people believe he was like Elvis. Every year there is a contest in Memphis, TN, to see who the best Elvis impersonator is? They get there by competing in regional contests held all over the United States and various locations around the world. There is also an Elvis Lives tour where you can see the best Elvis impersonators travel and put on a show trying to convince you, well, that Elvis lives. I checked, and Elvis did die on August 16, 1977. I can even remember where I was when I heard he was dead. My wife and I were traveling between Stillwater and Tulsa, Oklahoma, when the radio announcer came on with the announcement, “Ladies and Gentlemen, the King is dead.”

Last to Leave

The enemy of God, ole el Diablo¹⁹⁵ himself has a plan to trip up as many people as he can. He has his own set of Jesus impersonators. The job of these impersonators is to replace Jesus and get people to hang out with the fake Jesus instead of the real Jesus. Paul warned the church at Corinth that this could happen. He wrote to them to be on guard in case “*one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached.*”¹⁹⁶ This would be a Jesus impersonator. Now, this is not just someone pretending to be like Jesus. This is someone trying to take the place of Jesus. This other Jesus does not say what the real Jesus said.

The other Jesus’s are called antichrist. This compound word is exactly what it sounds like. It is one who is hostile to, opposes, and goes against the real Christ who is the real Jesus. There is only one writer who mentions these antichrists in his writing in the Bible. That is John. What we know about these antichrists we learn in the books of 1st and 2nd John. We will look at what John says about these antichrists.

MANY ANTICHRISTS

*“Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this, we know that it is the last hour.”*¹⁹⁷

John was living in a time of great persecution and thought it was the last days before Jesus returned. That is why he called it the “*last hour.*” It was not that he was wrong; it’s that since we do not know the day or hour of the return of Jesus, we need to live and believe that this is the last day or hour. We need to be careful not to say anything that John does not say about the antichrist if we are going to know what John was trying to teach and warn the church

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

about. This was originally written to the church 2,000 years ago. Even as Paul had warned about another *false* Jesus,¹⁹⁸ John warned: *“that antichrist is coming.”* If we take this out of context, we get the message that there is only one Antichrist that is coming. That is not what John says. He says *“many antichrists have appeared.”* Way back then there had already been *many antichrists*, and they were being warned to watch out for more of them to come. John believed that one way to know the end was near was that the enemy was fighting to get people to follow another Jesus or an “antichrist.”

THE ENEMY WITHIN

John continues and tells us more about these antichrists. *“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 so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.”*¹⁹⁹ These are not demons or some supernatural beings. These are people who used to be part of the local church fellowships and had turned their backs on the church and the message of Jesus. These former believers or church members have turned against or oppose the message of Jesus and are antichrists.

*“Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.”*²⁰⁰

John clarifies who is an antichrist. It is anyone who denies God the Father or Jesus, His son. Now I want to make sure you hear what John has said so far. An antichrist is anyone who denies Jesus is the resurrected son of God. They may have even been part of, or are part of, the church. I will give you a perfect example of an antichrist.

Last to Leave

This is someone who is in the church and who denies Jesus.

In 2000 the Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey wrote a book. Now “the Archbishop of Canterbury is the senior bishop and principal leader of the Church of England, the symbolic head of the worldwide Anglican Communion, and the diocesan bishop of the Diocese of Canterbury. In his role as head of the Anglican Communion, the archbishop leads the third largest group of Christians in the world.”²⁰¹ Carey wrote in his book, What in the World,²⁰² “I can tell you frankly that while we can be absolutely sure that Jesus lived and that He was certainly crucified on the cross, we cannot know that He was raised by God from the dead.”

He denies the resurrection and the lordship of Jesus. He is denying what the Bible says and is speaking an outright lie. He claims to represent God, but he is really an antichrist. He is opposed to Jesus. He is exactly what John was warning the early church about, and exactly we need to be on the lookout. An antichrist is someone who is in, or was in, the church and who is standing in opposition to the truth by telling a lie.

THE TEST OF THE SPIRIT

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.”²⁰³

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Today we would call a false prophet a false preacher. There are more of them around than I want to admit. The number of ministers and Christians who no longer believe Jesus is God is growing. John says this was a problem 2000 years ago and it is even a bigger problem today. It is the spirit that denies that Jesus is who he said he is. It is the spirit that says the Bible cannot be believed. It is the spirit that has turned against Jesus while still using his name.

John has a warning that *“many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.”*²⁰⁴ John is clear that there is not one antichrist but many who are antichrists. These antichrists are liars and pervert the truth and misrepresent Jesus. There is a spirit or movement that fights against the truth of Jesus. This spirit was alive and working in the first century and is alive and working in the 21st century.

This means the age of the antichrist is not reserved to the end of time but covers the entire church age. That is from the time of Jesus to the end of time. It is and has been part of every period of the time that the church has been here. So far, the age of antichrists has covered 21 centuries.

The guy who stood next to my wife and looked like Elvis was an impersonator. No one believes that he is the real Elvis. The problem develops when someone who says that they represent Jesus misrepresents Him as not being God's son or says he did not rise from the dead.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

KEY POINTS:

- There were many antichrists in the first century. Many of them had been in the church before turning against the truth.
- There are many antichrists in the world today. It is the same spirit, and some of them are even trying to stay in the church and are false preachers or false prophets.
- All antichrists are liars who deny the truth about God the Father and His son, Jesus.

The Third Temple

Then Solomon said, “The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick cloud. “I have built You a lofty house, And a place for Your dwelling forever.” ² Chronicles 6.1-2

This was at the dedication of the first temple. Solomon thought the earthly temple he had built was so great God would want to live there forever.

The beliefs about the third temple are as varied as there are days in any given month. The Jews believe it should be rebuilt to restore complete fellowship with God. In their daily prayers, they mention the rebuilding of the temple. Christians who believe in the millennial²⁰⁵ point of view see the temple as vital for the restoration of sacrifices during the 1,000-year reign of Jesus. There is another group of Christians who do not believe that the temple will ever be rebuilt as a physical building. An overview of temple history from a Biblical point of view may help us see more clearly the importance of the third temple and who is right about the third temple.

THE FIRST TEMPLE

Jewish tradition has it that the temple was built on the site where Abraham set up the altar to sacrifice Isaac.²⁰⁶ King David bought it from a man named Oran²⁰⁷ about 1015 BC. The temple was built by King Solomon in 957 BC in an alliance with King Hiram of Tyre.²⁰⁸ It took 183,600 workers using limestone from local quarries, cedar from Lebanon and a great treasure of gold and silver.

At the dedication of the temple, God made a promise to Solomon that he would live in the temple as long as the

Last to Leave

people were faithful. He also warned Solomon that if his sons turned away and followed other gods, he would turn against them “*and the house which I have consecrated for My name, I will cast out of My sight.*”²⁰⁹ The temple would last 371 years even though it was only one generation before the people began to turn to other gods and away from serving God as they were instructed. God had given them a two-sided promise. Either it would be where they met him forever, or it would be a place he turned his back on because of their sins. The temple was destroyed in 586 BC by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He attacked Jerusalem, burning the city, killing a large number of the residents and carrying a remnant away into captivity.²¹⁰

The temple furnishings and dishes were taken away to Babylon. Throwing a lavish banquet for thousands of his nobles, Belshazzar, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, called for gold and silver cups from the temple to be brought in so they could be used to serve wine to the nobles, his wives and his concubines. “*They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone.*”²¹¹ Suddenly there was a light that started writing on the wall. The king, in fear, called for someone to tell him the meaning. Before it was over, Daniel was brought to interpret the writing. The king was told he had “*been weighed on the scales and found deficient.*”²¹² That same night he was killed by Darius the Mede.²¹³ Even though God had punished the Jewish people for deserting Him, He would not tolerate that which was dedicated to Him being misused by an evil pagan king. The Jewish people were held in captivity for seventy years as a punishment for turning away and serving other Gods.²¹⁴

The temple in Jerusalem lay in ruin. The walls of the city had been torn down, and the people had been forbidden to rebuild them. This would all change with the Jews

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

returning from captivity after the seventy years of God's punishment.

THE SECOND TEMPLE

Nehemiah and Ezra are keys to the returning of the Jews and the eventual building of the second temple. First, the city walls had to be rebuilt and only then could they begin to rebuild the temple. The second temple was started around 530 BC and finished fifteen years later, around 515 BC. This smaller temple was only a shadow of the first one.

This second temple was desecrated in 167 BC when Antiochus offered pigs upon the altar and robbed the temple treasuries. All worship and sacrifices were stopped for two years until the temple was purified and worship began again in 165 BC.

The temple continues to be used but not completely restored until 20-19 BC when Herod remodeled it. It was a complete remodeling. He had the temple mount enlarged, the old temple was almost completely torn down and a new larger one built. This became known as Herod's temple.

This is the temple where Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to when he was dedicated in 3 BC,²¹⁵ his parents offered doves for him because they were so poor. This is also the temple that Jesus visited when he is 12 years old and taught the priests sometime around 8 AD.²¹⁶

During his three-year ministry, Jesus visited the temple many times. He was tempted by the devil to throw himself down from the top of the temple.²¹⁷ It is here in the temple Jesus cast out the money changers for desecrating

Last to Leave

his father's house.²¹⁸ Then in the final week of his life, He confronted the Pharisees here, taught the people and even predicted the destruction of this very temple.²¹⁹

There is a moment in the temple on which we need to focus. "*When Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks split.*"²²⁰ The splitting of the curtain in the temple marks a transition in God's relationship with humanity and in particular the Jewish people.

The inside of the temple was divided into two rooms, one large and one small. Separating these two rooms was a curtain or veil that was described by Josephus as being four inches thick, twenty feet wide and sixty feet tall. It was extremely heavy, and tradition says it took three hundred priests to pull it apart so the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies before God once a year. The high priest sprinkled sacrificial blood as an offering so that he could go in before God.²²¹ This was the place where they believed man and God came together, and this was only possible with the shedding of blood.

At the death of his son, God reached down and tore this curtain in half. The blood of his son had removed the barrier that existed between him and humanity. No longer would God be limited to one encounter with one man behind a curtain once a year. Now God was available to all through the greatest sacrifice, the sprinkling of the blood of his son, Jesus.

The temple continued to be used by both Jews and Jewish believers who are followers of Jesus. "*Every day [the believers] continued to meet together in the temple courts.*"²²² The temple was important to them, but God

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

had already separated himself from the temple and from the Jews who had rejected his son Jesus. It was here at the temple Peter healed the crippled beggar.²²³ Just outside the temple, Stephen is stoned to death and shortly after that, the early believers were to be driven out of Jerusalem by persecution.²²⁴ They wanted to remain in Jerusalem till Jesus returned but, God scattered them so they would spread the message of Jesus' death and resurrection from the dead.

Church history tells us that in 62 A.D. James, the brother of Jesus who was a leader of the church in Jerusalem was martyred by being thrown down from the pinnacle of the temple mount.²²⁵

The temple was doomed as Jesus prophesied it for almost 40 years before it happened. While teaching his disciples, he pointed to the temple and said "*Do you see all these things...I tell you the truth; not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down.*"²²⁶ This prophecy was so exact that when Josephus wrote about it in his records of the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman general Titus, he could have just as easily quoted Jesus. The rebelling Jews held out for an extended period of time which infuriated the Roman general. When his army finally broke into the city, they set the whole thing on fire. They had been told not to burn the temple. In their rage it caught fire, some of the gold melted and ran down into the cracks. The general had the temple torn down to the last stone to make sure that no gold remained. Then the temple mount was salted so that nothing would grow there. Literally, *not one stone* was left on another when they were done. The temple treasures and menorah were taken to Rome and never seen again.

MODERN TEMPLE HISTORY

This ended the second temple and opened the door for a continued call for the rebuilding of the temple. There was only one time when the temple came close to being rebuilt. That was in 363 A.D. when the Roman Emperor, Flavius Claudius Julianus authorized the Jews rebuilding the temple. In the earliest part of the clearing of the temple debris, an explosion occurred causing flames to come from the ground. The workers were so frightened that all work was stopped. Some think God caused this to happen to stop the rebuilding of the temple. The explosion was most likely caused by gases in the underground caverns ignited by torches. In either case, the rebuilding of a third temple was stopped.

The temple mount is next important when it is in possession of the Islamic Caliph Omar. He prayed there in 638 A.D., and the wooden El Aksa Mosque was built there in 700 A.D. The Dome of the Rock replaced it later.

The Golden Gate is the only gate in the wall of old Jerusalem that is still visible and faces east. It was walled shut by the Arabs in 810 A.D. and has remained closed for the last twelve centuries. Muslims, Jews and some Christian see the gate as having a place in the last judgment of God upon the world. When Jesus says, "*For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man,*"²²⁷ it has led some to believe that he will come from the east making the Golden Gate important to them.

Just outside the gate are three cemeteries. The one closest to the gate is the Muslim one. Just beyond it is the Jewish cemetery, and in the valley is the Christian cemetery. Many of these were buried there in hopes they would be

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

first to meet the Messiah when he comes or, in the case of Christians, when he returns.

Jerusalem and the third temple are of vital importance to some Christians today. These believers are looking for the temple to be built so that the Messiah, Jesus, will return, set up an earthly kingdom, and rule from there. They also believe that animal sacrifices will be reestablished and that the anti-Christ will rule there setting up the abomination of desolation. They see the temple as a sign of this coming conflict even though Jesus said the only signs of the end would be people getting married and people eating and drinking. Life, as usual, is what we could expect right up to the end of time.²²⁸

Today the temple mount is controlled by Muslims and is the second most holy site in their religion. Jews pray at the Wailing Wall which is one of the foundation walls of the old temple. Many Jews believe that they will not be allowed to return to the temple mount and build a third temple till the Messiah comes.

There is also a belief among some Christians that the temple needs to be rebuilt so Jesus can come back and rule over his earthly kingdom from there.

THE THIRD TEMPLE

The New Testament has a lot to say about the temple, and all of it contradicts what most people believe. Paul wrote to the believers at Corinth, "*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.*"²²⁹ This confirms that when God split the veil in the second temple, he was moving out permanently. He has

established contact with each and every believer. *“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises **to become a holy temple in the Lord**. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”*²³⁰ (Emphasis added.) Each believer is part of this new temple. We as *“living stones, are being built into a spiritual house.”*²³¹ This spiritual house is where God has put his Holy Spirit as a guide and helper. This is the temple of the New Testament, but it is not the final temple we find in the Word of God.

EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE

I know I just spoke of the New Testament but to understand this new third temple you need to look back to the Old Testament and the prophecies of Ezekiel. In chapters 40 through 48 there is a vision of a temple that will be built for the Messiah. Some think this temple will be built in Jerusalem on the temple mount. The temple Ezekiel talked about was unique and lined up with the New Testament.

- This temple has NO wall of partition to exclude the Gentiles. He *“has destroyed the barrier”*²³² that separates the gentiles from the Jews so there is no need for the exclusion. Now *“the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel.”*²³³
- This temple has NO court of women. *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*²³⁴ Jesus removed the barriers between the sexes.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

- This temple has NO laver. The laver or bronze basin was for the washing of the hands and feet of the priest every day so they would be clean. It was symbolic of the removal of sin. “... *your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.*” There is no need for daily cleansing when your sins are all forgiven.
- This temple has NO table with the bread of the presence. This bread of the presence of God was put on a special table in the temple. We know that Jesus said, “*I am the bread of life.*”²³⁵
- This temple has NO Lampstand or Menorah in it. Jesus told us that he is “*the light of the world.*”²³⁶
- This temple has NO altar of incense. The incense was symbolic of the prayer request rising to God. Jesus said, “*I will do whatever you ask in my name*”²³⁷ The name of Jesus is our incense that rises to God.
- This temple has NO veil that separates us from God. Jesus was clear that he is “*the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through*”²³⁸ him. Even the name the angel used to describe Jesus, Immanuel, means “*God with us.*”²³⁹
- This temple has NO Ark of the Covenant. Now we know that “*Christ is the mediator of a new covenant.*”²⁴⁰ We have been freed from the old covenant of laws and now live under this new covenant of forgiveness.

This new temple that Ezekiel prophesied about is not a building in Jerusalem, but it is a New Third eternal temple. John saw a vision of heaven. “*I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*”²⁴¹ This new temple is the way God wanted it from the beginning. When we die, everything will change. Now it is GOD WITH US. Then it will be US WITH GOD. “*The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine*

Last to Leave

*on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On **no day will its gates ever be shut**, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.”²⁴²*

The Golden Gate in Jerusalem has been sealed by men, but the gates of the city where Jesus is the temple will never be sealed or shut. This third temple is eternal. Until we leave this world and are changed, we need to remember what Paul told the church at Corinth.

“Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?”²⁴³

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- KEY POINTS:

THE FIRST TEMPLE WAS BUILT IN _____ BY

SOLOMON AND WAS DESTROYED IN _____ BY

- THE SECOND TEMPLE WAS BUILT IN _____ BY

_____ AND DESTROYED IN _____ BY

- THE THIRD TEMPLE IS DESCRIBED IN EZEKIEL 40-48

- THE THIRD TEMPLE IS NOT AND WILL NOT BE LOCATED
HERE ON EARTH. JESUS IS THE THIRD TEMPLE.

The Battle That Never Happens

The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

“Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.”

Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. Revelation 16.12-16

July 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of 1863 stand out in American military history because of the battle fought at the little town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The battlefield is flat farmland in a valley with small hills rising on either side. The valley is about 3 miles wide. General Robert E. Lee and his forces were on one side with their backs to Seminary Ridge, while the Union forces were entrenched across the valley on Cemetery Ridge. The battle lasted three days, and in the end, over 51,000 troops had died. It was the last great battle of the Civil War and ended any hope of a Confederate victory. The battlefield had a lot to do with determining the outcome of the battle. Lee sent his forces across the farmland into blistering cannon fire and right into the rifle fire of the entrenched Union forces. In the end, only a handful of Lee's forces ever reached the rail fence on Cemetery Ridge. Lee must have believed he

Last to Leave

could win the battle but, in the end, it was a military disaster.²⁴⁴

The battle of Armageddon is about a battlefield and not about a battle. Now, I know that seems to make no sense, but you will understand shortly. First, we need to look back at the closest incident we have from the Old Testament that will help us understand some of what is happening in the book of Revelation.

Josiah became king when he was only eight years old and ruled for thirty-one years. He is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus as recorded in the book of Matthew. The Bible says of his leadership, *“Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the LORD as he did with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses.”*²⁴⁵

*“While Josiah was king, Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt, went up to the Euphrates River to help the king of Assyria. King Josiah marched out to meet him in battle, but Neco faced him and killed him at Megiddo. Josiah’s servants brought his body in a chariot from Megiddo to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb.”*²⁴⁶

Here is an Old Testament battlefield. Kings who would normally fight against each other are uniting to come against Josiah, God’s servant. These enemy kings join together, approach and cross the Euphrates River. This happens on a large, flat plain of ground known as Megiddo. This battle ends in tragedy for Josiah as he is killed. The defeated Jewish army takes its king back to Jerusalem and buries him.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

This battle sets the stage for us to understand what is shown in the book of Revelation. Revelation is laid out in sets of seven. The sixth of each set is about conflict, and the seventh is about judgment. The section we are looking at starts, *“The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East.”*²⁴⁷ This sixth angel opens a battle scene that we will need to look at in detail if we are going to see what God is showing us. The kings are not named as they are in the Old Testament, but they have joined together and cross the dried-up river Euphrates. It is as if God wants them to come to the battle. He has opened the door and set the stage so they cannot help themselves but attack. Then we are shown the evil forces that are backing up the kings as they advance toward what they believe is a battle they cannot lose.

*“Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.”*²⁴⁸

These each represents the religions created by man to replace God. The Dragon represents all the pagan religions where men worship the creation and ignore the creator. This religion is represented by the number 6 because it is the religion of man. The Beast represents the false church created by man so they can make the rules. This religion is represented by the number 6 because it is the religion of man. The False Prophet represents all the cults created by man. This religion is represented by the number 6 because it is the religion of man. Each of these is evil, but here they join together to come against God and his church. The religions of man all together are $6+6+6 = 666$.

Last to Leave

Here is all the evil joined together deceiving humanity so that they will join them *“for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.”*

The enemy has passed through the dry river bed of the river Euphrates and arrived at the battlefield, and it looks much like it did when they arrived to face Josiah. They would normally fight against each other, but they are united together against God and his church. Then comes a voice with a reminder and a promise at the same time.

*“Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.”*²⁴⁹

The voice speaking is Christ Jesus himself. He knows what Paul has already written to the church. *“For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.”*²⁵⁰ He is reminding the church as the enemy approaches that the believers are not alone and that he is coming back. He has been very clear that no one knows the day or hour; it will be a surprise. Those who believe must not lose hope even when it looks bad. Even when the enemies are joining together, the believers are to stay awake, to be alert and not to lose hope. There are only two signs of his coming. They are the same ones that preceded the flood with Noah. People will be eating and drinking. They will be getting married, and then, when least expected, he will return.²⁵¹ When he returns all that are not ready will be shamefully exposed. This will come as a surprise. The surprise will be WHEN not WHAT. It is God’s secret when Jesus is coming back but what happens when he comes back should come as no surprise to anyone. Jesus was clear about his purpose and what would happen at the end. *“As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did*

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day."²⁵² The thought that God is not going to judge is a lie people tell themselves.

Judgment is either positive or negative. If you are taken before a judge in a court of law, everyone is judged. You can be found innocent. That is judgment. You can be found guilty. Speaking in spiritual language, when you stand before God you will be found righteous, or innocent of sin, or you will be found unrighteous, or guilty of sin. That this is coming is clearly stated by Jesus over and over.

Jesus is reminding the believers that he is coming back and only those who are ready will receive his reward. Facing a great trial or battle is no excuse to lower your standards.

"Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon."

The scene shifts and the battlefield is again in view. The kings are gathering together. All the evil in the world backs them. The Dragon of paganism, the Beast of the false church and the False Prophet of the cults have joined together with these kings or world leaders to come against the Church and God himself.

This battlefield is different than the one in the Old Testament where Josiah was defeated. The plain of Megiddo was flat. The name is different here in Revelation. They are not at Megiddo where the army of Israel under Josiah was defeated, but instead they are gathered together at Armageddon. This is a brand new place, and it

Last to Leave

appears for the first time here in the book of Revelation. The word Armageddon is two words joined together. It means the '*mountain that cuts.*' The flat plain of the Old Testament has been replaced by the mountain of God.

Another Old Testament picture comes into view here. Moses is called to the mountain to meet with God. God has a message for Moses to give to the people gathered around the foot of the mountain. "*Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, 'Be careful that you do not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death.'*"²⁵³ This mountain will cut you down if you touch it.

So the kings with their evil backers cross the Euphrates and come, not to surround the king on a flat plain, but they come to the mountain of God that will cut any evil unbeliever who touches it. This is the new battlefield shown to John in the Revelation he has received.

There is a question you need to answer. It is often overlooked, but it is important. Where does it say there is a battle here? I know we always hear about the 'Battle of Armageddon,' but there is no mention of a battle here. Everything is ready for the battle and then.... Remember one of the key rules for interpreting scripture is nothing out of context. We need to make sure we keep this section in context and flowing. Here we have a picture of all the evil in the world joined together against God and his church. They have surrounded all the believers who have fled to the mountain that cuts, the mountain of God's judgment. These evil kings and their evil backers of all the religions of man are prepared to take on God himself. Like those in the Old Testament who thought they could build a tower to God.²⁵⁴ Here they are going to fight against God himself. Their arrogance has led them to believe they can

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

take on God almighty. This is much like modern men who believe they can change the laws of God by a majority vote. They think they can overrule the clear voice of God and ignore His written word.

I live in Washington State where the majority voted to legalize homosexual marriages. No longer is it Adam and Eve but here it is often Adam and Steve. They think that this vote is the final word in the matter. How long God will wait is not known, but their attack is futile. There is coming a time when all the evil in the world will gather together against God and his church. Will it turn into a great battle? The answer is in the very next verse. The verse most people never read.

“The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, “It is done!”

There is no battle. The seventh angel is called forward to change the scene. Man on earth has come to a point to take on God, but God has other plans. We hear a voice coming out of the temple. In heaven *“the LORD God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.”*²⁵⁵ So God is speaking here. He speaks with a *“mighty shout”*²⁵⁶ that is heard by all around the world and throughout all of heaven and hell.

“IT IS DONE!” It is a declaration of completion and the arrival of something new. It is the line in time that people have tried to predict since the beginning of time. It will be the third time God has declared a finish and a new start. As God finishes up creation and begins to start his relationship with Adam and Eve, we learn that *“the creation of heaven and earth and everything in them was completed.”*²⁵⁷ The next time we hear from God with such

Last to Leave

a declaration is Jesus on the cross. Jesus speaks and says, "*It is finished!*" Then he bowed his head and released his spirit."²⁵⁸ Jesus had come "*to seek and save those who are lost.*"²⁵⁹ He has paid the price with his body and blood. He has completed that task. He has set up the church. He is now ready to return to heaven and his position as the LORD of LORDS.

There is no battle; God calls everything to a close. This opens the door for what is to follow. We move from the forces of evil surrounding the mountain that cuts and skip over to the end of time. The rest of the book of Revelation is about what follows. Chapter 17 is all about judgment upon the Great Prostitute who represents all the religions of man. (666) Chapter 18 is all about judgment upon Babylon who represents all the wickedness humanity has committed. Chapter 19 follows and is divided into two pictures. The first half is a celebration in heaven while the second half shows the wicked on the earth as they are judged. Chapter 20 shows Satan's final struggle followed by his final defeat and then his final eternal judgment. "*And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.*"²⁶⁰ Then follows chapters 21 & 22 where we see a new heaven and new earth. There are final warnings about the coming judgment followed by the one promise we can all grab hold of. Jesus is speaking, and the last thing he says to us in the Bible is, "*Yes, I am coming soon!*"²⁶¹

The sixth angel shows us the pride and arrogance of humanity as they rise to take on the very mountain of God. The seventh angel shows us how God responds. He does not fight or battle, he calls it all to an end. The battle of Armageddon is over before it is ever fought and God wins. It is good to be on God's side.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

People all seem to want to understand the book of Revelation. They search for the meaning of every symbol and event, but that is not necessary. The book of Revelation is all about the fact that God and the followers of His son Jesus win and everyone else loses. Revelation can be summed up in six words. “We win; we win; we win!”

CHAPTER SUMMARY

KEY POINTS:

- The sixth angel sets the stage for the coming conflict
- All the evil of the world gathers together as one force (666) to come against God and his servants
- Jesus reminds everyone he is coming back and it will be without any warning, just a big surprise.
- The battlefield is set with evil surrounding the Mountain of God that cuts (Armageddon).
- God declares that time is finished and there is no battle.
- The battle of Armageddon is the battle that is never fought. Instead, God judges the world and creates a new heaven and a new earth.
- We win; we win; we win!”

Heaven, Heaven, or Heaven?

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. 2 Corinthians 12.2

What is bass? Is it a deep voice or is it a fish? What is down? Is it a lower position or is it soft fluffy feathers? What is wind? Is it to turn something or is it the movement of air? What is lead? Is it to go first or is it a type of metal? All these words are Homographs. Homographs are words that are spelled the same but have different meanings. The way you know their meaning is by looking at the context of the word in the sentence.

There is a very important homograph in the Bible. Most people don't even know it is there and because of that, they get a lot of their theology about the end of time wrong. The word is "heaven," and though it is pronounced \ 'he-vən\ it is used in three different ways and it has three distinct meanings. We learn the three heavens exist from Paul. Speaking about his own experience, he wrote, "*I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven.*"²⁶² The trick is to learn what each one means and then learn how to recognize each one by looking at the context in scripture. This is not as simple as it seems or sounds. This is about understanding scripture while overcoming some horrible theology that has led to some very confused believers.

Understanding the three heavens will also allow the individual to understand better a vast amount of scripture that is often misinterpreted. This often happens when the four basic rules of interpreting the Bible are not followed. These four rules are:

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

1. Scriptures interpret scriptures: The Bible scriptures were put together by the Holy Spirit as he inspired different writers so that vital information to help us understand is located within its pages.
2. Scripture must not be taken out of context: The setting and original purpose of the scripture must never be overlooked in applying, so it is understood. Taking a verse out of context may cause it to have an entirely different meaning than originally intended.
3. The easy or simple scriptures explain the hard or difficult. Some scriptures explain or are key verses to open the understanding for other more difficult sections of scripture.
4. Jesus is BOSS! In the final analysis, what Jesus says is the most important teachings in the scriptures.

Applying these four rules will help us understand the importance of the three heavens in scripture.

The THIRD Heaven

“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—was caught up to paradise.”²⁶³

This section of scripture has a wealth of information we will use throughout this section to understand the use of the word heaven in scripture. Paul remembers back to his early days as a young believer. He has a supernatural experience. He is not sure if it is a vision God gives him or if he actually experienced it, but he has no doubt it happened, and it was from God.

Paul says he was *“caught up to the third heaven.”* This is a key verse that allows us to understand and interpret other verses. Knowing how many heavens there are in scripture

Last to Leave

allows us to begin the process of discovering how to define each one of them. The first thing we learn about this third heaven is its name. Paul said he was caught up to the third heaven which he calls paradise.²⁶⁴

When Jesus was dying on the cross one of the men dying on a cross beside him requested, “*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*”²⁶⁵ He knew he was dying and recognized Jesus as his way of salvation. Jesus’ response to him, “*I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.*”²⁶⁶ Jesus had told the thief on the cross that on that day he would go to Paradise or he would be with Him in the third heaven.

The only other place Paradise is mentioned is in the book of Revelation. The message to the church at Ephesus ends with a promise. “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.*”²⁶⁷ This is the tree of life that once stood in the Garden of Eden but now is located in the third heaven, where it blooms every month of the year.²⁶⁸

This third heaven is where believers go when they die. It is called Paradise. This third heaven is where God’s throne is located and where His followers will spend eternity. This third heaven is the “*heaven of God.*”²⁶⁹

The FIRST Heaven

“*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*”²⁷⁰ Here God is putting it all together, and he starts by dividing everything into two parts. There is the earth below, and then there is everything else. Everything else he calls the heavens because they are above the earth. “*God called the expanse the “sky.”*”²⁷¹ The NASB translates this same verse “*God called the expanse heaven.*”²⁷² The sky is the first heaven mentioned in scripture. This is where the sun and moon and stars are located. “*God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and*

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also."²⁷³

The first and third heavens are easy to understand. The third heaven is where God lives and has his throne, and the first heaven is the sky above including the sun, moon, and stars. The second heaven is more difficult to understand and will require using the rules of interpretation to comprehend.

The SECOND Heaven

The second heaven can be seen clearly when the rules of Biblical interpretation are followed and will allow us to see how people who don't use them get their theology wrong. The best place to discover the second heaven is in Isaiah the 13th and 14th chapters. These two chapters are tied together and are about one man, the leader of the nation of Babylon. Isaiah starts by declaring this is "*An oracle concerning Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw.*"²⁷⁴ This oracle or vision God has given to Isaiah is one he is to write down. It is a 'burden' he has been given to carry and to deliver about the leader of Babylon.

The first hint of prophetic language concerning the heavens is laid out here. "*The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light.*"²⁷⁵ Then three verses later it says, "*Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.*"²⁷⁶ The question we will want to answer is what heaven Isaiah is talking about and how can we know for sure. God is angry with Babylon and their king and has decided to judge both. God wants Isaiah and the world to know that "*Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the glory of the Babylonians' pride, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah.*"²⁷⁷

God promised he would restore Israel and the house of Jacob to the position that reflects their standing with

Last to Leave

God.²⁷⁸ Even as he promised their relief, he turns His attention back to Babylon. “*On the day the LORD gives you relief from suffering and turmoil and cruel bondage, you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon.*”²⁷⁹ This taunt is aimed directly at the King of Babylon. He will be the focus of God’s wrath.

This 2nd taunt against Babylon covers Isaiah 14.3-23 and by keeping what is written here in context the second heaven will become clear. The taunt is written in a past tense form. What will happen to the King of Babylon is spoken about as if it already is history. The king of Babylon “*has been brought down to the grave,*”²⁸⁰

Then the downfall of the King of Babylon is described. “*How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations*”²⁸¹” The King of Babylon is described as a star that comes up in the morning. This represents his position over others in his country and his position in the world. This is symbolic language used in prophetic writings. His fall from a high or heavenly position shows his fall from power.

We need to remember this is a taunt against the King of Babylon. He has been brought down to earth or as it said he “*has been brought down to the grave.*” This from a man who was so sure of himself and his power he had said in his heart “*I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God.*”²⁸² He had seen himself as greater than God. His pride had him believing he was invincible. He had gone so far as to say, “*I will make myself like the Most High.*”²⁸³ This man who saw himself in power like God discovered he was not God but a man who God would judge and deal with.

Isaiah speaks for God. “*But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.*”²⁸⁴ The King has died and is no longer in charge of anything. People look at his dead body and wonder, “*Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble?*”²⁸⁵ The scripture is clear;

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

this is about a man. He was the King of Babylon, and he compared himself with God, but he was not God. He is pictured as being a star in the heavens that is brought down to earth where worms and maggots eat his decaying body. His corpse is trampled on, and his body is not even buried.²⁸⁶ God is so angry with this man he has decided to turn Babylon into a “*swampland*.”²⁸⁷

By keeping these two chapters in proper context we see that this is a taunt against Babylon and more precisely the King of Babylon. He is seen as falling from heaven. This cannot be the sky, and it cannot be the place of God’s throne because this is about a man. This final heaven we see here is the second heaven of prophetic language. Here heaven is used to denote position and power. Those described here may be seen as a star or the sun or the moon. This places them in positions over others. This is symbolic language and does not represent anything literally.²⁸⁸

Another way of looking at this is to ask three questions. Was the King of Babylon in the first heaven, up in the sky with the sun, moon, and stars? The answer is no. Was the King of Babylon in the third heaven where God has his throne? The answer again is no. So, where was the King of Babylon? He was in Babylon, sitting on his throne, believing he was equal to God. He made God mad, and he is brought down and dies.²⁸⁹

THE THREE HEAVENS

The first heaven is the sky where the literal sun, moon, and stars are located. This was created by God.

The second heaven is symbolic prophetic language referring to a position of power and authority. People are referred to as the sun, moon or stars to show they have position and power. Whenever one loses the position of power, he is described as falling from heaven. This happened to the king of Babylon,²⁹⁰ the king of Tyre,²⁹¹ to

Last to Leave

Edom,²⁹² Egypt,²⁹³ and Joel uses this same language to show how judgment will come against evil.²⁹⁴

The third heaven is where God has his throne. It is a perfect place. *“Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.”*²⁹⁵ There is no sin in heaven. There will never be any sin in heaven. There has never been any sin in heaven.

The key is putting heaven into context and making sure you are not making the scripture say something that was not intended.

WHICH HEAVEN IS IT?

*“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.”*²⁹⁶

Here the phrase ‘*heavenly realms*’ is used. The question is which of the three heavens is this referring to? The message about God is to be delivered by the church to rulers and authorities. The language here is about those in the position of power and authority receiving a message from God. The church cannot deliver a message into the sky. The church cannot deliver a message to heaven where God sits. He does that directly there Himself. This is about the second heaven of symbolic prophetic language.

*“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”*²⁹⁷

Here again, is the expression “heavenly realms” that Paul has already used in Ephesians to represent symbolic second heaven of power and authority. This time he says it is not “*against flesh and blood.*” It is not a physical battle between armies on battlefields. This struggle is against evil forces that are in powerful positions. These

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

“*rulers*” and “*authorities*” are spiritually not aligned with God and his followers. The *heavenly realms* referred to here are referring to the second heaven or prophetic and symbolic language. These rulers and authorities are not in the sky, and they are not in heaven with God where evil cannot go. They are in positions of power or the second heaven.

Now before we do the next one, a reminder and a warning. Remember the four rules of Biblical interpretation. These are very important and should not be overlooked or broken. The warning is you must not assume you know what this scripture is saying just because you have heard it a thousand times. That is why you need to use the four rules if you want to know the truth.

Jesus is responding to His disciples when he says, “*I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*”²⁹⁸

The context of this scripture is vital to our understanding of what Jesus is saying here. Jesus sent out seventy-two disciples in teams of two. They were preparing the way for his upcoming ministry in the region. He gave them specific instructions about how to respond to the people they met on this mission they are on.²⁹⁹ It is what they said when they returned that Jesus is responding to. “*The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.*”³⁰⁰

The disciples are excited about what is happening as they minister in different towns. They see healings as demons are driven out of the sick. They have power over the enemy’s troops as followers of the Son of God. Instead of being impressed with what was happening with them Jesus tells them that while they were casting out demons He “*saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*”³⁰¹

Last to Leave

Different translations have it in different order.

- ❖ NIV: *“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”*
- ❖ NASB: *“I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.”*
- ❖ KJV: *“I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”*
- ❖ NLTse: *“I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning!”*

There are three parts to this scripture. The first is it is about Satan. He is the ruler or lord of the demons that the disciples are now casting out and bossing around.

The second thing we see is this happened *“like lightning.”* This means it was fast and it was sudden. When it happened to Satan, it was over quickly.

The third thing is he is removed *“from heaven.”* Now we need to ask which heaven this would be. Remember his followers, demons, are being ordered around by the disciples of Jesus. Something has changed in the spiritual world. Did Satan fall from the sky? No the metaphor of lightning is about how fast he fell and not from where Satan fell. Is this about Satan falling from heaven where God has his throne? Remember nothing evil or impure is allowed there. The third heaven is perfect, always has been, always will be.

This is not what Jesus is referring to. Did Satan lose his position of power? Even Jesus had said Satan was the ruler of this world.³⁰² Now Satan has lost his position of power and authority. This is evident in the power of the disciples of Jesus over the demons of Satan. The heaven being referred to here is the second heaven of symbolic prophetic language.

This is even more evident when you keep it in context and see what Jesus says next. *“Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy.”*³⁰³ Jesus makes it clear this is about power and position. Satan had lost his position as the ruler of this world, and his followers also had lost the power to fight against the followers of Jesus.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

This does not say Satan was in the sky or the third heaven; it says how he fell from the second heaven or lost his position of power. His fall was sudden, and quick, like lightning. The disciples were going around casting out demons showing that the authority of the followers of Jesus was greater than Satan's power.

This picture of prophetic or symbolic language is used using sun, moon, stars, and heavenly bodies throughout scripture. Jesus even used it to describe the time leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

*"Immediately after the anguish of those days,
the sun will be darkened,
the moon will give no light,
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken."*³⁰⁴

This is a picture of those in the second heaven represented by power and position losing control. They have a position over others that can be described like the sun and moon and stars being over the earth. This is about the Jewish leaders being punished and defeated by the Romans.

Look at the following four scriptures. Which heaven is represented by each one? How do you know this?

Genesis 14.19 *"Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of **heaven** and earth."*³⁰⁵

Mark 13.31 *"**Heaven** and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."*³⁰⁶

Matthew 13.24 *"The kingdom of **heaven** is like a man who sowed good seed in his field."*³⁰⁷

Ezekiel 32.7-8 (Hint to understand see Ezekiel 32.2 The context is the key to getting this one right.)
*"When I snuff you out, I will cover the **heavens** and darken their stars;*

Last to Leave

*I will cover the sun with a cloud,
and the moon will not give its light.
All the shining lights in the heavens
I will darken over you;
I will bring darkness over your land,”³⁰⁸*

Here is an exercise to see if you understand and also to show you it is not always easy to see which of the three heavens is being referred to. The word heaven appears 65 times in the book of Matthew in the New International Version of the Bible. How many of these can you figure out and know for sure which heaven is being talked about? How many will you have to mark with a ‘?’ because you are not sure?

HEAVEN # 1, 2, or 3 and do you know why?

Matthew 3:2	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 3:16	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 3:17	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 4:17	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 5:3	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 5:10	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 5:12	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 5:16	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 5:18	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 5:19	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 5:20	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 5:34	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 5:45	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 6:1	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 6:9	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 6:10	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 6:20	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 7:11	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 7:21	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 8:11	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 10:7	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 10:32	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 10:33	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 11:11	# _____	Why = _____
Matthew 11:12	# _____	Why = _____

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Matthew 11:25 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 12:50 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 13:11 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 13:24 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 13:31 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 13:33 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 13:44 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 13:45 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 13:47 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 13:52 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 14:19 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 16:1 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 16:17 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 16:19 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 18:1 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 18:3 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 18:4 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 18:10 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 18:14 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 18:18 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 18:19 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 18:23 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 19:12 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 19:14 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 19:21 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 19:23 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 20:1 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 21:25 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 22:2 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 22:30 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 23:9 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 23:13 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 23:22 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 24:35 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 24:36 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 25:1 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 26:64 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 28:2 # _____ Why = _____
Matthew 28:18 # _____ Why = _____

Last to Leave

There are three heavens in scripture. We know this because of what Paul wrote to the church at Corinth. By looking through scripture we can find that these three heavens are.

1. Heaven number ONE is the sky created by God.
2. Heaven number TWO is a position of power and authority used in symbolic or prophetic language.
3. Heaven number THREE is God's home where he has his throne and where believers will spend eternity.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

KEY POINTS:

- According to Paul's experience, there are three heavens. See 2 Corinthians 12.2
- The first heaven is the sky that we look up and see. It contains the sun, moon, and stars.
- The second heaven is prophetic language about rulers and those in powerful positions. These can be represented by the sun or moon or stars.
- Satan's fall in scripture was fast as lightning, and he lost his position of power. He was never in the third heaven. This happened during the lifetime of Jesus and not before the beginning of time.
- The third heaven is where God lives and is called Paradise. This is where the tree of life is now located.
- The context is the only way to know which heaven it is, and that is not always easy.

One Last Chain of EVENTS

People are always trying to figure out when the end of time is going to be. Jesus said there were only two clear signs leading up to the end of time. These signs would be the same warning signs that preceded the flood in the days of Noah. The first sign was *“For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away.”*³⁰⁹ In other words, there are no real signs leading up to the end of time; life will go on as usual. The list of signs most people use for the end of time is all related to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 a. d. Either there are no signs to the end of time like Jesus said or Jesus was wrong, and then he cannot be right on anything. None of the following have anything to do with the end of time.³¹⁰

- ⋮ Individuals claiming to be Jesus³¹¹
- ⋮ Wars and rumors of wars
- ⋮ Nations against nations, Kingdom against kingdom
- ⋮ Famines
- ⋮ Earthquakes in various places
- ⋮ Believers persecuted and put to death
- ⋮ False prophets deceiving many
- ⋮ Increase in wickedness
- ⋮ Many believers love of God growing cold
- ⋮ The Gospel being preached in the whole world

These are all signs Jesus gave leading up to the destruction of the temple by the Romans in 70 a. d. These have nothing to do with the end of time. There will be no warning signs leading up to the end of time. People will be eating and drinking and getting married. Life will go on as usual and then the end of time will come when least expected. The enemy may even think he has won and displaced God in this world. Jesus was clear he would

“*come like a thief!*”³¹² The following are some of the key events in the last chain of events that we know about concerning the end of time.

THE END OF LIFE

Jesus told a story about two men he knew.³¹³ This was not a parable but a true story. The one man was rich and the other poor. The one man was not ready to meet God, and the other one was. Then it happened, the one man died and went to heaven to be with Abraham. The other man died and went to Hades. It is important to see that the two items are linked together here. The first is they died and the second is they faced their judgment and punishment or reward right away.

What happened to these two men will happen to everyone unless Jesus comes back first. “*Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment...*”³¹⁴ It is here at the moment of death that so much happens.³¹⁵ The body is left behind, and a new body replaces it at death. The old body is described as perishable, weak, dishonorable, and natural. It is the physical body. Paul is clear, “*flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*”³¹⁶ The physical body is replaced with a spiritual body. This new eternal body is imperishable, powerful, glorified and spiritual. This is true of the righteous and the unrighteous. Referring to this replacing of the physical bodies with spiritual bodies Paul wrote, “*we will all be changed.*”³¹⁷

To those who were responsible for their burial, the two men may have appeared to be asleep. Sleep, sleeping or being asleep is a homograph and a homophone. It is a word that is spelled the same and sounds the same but has different meanings. The word sleep in the Bible is one such word. The first way the word is used is by dealing with being spiritual unaware. “*So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.*”³¹⁸ The second way it is used is dealing with a person who is not awake. “*I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep.*”³¹⁹ The third way it is used

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

is to describe someone who is dead. “*For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed.*”³²⁰ David was not unaware or resting; David had died. Whenever the word “asleep” appears in scripture, you have to look at the context and determine which one of the three it is about.

Both the rich man and Lazarus died and received new bodies. Then they were judged. The one died and went to heaven while the other who was rich died and went to Hades. The man in Hades was in torment and cried out to Abraham in heaven for help. Abraham reminded the man in Hades that this was a direct result of his life and how he had lived that life.³²¹ The man in heaven was not able to help the man in Hades. There was a great chasm between them that could not be crossed by anyone.³²²

What happens next is important in understanding time, punishment and death. There are some who teach that people die and sleep until the end of time when everyone is judged at the same time. The problem with this is that it is not what Jesus said. The man in Hades wanted Abraham to send the man in heaven back to earth to tell his five brothers about what had happened to him.³²³ He did not want them to end up in Hades as he had. Now, here is the key to understanding. The men had died, and one went to heaven, and the other one died and went to Hades. This happened while other people were still on earth living their lives. Judgment followed death, and there was no sleeping. “*The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*”³²⁴ Among those who die and go to heaven are the martyrs. They wait under the altar in heaven for the end of time.³²⁵ They are not asleep, and they are not in their graves waiting for the end of time. They have received their reward and wait in heaven.

When a person dies, he/she receive a new body. This applies to the righteous and the unrighteous. Following that, they are judged and go to heaven or Hades.

THE END OF TIME

A day is coming when God will call time to an end. This event will affect every living person on the earth, and a few astronauts who may be in space at the time. There is, living on the earth today, over half of all the people who have ever lived and the end of time will be when they all face God. There are a lot of people who want to tell you when this is going to happen. Jesus told us that *“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”*³²⁶ In other words, it is the best-kept secret because the only one who knows has not told anyone else, not even His Son. There are those who are always saying they know or that certain signs show it is about to happen. Jesus was clear that there would be two things happening (signs) at the time he returned. *“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.”*³²⁷ Did you catch them? The two signs are people are getting married, and people are eating and drinking. Jesus had said he did not know and then He said it could be on any day God chooses. Just like in the time of Noah there will be no warning. He will come like a thief, unexpected and suddenly.³²⁸

Just before the end of time, it will appear as if there are no barriers stopping the enemy.³²⁹ The enemy will have gathered his evil forces together against the church and all true believers.³³⁰ Much of the world will be backing them as they prepare to destroy the church.³³¹ Even as this is happening the believers know that Jesus will be coming back.³³² Even as the forces of evil come to encircle the believers, they will come up to the mountain that cuts.³³³ It is then God will call it to a close. Suddenly a cry will come forth from heaven. *“IT IS DONE!”*³³⁴ A trumpet will sound³³⁵ which will be heard by all the living no matter

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

where they are. It will happen so quickly we will hardly know what happened.³³⁶

The angels will be sent out to first gather the wicked out of the world and bring them to stand before God on His left side.³³⁷ Then they will return to gather the righteous³³⁸ and place them before God on His right side.³³⁹ Here is a great mystery. *“We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed.”*³⁴⁰ Over seven billion people will not die, but they will be changed. They will receive new bodies; this includes both the righteous and the unrighteous. The perishable will receive imperishable bodies. These new bodies will last forever. They are designed for eternity.

The wicked will arrive before God. They will be dragged in, weeping and afraid. The wicked do not get into heaven for their judgment. This would violate the Word of God. *“Nothing impure will ever enter [heaven], nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.”*³⁴¹

They will wait while a great procession goes out toward the earth. He will bring with Him all those who have died and already gone to heaven.³⁴² The angels will gather the righteous who will *“meet the Lord in the air.”*³⁴³ There, along with all those who came with Him from heaven, all the living who have been given new spiritual bodies will return to heaven. The righteous on His right full of joy will go to heaven, and the wicked on His left without hope will go away to eternal punishment.³⁴⁴ We will be with Jesus our Lord forever.³⁴⁵ *“He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.”*³⁴⁶ Here before God, every knee will bow and declare that Jesus is Lord,³⁴⁷ Christ and the Son of God, the righteous with joy and the unrighteous with fear of what is about to happen to them. The books were opened, and everyone will be judged according to what they had done.³⁴⁸ Finally, the book of life will be checked *“If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he [will be] thrown into the lake of fire.”*³⁴⁹ Only those who are followers and believer in Jesus will find their name written in the Book of Life.³⁵⁰

Last to Leave

Those on His right will receive eternal rewards, and those on his left will receive eternal punishment.³⁵¹ There will be no doubters on that great Day of Judgment and Rewards. The world will have passed away, and the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and Christ, and he will reign forever and ever.³⁵²

CONCLUSION: Everyone is either going to die or will be gathered up at the end of time. When you die or when time comes to an end, you will receive an imperishable body. This is true of the righteous and the wicked. When Jesus returns, he will bring with Him *'the dead in Christ'* who have already received their new bodies. These are described as being asleep, but that is only from the perspective of those who are alive on earth. They are not asleep but are alive with Jesus. Death (sleep) is the point where we pass over into eternity and are alive forever. At death or the end of time, we face judgment and then go on to eternal life.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

KEY POINTS:

- The end of each life is a point of Judgment. The righteous to eternal life, the wicked to eternal punishment.
- The end of time is a point of Judgment. The wicked will be gathered first, followed by the righteous.
- The righteous will go away to eternal life and the wicked to eternal punishment.

The Milton Mess

I bought my wife a high speed, super powerful blender last year. She combines various items to make smoothies. The last one she made had frozen pineapples, strawberries, yogurt, spinach, apple juice, and some ice cubes. When the blender was done with all those ingredients, it was a smooth green colored drink someplace just short of ice cream. I always get a brain freeze because I drink it too fast. What started as six different items are blended to form something brand new and completely different. The key is knowing what to put together to make the right combination.

That works great for making smoothies, but it makes for terrible Biblical theology. The problem is that it has become the most popular kind of theology today. With a dab of Isaiah about the king of Babylon and several verses from Revelation about a war in heaven combined with the imagination of a seventeenth-century blind poet and you get some of the most confusing and accepted blender theology ever put together. What starts as separate stories and events are then blended to form a brand new story that has nothing like it in the Word of God. I call this type of theology using the Bible, Blender Theology. It is putting scriptures together to make a new story that did not and could not exist without this misusing of the Word of God.

It all came to fruition in the 17th century, but we are still reaping the harvest of this perfect storm of blender theology. Whether John Milton was the first to come up with it or simply the one who put it down in writing is up for debate but what we know for sure is that what he wrote is now known worldwide.

John Milton, blind and impoverished, wrote his epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, between 1658 and 1664 by dictating it to hired assistants. The story he wrote is about the fall of Satan from heaven after he and a group of angels rebelled against God. After his fall he decides to go against God

Last to Leave

again. This time Satan rebelled by getting Adam and Eve to follow his directions and turn against their maker. The problem is this is not a Biblical story. It is a series of different Biblical stories put in a theological blender by a blind poet to make a new non-biblical fiction story.

The poem by John Milton is Paradise Lost. It is 10,000 lines of free verse. That means it does not rhyme but has a particular cadence when you read it. Milton was not a theologian but wrote his epic poem to entertain the readers of his time. We may forget that it was equal to our going to a movie or watching a television show. It was originally published in ten parts or books and revised later into twelve books. It was the Harry Potter or Hunger Games of its day and was read by everyone. Now imagine that 350 years from now Harry Potter is the theology and religious beliefs of the Church and over half of all Christian believers. That is exactly what happened with Milton and Paradise Lost. To understand this, we will look at a few scriptures Milton used or blended to see if they have anything to do with each other.

SATAN IS NOT A FALLEN ANGEL NAMED LUCIFER

*“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!”*³⁵³ At least that is how it reads in the King James Version from 1611. Instead of translating the word *‘helel’* into English it was simply transliterated into the word Lucifer. *‘Helel’* means “a shining star.” It has been translated properly in the NASB³⁵⁴. *“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations.”*³⁵⁵

One of the four key rules in interpreting scripture is, ‘take nothing out of context.’ This is vitally important to the proper interpretation of the verse in Isaiah.

Isaiah the fourteenth chapter starts with the promise of God having compassion on Israel and restoring the nation.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Then the purpose of the chapter is clearly stated. The Lord directs Isaiah to “*take up this taunt against the king of Babylon.*”³⁵⁶ This taunt or proclamation is directed to this king. A quick overview of the chapter should help us understand this clearly.

- Vs. 4 the taunt against the King of Babylon is declared
- Vss. 7-8 nature is glad the king is dead
- Vs. 9 the grave is waiting for the king’s arrival
- Vs. 10-11 the king is seen as coming down to the level of everyone else. In death, he is covered with maggots.
- Vs. 12 He is seen as being cast down from his position of authority; this is symbolized by being removed from heaven.
- Vss. 13-14 He had once boasted he was even more powerful than God.
- Vss. 15-17 Everyone who knows what has happened can’t believe this has happened to him.
- Vss. 18-22 The king of Babylon will not be buried like other kings, his body will be trampled underfoot. His children will be slaughtered and will inherit nothing.

When you see what is happening to the king of Babylon in context, it has nothing to do with Satan. It is only about the king of Babylon after he has been defeated and his body has been discarded.

Milton does not seem to care about who this is really about. He believes Lucifer is another name for Satan and takes this prophecy from the 7th century B.C. and uses it as the basis or proof that Lucifer is Satan and fell from heaven before Adam and Eve were ever created. As Milton wrote it, “Know then, that after Lucifer from heaven (So call him, brighter once amidst the host of angels than that star the stars among) Fell with his flaming legions through the deep...”³⁵⁷

Last to Leave

We will come back to this in a little while but, you need to remember, Isaiah was written in the 7th and 8th century B.C. long after Adam and Eve.

SATAN DID NOT CAUSE A WAR IN HEAVEN

The only reference to a war in heaven happens not at the beginning or in the middle but at the end of the Bible. On top of that, it is not about a war that happened in the past but about a future war. The other thing you have to remember is this is a prophecy pointing to events in the future. We have already looked at several of these in detail and will only mention them without reestablishing their validity.

“And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”³⁵⁸

Milton believes this happened in the past and not the future. Milton wrote, “Had cast him out from heaven, with all his host of rebel angels.”³⁵⁹ Unfortunately, Milton does not care about Biblical truth but only about the story he is making up using the Bible to prove his point.

This scripture in Revelation is where Milton went to say, “*when the Dragon, put to second rout, Cam furious down to be reveng’s on men...*”³⁶⁰ Again Milton uses a prophecy about the future from the end of the Bible to prove something that he says happened before the creation of Adam and Eve.

KEYS:

- This was written around 90 A.D. and is about a future spiritual battle and not about anything that happened in the past.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

- The heaven talked about here is the 2nd heaven of prophetic language dealing with a position of power and authority.
- The angels mentioned are messengers or those people who serve Satan.
- Being cast down to earth means Satan lost his position of power and authority over the world.

We will return to this in a moment, but first:

SOME THINGS MILTON GOT WRONG

- Milton said heaven was a place where sin had happened in the past. If this was true, then it could happen again. There is no sin in heaven where God lives, past, present or future. Heaven is a perfect place. The Bible is clear “*Nothing impure will ever enter it.*”³⁶¹
- Lucifer is not another name for Satan. Satan is called the ancient serpent, the great dragon, the devil,³⁶² Beelzebub, the prince of demons³⁶³ but not Lucifer. Lucifer means morning star and is only used in the Bible in reference to the King of Babylon³⁶⁴.
- Satan was an angel in heaven where God has his throne. This is not found in scripture anywhere.
- Satan was held in hell until he broke free and went and tempted Adam and Eve. The only reference to anything like this is in Revelation and about the future.³⁶⁵
- In *Paradise Lost*, Beelzebub and Satan are two different devils who argue over how to get even with God. In the Bible, another name for Satan is Beelzebub which means ‘Lord of the Flies.’
- Before appearing as a snake to trip up Adam and Eve, Satan showed up like a toad to whisper in Eve’s ear to eat from the tree. This is not found in scripture. In fact, much of what Milton has happening has no foundation in scripture.

Last to Leave

- Gabriel and Raphael are in the garden with Adam and Eve. Raphael even eats dinner with them one evening. Not in the Bible!
- Eve eats from the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil while Adam is away working in another part of the Garden. The Bible clearly says, “*she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*”³⁶⁶

The problem is that so many now hold what Milton wrote as Biblical truth. What Milton took from the Bible is not true or properly used and what he made up is just that, made up, not true, completely ridiculous.

Here is the summary of what Milton did with the Bible verses he did use. In the 17th century A.D., Milton took a verse from the Bible about the king of Babylon from the 7th Century B.C., put it in his writer blender with several verses from the book of Revelation about the future sometime after 90 A.D. and made them into a story about what he said happened way back at the creation with Adam and Eve.

Finally, I will answer the question you are now asking yourself and want me to answer. Then where did Satan come from if he is not a fallen angel named Lucifer? You are not going to like the answer, but here it is. THE BIBLE DOES NOT ANSWER THAT QUESTION! Sorry, but that is the simple truth. You have a choice, go with Milton or go with the Bible, but you have to remember they are diametrical opposites. If you choose to go with Milton, then you might want to start trying to explain to God why you believe a blind poet, from the 17th century, who wrote a fiction poem over the inspired word of God.³⁶⁷

CHAPTER SUMMARY

KEY POINTS:

- Using blender theology, you will get a brain freeze and can prove anything you want.
- John Milton used blender theology to write Paradise Lost which is a fictional story.
- Almost everything Milton wrote about concerning Satan, Adam and Eve is not true.
- If you believe Milton you will have to disregard the truth of the Word of God (the Bible).

The Gospel To The Whole World

What is holding Jesus from coming back and bringing everything to a close? Some would say it is the teachings of Jesus that are holding Him back. Answering three questions asked him by His disciples, Jesus said, *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”*³⁶⁸

There are two possible interpretations of this statement by Jesus, and each causes the need for a different placement in time. The most popular interpretation of this scripture is referring to the end of time. If this is the case, then you could imagine or believe that the gospel preaching would be a sign pointing to the imminent return of Jesus. This would mean there is a way to date or look toward the return of Jesus. This would also mean He cannot come back until this is accomplished.

The second interpretation is less known but, placed in the context of Matthew 24, makes more sense. The disciples had asked Jesus three questions. *“When will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”*³⁶⁹ Jesus answers the first question about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in verses 4 through verse 35. This is the section where Jesus gave his prophecy to them. *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”*³⁷⁰ The end Jesus is talking about is the destruction of Jerusalem.

Paul wrote to the church at Colosse around 60-62 A.D. *“This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.”*³⁷¹

This may appear to be simple, but when scripture does not line up with your belief system, then you have to

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

explain the scripture and make it say something else. Some want to put this statement of Paul into the future by manipulating the meaning of the words using the Greek text. One blog post by John Piper is an excellent example.³⁷² Dealing with the substantival participle and aorist tense of words, he works to show that this was not completed in the past but is making reference to “an indefinite future time.” He takes a phrase that is referring to something that has been completed in the past and says it will happen sometime in the future. This type of interpretation is presented as “The writer symbolically represents what is expected to occur at a later time.”³⁷³

So Piper translates “*the gospel that has been proclaimed*” as “the gospel which is proclaimed.” Now, the reason for the original proclamation by Jesus is a time stamp on his prophecy. He is making sure that the reader can know when an event is about to happen.

Now we must not think this relieves us of our responsibility to share the truth with those around us. Jesus’ proclamation to “*go and make disciples of all nations*”³⁷⁴ is not dependent upon when it is preached to the whole world.

Showing this is not an isolated scripture, Paul talks about this spreading of the gospel when He wrote to the church at Rome in 56-57 A.D. “*I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world.*”³⁷⁵ The phrase “all over the world” is about the known world in the first century. It is the same world Jesus said would hear the message before the end would come.

Luke writes in the book of Acts sometime between 48-62 A.D. that the city officials said of the believers, “*These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here.*”³⁷⁶ What the city officials called trouble was the Gospel message about Jesus.

Last to Leave

Paul wrote to the church at Colosse about the message of Jesus, *“All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing.”*³⁷⁷

In Acts on the Day of Pentecost, *“there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.”*³⁷⁸ Some of them would be saved and take the message home with them. The rest of them would return home with stories about Jesus.

Jesus had said the temple would be torn down and destroyed.³⁷⁹ His disciples wanted to know when it was going to happen.³⁸⁰ Part of the answer to this first question was that *“this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”*³⁸¹ Then end was the end of the temple and not the end of time.

The preaching of the gospel to some lost tribe is not holding Jesus back. He will come when the father decides, and there is nothing to stop Him. We are not to preach the Gospel to bring Jesus back. We are to share this Good News because Jesus told us to³⁸² and because it is our personal desire to share the greatest news of all time.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

KEY POINTS:

- The gospel was to be preached in the whole world before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
- This happened as shown in several New Testament statements made by Paul.
- This statement is not a prophecy about the future but is now a historical fact.

Matthew 24 & 25

The Olivet Discourse

3 Questions Answered - Matthew 24

Jesus had just left the temple and was looking for a quiet place to rest. He had spent part of the day inside of the Temple dealing with the religious leaders. Jesus had not held back today, leveling his sharpest criticism to date against the Pharisees. Six times he had called out to them, “*Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!*”³⁸³ He had reached his boiling point and had called them a bunch of religious actors and a bunch of snakes. After this grueling encounter, Jesus retreated across the valley to the Mount of Olives with his disciples. It is here we hear some of His most famous and some of His most misquoted teachings. Before we look at this section, there is some groundwork that will make it all easier.

THE RULES OF INTERPRETATION

There are just four simple rules anyone can use to interpret scripture correctly. These have been discussed earlier. They are:

1. Scripture interprets scripture: God has provided answers within scripture so we can understand even the most difficult or complex part of scriptures.
2. Nothing out of context: The surrounding texts are vital to understanding the meaning and purpose of any text in the Word of God. To ignore the context or take a scripture out of context can vastly change its meaning.

Last to Leave

3. The easy interpret the difficult: Even as the scriptures bring answers from within, it may seem obvious, but it is a rule to hold on to. The clear and direct passages are used to understand the unclear or complex passages.
4. Jesus is Boss: The words and teachings of Jesus are the final authority in any matter He spoke about.

All of these apply when working to understand Matthew 24 & 25. These will be used in what are parallel passages found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Each of these will help us understand what Jesus wants us to know about the answer to the questions. Without the three used side by side, we would not be able to understand Jesus' intended meaning. With them, we can see clearly what Jesus was teaching His disciples.

I will use first-century historians to show that Jesus was extremely accurate in his prophecies almost forty years before events unfolded.

BEFORE YOU START

Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 all have material that covers the same event surrounding what Jesus said and did on this day. These parallel passages will help us understand and interpret this section of scripture. Using these passages, scripture will interpret scripture; with the easy helping us understand the difficult. This is one-way God has provided to make it easier to get the proper meaning from what Jesus said.

One key problem many must deal with in working with this section of scripture is the headings put in by the different Bibles. These are not in the original text and are the opinion of those putting the Bible together. They often reflect various theological beliefs more than they do what the text is about. This is especially true here. They should be ignored and allow the scriptures and the words of Christ to speak to each reader.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

We will look at three key sections to begin with and then return to go verse by verse through the Olivet Discourse. This method should help the student discover the truth Jesus was teaching His disciples.

I will be using the New American Standard Bible³⁸⁴ as the key text and translation because of its accuracy. I will use several others to help us understand some of the thoughts and words that Jesus used.

The differences in the text are important and are there to help the modern student understand the intended meaning. Some of them will stand out as important, some of them will make you want to scratch your head, but in the end, they will help you understand. The underlines, bold, italics, and different fonts are added to the text to bring emphasis to the parts that are either the same or very different. These will be explained, but by placing them side by side, you will be able to compare and see that these are about the same event.

THE THREE QUESTIONS

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[1] Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.	[1] As He was going out of the temple , one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, behold what wonderful <u>stones</u> and what wonderful buildings!”	[5] And while some were talking about the temple , that it was adorned with beautiful <u>stones</u> and votive gifts,
[2] And He said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon	[2] And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which	He said, [6] “As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one

Last to Leave

<p>another, which will not be torn down.”</p>	<p>will not be torn down.”</p>	<p>stone upon another which will not be torn down.”</p>
<p>[3] As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying,</p> <p>“Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”</p>	<p>Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately,</p> <p>[4] “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?”</p>	<p>[7] They questioned Him, saying,</p> <p>“Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?”</p>

The first thing that needs to be looked at is the difference between Matthew and the other two. Matthew contains more material than the other two and also has more questions than they do. In Matthew, there are three distinct questions.

1. **When will these happen?** They want to know when the temple will be destroyed, and every stone ripped one from another.
2. *What will be the sign of your coming?* They thought of the return of Jesus as the time he would set up an earthly kingdom. Even though he had already dealt with this, it would not be until after his death they fully understood.
3. What will be the sign of the end of the age? When will time end and the final judgment of humanity happen?

In both Mark and Luke they only ask the first question, and then they want to know how they can know when it is

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

about to happen. They qualify the question by asking for more information. Mark and Luke are about the destruction of the temple while Matthew has two additional questions.

This is one of the KEYS to understanding this section of scripture. Matthew is about three questions being answered while Luke and Mark are about one compound question being answered. In the Gospels, the questions are asked and answered in order. Only in Matthew are all three answered. All three ask about the destruction of the temple, and in all three Jesus answers this question first.

WHEN THIS WILL HAPPEN

There is a timestamp that Jesus put on the first question about the destruction of Jerusalem. Since we know for sure that Jesus is speaking about the temple being destroyed, we can look at this very differently than the disciples did. For the disciples, the temple being destroyed along with the city of Jerusalem was a future event. They had all been in the temple most of the day and were surprised that Jesus had said it would be destroyed. For us, we have hindsight which is 20/20. Historical records tell us the temple was destroyed in seventy A.D. by General Titus who would become the future emperor of the Roman Empire. Emperor Domitian constructed the Arch of Titus in Rome in 82 A.D. in memory of his dead brother's victory over Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Josephus, the historian, records in detail the destruction of the temple and the city and also the punishment of the Jews who fought against Titus.

Jesus begins by answering the first question. Speaking to his disciples, he was clear when the events he was describing were to take place. This is the timestamp for this prophecy being fulfilled. Jesus is about to list everything he knew was going to happen before the temple would be destroyed in 70 A.D.

Last to Leave

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[34] “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all <u>these</u> things take place.	[30] “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all <u>these</u> things take place.	[32] “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.

This places the events we are going to look at as happening sometime between the time Jesus told his disciples and 70 A.D. when the temple was destroyed. That is about forty years. Jesus said that all these things would happen during *“this generation.”* That means some of the people who were alive when Jesus spoke about the destruction of Jerusalem would still be alive when it happened.³⁸⁵

This is not the first time he has used the term ‘this generation.’

- Matthew 11.16 Jesus said, *“But to what shall I compare this generation?”* He is not speaking of people in the future but of those all around him on that day.
- Matthew 16.4 *“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.”* This is about Jesus dying and being in the grave three days just like Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days. This was to happen to the generation right in front of him.
- Matthew 23.34 *“Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.”* Jesus is speaking to the Jews about their disobedience to God and then says the punishment will come upon them *“this generation.”* Jesus knew the Jew’s time as God’s chosen people were running out and that they would be replaced by the gentile believers God would graft in to become his holy people.³⁸⁶

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

The timestamp further allows us to separate the text into parts. Everything before Mathew 24.34, Mark 13.30 and Luke 21.30 are going to happen before the destruction of the temple, which happened in 70 A.D. So now we can look back at what appears between the asking of the question(s) and the timestamp and see if they fit with scripture and with history.

PRELUDE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

The questions have been asked, and we have established the timestamp put there by Jesus. Now it is time to see how Jesus responded to them.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[4] And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you.	[5] And Jesus began to say to them, “See to it that no one misleads you.	And He said, “See to it that you are not misled;
[5] “For many will come in My name , saying, <u>‘I am the Christ,’</u> and <i>will mislead many.</i>	[6] “Many will come in My name , saying, <u>‘I am He!’</u> and <i>will mislead many.</i>	for many will come in My name , saying, <u>‘I am He,</u> ’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not go after them.

Jesus opens this section with a warning for His disciples in the first century that still rings true in the 21st century. We need to be certain that we are not led astray. For them, it was being led away from following Christ. For us, it is being led astray into false doctrines that twist the words of Christ. Jesus has made it clear this is about then with the timestamp in verse 34.

Jesus is identified only in Matthew as the Christ. Luke has the warning about the time of this happening being near or soon. The warning here is to tell them to be sure and be aware that they have been warned.

Last to Leave

This happened over and over with someone claiming to be God, God's prophet or the promised Christ. Josephus writes of these in the time of Felix in Acts 24 when he says, "now these impostors and deceivers persuaded the multitude to follow them into the wilderness, and pretended that they would exhibit manifest wonders and signs that should be performed by the providence of God."³⁸⁷ Acts 8.9-10 refers to Simon "*who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of God."* These false deceivers were men like Theudas and Judas mentioned in Acts 5. Jesus did not want his followers to put their hope in anyone but Him. Jesus is warning them about the many imposters who would come and try to lead them astray.

SIGNS LEADING UP TO THE TEMPLE'S DESTRUCTION

Remember everything before the timestamp is leading up to the temple's destruction in 70 A.D. Jesus first talked about how the world would continue pretty much, as usual, leading up to the siege of Jerusalem.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[6] "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars . See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, <i>but that is not yet the end.</i>	[7] "When you hear of wars and rumors of wars , do not be frightened; those things must take place, <i>but that is not yet the end.</i>	[9] "When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, <i>but the end does not follow immediately.</i> "

Enemy countries surrounded the Jewish people. They were a conquered people, living under the harsh Roman government. Theirs was not a time of peace but constant fear. Jesus wanted them to know that though he was

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

speaking about the destruction of the temple they should not worry every time they heard about a possible invasion or another war. He was going to give them specific instructions they could hold on to, but he did not want them living in fear. It was going to be forty years before the temple was destroyed. Their “*hearing of wars and rumors of wars*” was about events leading up to the coming destruction of Jerusalem and had nothing to do with the end of time. The Jews lived in fear. Meserve records this time when “the Jews were threatened by war in turn by Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. There were, moreover, rumors of wars because of Bardares, and Bolgeses, declaring but not carrying out, war against the Jews. Vitellius, governor of Syria’s declaration of war against the Arabian king, Aretas, also led to ‘rumors of war.’”

The Jewish nation went through 40 years of turbulence and attack. In Seleucia 50,000 Jews were killed. In Caesarea 20,000 were killed in a battle between Syrians and Jews. In Alexandria, there was an uprising.”³⁸⁸ These, with many more, happened before the timestamp given by Jesus. These are warning to the “generation” that Jesus was speaking to. At the time these warnings were given they were prophecy, and in our time they are history.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
<p>[7] “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,</p> <p>and in various places, <u>there will be famines and earthquakes.</u></p>	<p>[8] “For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;</p> <p><u>there will be earthquakes</u> in various places; <u>there will also be famines.</u> These things are merely</p>	<p>[10] Then He continued by saying to them, “Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom,</p> <p>[11] and <u>there will be great earthquakes,</u> and in various places <u>plagues and famines;</u> and <i>there will be</i></p>

Last to Leave

	the beginning of birth pangs.	<i>terrors and great signs from heaven.</i>
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The world will be pretty normal leading up to the temple being destroyed. There has not been a period in all of history of real peace and the time following the resurrection of Christ was no exception. Josephus, writing about this period in the history of the Jews, called his book, "War of the Jews." The world was in turmoil, and little Israel was right in the middle of the whole mess.

We can look to the book of Acts to see this coming true. *"One of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius."*³⁸⁹ Meserve reports that "at least three other famines occurred during his rule."³⁹⁰

Earthquakes are part of the earth's growth and lifecycle. We cannot predict when but we can say they will happen. We know this now because we understand the tectonic plates of the earth that grind and rub against each other. As pressure builds they finally let go and an earthquake follows. Jesus knew this, and he knew they were going to be part of their immediate future. There is a list of major earthquakes during the forty years between Jesus's prophecy and the temple's destruction.

- There was a great earthquake in A.D. 46
- An earthquake on the day Nero assumed the toga in A.D. 51³⁹¹ In the writings of the first-century historian Tacitus we read a description of the conditions in A.D. 51 in Rome: "This year witnessed many prodigious signs or omens... including repeated earthquakes."³⁹²
- There were so many they were called "a common calamity" by Josephus.
- There were earthquakes in Crete, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colosse, Campania, Rome, and Judea.³⁹³

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

- Remember the earthquake that set Paul and Silas free from Prison in Acts 16.26
- There was a major earthquake in the bay at Naples Italy in 62 A.D.
- Matthew 27.54 There is an earthquake at the crucifixion of Jesus.
- Matthew 28.2 When the angel rolled the stone from the tomb of Jesus there was a “severe earthquake.

Every time there is a major earthquake or tsunami there are those who want to say it is about the end of time and they quote these verses. They are making a grave mistake. They are taking history and making it prophecy when it has not been about the future for almost 2,000 years. Earthquakes, famines, wars, rumors of wars: these are common in any era and are not a sign of the end of time.

“and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.” This is unique to Luke and should be interpreted in light of all we have covered so far in this book. These signs in heaven are about turmoil in leadership and the ever-changing political and social climate in the tiny nation of Israel. Many were hoping the coming of the Messiah would bring peace and freedom. Jesus is warning those listening to him just the opposite was going to happen.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[8] “But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.	[8b] These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.	

Jesus has defined how the world around them will continue pretty much as usual. He wants them to know that what he has described so far is nothing compared to what they can expect to happen. It will get much worse before the temple is destroyed. Today there are those shouting in fear of the end of time when there is a war, earthquake, famine or some strange occurrence in the moon. They are taking a prophecy that was fulfilled

Last to Leave

centuries ago and trying to make it into something for today.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
<p>[9] “Then they will deliver you to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.</p>	<p>[9] “But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be <u>flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake</u>,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>as a testimony to them.</i></p>	<p>[12] “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name’s sake.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>[13] “It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.</i></p>

This is easily documented within the New Testament.

- Acts 4.1-3 Peter and John are arrested for preaching the resurrection of Jesus.
- Acts 5.18 Apostles put in a public jail
- Acts 8.1-3 Believers are persecuted and arrested.
- Acts 16.16-22-24 Paul and Silas beaten and put in prison.
- Acts 9.23-24, 20.19, 23.12-14 Plot to kill Paul
- Acts 12.1-5 James is executed, and Peter imprisoned
- Acts 13.44-51 Paul and Barnabas driven out of Antioch
- Acts 14.19-20 Paul almost stoned to death
- Acts 16.16-24 Paul and Silas flogged and put in prison
- Acts 17.1-15 Persecution of Paul and other followers

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

- Acts 18.12-17 Paul beaten by the Jews
- Acts 19.27-28.30 Paul arrested and taken to Rome.

Of the original apostles, only John is reported to have lived to old age, and he spent much time in prison.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
	[11] “When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.	[14] “So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; [15] for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.

Jesus does not want them to worry about the future. An example of this happened in Acts when Peter and John appeared before the Sanhedrin. *“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished, and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.”*³⁹⁴

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[10] “At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.	[12] “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death.	[16] “But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death,

Paul wrote about this happening to him. *“You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including*

Last to Leave

Phygelus and Hermogenes.”³⁹⁵ Also, he wrote, “*Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.*”³⁹⁶ “*Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message. At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.*”³⁹⁷ Many of these were once believers who turned against other believers.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[11] “Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. [12] “Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.		

The New Testament is full of examples of this happening to the early believers in the first-century church.

Acts 20.29-30 “*I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.*”

2 Corinthians 11.13 “*For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ.*”

Galatians 2.4 “*But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.*”

2 Peter 2.1 “*But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you,*

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.”

1 John 4.1 *“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”*

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
	[13] “You will be hated by all because of My name,	[17] and you will be hated by all because of My name. [18] “Yet not a hair of your head will perish.
[13] “But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.	but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.	[19] “By your endurance, you will gain your lives.

Even as many turned away, Jesus wanted His followers to know it was not in vain. As Meserve points out “the word ‘end’ here DOES NOT REFER TO THE END OF OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE BUT THE END OF JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE just as it did in vs. 6. Thus the phrase “these things” (vs. 2, 3, 34), “those days” (vs. 29) and “the end” (vs. 6, 13, 14) are all dealing with the same period, namely the destruction of Israel.”³⁹⁸ As Jesus prepares to tell them how bad it is going to be before the destruction of the temple he wants them to know those who listen to him would be rewarded.

The Christian believers were both hated and protected. They were hated by the world and the ungodly who struck out against them. They were protected with the promise of eternal life if they remain true to Jesus under such pressure.

Last to Leave

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[14] “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.	[10] “The gospel must first be preached to all the nations.	

Mark 13.10 is placed here and is out of order for Mark but still falls within the asking of the question and the timestamp for the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

This one event will precede the destruction of the temple. First, remember that this is before verse 34 so it makes this event something that happened before 70 A. D. Second, we must be careful to keep it in the context of the first century. The whole world was much different back then to them than what it is to us today. The context of the first century must be maintained to understand this verse. This is also shown to have been fulfilled in the New Testament writings.

*“Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.”*³⁹⁹ The first preaching of the Gospel was in front of representatives from “**every nation under heaven.**” Many of them would return home after Pentecost as new believers in the Messiah, Jesus.

Paul wrote to the Roman church around 56-57 A. D. “*I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed **throughout the whole world.***”⁴⁰⁰

Paul declared that the “*the gospel which has come to you, just as in **all the world** also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing. . .*”⁴⁰¹ He continues to make his point, “*if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel*

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

that you have heard, **which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven**, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.”⁴⁰² According to Paul, the prophecy of Jesus had come to pass long before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

This is written in the same context as Jesus gave it. The entire world at that time was the Roman Empire. The prophecy was written to first century Christians to warn them. It is not a warning to the modern reader but proof of Jesus’ ability to foresee the future.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[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),	[14a] “ <u>But when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION</u> standing where it should not be (let the reader understand),	[20] “ <u>But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies</u> , then recognize that her desolation is near.

Here is a key to where scripture interprets scripture. In Matthew and Mark, it is spoken of as the Abomination of Desolation. The prophecy of Jesus is about to move to some very precise information about what would happen when the Roman General Titus arrived with his army. So the question “when will the temple be destroyed” is about to be answered in great detail. Luke gives us the first key they would need to watch for. Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies. There is nothing ambiguous about this. This is one reason God has given us four Gospels. Without Luke, we would not know for sure what the Abomination of Desolation is. The Christians were told to watch for a time when an enemy army had surrounded Jerusalem. The Roman army would surround Jerusalem before they enter the temple and desecrate it.

Last to Leave

This reference back to Daniel 11.31 and Daniel 12.11 is to show this is about the destruction of the city and the temple. This is not about setting up an idol in the temple but about the entering of the temple by non-believers or non-Jews. Some want to see this in the future, but it must be lifted out of context to make it about anything but the armies of Rome that are the abomination in the first century.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[16] then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.	[14b]then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.	[21] “Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city;

Now they are given direction how to respond when the armies of Rome arrive at Jerusalem. It is about responding quickly and without hesitation. They are told to flee. There would be many Jews who would retreat inside the walls of Jerusalem believing that God would protect them there. The followers of Christ are told not to do this but to head out as quickly as possible. Josephus wrote about those who claimed God had told them not to flee but to go into the temple where God would protect them.⁴⁰³

This ability and need to flee was complicated by the zealots who believed letting anyone leave the city would stop God from protecting them. Josephus says, “those that were at Jerusalem were deprived of the liberty of going out of the city: for as to such as had a mind to desert, they were watched by the Zealots.”⁴⁰⁴ The only hope was to flee as quickly as possible. After the gates had been shut it became all but impossible to escape the city.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[17] “Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house.	[15] “The one who is on the housetop must not go down, or go in to get anything out of his house;	

This is about fleeing and knowing the window of opportunity would not be very big. The roofs in ancient Jerusalem were flat. This is where they went to cool off in the evenings, and they often slept on the roof of their houses in the hot summer time. If they were on the roof and it came time to leave they were not to stop for anything.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[18] “Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak.	[16] and the one who is in the field must not turn back to get his coat.	

The fields were outside of the city walls, and the first inclination of an individual would be to flee back inside of the city walls. Jesus warns them to head out if the armies came while they were outside of the city.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
		[22] because these are days of vengeance so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.

The days of vengeance Luke is talking about is referring to the Jews and their rejection of Jesus. Jesus knew the time was drawing short for the Jews. His words were cutting and to the point. “*Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of*

Last to Leave

*your fathers. You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?*⁴⁰⁵ The taking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple was the final chapter of the nation of Israel as God’s chosen nation.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[19] “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!	[17] “But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!	[23a] “Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days;

Jesus knew that as life goes on the coming of the Roman army would not come at a good time for some. He thought of women who were pregnant or who had just had their babies. They would have to travel on foot without any supplies through the enemy-held territory. Those Jewish women who did not flee would live through some of the worst times in history. Josephus said that fathers and mothers who were trapped inside the city during the siege became so hungry that they took the food right out of the mouth of their children.⁴⁰⁶ Women were reported to have eaten their children and invited others to join them.⁴⁰⁷ Women following Jesus’ instructions would have to flee with only their children, with no supplies to help them on the trip.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[20] “But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.	[18] “But pray that it may not happen in the winter.	

Winter travel would be difficult because of the weather and the short length of daylight. If it happened on the Sabbath, they would be locked in the city as the gates were not opened.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

These signs or conditions are all aimed at people living in the first century who were going to be attacked by the Roman Army. It is reported that when the Roman army advanced on Jerusalem, the Christians fled to Pella as quickly as possible leaving the Jews behind in the city.⁴⁰⁸ "We learn from ecclesiastical histories,' says Bishop Newton, 'that at this juncture (the approach of the siege of Jerusalem) all who believed in Christ departed from Jerusalem, and removed to Pella and other places beyond the river Jordan; so that they all marvelously escaped the general shipwreck of their countrymen; and we do not read anywhere that so much as one of them perished in the destruction of Jerusalem.'"⁴⁰⁹ These believers had listened to the warnings of Jesus for forty years, and when the day came to flee, they did it as quickly as possible.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[21] "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.	[19] "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 will.	[23b]for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people;

We need to remember that the word tribulation means a period of extreme trouble or prolonged suffering. This is not about a future period of tribulation but is about the tribulation or suffering they had to endure inside of Jerusalem. Mothers were eating their babies, Zealots blockading the city gates believing that the Messiah was about to come. This is the worst thing that would ever happen to the temple. It is also the last thing that was going to happen to the temple. Jesus was warning His followers about the coming period of time and just how bad it was going to be. He wanted them to know if they did not follow His directions and flee right away staying behind would be the worst choice they could make.

Last to Leave

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
		[24] and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Luke describes the battle that was going to take place. Those who remained would find the Roman army merciless. This describes the warfare of the first century. The Roman army was merciless and cruel. After being sent to the small country of Judea to fight the Jewish rebels, they showed their frustration in the slaughter and imprisonment of the Jews as they took the city of Jerusalem and the temple.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[22] “Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short.	[20] “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.	

Josephus wrote about the battles between factions that happened within the city. Some were believing the Messiah was coming, while others were looking for food and going so far as to cut people open who had recently eaten to get the food from their stomach. Thousands died

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

at the hands of other Jews. The destruction was so complete that if it had not been stopped the Romans would not have found anyone alive. The battle for Jerusalem had to come to an end, or the entire country would starve to death. Christian believers who had fled Jerusalem were in jeopardy if the siege continued. The country needed to be free from the Roman army, or they all would die. Josephus wrote, "For they never suffered from the Romans anything worse than they made each other suffer."⁴¹⁰ It took the Romans five months to take the city after the final siege began. This is a short length of time for a siege of a city, but it was some of the most inhumane conditions the people found themselves in within the walls of Jerusalem.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[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.	[21] "And then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ'; or, 'Behold, He is there'; do not believe him; [22] for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect. [23] "But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance.	

This continues the section dealing about what is happening during the battle for Jerusalem. During such dire times, it would seem almost normal for the people to

Last to Leave

seek help from God. They were hoping for a military messiah who would defeat the Roman army. Josephus wrote about this very event happening in Jerusalem.

“A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God; and this was in order to keep them from deserting, and that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes. Now a man that is in adversity does easily comply with such promises; for when such a seducer makes him believe that he shall be delivered from those miseries which oppress him, then it is that the patient is full of hopes of such his deliverance.”⁴¹¹

These false prophets buoyed up the hopes of the people while at the same time causing them to continue when they should have surrendered or looked for another solution.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[26] “So if they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, 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 will the coming of the		

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Son of Man be. [28] “Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.		
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Jesus knew this was coming and wanted to make sure the believers were not led astray. Jesus mentions the coming of the Son of Man as being something that will happen suddenly, but He does not say it will happen here.

He describes Jerusalem as a corpse. Within the city were mobs or gangs of people who were robbing and killing other Jews. After the Roman army took the city, they had to fight against several of these groups that turned against the Romans and battled them.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[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.	[24] “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.	[25] “There will be signs in sun and moon and stars , and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, [26] men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

This shows a loss of power and authority of the Jewish leaders in their own country. This is about the second heaven or the one of prophetic language. The sun, moon, and stars represent the rulers of the Jewish nation that

Last to Leave

were taken captive and punished by the Romans. Many of them were executed. Josephus reports that the number that perished during the whole siege was eleven hundred thousand and the number taken captive by the Romans was ninety-seven thousand.

The sun, moon, and stars here do not represent the real ones in the sky and have nothing to do with events that occur over and over again. Those who want to make a dramatic and Biblical event out of blood moons⁴¹² are using this verse out of context. This is about leadership in the first century Israel losing their power for standing up against the Romans and their rejection of Jesus.

This is the same type of language used in the Old Testament to show the overthrow of a government. Language like this is used against Babylon (Isaiah 13.10; Isaiah 24.23), against Edom (Isaiah 34.4-5), and against Egypt (Ezekiel 32.7-8). This is figurative and prophetic language used in Matthew 24.29-30 dealing with the fall of Israel and the rise of Christianity

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[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.	[26] “Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN CLOUDS with great power and glory.	[27] “Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory.

Even as the Jewish nation and people lost their position and power within the Roman Empire, the number of believers continued to grow. This is symbolized by showing the Son of Man coming or occupying a position of power

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

and authority in the sky. It is similar language as used to show the second coming in the book of 1 Thessalonians, but it is not referring to the same event. In Thessalonians, it is the literal return of Christ. Here it is about the power position he and his church take in the Roman Empire. Even though it was not until 313 A.D. that persecution of Christians ended under Constantine the Great, its influence upon the empire was felt in every corner. With the conversion of Constantine, it had reached the highest place of power in the Roman Empire and was a visible part of everything that happened from then on.⁴¹³

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[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.	[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.	[28] “But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads because your redemption is drawing near.”

Again we need a word of warning to remember that everything before verse 34 is about the destruction of Jerusalem and what happened immediately afterward. This is about the deliverance of the believers during and immediately after the battle for Jerusalem.

The word translated angels denotes messengers and is most likely referring to ministers and missionaries who took the word to the whole Roman Empire and beyond. The gathering together is about those being saved in the first century and who will all join Christ in heaven. There is one church made up of all believers.

Last to Leave

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
<p>[32] “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that <i>summer is near</i>;</p> <p>[33] so, you too, <u>when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.</u></p>	<p>[28] “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that <i>summer is near</i>. [29] “Even so, you too, <u>when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door.</u></p>	<p>[29] Then He told them a parable: “Behold the fig tree and all the trees; [30] as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that <i>summer is now near</i>. [31] “So you also, <u>when you see these things happening, recognize</u> that the kingdom of God is near.</p>

Jesus has given them all the signs they should watch for leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem. There are the ones about the world continuing as it always has been: a place of wars and earthquakes. He has also warned them about the appearance of the Roman army and the need to flee quickly. He is reminding them that when the fig tree buds they know spring is coming so they should know when the signs he has warned them about occur, the end of the temple is about to happen. They need to respond quickly and flee, believe the warnings of Jesus. The believers fled the city as soon as the Roman army approached and none died.

Again Luke is showing the difference and is explaining this is not about the end of time but about the spread of the Kingdom.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
<p>[34] “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away</p>	<p>[30] “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away</p>	<p>[32] “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away</p>

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

until all these things take place.	until all these things take place.	until all things take place.
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Jesus is plain and direct here. All this will happen in the lifetime of many of those who are listening to his words. This is prophecy about a coming event in the life of believers alive in 30 A.D.. As noted earlier in the chapter this is not about the events leading up to the end of time but the events leading up to the destruction of the temple which occurred in 70 A.D.. This is a key verse and everything before it up to verse (4) are about the destruction of Jerusalem and not about the end of time.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[35] “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.	[31] “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.	[33] “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

Jesus is the final authority on anything he talks about. His teachings and truth will always be true. This is Jesus stating the fourth principle of Biblical interpretation: Jesus is Boss! Everything Jesus said was going to happen to the temple did. The believers had to believe and respond as he had told them to.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
[36] “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.	[32] “But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.	

This is the same type of language Jesus used talking about the end of time, but here this is about the coming of the Roman army. Jesus has been allowed to see what will happen, but he does not know the exact day or the hour. As is pointed out in the ending of Mark, it can happen in

Last to Leave

the middle of the night, or it can happen at dawn. It could be on a Sabbath or in the winter time. The exact time is not known, but all the warning signs have been given for the people to watch for. Jesus has warned them to pray it not be in winter. It is clear he does not know exactly when but the believers have been warned.

The Ending in LUKE 21

[34] “Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; [35] for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. [36] “But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Luke only deals directly with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. He warns them that this will happen suddenly, but they should not be afraid. All they have to do is stay alert, so they can escape the coming destruction Jesus has warned them about. If they let their guard down and start living like the people around them, they will find they are not ready to flee when the time comes. All the believers in Jesus as the Christ escaped the city leaving all their possessions behind. They had taught this prophecy for forty years believing what Jesus had told them was coming true.

The Ending in Mark 13

[33] “Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come. [34] “It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. [35] “Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— [36] in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. [37] “What I say to you I say to all, ‘Be on the

alert!”

The ending of Mark also only covers the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D. It is a warning about being ready and has nothing to do with the end of time. They are to remain alert because it can happen in the middle of the night or at dawn. Servants were often left to watch over a master's home and were not told when he was coming back. This kept them on alert at all times. The time is not important, but the warning signs are.

In both Luke and Mark, only the question about the destruction of the temple is asked by the disciples. This is the only question answered. Everything covered up to here in Matthew, Mark, and Luke is only about the Romans taking Jerusalem and destroying the temple.

THE LONGER ENDING OF MATTHEW 24

Matthew has three questions to answer and is longer and contains information not mentioned in the other two. Only Matthew has this additional information. The timestamp of verse 34 must be remembered. Everything before verse 34 in Matthew 24 and with the parallels in Mark 13 and Luke 21 is about the destruction of Jerusalem which would take place in 70 A.D. All of the signs mentioned are about this event and are NOT about the end of time. Jesus has not dealt with the end of time yet, but that is about to change. Verse 35 and 36 deal with a final warning to be watching for the events already mentioned.

I have added the following headers for the sections. They reflect the proper interpretation of this section of scripture. Looking at most English translations of the Bible the headers for verses 4 through 36 are incorrect.

THE SIGNS OF THE END OF TIME

Jesus quickly transitions and begins answering the last two questions. He ties them together even though the disciples had asked them as two separate questions. He

speaks to “*the coming of the Son of Man*” as he changes from the destruction of Jerusalem to the last two questions the disciples had asked.

Matthew 24

The ONLY Two Signs of the Return of Jesus

[37] “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. [38] “For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, 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 will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Everyone wants to know when Jesus is coming back. They want to know what to watch for. Jesus told them what it would be like just before the destruction of Jerusalem and they were ready. Jesus had warned them about the coming of the Roman army and the destruction of the temple. Here Jesus addresses His return and the end of time.

Jesus was a master of stating the obvious in the simplest ways. People want to make it so hard and complicated. Every earthquake, war, crashed airliner, blue, blood, or super moon that comes along has people going crazy saying it is a sign of something dealing with the beginning of the end of time. Jesus was clear about the only two signs of the coming of the end of time. He said if you look at the days of Noah they got the same two warning signs that the world will get for his return and the end of time. During the days of Noah:

1. They were eating and drinking.
2. People were getting married.

Did you catch that? Jesus said there are no signs. Everything will be like any other day, and then it will happen. It has nothing to do with earthquakes or wars or rumors of wars. Every fast food restaurant that serves billions and billions is proof Jesus is coming back. Every

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

person who gets married is proof Jesus is coming back. These are the signs he said you could watch for.

Noah was building the ark, and no one thought the end was coming. Even though there was a group getting ready. The people just got up and lived their lives. They had breakfast, lunch, and dinner day after day as the ark was being built. Then one day after the animals were on board it started to rain, and it rained and rained.

Every week people go to church and make preparations for eternity, but the people in the world around them look at the churches like they looked at the ark in Noah's day. Last Sunday, as I greeted people at the front door of the church people, were riding by on bikes. There were joggers out for a run. There were people filling up the local restaurants, and I checked the paper, and sure enough, the wedding announcements were there. Everything is ready for Jesus to come back. All the signs he spoke of are in place. The signs he said to look for mean it can happen at any time God chooses, and there is nothing we can do to discover anything about it.

Now, Jesus was making a point. He did not know when the end of time would be, and he was clear that there were no signs. When His heavenly father says it is over, it will be over.

<p style="text-align: center;">Matthew 24 Life goes on as Usual</p>

<p>[40] "Then there will 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.</p>

People will be doing their everyday jobs. Kids will be in school. The lines at the stores will be full with people thinking life will go on forever and then God will say, "That's it!" I covered this earlier, but I want to remind you that the ungodly, or the tares, will be taken out of the world first.⁴¹⁴ The believers are LAST TO LEAVE. (That is why I named this book Last to Leave and covered this in

detail in the first chapter of this book.) Time will come to an end, and the final separation will take place. Angels will separate out of this world all non-believers and then come back for the believers.

Matthew 24

The Call to be Alert and Ready

[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 also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

So what does Jesus say next? For a third time, he says no one knows when it is going to happen, so you always have to be ready. “*You do not know which day your Lord is coming.*” If you don’t know when, because there are no signs, then you always have to be ready, even as the first-century believers were ready when the Roman army came the believers at the end of time must be ready. There will not be a period to get ready. Either you are, or you aren’t. Jesus will spend the whole 25th chapter of Matthew making it clear there are no second chances to get ready.

Responsibilities of Believers to the Master

[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.

Jesus is not talking about slaves. It is talking about you and me, the living followers. He wants us to know we must be found living our lives as real believers. We will not have time to repent or hide anything. It will be the biggest surprise in all of history. When he arrives, you will either be ready and blessed, or you will be in deep trouble. Every believer is responsible for making sure they are ready.

Rewards and Punishment

[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 begins 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 will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

I meet people all the time who doubt there is a God. Then there are those who think if there is a god, he or she will not be punished. But, Jesus said that those who are ready would be rewarded. Jesus is very vivid. The punishment will be severe. Remember Jesus is boss, and this is straight from his lips to your ears. This separation and judgment are what the entire next chapter is about. In fact, at the end of the next chapter, Jesus spells it out clearly how those on both sides will spend eternity.

THREE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

The disciples asked Jesus three questions in Matthew and only one question in Luke and Mark. He answered the first question about the destruction of Jerusalem in all three. He explained in detail the signs leading up the coming of the Roman army and the destruction of the Temple.

Then in Matthew, he adds the section answering the last two questions. The coming of the Son of Man and the end of time are combined together and answered together. There are no signs for these like there were for the coming of the Roman army to conquer Jerusalem. Everything will go on as always with people eating and drinking, and people getting married. The key for the believer is always to be ready because no one knows except the heavenly father when these things are going to take place.

MATTHEW 25

Even as Matthew 24 ends with the coming of Jesus and the end of time being put into proper perspective Jesus wants everyone to know what happens after time comes to an end. Jesus wanted everyone who heard his words to know for certain about the coming judgment and why they needed to be ready at all times. Here the righteous would be judged innocent, and the wicked would be judged guilty. The fate of each group was made clear by Jesus. The guilty would “*go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*”⁴¹⁵

Popular teaching today says because God is a God of love; he will not send anyone to hell. That is almost correct. He will not send anyone to hell, but he will honor the life request they have made by either submitting to His son or by refusing His son. The concept of eternal life appeals to people. It is positive. It allows them to live their lives any way they choose believing the God of love will not punish them. They overlook the fact that He is also a God of justice. This places the choice on the individual to accept or reject His love through His son Jesus. This choice, then, is what God honors with either eternal life or eternal punishment. (Jesus’ words, not mine.)

THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BE READY

Jesus told three distinct stories in Matthew 25 to help everyone understand this judgment. The first was about ten virgins. Five of them were foolish and were not prepared for the return of the bridegroom, and five were wise and were ready. This parable or story is aimed at the religious who have knowledge of God and have responded to God’s call. They cannot become complacent and lazy believing that it is an experience that seals the deal no matter how one lives. The virgins represent all who have called on God through His son and call themselves Christians or believers. Jesus was plain; if you are not ready at the end of time, there will be no second opportunity.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Here is the separating at the end of time of those with God and those who are not with God. This, even though some of them claim him but are not ready for his return. This is judgment as taught by Jesus. The five wise were allowed in or got to go to heaven. The five foolish were locked out for eternity.

Jesus then reinforces what he has taught in Matthew 24. *“Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”*⁴¹⁶

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LIFE

To better illustrate his point Jesus compares waiting on the end of time to servants waiting on their master's return. They each have been given talents or money to take care of while the master is away. Two of them use the money wisely and are rewarded while the last one hides the money and does nothing. When the master returns the first two are rewarded, and the last one is punished.

Jesus is not trying to veil this in any way. He is the one who is going away. The servants are believers who have been given gifts and responsibilities. The return of the master is the end of time, and the punishments represent the judgment of God. The illustration turns dark finishing with the wicked servant being thrown *“outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*⁴¹⁷ Jesus is clearly showing that there are those who will spend eternity with God and those who will not.

THE END OF TIME

Finally, Jesus says it is about *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly Glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.”*⁴¹⁸

Last to Leave

This separating is designed to be the final judgment. The sheep are going to heaven (eternal rewards), and the goats are going to Hades (eternal punishment). When asked why He has chosen some as sheep and others as goats it comes down to the same thing it did with the ten virgins and the money given to servants. It is how the person lived his life. The sheep were doing what Jesus wanted them to do while the goats completely missed the mark.

A word of caution, this is Jesus illustrating the end of time in first-century parables and language. The point is the same in each of the three stories Jesus told. The wicked *“will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”*⁴¹⁹

JUDGMENT AND ‘THIS GENERATION’

Jesus is very clear about the end of time. There are no warning signs, and when it happens you are either ready, or you are not ready. Those who are ready will be rewarded, and those who are not will be punished. If you don’t believe this or don’t like this, you will have to take it up with Jesus. I believe He is boss and I believe His is the final word on the matter.

Jesus spoke of Judgment in Matthew 25 in the broad sense of all of humanity being separated into two groups at the end of time. This final judgment of rewards and punishment will come suddenly and when least expected. Even as people are separated into two groups, the ultimate judgment is personal and dependent upon how a person has lived his/her life.

Before this, Jesus also spoke of another Judgment. This judgment was to come upon the Jews who had turned against God. Jesus was clear on three occasions that there was coming an immediate and terrible Judgment on those Jews who had rejected Him and who had hijacked the Jewish religion for their own purposes. Early in his ministry, he had spoken about this to them. They asked

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

him for a miraculous sign. His response was not what they expected.

*“A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.”*⁴²⁰

The Jews had reached the full measure of the tolerance and patience of God. This cumulative disobedience was reaching a climax. Knowing what they were going to do to him, he had told them to *“Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers.”*⁴²¹ The final straw would be His crucifixion. Speaking about the hardness of their hearts and the way they had treated the servants and prophets God had sent to warn them, Jesus said, *“I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation.”*⁴²² They had killed the prophets and rejected their warnings. The Jews thought of themselves as God's people without considering they had to act like God's people or pay the price. Knowing what was coming, he had cried out over the city.

*“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate.”*⁴²³

This is followed by his teaching about the destruction of Jerusalem. *“Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.”*⁴²⁴ Jesus knew the time was drawing to a close when the Temple would be important to God in any way. The temple era would end

Last to Leave

the connection of God through the Jewish people. Jesus had already promised the coming of the Holy Spirit. Each person would become a personal temple of God. The veil of the temple would be ripped down the middle at the death of Jesus. He would drink the sour wine and step across into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jerusalem fell in 70 A.D. just as Jesus said it would. The end of time and His return will happen when we least expect it. People will be eating and drinking, marrying and getting engaged and then it will happen. The key is Jesus has warned the world and especially the believers. Those living in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. were ready and fled. We need to be ready for we do not know when it will be, but everything is in place.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

KEY POINTS:

- The disciples ask three questions in Matthew and only one in Mark and Luke.
- Everything before Matthew 24.34 is about signs dealing with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
- VSS 36-37 are a warning for them to be ready and watch for the signs Jesus told them about.
- Jesus said His coming and the end of time would have the same signs as were given the people in the days of NOAH.
 1. People would be eating and drinking
 2. People would be getting married and engaged
- The wicked will be taken first, and the believers will be last to leave at the end of time.
- Jesus says the wicked will go away to “*eternal punishment*” and the righteous will go away to “*eternal life.*”

Last to Leave

The Book of REVELATION

*'He who has an ear, let him hear what the
Spirit says to the churches.'*

Revelation 3.22

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

The Book of Revelation

OVERVIEW

The book opens with the declaration that it is the “*Revelation of Jesus Christ*” to “*His bond-servant John*.” John had been imprisoned on the island of Patmos for preaching the good news about Jesus. It is here he is given a message to the seven churches of Asia Minor which is followed by the call to “*Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things*.”⁴²⁵

The timing in the Book of Revelation is open to various interpretations, and each commentator wants us to believe he or she has solved the matter. We learn from the very first verse that these things “*must soon take place*.”⁴²⁶ The question is what is soon? Is it soon to you and me or is it soon to God? “*With the Lord, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day*.”⁴²⁷ So from God’s point of view, it has been two days. If He decides to wait until three days before coming back, we are still a thousand years off from his return and the end of time. There is no way to pin it all down to a certain time or season. God wants it to stay that way. The only signs of the end are clearly outlined by Jesus when he spoke about the matter in the book of Matthew. People will be getting married, and people will be eating and drinking. According to Jesus, these are the only two signs of the end of time.⁴²⁸

The book of Revelation is full of pictures and images. “These symbols are plastic, flexible, and on the order of character analysis rather than literal descriptions.”⁴²⁹ Some of them are explained within the text, and some are reflections of other Bible passages. No one person has figured it all out or understands it all. There are some who want you to believe they know it all and can pin everything down. I have over 25 commentaries and books on my desk about the book of Revelation as I work on this and none of them agree. I just checked on Amazon.com and found for the book of Revelation there are 64,135 possible book

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

references. It is a book many think they have all the answers for. Many of the books on Revelation have longer introductions to their commentaries than this entire overview of the book I present here. This section is designed to go deeper than the casual reader but will not examine all the details and images. I do not attempt to connect all the dots to the Old Testament references. Here is a basic outline, commentary and approach to the most challenging book in the Word of God. I write this section on Revelation at the end of this book after explaining the different approach I take and the reasons I feel this will add and hopefully aid in many more understanding the basics of the book of Revelation. Unlike Matthew 24 where I feel confident in the setting and dating of the events, here I can only attempt to help you. I do not have all the answers and do not pretend to. I humbly submit this for your consideration.

I have divided the book into seven parts and four sections.⁴³⁰ This is done following the way the book naturally divides itself. That it is divided into seven parts and four sections has no spiritual significance. Sometimes numbers are just that, numbers, and nothing more.

The outline of the Book of Revelation:

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. The vision of Christ: *Rev. 1.1-20*

SECTION TWO: THE LETTERS

2. Letters to the 7 Churches: *Rev 2.1 thru 3.22*

SECTION THREE: THE PROPHECY

3. The 7 seals: *Rev. 4.1 thru 8.1*
4. The 7 Trumpets & 7 Thunders: *Rev. 8.2 thru 11.19*
5. The 7 Other Angels: *Rev. 12.1 thru 14.20*
6. The 7 Bowls: *Rev. 15.1 thru 16.21*

SECTION FOUR: CONCLUSION

7. Judgment & Rewards: *Rev. 17.1 thru Rev. 22.21*
See Revelation Chart 1 – Overview

Flow Chart for the Book of Revelation

INTRODUCTION

The Vision of Christ—Chapter 1

The Letters

7 Churches of Asia Minor—chapters 2-3

The Prophecy (Parallel & concurrent events)

X & * Show Direct Parallels

<u>7 SEALS</u> chapters 4-8.1	<u>7 TRUMPETS</u> chapters 8.2-11	<u>7 ANGELS</u> chapters 12-14	<u>7 BOWLS</u> chapters 15-16
	X		X
	X		X
	X	*	X *
	X		X
	X		X
	X		X
	X	*	X *

Conclusion

Judgment & Rewards

Chapters 17-22

FLOW CHART SHOWING THE PROGRESSIVE PARALLELISM OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

OVERVIEW OF FOUR SECTIONS

Section ONE: The Introduction

Rev. 1.1-20

The letter opens with an introduction of John and Jesus. It sets up what is happening and where. This would have been of great significance to the people in the first century who read their letters from Christ and the Revelation that followed.

Section TWO: Seven Personal Letters

Rev 2.1 thru 3.22

Then the letter becomes personal and speaks directly to these first readers who are the pastors of the seven churches on a mail route in Asia Minor. The recipients would all know John and be aware that he was in prison on the island of Patmos just off the coast. The personal nature of each letter would have been magnified knowing that it was being read by other pastors in other churches.

Section THREE: The Revelation from Christ

Rev. 4.1 thru 16.21

Next, are the four overlapping Revelations known as progressive parallelism.⁴³¹ Think of these like a horse race which starts in the first century. Each horse is distinct and different while at the same time all are racing together or parallel to each other. They race around the track or progress toward the finish or the end of time and the final judgments and rewards of God. This section covers the seven seals, seven trumpets, the seven other angels, and the seven bowls.⁴³² These are all about the same race but from different perspectives. This is God using repetition to make sure we get His point. Four times He tells us about the struggle between good and evil.

Section FOUR: Conclusion to Everything

Rev. 17.1 thru Rev. 22.21

The final section is a wrap up of what happens to everyone involved. It is a section filled with information about punishment and rewards. Here we see what happens to all the bad guys for going against Christ Jesus and His church. We learn about the New Heaven and New Earth and the joy of being on the winning side. There is a touch of progressive parallelism as events from the past are put into perspective and related to events that took place during the race and lead to the final outcome for everyone involved.

MY POSITION ON INTERPRETATION

I need to lay a little groundwork. I lean toward the Idealist⁴³³ approach for the bulk of the Book of Revelation. I see everything after the third chapter as representing the struggle of good against evil, Christ vs. Satan. The first three chapters are directly written about people, places, and events relating to first century Christians. These events can influence and shed light on the lives of believers in any era. These first three chapters are written less in symbolic language and more directly as individual messages or letters to the seven churches. Chapters two and three are direct messages to the seven churches, and each message ends with a promise for any who overcome and live for Christ.

My approach to understanding the book of Revelation and end time events is known as amillennialism.⁴³⁴ This approach is based upon the beliefs that Jesus has already established his Kingdom⁴³⁵ and is not returning to set up an earthly kingdom. Jesus was very plain when he said, *“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”*⁴³⁶ This holds that when Jesus returns he will not set foot on the earth again but we *“will be caught up together with them in the clouds to*

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."⁴³⁷ Judgment and rewards will follow and eternity will, well, eternity will be eternal. This perspective also sees the Church as always being a central part of God's plan.⁴³⁸

SECTION ONE INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK: The vision of Christ

The book opens declaring it is the "*Revelation of Jesus Christ.*" The word revelation means to reveal or to uncover. The Greek word is translated into the word apocalypse. This is the apocalypse or uncovering of the events leading up to and including the end of the world. These events are to be shown to Christ's *bond-servant*, John. These events are depicted "*which must soon take place.*" The "*time is near*" for these to unfold or begin. Since the prophecy is through the end of time, it will not be completed until time has ended and final judgment and rewards issued.

The vision of Christ in the 13th through 15th verses list qualities that identify Him.

1. A long robe reaching to his feet
2. Wearing a golden sash around his chest
3. Hair white like wool or white as snow
4. Eyes like a flame of fire
5. Feet like polished bronze refined in a furnace
6. A voice like mighty ocean waves.
7. A double-edged sword coming out of His mouth
8. Face like the shining sun

This vision of Christ is far different from the one in most children's books and from that reported by people claiming to have died and come back to life. This is the transformed, risen Christ. He is powerful and awesome. This is the mighty Lord of Lords and King of Kings. This is the one who sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. This is Jesus.

INTRODUCTION: The vision of the Churches

This magnificent Christ is standing among seven lampstands and holding seven stars in His hand. Here we need to make sure and take note that one of the three key ways to understand this book is to allow it to interpret itself. *“As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”*⁴³⁹

The seven stars are the seven angels of the churches. The word translated ‘angels’ means messengers. This is referring to the pastors of these churches who are the messengers of Christ to each local church. The symbolism is dramatic. Christ stands among the churches and has direct contact with the pastors of each church. Each letter to the church is addressed to the pastor of the church. It is dramatic that Christ holds them directly responsible for what is happening in their church. The letters are not private but part of a public message sent to all the churches.

SECTION TWO: THE LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA MINOR

There is a cycle in the way the seven churches are approached by the message given to them through John from Christ. Each church is symbolized by a lampstand and the pastors as the stars in the hand of Christ. For the pastors, this is either the best place to be or the worst place to be. Some of them receive high marks for their service and dedication while others are strongly criticized for their turning away from Christ. In each case, there is a promise to anyone who ‘overcomes’ their sins and shortcomings and turns to serve Jesus. There is a pattern to the messages.⁴⁴⁰

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

	Revelation 2.1-7 EFESES	Revelation 2.8-11 SMYRNA	Revelation 2.12-17 BERGAMUM	Revelation 2.18-29 THYATIRA	Revelation 3.1-6 SARDIS	Revelation 3.7-13 PHILADELPHIA	Revelation 3.14-22 LAODICEA
Church Character	The TESTING Church	The POOR Church	The Church in a BAD NEIGHBORHOOD	The SERVING Church	The DEAD Church	The ENDURING Church	The RICH Church
LOCAL SITUATION	False apostasy in the area	Synagogue of Satan there in their city	Satan's throne is there in the city	Jezabel is there attacking the church.	Church has a good reputation in the local community	Synagogue of Satan full of false Jews	Not mentioned
IMAGE OF CHRIST	Holds 7 stars and walks around the lampstands	Let and last, He was dead and is now alive	Double edged sword from his mouth	Eyes like fire, feet like bronze, looks like son of God	Holds 7 spirits and 7 stars in his hand	Key of David which opens door and cannot be closed	The Amen, the faithful witness, the source of creation
STRENGTHS (I Know)	Hard work, patience, suffering endured do not tolerate evil people, false apostasy tested	Spiritually rich, endurance in persecution, suffering and poverty do not stop them	Faithful, martyrdom endurance	Love, faith, endurance, now doing more than before	A few have remained faithful & will be dressed in white	Obedied the word, and did not deny Him.	NONE
WEAKNESSES (Complaints)	Don't love like they used to	NONE	Some are following teachings of Balaam (idolatry & immorality) Nicolaitans also here	Tolerate prophetess Jezabel. Sexual Immorality & idolatry because of food	Appear alive on the outside but on the inside are dead. Just like Pharisees	NONE	Luke-warm, neither hot or cold, unaware of their own sinfulness
GUIDANCE	Turn back and do the works done at first. Repent or lose your lampstand (church)	Reject the fear of poverty and suffering. Death brings crown of life and rewards.	Repent or face the Word of God as their Judge.	Repent and turn away from Jezabel's teachings. Her children will die. Hold on strong.	Repent, wakeup & revive what is dying. Not living up to God's standards.	Hold on you will be protected, remember Jesus is coming quickly.	Repent before he spits you out of his mouth. Jesus is knocking on the door.
PROMISE (Anyone who hears)	Will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God.	2nd death will not hurt them	Give hidden names & white stone with secret name on it	Given authority to rule over nations. Will give them the morning star	Dress in white. Name stays in the book of life. Will confess your name before the father.	Will be pillar in God's temple. Receive name of God as a personal gift.	Victorious will sit with Jesus on throne.

CHART SHOWING PARALLEL MESSAGES GIVEN TO THE SEVEN PASTORS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

Last to Leave

These were seven literal churches which Christ chose to send messages to. They were all on a mail route in Asia Minor. Each church not only received their own message but was able to read the message given to the other six churches. Reading the letters from a pastor's point of view makes them personal and in several cases is very embarrassing because of the problems and sin Christ saw. In each case, they had the opportunity to repent and discover fresh their relationship with Jesus. We can learn from these churches the things Jesus sees as important and those items He does not want in His church. These truths apply to any age and any church.

The pattern for the messages to the churches is striking. When looked at side by side the picture of each church becomes visible.

Each pastor must have received the reading of the letter with pride in the compliment about the strength of his church. This would have quickly dissolved to concern as the words "*But I have this against you*" followed by the weakness of the church. Then there was advice on how to get back into the proper relationship with Christ by making corrections.

Two churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia, have no complaint or weakness listed. Both of them still received guidance to help keep them on track.

The church at Laodicea stands out in having no reference to the local situation and having no strength recognized by Christ. It was one of three churches that were called on to repent or turn back and serve Christ.

All seven churches were given a promise if they returned or if they remained faithful. These promises were not exclusive to each church as they are what each believer can expect from Christ.

The message may have been addressed to individual churches, but they were designed to be read and to help

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

all the churches. “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*” This also means we can apply the truths to our local churches and consider which letter Christ would send to our pastor about the local church. The hardest part is Christ was standing in the center of the churches and had an outside looking in view. We are in the local church and may not realize the slow drift away. The churches may have been surprised or even shocked to hear their shortfall from their Lord.

Here the book of Revelation takes on the form of a series of epistles or letters. Chapters two and three are seven letters joined together written to the pastors of seven different churches. Much like the letters Paul wrote, except these are a messages from Christ to each of the churches.

THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS

The church at Ephesus was well established by the time the Book of Revelation was written. The church at Ephesus had been founded by Paul around 52 A.D.⁴⁴¹ The city was known for its pagan worship including the worship of the emperor. It was also a center of trade for the entire region. The church is praised for standing against evil people and testing to make sure false prophets did not infiltrate the church.

Their love for Christ had waned. Much like many married couples who have let their love grow cold, the believers at Ephesus had begun to take their relationship with Christ for granted. They were paying attention to someone or something else. Christ is reminding them that they need to pay attention to the person who brought them to the dance or they would not get to go home with Him.

They had stopped doing what they had done at first. This had been an active church working for Christ. When Paul wrote the letter of Ephesians to them, he wanted to strengthen the church and encourage them. Now thirty years later Christ is sending them another letter with the

Last to Leave

same goal of returning them to their previous relationship and faithfulness.

Revelation 2.1-7 The church at **EPHESUS**

- Church Character: The TESTING Church
- Local Situation: False apostles in the area are threatening the church.
- Image of Christ: He holds 7 stars and walks around the lampstands
- Strengths (Christ says “I Know”): About their hard work, patience, suffering, endurance, they do not tolerate evil people, false prophets are tested
- Weaknesses (Complaints): Don’t love like they used to
- Guidance: Turn back and do the work done at first. Repent or lose your lampstand (church).
- Promise (Anyone who hears): Will be given fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God.

THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA

The city of Smyrna was a port city heavily dependent upon trade. It also had a large Jewish population which was causing problems for the local Christian church. The church was seen as the enemy to the Jews since Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. The Christians saw themselves as Abraham’s seed. Even the message from Christ to the church here recognized that these Jews were not the real followers of God. The believers were suffering persecution for their faith by outside forces. The Jews were referred to as “*a synagogue of Satan.*”

The ten days of suffering mentioned in Rev. 2.3 may represent a particular period of time or may only be symbolic of coming suffering the church, and local believers are being warned about. In either case, they were aware of its meaning, and since it does not apply directly to us today, we must not worry or spend too much time trying to figure it out.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Smyrna was one of two churches that received no complaint from Christ in His letter to them. They are called on to remain strong and to reject the fear of poverty and suffering. They need to keep their eyes on Christ and not allow their circumstances to interfere with their faith.

Revelation 2.8-11 The church at **SMYRNA**

- *Church Character*: The POOR Church
- *Local Situation*: Synagogue of Satan there in their city
- *Image of Christ*: 1st and last, He was dead and is now alive
- *Strengths* (Christ says “I Know”): Spiritually rich, endurance in persecution, suffering, and poverty do not stop them
- *Weaknesses* (Complaints): nothing
- *Guidance*: Reject the fear of poverty and suffering.
- *Promise* (Anyone who hears): 2nd death will not hurt them.

THE CHURCH AT PERGAMUM

Like much of the area the larger cities were full of idol worship and sinful lifestyles. In the church at Pergamum, some of the believers were beginning to allow some of the sinfulness of the surrounding pagan beliefs to creep into their lives. They receive a warning about such actions. These warnings are directly tied to the word of God. Even the image of Christ has a double-edged sword coming out of His mouth. This is not an outpost for evil; “Satan’s throne” is there. This city is ruled by evil. It would be a tough place for a church to exist. Christ will not accept excuses. He expected them to be faithful even under such tough circumstances.

They would have to change or face the fact that the truth of the words of Christ would be used against them. They also received a promise that anyone who repented would receive a hidden blessing, one so great and special it had

Last to Leave

to be referred to in code. Only those who stayed close to Christ would ever experience it or know what it was.

Revelation 2.12-17 The church at **PERGAMUM**

- Church Character: The church in a BAD NEIGHBORHOOD
- Local Situation: Satan's throne is there in the city
- Image of Christ: Double edge sword from his mouth
- Strengths (Christ says "I Know"): Faithful, member martyred, endurance
- Weaknesses (Complaints): some hold teachings of Balaam⁴⁴², eat meat offered to Idols, commit acts of immorality.
- Guidance: Repent or face the Word of God as their judge.
- Promise (Anyone who hears): Given hidden manna & white stone with a secret name on it

THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA

The conflict here goes to the members of the church not dealing with a sinful woman who attends the church. Paul understood this when he wrote to the church at Corinth; *"What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."*⁴⁴³ Here is the same message from Christ. Sin tolerated is sin shared when it comes to allowing it in the church. The choice is clear, either they deal with Jezebel or Christ will deal with them all.

Today many churches have taken a "do not judge" stance allowing many hurtful and sinful people to remain in their churches. We cannot allow the church to become like the world, or allow the world to set the standards for the church. This weakens the local church and allows the enemy a foothold within the family of God, where he does not belong. Judging is not ignoring sin.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Jesus is called the son of God with eyes like fire. He is watching to see if the church is obedient to his instructions. Those who respond will be richly rewarded.

Revelation 2.18-29 The church at **THYATIRA**

- Church Character: The SERVING Church
- Local Situation: Jezebel is there attacking the church.
- Image of Christ: The Son of God with Eyes like fire, feet like bronze
- Strengths (Christ says “I Know”): Love, faith, endurance, now doing more than before
- Weaknesses (Complaints): Tolerate prophetess Jezebel⁴⁴⁴. Sexual immorality & idolatry because of food
- Guidance: Repent and turn away from Jezebel’s teachings. Her children will die. Hold on strong.
- Promise (Anyone who hears): Given authority to rule over nations. Will give them the morning star.

THE CHURCH AT SARDIS

The perception the church at Sardis had about itself and the truth were two different things. They had grown oblivious to their situation. They had started on the right track but had somehow lost their focus. They have the opportunity to change directions. Even if they don’t, it is evident that Christ is not going to punish the whole church for the sins of some. Those who are faithful will be rewarded. The white garments are symbolic of the rewards given to those who remain faithful. Those martyrs under the throne in the 6th chapter are each given a white robe.⁴⁴⁵ These faithful believers at Sardis will find their names written in the book of life while the others will discover finishing is just as important as starting. Salvation is not complete until the believer stands before God and hears ‘well done.’

The church had a good reputation with the local community but was not living as they should be. It is not

Last to Leave

the opinion of the local community that will determine where we spend eternity. It all comes down to being in right relationship with Christ. It is as if they were asleep spiritually. They are told to “*wake up, and strengthen the things that remain.*”

Revelation 3.1-6 The church at **SARDIS**

- Church Character: The DEAD Church
- Local Situation: Church has a good reputation in the local community.
- Image of Christ: Holds 7 spirits and 7 stars in his hand
- Strengths (Christ says “I Know”): A few have remained faithful & will be dressed in white
- Weaknesses (Complaints): Appear alive on the outside but on the inside are dead. Just like Pharisees.
- Guidance: Repent, wakeup & revive what is dying. Not living up to God’s standards.
- Promise (Anyone who hears): Dress in white, Name stays in the book of life. Will confess your name before the father.

THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA

The church at Philadelphia is one of two who received no complaint from Christ. There is before them an open door leading to eternal life. They have demonstrated their ability to obey the directions given to them by Christ. They are told to continue to live as they have in the past and they will be rewarded and protected even in difficult times that are sure to come. Even though they live where Satan has a strong foothold on the local community they are still called on to live their lives for Christ.

The church at Philadelphia was steady and always ready. They were not fooled or taken in by the surrounding world as several of the other churches had been. Even the attack of the Jewish community did not stop them from remaining faithful. They remain true to the Word of God.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Revelation 3.7-13 The church at **PHILADELPHIA**

- Church Character: The ENDURING Church
- Local Situation: Synagogue of Satan full of false Jews.
- Image of Christ: Key of David which opens the door and cannot be closed
- Strengths (Christ says “I Know”): Obeyed His word, and did not deny Him
- Weaknesses (Complaints): NOTHING
- Guidance: Hold on; you will be protected. Remember Jesus is coming quickly.
- Promise (Anyone who hears): Will be a pillar in God’s temple. Receive name of God as a personal Gift

THE CHURCH AT LAODICEA

One of the most recognizable verses from the book of Revelation was written to a church that desperately needed to repent. The church at Laodicea was financially well off and needed nothing. They had allowed their wealth to replace their reliance on Christ. Jesus tells them “*Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will dine with him, and he with Me.*”⁴⁴⁶ This call for anyone to open the door to the church shows how far the church had slipped away from Christ. He is standing outside knocking, hoping to be let into the church.

The church at Laodicea is called lukewarm. We can understand this better than they would have. Cold preserves and hot kills germs but lukewarm spoils and allows germs to grow. This church had spoiled and was rotting away. It had to respond quickly, or it would be of no use to the mission of the Kingdom of God.

There is no mention of any problems in the local community. They are just self-satisfied and self-sufficient.

Last to Leave

They do not need to pray for help because they can provide for themselves and have lost sight of their savior.

Revelation 3.14-22 The church at **LAODICEA**

- Church Character: The RICH Church
- Local Situation: NOTHING MENTIONED
- Image of Christ: The Amen, the faithful witness, the source of creation
- Strengths (Christ says “I Know”): NOTHING
- Weaknesses (Complaints): Lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, unaware of their own sinfulness
- Guidance: Repent before he spits you out of his mouth. Jesus is knocking on the door.
- Promise (Anyone who hears): Victorious, will sit with Jesus on a throne

CONCLUSION THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Many of the seven churches suffered persecution from those who lived around them. Some of it came from pagans, some from Jews and some from the government. The greatest danger was when the churches compromised and allowed worldliness or sinfulness into the church. Persecution was a sign of strength while compromising was a sign of weakness. This is a lesson the modern church has not learned and which they will answer for if changes are not made.

Ben Witherington III in his commentary on Revelation makes an excellent point on why the letters were shared openly even though they were addressed specifically to the pastors of each church.

“These churches are in effect being encouraged to read each other’s mail, even if it’s embarrassing! The issue, however, is one of accountability. In an honor-and-shame culture such as John is addressing, being shamed or embarrassed in public was a severe remedy. By airing churches’ dirty laundry, John is applying pressure to these churches, and in the rhetorical realm, effectively.”⁴⁴⁷

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Today, much like then, there appears to be no shame in the world and none in the church.

The message to the seven churches is just as relevant today as the day John received it 2,000 years ago. "One of the major functions that Revelation can serve for the Christian community today is as a warning against too much assimilation into the dominant non-Christian culture."⁴⁴⁸ The letters are personal and written not only to them but also to us today. Churches trying to fit into their community will find they are getting further and further away from Christ.

Finally, these letters are a warning that weak or compromised believers will not be able to stand against the enemy and all that is about to happen. The call to repent is also a call to prepare for all-out spiritual warfare.

THE OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS 4-22

The last 18 chapters of the book of Revelation are different in literary genre from the first three chapters. These last chapters of the revelation of Christ to John are both apocalyptic and prophetic in nature. It is apocalyptic or an unfolding of events leading up to and including the end of time. It is prophetic in that it is a message from God through a prophet or messenger, about future events. This change of tone makes the last 18 chapters a different message from those delivered to the seven churches. This message is for all believers in all ages.

A key to understanding the last 18 chapters is that it is divided into two parts. The first part is the primary revelation from the advent of Christ and the early church right up and through the end of time and the new heaven and the new earth. This covers chapters 4 through 16. This is broken down into four sections we will look at shortly.

The second part of the final 18 chapters is primarily a summary or conclusion. Chapters 17 through 22 cover the

victory of the believers with Christ and the judgment of the enemy with Satan. Many commentaries include this judgment and rewards section as part of the cycle of revelation instead of the concluding overview.

The primary revelation of chapters 4 through 16 is a series of prophecies that cover the same matters from different perspectives. These prophecies are each divided into seven distinct parts that run parallel to each other. This is called Progressive Parallelism.⁷⁴⁴⁹

THE PROCESS OF INTERPRETATION

The primary way to interpret the Book of Revelation is the internal self-interpretation provided within the text.

An example of this is found in Revelation 12.9. “*the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan.*” Within this verse, we learn that the ‘*great dragon*’ is the devil and just to be sure there is no doubt the great dragon is also identified as Satan. This form of self-interpretation is the best way to know what key images from the prophecy are. Without these key self-interpretations, we would be very much in the dark about many of the images, and some of them only leave us wondering what it means when we are told their meaning.

A second way is by gaining clues from the parallel passages. The seven seals, seven trumpets, seven angels and the seven bowls are parallel to each other. The second trumpet and the second bowl both refer to the sea and blood. There are parallels between the second, third, fourth and sixth trumpets and bowls.

A third way is by looking at images from other books in the Bible that also appear in the Book of Revelation.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Some examples of these are:⁴⁵⁰

Revelation	Other Reference	Prophetic Picture
4:2,3; 10:1-3	Ezekiel 1 22-28	rainbow around Gods throne
5:6-8	Isaiah 53:7	Christ is pictured as a Lamb
5:9-14	Psalm 96	New song
6:1-8	Zechariah 1:7-11	Colored Horses and riders
6.12; 8.5; 11.13	Isaiah 2.19-22	Earthquake
6:12	JOEL 2.28-32; Acts 2.14.21	Moon turns blood .
6:13	Mark 13.21-25	Stars falling from the sky
6.14	Isaiah 34:1-4	Sky rolled up like a scroll
6.15-17	Zephaniah 1:14-18	God's inescapable wrath
7.1	1 Thess. 5:1-3 Jeremiah 49.35-39	Four winds of judgment
9.1-2; 17.3-8	Luke 8.26-34	Abyss (bottomless pit)
9.3-11	Joel 1.2-2.11	Plague of locusts
11.1-2	Luke 21.20-24	Trampling of the holy city of Jerusalem
1-1:3-6	Zechariah 4	Two olive trees as witnesses
13:1-10	Daniel 7	A beast coming out of the sea
13:11-15	2 Thessalonians 2:7-14	Wondrous signs and miracles done by the evil beast
14:9-12	Jeremiah 25:15-29	Drinking the cup of God's wrath
18:2, 3	Isaiah 21:1-10	Babylon" Falls'
19.5-8	Matthew 22:1-14:	Wedding supper of the Lamb
20.7-10	Ezekiel 38, 39	Conflict with Gog and Magog
20.11-15	John 5.19-30	Judging of all people

Last to Leave

21.3	Ezekiel 37.21-28	God lives among humanity
21:4	Isaiah 25.1-8	Our tears will be wiped away forever,
22:1, 2	Genesis 2.8-14	Tree of life
22.3-5	1 Corinthians 13:11,12	We will see God face to face

The parallels from other portions of the scriptures may serve as hints of what we are looking at but should not be seen as always being the interpretation for the Book of Revelation.

The other key way of interpreting the Book of Revelation is the context and setting of the prophecy. This includes remembering this is a picture puzzle we are looking at and no single portion can be seen without the rest of the pieces.

There is a great danger in assigning or being too specific on matters we cannot know for sure. There are the items that are shown to us clearly as the book interprets itself, but beyond that, there is great danger in trying to make the book fit into a dispensational timetable of seven ages. This book was written as a message for all believers at all times. The end of time is not dependent upon us understanding these prophecies but upon the continued mercy and patience of God so that a few more may be saved.

My goal is to show an overview of the Book of Revelation and not to identify every image. This broad overview of the final 18 chapters is intended to allow the reader to understand the purpose and scope of the book of Revelation.

SECTION THREE THE PROPHECIES

The prophecies are about the struggle between good and evil. The enemy has been thrown down from his position of power, and he is not happy. The battle over the hearts

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

and minds of those living on the earth is shown being fought as a battle over the earth.

The prophecies are shown as four parallel storylines about events as seen from a spiritual point of view. Each prophecy cycle looks at a distinct part of how God is interacting with humanity. A key is the knowledge that God is actively involved in ongoing events and has not stepped back to merely watch. The seven seals show the power of the Word of God in dealing with the matters of daily life and spiritual battles. The seals are removed or opened by the lamb who can reveal all truth to humanity through the inspired word. The seven trumpets are blown as leaders are removed from positions of power and ongoing preparation of God for the final judgment. The seven angels are the messengers of truth and show how even now God is gathering souls into eternity. Here is the picture of the daily resurrection and judgment that precedes the final and great judgment when all remaining humanity will be judged. The seven bowls of wrath show that God is active in determining and moving against those who reject his directions and His son, Jesus. If it were not for this constant intervention humanity would completely disengage itself from God and all that is holy, much as they did before the flood in the Old Testament.

Through the seven seals, seven trumpets, seven angels (messengers), and the seven bowls God is clearly demonstrating his involvement in the daily battle between good and evil. He is engaged, protecting, and marking the followers of His son even as he is actively working through them to combat evil and free the souls of humanity. His ultimate goal is the salvation of as many as possible. Some may think him slow in responding to the growing evil, but it is as Peter wrote, "*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.*"⁴⁵¹

These four parallel sevens all end the same, with the removing of all that is evil and the eternal beginning of all

that is holy. These four parallel prophecies with their introductions must be seen as God's active involvement in the lives of humanity throughout the ages. All four prophecies start with actions in heaven that are then carried out or delivered to the earth and the lives of both believers and non-believers.

THE SEVEN SEALS CHAPTERS 4-8.1

REVELATION CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4 is the beginning of the prophecy and also the clear introduction. It is divided from the letters to the churches. "*After these things, I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."*⁴⁵² It is these things that the prophecy is about. One must be careful to see this as imagery and not as literal. The images are LIKE but, are not. It is LIKE the sound of a trumpet; LIKE a jasper stone; LIKE an emerald; LIKE a sea of glass; LIKE crystal; LIKE a lion; LIKE a calf; LIKE the face of a man and LIKE a flying eagle. The images are used to help the person visualize or understand what John saw. This process will continue for the rest of the prophecy.

John is allowed to look directly into heaven. It is here he sees perpetual worship before the throne in all its fullness. Everything focuses on the throne and the holiness of God. This shows us that all we are about to see and hear comes directly from God. "The crucial issue is *what* has happened and will happen, not *when*. The point is that it will happen according to God's plan."⁴⁵³

REVELATION CHAPTER 5

Each of the four sections opens with an introduction.⁴⁵⁴ Here, before the seven seals are opened, we are given a picture preparing who and how each seal will be opened. The book with seven seals is revealed, but there is no one

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

to open it. After a search, it is found that the Lamb can open the seals of the book. This Lamb and the one who sits on the throne are to be worshiped. The Lamb is the resurrected Jesus who is the lamb who was slain for the sins of humanity. The one who sits on the throne is God the Father.

REVELATION CHAPTER 6-8.1 THE SEVEN SEALS

This first section is full of images that bind together to form a picture. There is no way to show the meaning of every image. There are only those images which are self-interpreted by the text that we can know for certain. All the rest are images telling a story. Separately they can mean almost anything, but together they are a story of the struggle between good and evil.

- Seal One: Revelation 6.1-2 A white horse with a conquering rider.
- Seal Two: Revelation 6.3-4 A red horse with a rider who removes peace from the earth and has a sword.
- Seal Three: Revelation 6.5-6 A black horse with a pair of scales in his hands.
- Seal Four: Revelation 6.7-8 An ashen (pale green) horse who was named death.
- Seal Five: Revelation 6.9-11 The martyrs under the throne cry out for justice.
- Seal Six: Revelation: 6.12 thru 7.17 The day of God's wrath arrives. This vision also includes a picture of all the saved. There are the 144,000 from the Old Testament tribes, and there is the great multitude which no one could count from every nation representing all those to be saved in the New Testament.
- Seal Seven: Revelation: 8.1 There is silence in heaven for half an hour.

This first series of seals set the stage and the basic pattern that will be repeated three more times. Each one is an incomplete picture, but together there is the flow of events that lead from the first-century church to the end of times.

Last to Leave

The sixth of each series is the setting for the final conflict before the end of time. Here the sixth seal is about those who are waiting with Christ in heaven. When the seventh seal is opened, there is silence in heaven. It is this moment they have waited for, and now that it arrives they are all unable to speak.

The 144,000 represent all the saved from Abraham up to the resurrection of Christ. These are represented by 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The zeroes represent completion and perfection. The 144,000 are also shown in chapter 14.1-4. The reference here is actually after the one in the 14th chapter.⁴⁵⁵ Here it is followed by “*a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues.*”⁴⁵⁶ Now in heaven, there are many being added to the faithful who have accepted Jesus after His resurrection and the establishment of the Church. Many more will enter heaven due to the resurrection and the spread of the gospel than ever came through the covenant of the Old Testament. As these new ones arrive, they also gather around to be with Jesus and wait for the end of time.

REVELATION CHAPTER 8.2 THROUGH 11.19 SEVEN TRUMPETS

There is a brief introduction to the next series in Revelation 8.2-6. Here is a picture every believer should see and hold on to. Incense smoke is rising from the altar before God mixed with the prayers of the saints. “God gathers our cries and our praises, our petitions, and intercessions, and uses them.”⁴⁵⁷ Every prayer that is prayed rises in this way before God as a sweet smell he enjoys and looks forward to. In response, God fills the censer with the fire from his altar and pours it out upon the earth to answer the prayers of his followers. These hot coals clean the saints and remove the evil from around them. Here is a picture of our daily prayers being answered by God. Here in heaven is found the lost Ark of the Covenant. It has disappeared on earth when captured

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

by the enemies but now appears in heaven with its precious cargo.⁴⁵⁸

Then the seven trumpets sound one at a time. “Trumpets are especially associated as warning instruments in a war situation, whether calling for attack or retreat or just alerting (cf. Judg. 3.27ff., 7.8 ff.; Neh. 4.18 and especially Joel 2.1).”⁴⁵⁹

- *Trumpet One*: Revelation 8.7 Hail, fire and blood pour out upon the earth followed by great disasters.
- *Trumpet Two*: Revelation 8.8-9 Great disasters come upon the sea, sea creatures and ships.
- *Trumpet Three*: Revelation 8.10-11 Waters are made bitter from a star named Wormwood, and many people die. Wormwood means bitter or sour.
- *Trumpet Four*: Revelation 8.12-13 One-third of everything in the sky is darkened.⁴⁶⁰ This is followed by a warning that the next three trumpets will bring more destruction. (Remember that such images of sun, moon, and stars being affected are prophetic language dealing with those in authority being punished or losing their power.⁴⁶¹)
- *Trumpet Five*: Revelation 9.1-12 A star (person) falls and opens the bottomless pit. A swarm of locust-like creatures swarms the earth and do great harm following their leader Abaddon⁴⁶² a.k.a. Apollyon. The writer states the first woe is past, and two are to come. Only one more of these woes are mentioned and what the woes are is not stated.
- *Trumpet Six*: Revelation 9.13 through 11.14 This is a long section that is filled with images of the final conflict between good and evil. This image is the enemy preparing all his forces for battle against God’s servants. The number 200 million is vast beyond the minds of those in the first century. This number represents all the forces of evil, both physical and spiritual, joined together to fight for their master. There is a book that is sweet to eat and sour in the stomach. Here there are images of times that overlap and reinforce but which no one

Last to Leave

really understands. Forty-two months (11.2), twelve hundred sixty days (11.3), and three and a half days (11.9,11). There are the death and resurrection of the two witnesses followed by their going up to heaven. The image is one of chaos and crisis after crisis. Here the second woe is mentioned but not described, and the third is never referred to.

- *Trumpet Seven:* Revelation 11.15-19 Suddenly the chaos ends. The eternal reign of Jesus has started. There are praise and thanks. The dead are judged, and rewards are given to the faithful saints and bond-servants. Heaven opens, and the ark of His covenant appears in His temple. This is followed by thunder, earthquake and a great hailstorm.

The pattern is the same. There is a great conflict where those in positions of power are thrown down. In losing their positions, they hurt as many others as they can. This is represented by the harm to the land and the sea. These are evil people who, even in defeat, strikeout to hurt and reject God.

The sixth and seven trumpets are much like the sixth and seventh seal. There are a great battle and conflict where the enemy makes one last attempt to overpower God and his servants but, when God can stand it no longer, He calls time to a close. Then the results are simple. The wicked are punished, and the righteous are rewarded.

REVELATION CHAPTER 12.1 through 14.19 THE SEVEN ANGELS

INTRODUCTION: Revelation 12.1-14.5

Most commentaries⁴⁶³ see this not as an introduction but as part of the prophecy itself. It should be noted that the four prophetic sections are all divided into seven sections and are at least partially numbered by the writer. Each of these prophetic section starts with an introduction. Even as the four Gospels take a slightly different point of view,

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

the four introductions and their following prophecies take different points of view. Three (Mathew, Mark, and Luke) of the four gospels overlap a great deal while the last (John) seems almost to stand alone. In the Book of Revelation, the last three sets of four overlap and the first one stands alone.

Here in this section is the longest introduction (12.1 through 14.5). It is longer than the series of seven angels it precedes. This introduction is not a prophecy about the future; instead it is a series of pictures about the past leading up to the prophecies that will follow when the seven angels again return. This introduction is divided into seven parts which tell a story about the spiritual struggle that took place between Satan and God. The time frame is from the preparation for the birth of Christ to his ascension after His death on the cross. Many commentaries try to make this introduction one of the sections of prophecy running parallel to the others. This is a mistake. This is the introduction and is a look back at what has lead up to the prophecies themselves.

Even though it has seven parts, they are not numbered and are not delivered as the prophecies are by seven angels. It is the prehistory to the prophecies and a critical picture leading up to their presentation. Much like Stephen as he stood before the council in Acts 6-8 is this section of Revelation. Stephen repeated the history of Israel starting with the calling of Abraham. Each step of the way he called their attention to the most important events, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, the tabernacle. These were all well known to those he was preaching to. I believe the images presented here would have been obvious to the readers of John in the first century. A reminder here: this is written to seven churches in Asia Minor. Many commentators act like this was written to the whole world. God intended it for us but sent it to them first, and in language, they would understand. Here John, in this prehistory to the prophecies, moves from Israel and the birth of Christ through the struggle of his childhood, his ministry and struggle against the Devil and finally his

resurrections and victory as he watches over the churches with the saints from the Old Testament gathered around him.

This section contains some of the key (and often misinterpreted) scriptures concerning heaven. Remembering that there are three heavens and that each one must be identified from the context is important. Each of these will be mentioned in the section. The first heaven is the created sky. The second heaven is the place of prophetic language representing power and authority. The third heaven is where God's throne is at and where no evil can enter.

Israel and the Birth of Christ: Revelation 12.1-2

“A *great* sign appeared in heaven⁴⁶⁴.” This is the second heaven, and it shows the importance of Israel at this point in history as far as spiritual matters go. This is a picture not of Mary the mother of Jesus but Israel through who the promise of Jesus came forward. The key to the existence of Israel is not the thousands who followed but the one who would come from this group to save all who called on his name. “*Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.*”⁴⁶⁵ This is the picture here where the twelve stars represent the 12 tribes, the woman is Israel, and the male Child is Christ who is born in very troubling and difficult times. Christ is the promised ‘seed’ of Abraham.

Satan the Great Red Dragon: Revelation 12.3-4

“*Then another sign appeared in heaven.*”⁴⁶⁶ The dragon is clearly identified in the book of Revelation as the serpent, the devil and Satan.⁴⁶⁷ This self-interpretation is vital to understanding this section. Satan is challenging for the position of power and authority over the earth. This is why the term ‘heaven’ is used here. He attacks the church and when it says his tail swept away one-third of the stars it is using the picture of the dragon to tell us that a large

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

number of people in positions of power lost their status in this struggle as Satan tried to make sure Christ was not born. The stars represent officials and leaders Satan dealt with preparing to destroy the Christ Child. He even had Herod try and kill Jesus as a baby by murdering all the males born in the area within a two year period.⁴⁶⁸

The tiny nation of Israel was suffering under the Roman government. Satan used this oppressive government to try and destroy Israel and to kill the baby, Jesus.

The Male Child: Revelation 12.5-6

This child is Jesus. His raising to heaven in this section does not mean he left earth but symbolizes his ascending to a position of power and authority. This was evident in his healing and miracles. *“When the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.”*⁴⁶⁹ Even when he taught this was evident, *“He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.”*^{470, 471}

Michael and His Angels: Revelation 12.7-17

This section is of spiritual warfare. The heaven mentioned here is the second heaven, the place of symbolic power and authority. The Dragon is Satan and Michael, and the angels represent those aligned with Christ Jesus. This war takes place not before time begins or at the end of time but right at the beginning of the first century. What is described in verses 12.7-9 where the devil is thrown down is recorded in the gospels. In Luke, the 10th chapter Jesus sends out his disciples in groups of two to go out to towns and get everything ready for his trip through the region. These seventy disciples return filled with joy and report to Jesus, saying, *“Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.”*⁴⁷² His response is vital to this section of the Book of Revelation and is often misunderstood. Jesus responded to their joy about demons being subject to his disciples by saying, *“I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.”*⁴⁷³ As covered earlier in this book in great

Last to Leave

detail this is the second heaven. When the disciples were able to cast out demons, it was because Satan had lost his hold over this world and lost his position of power and authority. The event was almost insignificant when it happened, and Jesus spoke, but was of great importance in eternity and Kingdom warfare. Robert Mulholland paints a perfect picture of this event.

“At a certain point in many chess games, the one who ultimately wins make a move that sets the mating net. That is, from that point on the outcome of the game is a foregone conclusion. There may be as many as ten or fifteen or even more moves left before the final checkmate move that seals the victory. During these endgames moves the loser is still playing the game, still capturing pieces from the winner. But inexorably, unavoidably, finally, the winner makes the checkmate move, and the loser is defeated. . . Often the move that sets the mating net is costly, a sacrificial move that lures the loser into a trap. The winner may sacrifice the most valuable piece in the game, appearing to ensure defeat.”⁴⁷⁴

Jesus moved his pawns, disciples, out onto the playing field against the pawns of the enemy. It was a strategic move that caused Satan’s fall. Jesus’ death on the cross was a follow-up to this. On the cross, he paid the price for the sins of all who will accept it, and with the resurrection, he conquered the last barrier, death. The game goes on but with only one possible outcome. That is what the book of Revelation is about. These are the last moves taken on both sides. Jesus takes the last move in each of the four series of prophecies, and the outcome is always the same. Jesus wins, and Satan is finished and loses.

“Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.” This declaration of the Kingdom happened at the last supper and was fulfilled the next day. Three of the Gospels record that Jesus said it as he reclined at the last supper. *“I will*

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."⁴⁷⁵ It was the next day when he hung on the cross when he cried out in thirst. "A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit."⁴⁷⁶ Christ steps from the cross of shame and suffering into the throne room of God where he assumes the position of Lord of Lords and King of Kings over the Kingdom of God. It is because of this the writer of Revelation says we have a reason to rejoice.

There is also a warning that even as we see this happening Satan may be down but he is not out. "Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."⁴⁷⁷ Satan has attacked Israel and the church ever since. He knows hell has been created for him, but he has not accepted what is coming and is fighting to try and control the earth. The dragon, Satan, "*went off to make war with the rest of her children.*"⁴⁷⁸ He continues this battle to this day and will to the end of time. All believers in Christ are well aware of him and how much he hates them. He also hates the Jews for being the instrument that God used to bring Christ into the world.⁴⁷⁹

The Beast From the Sea: Revelation 13.1-10

Even as the dragon, Satan himself, has lost his position of power and authority he is not through. His plans are always to find another way to deceive the world, punish all who oppose him and to persecute the followers of God. Here is a beast coming up out of the sea. The seven heads, with ten crowns and the different parts from different animals, are right out of the Old Testament prophecies. In the Old Testament, these animals represented nations. Here they are a mix or variety of physical nations and spiritual nature. The primary reason this beast exists is "*to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and*

Last to Leave

authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.”⁴⁸⁰

There is among apocalypse interpreters a common desire to label each of the heads and horns. This is complicated by those who want to move the prophecy to their current time and setting and to label each head and horn using current nations and rulers. This would allow them to prove they are living in the last days. Often the beasts of Daniel are referred to as a parallel proof and foundation for this. The problem is the time stamps within the text itself do not support such interpretations. In the Judgment section of Revelation 17, it clearly says the seven heads are seven kings; “*five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come.*”⁴⁸¹ This self-interpretation places these kings in the first century at the time of John and not in the 21st century. Those who do put it in the first century all look to Rome and the emperors as the ones represented as the heads or kings. No one can make them line up to match the timestamp without stretching it somewhere. I, instead, contend since it was written originally to the seven churches of Asia Minor one should look there for the rulers the prophecy refers to. They would have easily understood and been able to apply it to their local situation. In any case, this long introduction has a time stamp that places it squarely at the end of the first century. We do not have to know what each head represents to know they represent evil who wanted to destroy the church.

The Beast from the Earth: Revelation 13.11-18

Here is the false Christ, the beast that looks like a lamb but with two horns and speaking like the dragon. This is a religion that looks like the real thing but which preaches a gospel of salvation through works and says there are many ways to God.

As shown earlier in the book this 2nd beast with the number 666 represents all false religions. These are the

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

false church, the cults, and the pagan religions, all which are created by man and which serve their master Satan.

This is a glimpse of the battle that extends past the first century to the end of time.

The Lamb on Mount Zion: Revelation 14.1-5

The vision of Christ has greatly changed in this introduction to the third set of seven presented in the book of Revelation. At the beginning he was the “*male child*,”⁴⁸² but now he is “*the Lamb... standing on Mount Zion*.”⁴⁸³ Surrounding Him 144,000 gathers him in the third heaven where God’s throne is. These 144,000 are not the only ones in heaven. Twelve times twelve is a complete number which represents all those from the Old Testament who have waited in faith for his resurrection. This same 144,000 are mentioned in chapter seven where it is followed by the declaration, “*I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb*.”⁴⁸⁴

At the beginning, he was running and hiding. Now he has brought Satan down to earth and Jesus the Lamb of God is standing in Heaven surrounded by those who worship him. This is the picture of Christ across the ages for all time. He has conquered death and set the example for all who follow him. As each saint or believer from the New Testament period or covenant of Grace comes forward, the numbers swell around the 144,000 which represents all those from the Old Testament who had a place in heaven. This number is symbolic and does not limit the number from the Old Testament before the resurrection of Christ. Included in the 144,000 would be Abraham, Moses, David, and John the Baptist. These are the “*first fruits to God and to the Lamb*.”⁴⁸⁵ The harvest continued, and the final harvest will be when God calls time to an end. One of the first to join them and begin to create the number no one could count would be Stephen.

THE SEVEN ANGELS

Following this long introduction, there is a brief description of seven angels. We can put them in place because the second and third angels are labeled in the prophecy. The angels are referred to as ‘another angel’ in six of the seven instances with one of them appearing twice in the list. The third angel of this group lines up with the third angel of the angels with the seven bowls. Here it calls for “*the perseverance of the saints*”⁴⁸⁶ while the third bowl says “*they poured out the blood of saints and prophets*”⁴⁸⁷. The seventh angel here lines up with the seventh angel from the seven bowls. The seventh bowl references “*the wine of His fierce wrath*,”⁴⁸⁸ while the seventh angel here speaks of “*the great winepress of the wrath of God*.”⁴⁸⁹ These similar references help show the progressive parallelism of the text.

Again there is the strong reference to the conflict in the sixth cycle and the judgment and finishing off everything in the seventh cycle of the angels.

- Angel One: Revelation 14.6-7 The first angel brings the gospel for all nations and a call to fear God before his judgment arrives.
- Angel Two: Revelation 14.8 The message here is of the defeat of Babylon. Babylon represents the immoral world and the rejection of God. This angel is called the ‘second one,’ placing it in order in a cycle of seven.
- Angel Three: Revelation 14.9-13 Here the angel is referred to as ‘a third one.’ This helps solidify the position of this prophecy in line with the other three.

The binding of Satan shows the power of Christ and the need to protect his church and people for some time. One thousand is a complete number in prophecy. It may mean a literal thousand years, or it may be merely symbolic. The release of Satan is to prepare for the final judgment of God. He does not return to full power or replace Christ. Much like

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

in a chess match it is only a matter of getting everything in place before God calls time to an end. There is a warning of the punishment of those who have the mark of the beast. This mark is not required. The Saints have the choice to refuse the mark of the beast and stay on God's side.⁴⁹⁰ This mark has been described in a variety of ways. People have seen it in social security numbers, computer chips, in credit cards and even literal marking. It is none of these. It is a spiritual marking and represents the person's allegiance. A Christian is marked with the blood of Christ, and a non-believer is marked with their sins and disobedience to Christ.

The perseverance of the saints shows that they are always under attack in all ages and must always be vigilant.

- Angel Four: Revelation 14.14-16 The angels reaping have a double meaning. First, both the righteous and unrighteous are gathered over all ages and not just at the end of time. Second, God has not lost control of the world, and his angels still gather godly and ungodly from the world. No one escapes them. Satan is defeated and is only fighting a losing battle.
- Angel Five: Revelation 14.17 God's angels are always ready for the final call to reap the harvest when the end of time is called.
- Angel Six: Revelation 14.18 This angel states the obvious about the coming judgment. It will come at a time that all in heaven see as obvious, even as the harvest of grapes is clear to the vinedresser. The time of Judgment will come. Even though the final call will come from God himself, everyone and all the angels will be ready for the great harvest of the souls of half of all who have ever lived.⁴⁹¹
- Angel Seven: Revelation 14.19-20 This is a picture of the final judgment. No one will escape, and all the unrighteous will pay dearly. This is a picture of a conquering Lord and will not literally take place.

It appears that the seventh angel is the fifth one who has been waiting for the final harvest.

REVELATION CHAPTER 15.1 through 16.21 THE SEVEN BOWLS

INTRODUCTION: Revelation 15.1 through 16.1

The introduction of the final section of sevens shows the change from the angels who are sent to reap to those who are sent to pour out the wrath of God. Praise and glory are proclaimed in heaven as the seven angels with the seven bowls prepare to pour them out upon the earth. This shows God's response to the wickedness of man over the ages. These seven bowls of wrath of "Revelation 15 means that John believes God's chastisements are intended to lead the lost to salvation and that God takes no satisfaction that some of the lost will remain lost."⁴⁹²

Seven Bowls of Wrath Revelation 16.2 through 21

The seven bowls run parallel to the other three cycles of seven. There are direct parallels between the seven bowls and the seven trumpets. There are "parallels between the judgments of the seven trumpets and those of the seven cups. Both sets of visions are based on Exod. 7 and 9. In both sets of judgments, the following things are affected in the same order: (1) the earth; (2) the sea; (3) the rivers and fountains; (4) the sun; (5) the darkness comes and torments humankind; (6) judgment comes from beyond the Euphrates; and (7) loud voices in heaven, lightning, thunder, earthquake, and hail climax the series of disasters."^{493, 494} These parallel prophecies tie them together and show the continuity of the book of Revelation.

- Bowl One: Revelation 16.2 God's wrath is reserved for those who have rejected his son and aligned themselves with his enemies.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

- *Bowl Two*: Revelation 16.3 The water turning to blood is symbolic of God working to force people to make a choice. He used it against Pharaoh in Egypt. This is not turning the water to blood but symbolic of God putting pressure on humanity.
- *Bowl Three*: Revelation 16.4-7 This warning of God's power continues. Then an angel or messenger proclaims the justice of God in dealing with such evil people.
- *Bowl Four*: Revelation 16.8-9 The hardness of the hearts of humans who have rejected God is shown here. Much like Pharaoh in the Old Testament, they refuse to recognize the power of God even when it is right in front of them. Instead of calling to God for help they curse his name and blame him for their sinful lives and the consequences for their rejection of Him.
- *Bowl Five*: Revelation 16.10-11 The enemy only thinks he is in charge. God has the power to take away his light. Instead of turning to God they grow angrier and blame him whenever something goes wrong in their lives.
- *Bowl Six*: Revelation 16.12-16 Covered earlier in the book in great detail is this referring to the three forms of Religion that Satan has created to replace the true church and fool humanity. The dragon represents the pagan religion. The beast represents the false church, and the false prophet represents the cults. Also covered earlier in the book, the battle of Armageddon is the battle that is never fought. The enemy gathered together to go against the church, but God has had enough at this point. The battle of Har-Magedon does not take place. When the enemy has gathered his forces to come against the church at the mountain that cuts, God calls it all to an end.
- *Bowl Seven*: Revelation 16.17-21 This is the final cycle of seven. Here it is appropriate that a loud voice declares "*It is done!*"⁴⁹⁵ This is the message of the seventh seal, the seventh trumpet, the seventh angel and the seventh bowl. This is why there is

Last to Leave

silence in heaven for half an hour. This is the beginning of the reign of Christ. This is the judgment of all of humanity, and all evil and wrong have come to an end. God pours out rewards and punishment even as Christ has said. Jesus has clearly stated, the wicked “*will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.*”⁴⁹⁶

JUDGMENT & REWARDS: REV. 17.1 THRU REV. 22.21

OVERVIEW OF FINAL CHAPTERS

With the outline used here, these last chapters are all about judgment and rewards. After all that has transpired, the prophecy makes sure that all are aware of what is coming for those who fight against God and his servants. It also shows the rewards that await the faithful who have remained true to their call.

OUTLINE

- Chapter 17: JUDGMENT upon the great prostitute who represents all the religions of man (666)
- Chapter 18: JUDGMENT upon Babylon who represents all the wickedness man has committed.
- Chapter 19: CELEBRATION in heaven and JUDGMENT upon the wicked on earth.
- Chapter 20: Satan’s final struggle, Satan’s final defeat, FINAL ETERNAL JUDGMENT.
- Chapter 21-22: Revealing the coming New Heaven & New Earth, Final warnings about the coming JUDGMENT.

These chapters are not chronological but parallel. Giblin says that “in terms of clock-and-calendar time, of course, the end of Babylon and all other adversaries will take place simultaneously in an instant.”⁴⁹⁷ The end of time and judgment are the same for everyone. Each chapter is telling us how each one is rewarded or punished according to the justice of God. Some contain more information about the events leading up to the end, but they are all

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

about summing up what happens to each and how God settles accounts.

CHAPTER 17: Judgment upon the Great Prostitute who represents all the religions of man (666).

The last chapters are about what happens to all the evil and all the good when God decided to call it all to an end. Even as the section opens, the angel declares “*Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters.*”⁴⁹⁸ This punishment of Babylon is set forward in striking language here.

Then there is a revealing that has only clouded the waters of prophecy more. There are a series of prophetic pictures that are revealed.

- Seven heads = seven mountains (Some have seen this as the Seven Hills of Rome)
- Seven heads = seven kings, five fallen, one now, one to come (Just when is the ‘now’ being referred to here? That would put this prophecy into a time frame. This is about judgment at the end of time.)
- The Beast = one of the seven but also an eighth
- Ten Horns = ten kings who have not yet come

The key here is that this is about judgment at the end of time and is showing who is being judged. Commentators disagree sharply over the understanding of these. It may be that they were plain to those of the first century and may never make any sense to anyone else, ever.

The second half of this chapter is about the victory of the Lamb. The Lamb is “*Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.*”⁴⁹⁹

The contrast of the chapter sets the stage for this final section of the book of Revelation. There is the judgment of evil and the rewarding of the faithful. There is a picture of final things. The entire book has pointed toward these last

chapters. All the conflict and turmoil are coming to a close. Everyone will finally enter into either eternal rewards or eternal punishment.⁵⁰⁰

CHAPTER 18: Judgment upon Babylon who represents all the wickedness man has committed.

The end of the world will bring a complete judgment upon the wickedness of man. No one will escape no matter how powerful they thought they were. This picture is about how terrible the loss will be to those who have placed all their hopes in earthly wealth and power. The reason for the punishment is that Babylon and all that it represents has shed "*the blood of prophets and saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.*"⁵⁰¹ Finally, the answer to those under the throne who had cried out "*How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?*"⁵⁰² How long is no longer a question? How long is now and how long is forever. Forever will be how long the saints will live with God and forever will be how long the children and merchants of Babylon suffer punishment.

CHAPTER 19: A great celebration in Heaven and Judgment upon the wicked on earth.

The contrast is striking between chapter 18 and 19. Chapter 18 is about the fallen. Chapter 19 opens where the cry in heaven is Hallelujah. There is a picture of a marriage about to take place in heaven. This marriage and the feast brings the bride of Christ, the church, into heaven.

This is followed by a vision of the victorious and conquering Christ riding a white horse. The end is declared, and all evil is defeated.

CHAPTER 20: Satan's final defeat

This is an overview of the struggle that will take place and the outcome at the end of time. The picture of Satan being

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

bound shows the power of Christ over the enemy. This is the same power he gave to his disciples that allowed them to cast out demons and heal the sick.

There will be a final struggle when Satan will gather his forces and come against all of God's people on earth. All evil will join together against the church, but there will be no final battle. "*It is finished*" is a declaration that God and His son have had enough. There will be only judgment and rewards. Here we find the fulfillment of Peter's proclamation "*that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*"⁵⁰³ There is the opening of books and the lake of fire waiting for those who failed in life to bow and submit to Christ.

CHAPTERS 21-22: Everything new

Here at the end of the book of Revelation is the new beginning where there are the new heaven and the new earth.⁵⁰⁴ There is the New Jerusalem⁵⁰⁵ and the revealing of Christ as the third temple of God in heaven forever.⁵⁰⁶ Finally, the tree of life is restored to all of those who have been faithful.⁵⁰⁷ God has made everything right and has restored order. Sin has been dealt with.

Heaven is revealed where the water of life flows and the tree of life "*yielding its fruit every month,*" and all those marked in Christ will live forever.⁵⁰⁸

Then three times Christ declares to the believers that He is coming quickly.⁵⁰⁹

SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The pictures are striking. There are dragons, beast, angels, and seas turned to blood, hailstorms, seals being opened and trumpets blast. There are even seven thunders that sound but John is not allowed to write any of that down. In the end, the message is always the same.

Last to Leave

God wins, and everyone with God's son also wins. Everyone else, no matter how powerful they were, will lose. That includes Satan. He will face his judgment along with his servants and together discover eternity in the lake of fire.

The complexity of the book of Revelation cannot be overstated. There are ties to Old Testament text and images. There are the intricate details of a master who knows no one will really understand but must put them in, or it will not be complete. There are the parallel prophecies that tell us more than we will ever understand. There are the sevens upon sevens everywhere. Each one is a study in themselves. Like the seven beatitudes or promised blessings. Rev. 1.3; 14.13; 16.15; 19.9; 20.6; 22.7; 22.14. The images are striking and overpowering. They have been the speculation of writers and students of the Word since the book first appeared. There are those who take the book literally and those who see it as only images that illustrate the battle between good and evil. Somewhere in between, I think, there is the truth of the book.

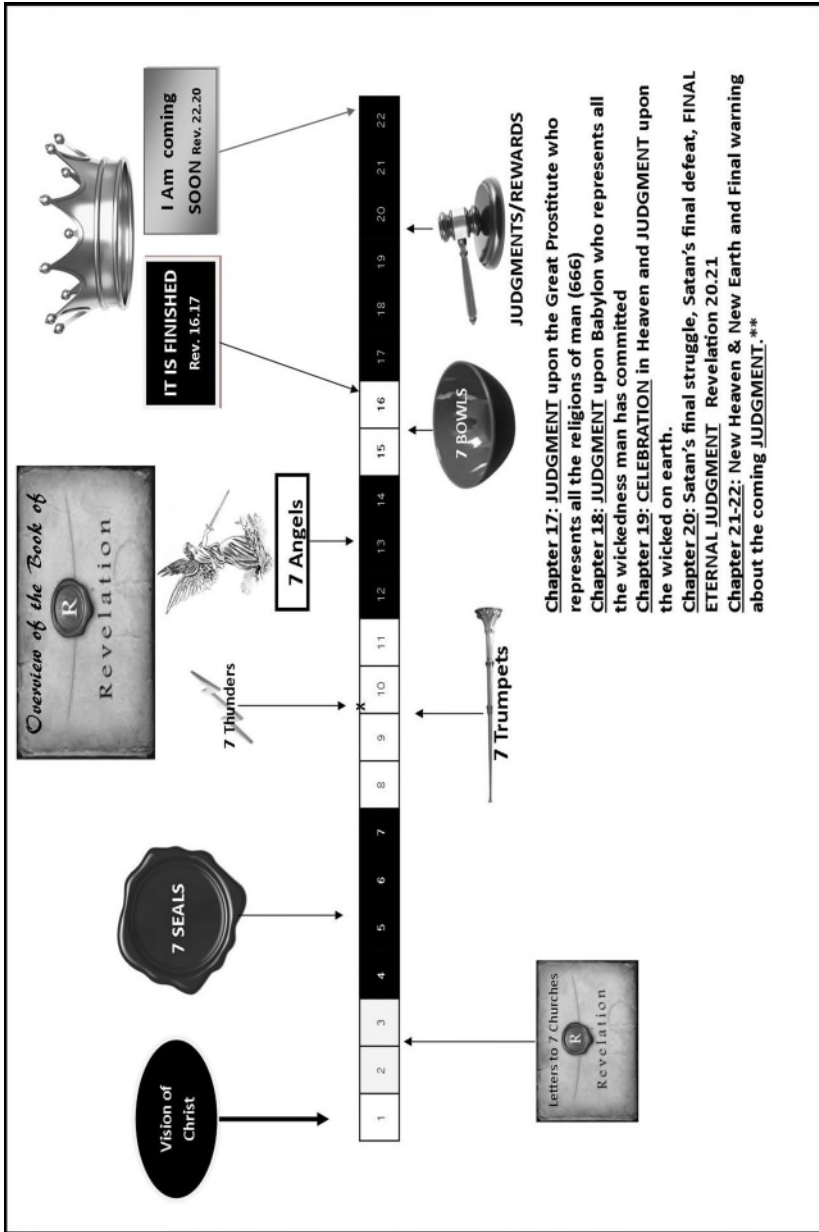
All believers will gather for a wedding and a feast like none before. The message of the book of revelation is we win! It is what Jesus is saying when he cries out above the sound of all the sins of earth and says, "*It is finished.*" Sin is finished, and we win. You don't need to understand all the images; in fact, no one does. What you need to see is that we win, forever.

Please come quickly, Lord Jesus.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

KEY POINTS:

- The book is divided into four key sections
 - Introduction: Vision of Christ
 - 7 Letters to the pastors of the churches
 - The 4 parallel prophecies: 7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 angels, & 7 bowls.
 - The parallel conclusions covering Judgment and rewards which last forever.
- The key message of the Book of Revelation is
 - We Win, We Win, We Win!



THIS CHART DOES NOT SHOW THE PARALLEL PROPHECIES OR PARALLEL CONCLUSIONS. IT MERELY SHOWS THE WRITTEN PROGRESSION OF THE BOOK. THE FLOW CHART AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CHAPTER ILLUSTRATES THE PROGRESSIVE PARALLELISM IN THE PROPHECIES.

The Satan Mess

In the chapter on Milton, I stated that the Bible does not tell us where Satan came from. I know there are those who want to yell at me and tell me otherwise. I will go through the scriptures and look at the ones used to prove something that is not there. This proof of theirs is what I have already referred to as blender theology. John Milton used it to write his fiction book, Paradise Lost. If we look at the scriptures one at a time, we will find that they do not say what Milton wrote. We will also discover that much of what has been taught is not in the Word of God. This brief study is designed to clear up some Biblical misconceptions about Satan and his servants and messengers.

I have placed this here, at the end of the book, because after the other studies you will have covered key materials you needed to understand the Satan Mess. It is important to remember that by using the four rules of interpretation you will find what the Bible says and will be able to overcome some very bad theology. The other key is knowing there are three heavens in scripture and how to recognize them or tell them apart.

Tracing Satan's heritage in Scripture

This study was originally written for a friend who had questions and needed it for himself and family members. The greatest problem in putting this together is not the Biblical materials and explaining them clearly, but getting past teachings and beliefs that are not Biblical but are widely held and taught. Your first task will be to approach these materials with an open mind.

This is the story of a puzzle put together poorly. It is as if several puzzles were poured onto the floor and then pieces were selected from the pile to make a new puzzle. Then the pieces that did not fit were discarded, and the new puzzle

was declared the one intended from the beginning.

First, let me outline the popular and widely held beliefs about Satan and his angels. It goes something like this: *Satan was the most beautiful angel in heaven who rose up against God with a group of angels who followed him. Satan then was thrown out of heaven with his followers and came to earth where he has fought against God ever since.*

Now I believe that the foundation of all Christian beliefs is the Bible. That also means if a belief is contrary to what is in the Bible, the Bible is right, and the belief must be discarded. We will examine what the Bible actually says, and we will look at where all the modern beliefs got their start. You may be really surprised.

First things first: There are four basic rules for Biblical interpretation that we will use and are reviewed here.

1. **Nothing out of context:** Each verse, saying, and event in the Bible is part of the larger and surrounding scripture and cannot be lifted out of its intended context.
2. **Scripture interprets scripture:** The Bible is a divinely inspired book. God has placed within the text of the sixty-six books the basic understanding and interpretation necessary for us to know what the author intended for us to know. We have to allow the Word of God to interpret the Word of God.
3. **The simple explains the hard:** There are parts of scripture that explain other parts. This allows us to understand the Word of God and to piece together the picture God has always wanted us to see.
4. **Jesus is Boss:** Jesus Christ is the final authority on any subject he spoke about. New Testament grace supersedes Old Law for the Christian.

We will begin this study by looking back at two key historical, literary events that have shaped the theological understanding and teachings concerning Satan and his

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

angels. The first of these literary events took place in 1611; the second took place in 1667.

We need to trace the translation of the Bible if we are to understand where one of our misconceptions about Satan came from. This brief timeline will help us:

- 500 B.C. Hebrew Texts of the Old Testament are completed
- 100 A.D. Greek texts of the New Testament are completed
- 390 A.D. Jerome's LATIN Vulgate translation is produced
- 600 A.D. LATIN is the only language allowed for scripture
- 1384 A.D. Wycliffe produces the first complete copy of Bible in English language from the LATIN (a few dozen copies were handwritten)
- 1455 A.D. Gutenberg prints first Bibles in LATIN
- 1526-1560 The Bible is printed in limited numbers in English. It is translated mostly from the LATIN bible or inferior Greek text.
- 1568 The Bishops Bible is printed in England
- 1611 The King James Bible is printed; it is merely a revision of the Bishops Bible.

The Bible was produced only in LATIN for over 1200 years. Even when it was translated into other languages in the 16th and 17th century, it was mostly translated from the LATIN Bible texts. This is more important than you might imagine. One of the ways some words came over to the English was by transliteration. This is the way a word moves from one language to another and sounds the same in both languages.

A modern example of this is the word, Airport. It is a word that is understood in almost all languages. Instead of translating the word it moves from English to other languages like Spanish and sounds the same. We will look at this again later on, but first, we need to look at the first literary work.

The King James Bible

First published in 1611, in what at the time was the common yet proper English language, this Bible became the staple of most English speaking Christians until the 20th century when modern language Bibles began to proliferate. Written without the aid of many ancient texts that were discovered after 1611 it is mostly an upgraded copy of the 1568 Bishops Bible. It contains some minor textural translation errors and more importantly has two striking language problems. Some words were not translated but were transliterated. This occurred as part of a two-step process that took over 1500 years.

The original text in Hebrew and Greek were translated into LATIN. Then much later they were translated from LATIN to ENGLISH. Some of the words were not translated but were transliterated from the LATIN to the ENGLISH. We will look at a word that was transliterated when we examine Isaiah 14.12 and see how important this can be to our understanding.

The second is that the meaning of words from 1611 in the English language is used differently in modern English. This has caused some words of 1611 that were in common English language usage then, to need translating if they are to be understood today. (NOTE: many of these words have now become so “religious” that they are still used in the modern translations instead of being put into common modern language. Examples of such words are; righteousness; justification; sanctification; and the list goes on.)

The King James Bible gained rapid acceptance and was the basis for the writings of John Milton and his book *Paradise Lost* which was first published in 1667. We will examine several key texts from this book by Milton and compare it to what the scriptures say.

Milton's Paradise Lost

This is the second literary event we need to look at if we are going to understand what is Biblical and what is not surrounding Satan and his angels. Published in 1667 by John Milton, this poem is written in 10,000 lines of Blank verse. The story is about the fall of Adam and Eve as they lost their place in the paradise prepared for them by God. It is a mix of Biblical facts, the Bible misinterpreted, and the fantasies of John Milton. It is a work of pure 'fiction.' That means it is not based upon facts. In the poem, Milton sees Satan, who he calls Lucifer, as a sympathetic character who has been misunderstood. Satan rebels against God is thrown out of heaven along with all the angels that followed him and goes on to upset God's plans by tempting Eve and then Adam into sinning by disobeying God.

The Biblical fact that Milton did get right is that Satan did get Eve and Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit resulting in their being thrown out of the Garden of Eden.

The Biblical facts he got wrong are many. We shall look at just a couple of them to help us understand how this has affected the doctrines of the church over the three hundred plus years.

Milton calls the Garden of Eden "Paradise." This is contrary to scripture. Paradise is only mentioned three times in scripture. All three times are in the New Testament and all three times are in reference to Heaven and not the Garden of Eden.

1. Luke 23.43 Jesus says the thief who believed in Jesus as the savior would be transported that day to live in Paradise.
2. 2 Corinthians 12.1-4 Paul speaks (in verses 2 & 4) of being caught up to the third heaven which he calls Paradise.

3. Revelation 2.7 Writing to the church at Ephesus
John refers to the place where believers will go to eat of the tree of life "*in the Paradise of God.*" This may have been where Milton got the idea that paradise was the Garden of Eden. The truth is that the tree of life now grows in heaven and eternal life is only obtainable through faith in Jesus.

SUMMARY: MILTON WAS WRONG ABOUT WHERE PARADISE WAS/IS. HE HAD IT AS THE GARDEN OF EDEN WHEN IN TRUTH PARADISE IS THE HEAVEN WHERE GOD LIVES AND WHERE BELIEVERS IN JESUS GO TO SPEND ETERNITY.

Milton refers to fallen angels who followed Satan when he rebelled against God.

"Had cast him out from heaven, with all his host
Of rebel Angels; by who aid, aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,"

Milton, Paradise Lost, Book 1

Yet the only reference to fallen angels in scripture is in the book of Jude in the New Testament and when it is examined, it does not support Milton's fictional tale.

Jude 5-7

*Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. **And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.** (NASB emphasis added)*

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

These three verses are about how God handles the judgment of those who rebel or reject him. Those who left Egypt and turned away were destroyed, literally died in the wilderness and did not make it to the Promised Land. The residents of Sodom and Gomorrah were also physically killed by God when the Lord rained “*brimstone and fire*” on the valley for their disobedience.

Then there is the center verse that we need to look at carefully and see what it says and see how Milton may have used it to write his story and to mess up the theology of so many. We will look at several parts of this.

First, we need to look at the word angels here. It is the Greek word (**aggelos**) which literally means a messenger. The word is used in the New Testament to refer to the following:

1. A heavenly messenger (angel) sent on a mission by God to earth. Like the one sent to tell Joseph that Mary was carrying the Child given her by God. (Matthew 1.20)
2. The word messenger is used to refer to John the Baptist as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. “Behold, I send my messenger (**aggelos**) ahead of you,...” (Matthew 11.10)
3. Those sent from John to Jesus were called messengers (**aggelos**). (Luke 7.24)
4. Those sent by Jesus to make arrangements for him were called messengers (**aggelos**). Luke 9.52)
5. The physical ailment of Paul is called a “messenger (**aggelos**) of Satan” that is tormenting him. (2 Corinthians 12.7)

Of the over 170 times that the word angel/ messenger (**aggelos**) appears it refers to heavenly beings sent from God over 90% of the time but not exclusively. This means we have to determine what the meaning is each time it is used, so we do not get it wrong.

When we look at Jude 6, the crime or sin of these

Last to Leave

messengers was they abandoned their proper place and calling and did other than they were supposed to. They sinned or were disobedient.

Now it does not matter if this is a reference to heavenly angelic messengers or earthly human messenger, I will deal with this distinction shortly. What matters is what has happened to these angels. They are NOT running around bothering anyone. They are not working for Satan as his agents. These are not demons. They are being held "*with everlasting chains for judgment on the great day.*" They are prisoners of God waiting for their final punishment.

It should be noted that there is not a direct link to heaven or angels sinning in heaven or to anyone named Lucifer (we will get to him soon) in this verse. It only says they abandoned their position. Now, I am going to be very careful here and tell you what I believe about this verse and why.

We need to start with what has happened to these messengers who have abandoned their position. They are being held in chains. They are not free. They are not running around causing mayhem or tempting anyone to sin; they are being held for judgment. That makes me believe that these are not heavenly or spiritual beings, but they are messengers or individuals who were called by God to deliver his message over the ages who either refused or who turned away to follow their desires. These messengers are being held under special conditions because they had an extraordinary call and responsibility which they turned away from. The second reason I do not believe these are heavenly messengers is that they "*abandoned their proper abode.*" This appears to be where Milton got them leaving heaven, but that also means they would have sinned in heaven. Heaven is a place without sin and sinners.⁵¹⁰ I believe that is true of the past, present, and future. If sin was there in the past, it could be there again and would make heaven less than perfect. Proper abode is dealing with their responsibilities and

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

calling. These individuals turned away from God and when they died were punished severely and immediately.

When we look at the part of this verse in Jude about fallen messengers, there is the tendency to take it out of context and forget what has just preceded it. We will do this by looking at the picture as it is laid out in the Old Testament and then look at the current context.

We need to look at an Old Testament text and examine what it says in light of our understanding of the word translated 'messenger' or 'angel.' This follows the declaration that God destroyed those who did not believe between Egypt and the Promised Land. While on that journey, there were several instances of leaders rebelling against Moses, numbers 16 records one such instance. Korah leads a rebellion against Moses' leadership. God judges him, and all who follow him and they died in a violent earthquake and firestorm. These leaders were to be messengers working with Moses. Instead, they rebelled and forgot their place causing God to judge them. It could be these are the leaders, messengers, angels that are being referred to herein Jude 6. The context of Jude 6 places it right after the part about those who left Egypt but did not make it to the promised land because of their unbelief. They are being held until the final judgment.

In Matthew 25.41 Jesus was talking about the judgment that would take place at the end of time, "*Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'*"

Here, we have Jesus saying that eternal fire was prepared for the devil (more on him later) and his messengers. These are the individuals who, over all of time, have served Satan either openly or unknowingly just by rejecting God. Even as I write this, there is a news article about a group of atheist who is putting signs on the side of busses in several major U.S. cities, that say, "*There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.*"

Last to Leave

The other one they are using says, “The *bad news is that God does not exist. The good news is that we do not need him.*” These atheists will be counted among the messengers of the devil who have a place of eternal punishment prepared for them.

Once again we see that Milton is wrong in what he has written in his poem. So far we have no record of any angels falling from heaven that got caught up in a great rebellion. What we do have is a record of those messengers who rebelled against Moses and died and are being held, waiting for eternal judgment. We also have all the messengers of evil who have ever lived and who have died who also are being held in chains until the final judgment. We also see that these angels or messengers are locked up in chains until the judgment.

SUMMARY: THE ONLY ANGELS/MESSENGERS WHO FELL OR REBELLED IN SCRIPTURE ARE BEING HELD IN CHAINS WAITING FOR JUDGMENT. THERE IS NO REFERENCE TO THEIR BEING IN HEAVEN. THEY ARE NOT ROAMING THE EARTH. MILTON GOT THIS ONE WRONG TOO!

Milton also says that Satan is Lucifer and is a fallen angel who rebelled against God.

“Know then, that, after Lucifer from Heaven...
Fell with his flaming legions through the deep.”
Milton Paradise Lost Book VII

Milton got this image of Lucifer falling from heaven from Isaiah 14.12. We will examine this verse in detail. We will need to look at how it was translated and also the context of the verse that Milton lifted to prove his point.

When they translated the King James Bible in 1611, they kept some Latin words as part of the translation process. One place they used the transliterated Latin word was in Isaiah 14.12 They used the word Lucifer which is a Latin

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

word which means *light-bearer* as the translation for **(helel)** the Hebrew word which should be translated as *a shining one* or *star of the morning*. So what they did was take the Latin word *Lucifer* that means *morning star* instead of translating it into English. That is why the King James Bible says:

*How art thou fallen from heaven,
O **Lucifer**, son of the morning!
how art thou cut down to the ground,
which didst weaken the nations!* ^{KJV}

It was not until the late 19th century that this was corrected in more modern translations. In the New American Standard Bible, the word is translated from the Hebrew to English skipping over the Latin.

*“How you have fallen from heaven,
O **star of the morning**, son of the dawn!
You have been cut down to the earth,
You who have weakened the nations!”* ^{NASB}

SUMMARY: THE PROPER TRANSLATION SHOULD BE “STAR OF THE MORNING.” THE WORD LUCIFER IS AN ENGLISH TRANSLITERATION OF THE LATIN TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW. THE WORD LUCIFER IS JUST THE LATIN TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW WORD FOR ‘STAR OF THE MORNING.’

There are two more items we will need to answer surrounding Isaiah 14.12. The first one is what is the context of this verse, or who is this verse referring to? The second one is what heaven is this verse referring to?

The Context of Isaiah 14.12

Milton used the King James translation that had been taken from the Latin translation when he wrote *Paradise Lost*. To understand why this is important, we need to remember the rules for translation. The second one says, *nothing out of context*. Milton broke this rule when he used this verse in reference to Satan.

Last to Leave

The context of the verse is three layers deep here, and we will look at them each briefly. The first layer is that this is located in the book of Isaiah. Isaiah was a prophet who delivered his message to Judah around 700 B.C. He was calling them to return to God, and he was telling the surrounding nations of God's judgment upon them.

The second layer is a prophecy that starts at Isaiah 13.1 and continues until Isaiah 14.23. This starts with the declaration; *The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.* This prophecy or burden that Isaiah declared here is against the wicked nation of Babylon. Babylon would enslave the nation of Judah and God is warning that they would be punished for it. Then in Isaiah 14.3-4, it says that when judgment comes upon Babylon, they will take up the taunt against the King of Babylon. Did you catch it? This section is about the King of Babylon and is not about Satan. Satan is not even mentioned.

This brings us to the inner or third layer of the context of the verse we are looking at. Isaiah says, *"you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon,"* Isaiah 14.12 is part of the prophecy against the KING OF BABYLON.

Isaiah in prophetic language is delivering this message against the King of Babylon. It starts out declaring that *"How the oppressor has ceased, And how fury has ceased!"* ^{NASB} The oppressor is the King of Babylon and this prophecy is about him. This is about the defeat of the King of Babylon. Verse 8 says even the trees are happy that this has happened because now they are safe.

Then Isaiah paints a picture of the defeat of the King of Babylon in verses 9-11. Here the grave is waiting to greet the King of Babylon as he joins the other dead leaders who have gone before him. They are waiting to greet him with a taunt that says he has now become weak and joined them in death. His pomp and splendor have been reduced to a body that lies on a bed of maggots and has worms as a blanket. This brings us to the verse in question.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

This is Isaiah 14.12. I remind you that this verse is about the King of Babylon. The ONLY place this verse ever is used to refer to Satan is not in scripture, but in the fictional poem written by John Milton, in Paradise Lost. He took this verse out of context and placed it in his poem to proof-text his story. That leaves us with a dilemma of sorts. Do we allow Milton to be the person who decides what the Bible is saying here or do we allow the Bible to tell us what it is talking about?

SUMMARY: ISAIAH 14.12 MUST BE SEEN IN A PROPER CONTEXT WHICH MAKES IT CLEAR IT IS PART OF THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH THAT IS ABOUT THE KING OF BABYLON AND HIS DEFEAT AND DEATH. IT IS NOT ABOUT SATAN.⁵¹¹

Understanding the Context of the word Heaven

Now that we know that this is not about Satan but is about the King of Babylon, we need to answer the second question here, what heaven is this verse referring to when it says, “How are you fallen from heaven?” How can the King of Babylon fall from heaven?

We learn in the New Testament that there are three heavens in scripture. Paul said he “*was caught up to the third heaven.*” Here we will look at the three different heavens mentioned in scripture.

1. Heaven number one is the literal sky where there are the sun, moon, and stars.
 - “*And beware not to lift up your eyes to **heaven** and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of **heaven**, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole **heaven**.* Deuteronomy 4.19 NASB *emphasis added* (here we have a clear picture of the physical heaven or sky)
 - “*For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*”

Last to Leave

Matthew 5.18 NASB (Jesus is speaking about the first heaven or the sky)

- "...WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT,..." Revelation 10.6 Speaking of heaven (the sky) and earth as creations of God.
- "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven," Isaiah 55.10 Referring to the heaven or sky where the rain and snow come down from.

2. Heaven number two is prophetic language dealing with those in leadership. The sun, moon, and stars are symbolic of different leaders in a nation. Their position of leadership is compared to being lifted up or in heaven. They are seen as being over or above, and that is why it is called heaven. The prophetic language then shows them being brought down or defeated and removed from their position of authority.

- *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.* Isaiah 13.10

This language is referring to the leadership of Babylon and losing power because of the judgment of God. This is preparation for a similar prophetic language that was to follow.

- *Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."* Genesis 37.9

Here Joseph has a dream that shows his family as the sun (his father), the moon (his mother) and the stars (his brothers). This is the same language used by prophets (Joel 2.10) of the Old Testament and the writers of the New Testament (Matthew 24.29 &

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

Revelation 8.12 & Revelation 12.4a).

- *And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. Rev 12.4a NASB*

Here is a great text to work from and ask some simple questions. Even if you are not sure of all of the details, there are great clues here to help. What about this verse makes it unbelievable if we are talking about the first heaven, the sky? Knowing that our Sun is a small star what would be the results if one star collided with the earth? How large would the dragon have to be to pull a third of all the stars down with his tail?

This is prophetic language that is symbolic of leaders in a position of authority. Knowing this how would you answer the following questions? What does it mean to sweep away a third of the stars (leaders) from heaven? What might the dragon represent if he is able to pull a third of the leaders from their positions? If this is symbolic language what does it mean that they are pulled from heaven to earth?

3. Heaven number three is Paradise where God makes his throne.

- “For our citizenship is in heaven,” Philippians 3.20 This is in reference to the place of eternity with God.
- *Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. Revelation 4.2* Here John has been transported to the third heaven where God has his throne. It is the same heaven Paul visited.
- *“And whoever swears by heaven, swears both by*

Last to Leave

the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.
Matthew 23.22 Here Jesus says the throne of God is in heaven.

Knowing that there are three heavens mentioned in scripture makes it necessary for us to determine what the word heaven means each time it appears. The word heaven appears 437 times in the New American Standard Bible. Sometimes it is easy, and the way it is written in the particular verse makes it clear. But sometimes it must be examined in context. When it comes to Isaiah 14.12, the context is the answer to which heaven Isaiah is referring to.

Remember that this section is about the King of Babylon. The proceeding verse is about his defeat and ultimate death. Then comes the pronouncement about the life and reign of the King of Babylon. "*How you have fallen*" states the obvious. Once the ultimate ruler, he now is being eaten by maggots and worms. The prophetic language of falling from heaven and being cut down to earth shows the great and totality of the fall. It is symbolic and prophetic language. It is not about a literal fall from the third heaven, but of the fall from power. The fall of a proud man who had declared that he would "*ascent to heaven,*" a man who had said he would make his "*throne above the stars.*" He had declared that he would make himself "*like the Most High.*" He had declared that he was so powerful that he was equal or even beyond God. (see Isaiah 14.13-14)

Those who are so proud should hear what God said to the King of Babylon. "*But you have been cast out of your tomb Like a rejected branch, Clothed with the slain who are pierced with a sword, Who go down to the stones of the pit Like a trampled corpse.*" (Isaiah 14.19) Thus the MAN who thought he was equal to God was cast down from his self-righteous position and was not even buried. His body was to be left to rot.

So we end up with almost everything we believe about Satan being from a fictional poem, and it is all untrue

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

when compared to the Biblical facts.

Isaiah 14.12

*How art thou fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer, son of the morning!
how art thou cut down to the ground,
which didst weaken the nations!* ^{KJV}

*“How you have fallen from heaven,
O star of the morning, son of the dawn!
You have been cut down to the earth,
You who have weakened the nations!* ^{NASB}

*How you have fallen from heaven,
O morning star, son of the dawn!
You have been cast down to the earth,
you who once laid low the nations!* ^{NIV}

One more note here. There are some that want to say they know it is the King of Babylon but say it is also Satan. I only have one question. Is this what the Bible says or is this what they are saying so they can continue believing a non-biblical teaching that is part of their theological belief system? The Bible is only referring to the King of Babylon here and makes NO reference or inference that this has anything to do with Satan.

So we know that Milton was wrong about the following.

- Satan is not Lucifer. Lucifer is Latin for Morning Star.
- The Morning Star referred to in Isaiah 14.12 is the king of Babylon and is not Satan.
- There is no Biblical reference to angels or messengers falling from heaven except those in Jude 6, and they are not free to do anything except to wait for final Judgment.
- Paradise is not another name for the Garden of Eden.
- The heaven the King of Babylon fell from was symbolic, prophetic language referring to his losing his position as King and self-declared god.

Other Text We Need To Examine

Luke 10.18

A New Testament text out of the life of Jesus needs to be examined if we are going to clear all the doubts concerning the tale that Milton turned together using scripture out of context to proof-text his story.

“And He said to them, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.”

We will need to start with the context of this verse, and then we will be able to decide which of the three heavens Jesus was talking about.

All you have to do to put this in context is go back to Luke 10.1 and read that *“the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.”* They were traveling ahead of him. They were given instructions to heal the sick and preach about the Kingdom of God. After their trip to make arrangements for the Lord, the seventy returned and declared, *“Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.”* They had been beating the foot soldiers of the enemy. Satan’s demons could not stand up against the disciples of Jesus.

The response of Jesus to the news of the defeating of the servants of Satan speaks of his spiritual awareness and the importance of what the disciples had done. Jesus said, *“I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.”*

Jesus was aware of what was happening on a larger scale. He saw that the defeat of the demon army of Satan also caused Satan himself to be defeated. Satan had thought

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

that he was in charge since the first humans were cast out of the garden. A leader of a defeated army is a defeated leader. Jesus had seen the bigger picture. The disciples had seen the defeat of a few demons they had faced; Jesus had seen the defeat of their leader Satan. Jesus had seen the fall or defeat of Satan taking place as the disciples were defeating his army of demons. Satan was losing his position of power and authority.

The question then becomes what does it mean “*from heaven like lightning?*” Let’s look at the end of that phrase first. The fall of Satan was “*like lightning.*” This is a metaphor for how fast the fall of Satan came. One minute he was in charge, the next he had been struck down from his position of authority. It happened so fast it was just like a lightning strike. WHAM! One minute he was leading an army of demons that had been in control, and the next the disciples were defeating his army, and he was brought down and defeated.

Now we have to ask the question, which heaven did Satan fall from? We have three choices. 1. The sky 2. The prophetic symbolic heaven of power and authority 3. The heaven where God has his throne. Remember the context; this is about Satan being defeated and losing his position of power. It is about him suddenly and violently being overcome by the disciples of Jesus through the defeat of his demons. This was not about the past or the future; it was what had happened because of the actions of Jesus’ disciples. This was Satan being thrown down from the symbolic heaven of power and authority. He had lost his power because now the followers of Jesus were starting to cast out demons. Now Satan did not have just one enemy, but now he was up against a much more powerful army.

This is why Satan wanted to kill Jesus, and it is also why the resurrection is so very important. Jesus died for our sins, but Satan killed him in an effort to get his power back, and for the better part of three days he thought he had won. Then on that first Easter Sunday morning, there was an earthquake, an angel rolled away the stone and Jesus was resurrected from the dead. Satan was removed from his position of authority over the earth; he had been

cast down from the second heaven for the count. Jesus saw his sudden fall when the disciples were casting out demons, and he sealed the deal at the resurrection.

SUMMARY OF LUKE 10.18

- Satan fell because his demons were defeated by the disciples of Jesus.
- Satan's fall was sudden; it was like lighting (WHAM!)
- Satan's fall removed him from power, so it is described as being a fall from the second or the prophetic heaven of power and authority.

Genesis 6.1-4

When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."

The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

These verses are often cited for being the beginning of the creation of demons. They have nothing to do with that, in fact, they are about a key Old Testament and New Testament doctrine.

First, let's break them down and see what is being discussed here. This is about mixed marriages. They are spoken against both in the Old and New Testament.

"...you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons." Deuteronomy 7.3

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”

2 Corinthians 6.14

Here in Genesis, before the Law against mixed marriages, we have the first example of a marriage between followers of God and non-believers. The expression, “*sons of God,*” is Bible code for believers. This is especially clear in the New Testament. (The principles of *Scripture interprets scripture,* and *the easy interprets the difficult,* and *Jesus is Boss* are the ones we are using here.)

Jesus said that the peacemakers would be called “*sons of God.*” (Matthew 5.9) Again in Luke 20.33, Jesus refers to believers as “*sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.*”

Paul says that “*all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*” (Romans 8.14) He is even clearer in Galatians 3.26 when he says “*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*”

In the New Testament, we have the expression ‘*sons of God*’ referring to followers of Jesus. There are only two places this expression appears in the Old Testament, Genesis and Job. We will look at Job in the next section. It is always a clear reference to believers in God in contrast to non-believers.

When it says in Genesis “*the sons of God saw the daughters of men were beautiful,*” it is referring to “the sons of those who believed in God” saw that “the daughters of those who did not follow or believe in God were beautiful.” This is about mixed marriages. This is about marriages between believers and non-believers.

God is so unhappy with this event that he shortened the lifespan of all the human race. Remember that people had been living extended lifespans — some five, six, seven

Last to Leave

hundred or more years. When the sons of God (believers) began to marry the daughters of men (non-believers) God decided that they needed to live shorter lives. Even though the Law would not be given for some time yet, there was the natural law that God had placed within the hearts of men. This is what Paul was talking about when he wrote: *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.”* Romans 1.18-19 Here the wrath of God was shortening the lives of those who turned away from him for the temporary beauty of non-believers.

Then, in verse four, there is the reference to the Nephilim or Giants. These are mentioned two times in scripture. Once here in Genesis and the other is in Numbers 13.33. In numbers, they are seen by the ten negative spies who brought word back to Moses that the inhabitants of the promised land were so big (Nephilim) that the Hebrews were as small as grasshoppers beside them.

Some have improperly said that the Nephilim were the results of the mixed marriage. That is not what it says here. It says that the giants or Nephilim were on the earth at the same time as these mixed marriages between believers and non-believers were going on. It then goes on to say they were also there after the mixed marriages ended. It does not say these giants were a result of mixed marriages.

The sections say:

1. The sons of God (believers) married the daughters of men (non-believers).
2. The Nephilim were on the earth at the same time as these marriages were happening.
3. The mixed marriages produced children who became famous in their time.
4. The Nephilim were there after the mixed marriages ended.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

This section does 'NOT' say any of the following:

1. That the mixed marriages produced the giants or Nephilim
2. That the sons of God were angels
3. That the daughters of men married angels
4. That the results of the mixed marriages were demons.

Jesus teaches about this in his ministry. In Mark 12.18-25 a group of Sadducees who did not even believe in the resurrection came to ask Jesus a question about the resurrection. They believed that when you die, you are like the dog named Rover. When you die, you die all over, and that is the end of that. Their question was meant to trip Jesus up, but instead, it helps us understand why the sons of God were not angels having sexual relations with earth women.

A woman married a man who died without children, so then she married his brother according to Jewish law, but he died. Then she married the next brother, and he died. This happened seven times until all seven brothers died. (If I was the youngest brother I would have refused to marry her, but that would ruin the story.) Then when they were all dead, she died. The question the Sadducees ask Jesus was, *"In the resurrection, when they rise again, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her."*

Jesus' response about this is *"For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."*

Did you catch it? They are like angels they do not get married. Why do people get married? To have sex to have babies, but Jesus says the Angels do not get married. By extension, they do not have sex. They do not molest earth women and produce demons or giants. The angels and spiritual beings are beyond that. Jesus says that when people die, they stop getting married and having babies.

Last to Leave

Remember the rule that says JESUS IS BOSS! That means that Jesus is the supreme authority on any subject he speaks about. Jesus says that angels do not marry. They do not have sex, and that should settle the matter for anyone who has a question about this matter.

SUMMARY OF GENESIS 6.1-4

- The sons of God are the children of believers.
- The daughters of men are the children of non-believers.
- God shortened the life of everyone to a maximum of 120 years as a punishment because of their turning away from him.
- The Nephilim are giants that were living while this was happening; in fact, they lived after this had stopped.
- This has NOTHING to do with Angels!
- This has NOTHING to do with demons!
- This is just about mixed marriages between believers and non-believers.

JOB

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.” Job 1.6

“Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD.” Job 2.1

Job is one of the earliest stories of the conflict between good and evil. It is also remarkable in what is often read into the two verses cited above.

First, you need to remember that the expression “*sons of God*” is Biblical language that is speaking about believers or those who follow God. What we have here is a time when believers (sons of God) came before God. (see Romans 8.14 or review the previous section on Genesis 6)

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

We need to make sure you see what is not said here. I know that sounds strange, to see what is not here, but it is important. People often read these two verses and then they assume that they have read several things that are not said here at all. The location is not heaven. It does not say heaven; it only says that the believers came to present themselves before the Lord. This is what believers do all around the world every week. They come to a place of worship to present themselves before God. That was what the Hebrews did in the tabernacle and the temple. They came to present themselves before God. All we know for sure here is that it is a place where men who believed in God came to present themselves and to worship God.

Then Satan shows up also. He is not described here at all, and it could be he came disguised as a man, or he may have come in spiritual form and was not seen by the men: we do not know for sure. What we do know is he was there and was getting ready to pick a fight with one of God's best followers ever. The only problem was that Job was so well protected he had to get God to lift the barriers.

This is not a heavenly event. This is an earthly event. Satan is, or more correctly was the prince of this world until Jesus and his disciples dealt him a blow that he will never recover from. (see notes on Luke 10.18) Satan came before God at this meeting of believers or sons of God. This is an earthly event. In fact, every event in scripture dealing with Satan is an earthly event.

It is so interesting that Satan would come into a meeting of believers, and yet I have seen him do that very thing. I have been in meetings of believers when evil has spoken out. When a follower of the enemy disguised as a follower of God has spoken. When the one filled with the witness of the enemy has tried to influence the assembly of the righteous believers, that is what we have in these two verses here in Job. Satan was trying to move in the assembly of believers.

Summary of Job 1.6 & 2.1

- This did not take place in heaven.
- This is an earthly event that took place in the assembly of believers (sons of God).
- All events in scripture dealing with the Devil, Satan, are earthly events.

Revelation 12.7-12

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying,

“Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. “And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. “For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.”

We will need to use several of our rules of interpretation if we are going to understand what this scripture is saying. I will not be explaining all of the symbolic language in Revelation, but we will see enough to understand these verses.

First, there is the context of the verses above. They are located in the Book of Revelation. This is not a history book, but it is a prophetic book written around 90 A. D. Revelation 1.3 states clearly that these are “*words of the*

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

prophecy.” Then in Revelation 4.1, it says this is about things that will take place in the future. What follows is a picture of future events that are painted in some of the most dramatic symbolic language ever written. The book of Revelation has been outlined and broken down in another chapter in this book. The section we are looking at is included in the introduction of the third series dealing with the seven angels. This introduction is about the birth of Jesus through his resurrection and assuming his position over the leadership of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The important thing for you to remember is that these are events in the first century. So, even if you do not know what these verses are about, they are not about events that happened before Adam and Eve entered the Garden of Eden. The context of these verses is in a prophecy about the future when seen from the first century.

Remember the rule; scripture interprets scripture. We will need to use that if we are going to understand this verse. So let’s break it down and see what we can learn about the person and events in this section. The last thing we will look at is which heaven. We will need to have established everything else so we can know which of the three heavens this is about.

First, there is Michael. We learn in Jude 9 that Michael is an archangel or an angel in charge. He is mentioned in Daniel as a chief prince who fights for Daniel against evil. So in Revelation 12, we can see Michael as a leader of angels or messengers of God who is involved in a battle against “the dragon.”

In this section, we learn that the dragon is “called the devil and Satan.” So the dragon is a symbolic picture of Satan. Remember this is symbolic, prophetic language used to paint a picture in our minds. We already have a picture of what has happened here, and it is from Jesus. Remember the rule of interpretation that says, “Jesus is Boss.” What has Jesus said about a battle where Satan lost his position of power and was thrown from heaven to earth.

Last to Leave

Luke 10.18 is where Jesus says he saw Satan fall from his position of authority (heaven) and was cast down to where he was not in charge any longer (earth).

What was and is the result of this event that happened one day as his disciples were casting out demons? Everything changed and as the scripture says in Revelation 12 *“Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come.”* This world waited through thousands of years to receive Christ Jesus as its Lord and Savior. When it finally happened, it was a momentous event. It meant that Satan had lost his hold on this world and that Christ had been lifted up and had assumed his rightful position.

“for the accuser of our brethren, he who accuses them before our God day and night” What we see is the same accuser who attacked Job has not stopped attacking and accusing believers or the sons of God. As he approached God in the book of Job he approaches and accuses the believers even today.

“the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down.”

Here we have the restating of the facts from Luke 10.18. Jesus had seen Satan lose his position of authority as the disciples were dealing with the demons. Satan had fallen from his position of authority, or in prophetic language, from heaven, and been brought down to lead his dying and defeated army on the lowly earth from his position of defeat.

This leaves us with one key question, which heaven is this referring to? The heaven or sky? Is it the heaven that is the symbolic language used in prophecy? Or The heaven where God has his throne and where believers will live forever?

First, this is in a book that is clearly labeled as a prophecy. Second, it is located in a section filled with symbolic language, some of which is explained, so we do

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

not get confused. Third, it is explained as occurring in the time of Christ. Finally, it points to the victory because of the blood of the Lamb, which is a symbolic reference to Christ and his blood sacrifice on the cross for the sins of humanity.

That is why this section says “*the heavens should rejoice and the earth should live in cry out (woe).*” The heaven in this section is the second prophetic heaven referring to power and authority. It represents the fall of Satan at the time of Christ and his continued defeat and lack of power against those who believe.

The dragon, Satan, loses his position of authority and power (heaven) and is replaced by Jesus the lamb who shed his blood for all of humanity. The dragon, Satan, though not in charge is still the accuser of the brethren and is still the evil deceiver.

There is also the context of what has been said about this dragon, Satan, just a few verses before. Revelation 12.3-4 “*a great red dragon ... And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.*” This has to be symbolic prophetic language. This dragon has a tail that brings down one-third of all the stars in heaven, and they land on earth. The smallest star is larger than the Earth by hundreds of times. One star hitting the earth would vaporize this planet. A dragon with a tail big enough to do this would be ginormous. This language is so large, and out of proportion, it has to be prophetic language. The heaven mentioned in verses 3, 4, 7, and 8 has to be the 2nd heaven of prophetic language dealing with power and authority. This is yet another picture of Satan losing his power and being thrown down from his position over the earth.

SUMMARY

- Heaven here is the second one of symbolic language that represents power and authority
- The dragon is the symbolic language for Satan

Last to Leave

- Satan loses his authority and is, in symbolic language, thrown down to earth (Just like in Luke 10.18)
- Jesus replaces Satan as the one in the 2nd heaven. He now has the power and authority.
- Even though cast down, Satan is still the accuser of the Sons of God, or believers, even as he was in the time of Job.
- Those in heaven (believers) have nothing to worry about. Those on earth (non-believers) have a lot to worry about because Satan is going to take all his anger out on them!

What the Bible says for sure.

The first encounter with evil takes place in the Book of Genesis. The serpent approached Eve and Adam with the first lie that is recorded. He is already the enemy of God and is seeking to destroy His creation. We know from Revelation 12.9 that this serpent is the dragon of the Book of Revelation and is also the devil, or Satan, who goes against Jesus.

The first question we want to be answered is where did Satan, that old serpent, the devil, the dragon, the great deceiver, Beelzebub himself, come from. Well, we have already looked at every scripture referring to him being in heaven and found that they are all references to prophetic language about power and authority. There is no Biblical reference to Satan ever being in the third heaven. All the references show that his work has been done here on earth. Now, here is the answer to the question, “where did the ultimate bad guy come from?” THE BIBLE DOES NOT SAY! I hate that answer, but it is the best and most correct answer there is. Speculate, guess, wonder all you want, but we just do not know. It is one of the zillions of billions of trillions of things God just did not tell us about anywhere. I can say the following for sure; there is no reference to Satan having been in heaven at any time. Heaven, where God has his throne, is a perfect place. There has never been sin there, and there never will be. If it were defiled once it would not be perfect and would be

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

subject to future sin. When pressed, my first theology teacher said, and I quote, “Where there is creativity there is the possibility for dis-creativity.” I am not sure what that means. The best response I can give to the question about where Satan comes from is. “Bad things happen.” The first time Satan appears in scripture we learn he is already bad and very crafty.⁵¹²

The first time we have a name for this evil is in the book of Job where we find that the one called Satan appears in the assembly of believers to accuse Job before God. The name Satan means adversary, or the enemy, and is as much a description as it is a name.

Next, we see Satan in 1 Chronicles 21.1 when we see him get David to do evil and number the army of Israel. We may not see this as evil or temptation, but it was a way for David to see how many men he had fighting for him and to trust in his strength. Satan wanted David to trust in his men and not rely on God. That way if David won he would not have to give God any credit, and if he lost, well, Satan won either way.

Jump forward to a prophetic vision in the book of Zechariah 3.1-7 This vision is about the future and the conflict between Satan (the adversary) and Joshua (the Hebrew version of the Greek name, Jesus, which means “the LORD is salvation”). In this vision, we see that those who follow Joshua/Jesus will be victorious.

Most of what we learn about Satan comes from the life of Jesus and the conflict between Him and Satan. Satan is the great tempter and uses proven methods to attack. He used food, beauty, and knowledge as the key attacks on Eve in Genesis and on Jesus in Matthew 4.

Satan is watching to snatch anyone who stumbles early in their Christian lives. (Mark 4.15)

Satan can enter into a person who is not following Jesus as he did to Judas in Luke 22.3.

Last to Leave

One of Satan's favorite tactics is to accuse the believer before God and try and test him. This is what Satan did to Job, and it is what appears to be happening in Luke 22.31-32 when we read, "*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*" The accuser has done the same thing to Peter he did to Job. He has demanded to try or sift Peter to see if he is a believer. Jesus says that His prayers would help him through this tough encounter.

Satan has power that is described by Jesus as "*the dominion of Satan.*" (Acts 26.17) This is wherever evil is in charge, but it is not any one country, nor does he rule the earth. He was cast down from his position of power even while Jesus was still alive and the disciples of Jesus starting casting out demons.

Satan watches for our weak points and attacks us there. Paul speaks about this to married couples and warns them so "*that Satan will not tempt [them] because of [their] lack of self-control.*" 1 Corinthians 7.5

Satan can hinder believers as he did Paul in 1 Thessalonians 2.18-19 and as he did Daniel when Michael had to come and help set him free. Daniel 10.13.

In Matthew 12.24-26 we learn that a proper name for Satan is Beelzebul or Beelzebub (depending on the translation) which means "lord of the flies." We also learn that he is the 'ruler of the demons.' The word demon means "evil spirit."

Satan has been here since the creation story, and his end is clearly written and planned for. Jesus said there was "*eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;*" (Matthew 25.41) We know that Satan, the demons and all the human messengers of evil (angels) will go away into eternal fire. We may not know where Satan came from, but we sure know where he is going to spend

eternity.

Demons: what little we really know

Let me start with a little review, or we can get confused quickly. Satan was never an angel in heaven. There is no place in scripture that says that he was. It is only a story put together by John Milton in a fictional poem, "Paradise Lost." We do not know from scripture where Satan came from. All we know for sure is "Bad things happen," and he is the baddest thing that has ever happened. (and yes I know baddest is not a word, but nothing else says it like baddest.) Now if we do not know where the general in charge of all evil got his start, you guessed it, we don't have any way of knowing where the evil spirits (demons) got their start. We know it was not when the sons of God hooked up with the daughters of men. That had to do with mixed marriages between believers and non-believers. So what do we know about demons or evil spirits?

They are only mentioned in passing in the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy 32.17 and Psalm 106.37 reference is made to sacrificing to demons and to sacrificing their sons and daughters to demons like the people did who serve other Gods. It needs to be noted that the Old Testament is less about the spiritual world and centers on the physical world and physical worship toward God. They understood little of the extent of the spiritual battle that was being waged around them.

The one window into this realm was in the life of King Saul. He has an evil spirit that came upon him that tormented him. This caused the king to become violent. He was no longer walking with God as he had in his earlier life. (see 1 Samuel 16.14-23) It needs to be noted that the way it is stated makes it seem that God caused the evil spirit to come on Saul. It was because Saul had stopped following God that God allowed Saul to have the free will and Saul's choice led to being open to the evil spirit.

Last to Leave

It was Jesus who opened the doors into our understanding of the spiritual battles with evil spirits (demons) and their master, Satan. Evil spirits or demons are seen as taking control of individuals who were not serving God. The purpose of this study is not to cover the full range of demonology but to answer the simple question about what the scriptures say about their origin and demise. We will only look at one case for a brief overview of these activities.

“When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.” Matthew 12.43-45

We can see several key features about demons from this teaching of Jesus. They can occupy or control an individual. This happened here, it happened to the demoniac beside the sea, and it happened to the little boy who would throw himself into the fire because of the evil spirits inside of him.

They do not have to remain in an individual and can be driven out by followers of Jesus. This is what happened when the 72 disciples were sent out in 36 groups and were able to drive out the demons.

Here the demon is removed and begins the search for a new person to inhabit. There can be more than one in an individual as there were in the end here, or as the demoniac who had a legion of demons inside of him. They can also inhabit animals, at least for a short time. They were driven out of the demoniac into the pigs, who immediately ran into the lake and drowned themselves.

They can die or be removed from this world, and it is one of the things they fear the most. The eternal fire was prepared for them along with their leader Satan. They

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

know that that time is coming and do not want to leave one minute sooner than they have to. (see Luke 8.31 & Matthew 25.41)

We have already examined the verse in Genesis 6 that some try to use to show the creation or start of demons in the world. This was clearly shown to be about intermarriage between believers (sons of God) and non-believers (daughters of men). There is nothing about the spiritual world mentioned at all.

That leaves us with the question about where did demons come from. The scriptures speak of their activity, their demise, but it does not say anything of their origin. Since there was never a rebellion in heaven like Milton wrote about in "Paradise Lost," there are no fallen angels to become demons. Since angels do not get married or have sexual relationships, there are no children of some angels who slipped out of heaven one afternoon to have sexual relationships with a group of unsuspecting young women. Since these are the only two choices and, since they are both not in the Bible, we are left with the question, and no answer except possibly the one I gave earlier. I am afraid that the answer is "Bad things happen."

We do not have answers to the following questions because the Bible is silent on the subject.

- Where did Satan come from? God has not provided that information in the Bible.
- Where did the demons come from? God has not provided that information in the Bible.
- How long have they existed? God has not provided that information in the Bible.

Final Review of What We Do Know

So what concepts have we shown not to be true after examining scripture?

- Lucifer is not another name for Satan. The morning star was a leader of Babylon who lost his position of

Last to Leave

authority which was symbolically represented as heaven.

- There is no reference in scripture to some long-ago battle between Satan and God over control of heaven where some of the angels rebelled and were thrown out. The only mention is in Revelation 12, and that is about Satan losing his power over the earth during the time of Jesus.

So what do we know about Satan from scripture? Well, far less than we want to know. That may be why there is so much misinformation. We are left with the fact that God did not tell us where Satan or his demons came from so people like Milton make up stories, and others believe it who do not study the Word of God searching for truth.

We know the following for sure.

- That he is called Satan, the Devil, Beelzebub, aka the Lord of the Flies.
- That he has always been a crafty liar.
- That he fights against all that is good and godly.
- That he is a spiritual being that can take physical form.
- That he uses the same tactics over and over.
- In the end, he will be punished for eternity.
- He is not as powerful as God.
- He cannot force anyone to do his will.
- When a person surrenders to him, he works to enslave them so they cannot get free.

If you are not happy with the truth that we just do not have this information, take it up with the Boss, but before you do, you might want to read the book of Job and remember who is running this place.

FINALLY

Matthew 16.23 When Jesus said “Get behind Me, Satan!” to Peter, he was not saying Peter was Satan. He was

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

saying in the context that Peter was an adversary or hindrance at that time, so he needed to get out of the way. This verse would be better translated, Peter you are hindering me, get behind me now.”

One of the hardest parts of understanding Satan and the end of time is properly interpreting the word “heaven.” Here is a little review TEST to help you see how you are doing.

Which heaven is represented in the following verses?

1. 1 Corinthians 12.2 _____
2. Colossians 4.1 _____
3. Hebrews 11.12 _____
4. 1 Peter 1.12 _____
5. John 17.1 _____
6. Matthew 13.31 _____
7. Matthew 13.32 _____
8. Matthew 22.30 _____
9. Revelation 5.13 _____
10. Revelation 13.13 _____
11. Revelation 14.13 _____
12. Mark 13.25 _____

Answers in the endnotes⁵¹³

CHAPTER SUMMARY

KEY POINTS:

- The Bible does not tell us where Satan or demons came from. They are just there before the first person.
- Paradise Lost is a fictional poem that uses blender theology to create something which the Bible does not say. Only by taking Bible texts out of context can you create such a story about God, heaven, and Satan.
- Angels can be heavenly messengers, or they can be human messengers.
- Satan fell from his position of authority here on earth. He was never in the third heaven.
- The Bible does not tell us where demons came from, but it does tell us where they are going to spend eternity.
- Satan can show up at a church service, but he does not have access to God's throne in the third heaven.
- The war in heaven in Revelation 12 is about the struggle for control in the first century. The heaven mentioned there is the second heaven of prophetic language which represents power and position here on earth.

Last to Leave Final thoughts

There are thousands of blogs and books about the end of time. There are as many opinions about what will happen at the end as there are days in the year. The biggest problem is the lack of true Biblical work and study by the average believer. Anyone can create a story from what is there, but is it the truth or is it a great epic poem like Milton wrote?

Jesus told us there were no real signs of his return. Everything would be as it has always been. People would be eating and drinking, marrying and getting engaged right up to the moment God called it all to a close.

Most of the signs people are writing about are not signs for the end of time but were the signs for the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. These are no longer prophecy about the future but are historical facts about what happened when the Roman general Titus took Jerusalem and destroyed the temple.

Here are the facts we know for sure and which should help as we live our lives for Jesus. These facts are some of the truth that Jesus said would set us free. Free from wasting our time listening to false prophets. Free from fears about marks and signs that have nothing to do with us. Free from the confusion that surrounds us. Free to live our lives as victorious believers in Christ Jesus.

FACT: The believers will be **LAST TO LEAVE** at the end of time. Those rapture movies are just modern versions of Milton's Paradise Lost. They are made up stories, nothing more.

FACT: God did not make a mistake when it comes to Jesus and the church. The church age has always been God's plan. What follows the church age is eternity in heaven with God.

Last to Leave

- FACT: God has marked the followers of His son so the enemy cannot hurt them. The enemy marks his followers so they cannot get away from him.
- FACT: Numbers can have deep meaning in scripture, but it depends on the context. Many times numbers are just a way of counting objects or people.
- FACT: There are four simple rules that will help you interpret scripture. (Can you name them?)
- FACT: There are many Anti-Christ in every time period. Those who are against Jesus are Anti-Christ.
- FACT: The third temple is already complete. Jesus is the third temple in heaven, forever.
- FACT: The battle of Armageddon⁵¹⁴ does not happen. When the enemy gathers against the saints one last time, God will say "*It is done.*"⁵¹⁵ The enemy and all who serve him will be judged and time will be no more.
- FACT: There are three heavens in scripture. Each one must be understood and can be recognized by the context as it appears in scripture. (Can you define each one?)
- FACT: When Jesus returns we will meet Him in the air and go to heaven to spend eternity with Him. He is not returning to set up an earthly kingdom.
- FACT: The poem by John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, is fictional and not true. He used blender theology to make up his story.
- FACT: The prophecy about the Gospel being preached to the whole world was about the destruction of Jerusalem in the first century. It has happened and has nothing to do with the end of time.

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

FACT: Jesus predicted the events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem. He also said there are only two signs that indicate the end of time. (Can you name them?)

FACT: The book of Revelation may be hard to understand, but it has one clear message everyone can agree on. “We Win! We Win! We Win!”

FACT: The Bible does not tell us where Satan or his demons came from, but it does tell us where they are going to spend eternity. It is best to make plans not to join them.

When all is said and done it really is simple.

“We Win! We Win! We Win!”

*“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.”*⁵¹⁶

ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹ John 8.32

² Ben Witherington III, Revelation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 155

³ These will be presented later in the book.

⁴ World Magazine, April 5, 2014 page5

LAST TO LEAVE TURN OUT THE LIGHTS

⁵ Genesis 3.6 Eve was tempted on all three levels and came up short.

⁶ Matthew 24.1f

⁷ This first section will not be covered in detail here. It should be noted that whether you understand this section or not will not hinder the purpose or the understanding of this book. The verses 4-34 require a separate space that would double the size of this book.

⁸ Matthew 24. 36-42

⁹ Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C. was a television shown from 1964-1969 about a naïve young man from a small southern town who joined the Marine. Whenever he would show up he would often enter say “surprise, surprise, surprise.”

¹⁰ February 28, 2001 the Nisqually earthquake measured 6.8 and lasted 45 seconds.

¹¹ The four rules for basic scripture interpretation are:

1. Scripture interprets scripture
2. The simple interprets the difficult.
3. Nothing can be taken out of context.
4. Jesus is Boss. (He is the final word.)

(these are covered in detail in the chapter RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

¹² Matthew 13.24-30

¹³ Matthew 13.36-43

¹⁴ What about the rapture? The 1000 years, the tribulation period? Read the rest of the book, the answers are all here.

¹⁵ The teaching that there will be a 1,000 reign of Jesus on earth from the new temple in Jerusalem.

¹⁶ John 5:24

CHECK THE FOUNDATION

¹⁷ Matthew 7:26-27

¹⁸ The seven here represents a prophetic week, which is equal to seven years. Hence 490 equals 490 years. This is agreed upon by all points of view and is not in dispute. At least there is one thing everyone can agree on.

¹⁹ A prophetic week is seven days. ½ of a prophetic week would be 3 ½ days which in prophetic language equals to 3 ½ years.

²⁰ This is shown in the Scofield reference Bible. The footnote reads “*Prophetic time is invariably so near as to give full warning, so indeterminate as to give no satisfaction to mere curiosity*” The period between the 69th week and the 70th week that the Scofield footnote says “*is obviously an indeterminate period,*” and “*a period not fixed, but which has already lasted nearly 2000 years.*” This is the teaching of Scofield, Ironside, Blackstone, and that all millennial teachings are built upon. They teach the POSTPONEMENT or GREAT

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

PARENTHESIS as being inserted by God because he made a mistake or did not know how long it really would be.

²¹ Scofield says, “*Between the sixty-ninth week... And the seventieth week... intervenes this entire Church age.*” Scofield wants you to believe God did not mean 490 but well 2,490 or more.

²² It should be noted that Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” (JN 18.36) This means that for there to be an earthly kingdom, as the Millennial teaching calls for, Jesus made a mistake and did not know what he was talking about. This presents another problem for the millennial teaching, now not only is God the Father making mistakes and wrong, so is Jesus his son. In the millennial teaching it is like father, like son.

²³ The earthly kingdom will be covered later in this book. To help you briefly remember that Jesus said, “**My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.**” John 18:36

²⁴ 3rd temple, 1000 year reign, and more to be covered later in this book.

²⁵ The rapture or who is to be taken first is covered in the first chapter of this book.

According to Jesus the weeds, or sons of the evil one, will be taken first. (Matthew 13)

²⁶ Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, © 1970 by Zondervan Publishing House, 43

²⁷ *ibid*

²⁸ Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, *Are we living in the End Times?*, (© 1970 Tim LaHaye and Jerry B Jenkins) Tyndale House – Wheaton Illinois 60

²⁹ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Footsteps of the Messiah* (Tustin, Calif.:Ariel Press, 1982), 445

³⁰ Albert Dallas Meserve, *The Prophecy of the Messiah Prince (Covenant & Sonsequence) A study of Daniel's Seventy Weeks* published 1972. Booklet without copyright or publisher. This is one of the best documents available on clearly understanding the prophecies of Daniel nine, and refuting some of the false teaching the millennialists have to employ in order to allow their God to be a God of mistakes.

³¹ Matthew 23.32 see the entire section Matthew 23.1-36 dealing with Israel's rejection.

³² Matthew 21.37

³³ Matthew 23.43

³⁴ Hebrews 9.26-28

³⁵ Hebrews 9.12

³⁶ 2 Corinthians 5.21

³⁷ Matthew 1.22 see also Matthew 2.15, 17, 23; 4.14; 5.17; 8.17; 12.17; 13.14, 35; 21.4; 26.54, 56; 27.9

³⁸ Luke 4.34

³⁹ Luke 1.35

⁴⁰ John 6.69

⁴¹ Luke 4.18

⁴² **Matthew 7.24**

⁴³ 2 Peter 3.9

⁴⁴ Habakkuk 2.3

⁴⁵ 1 Thessalonians 4.16

⁴⁶ Matthew 13.30

⁴⁷ 1 Thessalonians 4.17

MARKS-A-LOT

⁴⁸ Revelation 13.16-18

⁴⁹ Remember the rules for Biblical interpretation 1. Scripture interprets scripture 2. Nothing out of context 3. The simple interprets the difficult 4. Jesus in Boss (we will use all four in this study)

⁵⁰ Revelation 7.3

Last to Leave

- ⁵¹ This is the marking of the 144,000 which will be explained in the next chapter.
- ⁵² Revelation 9.1-5
- ⁵³ Revelation 13.16-18
- ⁵⁴ Revelation 14.1
- ⁵⁵ Revelation 7.9
- ⁵⁶ Revelation 13.18
- ⁵⁷ Revelation 16.13-19
- ⁵⁸ Revelation 12.3
- ⁵⁹ Revelation 13.8
- ⁶⁰ The church from 1312 to 1517 was in constant struggle between the spirit of man and the Spiritual leadership of God. This church cannot be all condemned or all praised, but it does represent the strong influence of man's tradition over the biblical teachings. Much like the Jewish religion they grew away from the leading of God and assumed power for themselves. This is highlighted by the power struggle surrounding the eastern and western church. It is most clearly evident in the power of the papal system. The protest started by Martin Luther highlighted this struggle between the teachings of man and the teaching of God. The Protestant church has the same struggle and problems of power and tradition that can be found in the Roman Catholic Church. There are within the Protestant movement those who are marked by God and those who are marked by Satan. It can be the same beast that was found before 1517 just without the Pope.
- ⁶¹ Revelation 13.11-12
- ⁶² Key indicators of a Christian cult *are* 1. Use Book that replaces the Bible 2. Defective view of Jesus 3. Misrepresentation of God 4. False basis of Salvation 5. Financial exploitation of followers 6. Claims of new revelations 7. Enslaving organization structure 8. Emotions emphasized over doctrinal truth 9. Defective view about the end of time 10. Defective view of man 11. Messianic leader who replaces Christ.
- ⁶³ Revelation 16.13
- ⁶⁴ Revelation 13.18
- ⁶⁵ Revelation 22.4

DIGITS IN GOD'S COMPUTER

- ⁶⁶ Revelation 14.1
- ⁶⁷ Numbers 1.21
- ⁶⁸ Romans 3.30
- ⁶⁹ Genesis 1.1
- ⁷⁰ Revelation 21.6
- ⁷¹ Romans 3.30
- ⁷² James 2.19
- ⁷³ Ephesians 4.3-6
- ⁷⁴ Ephesians 5.31
- ⁷⁵ Ecclesiastes 4.9
- ⁷⁶ Ecclesiastes 4.11
- ⁷⁷ Ecclesiastes 4.12
- ⁷⁸ Amos 3.3
- ⁷⁹ 1 Samuel 18.1
- ⁸⁰ The number two and three both share the testimony or witness distinction.
- ⁸¹ Matthew 18.16 where Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 19.15
- ⁸² Zechariah 4.3
- ⁸³ Revelation 11.3-4
- ⁸⁴ Revelation 11.7

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

- ⁸⁵ Matthew 18.16 where Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 19.15
- ⁸⁶ Genesis 17.17
- ⁸⁷ Genesis 18.1
- ⁸⁸ Genesis 18.2
- ⁸⁹ Jonah 1.3
- ⁹⁰ Jonah 1.15
- ⁹¹ Jonah 1.17
- ⁹² Matthew 12.38
- ⁹³ Matthew 12.39
- ⁹⁴ Matthew 12.40 see also Matthew 26.61; Mark 8.31
- ⁹⁵ Acts 10.9-10
- ⁹⁶ Acts 10.11-13
- ⁹⁷ Acts 10.14
- ⁹⁸ Acts 10.15
- ⁹⁹ Acts 10.22
- ¹⁰⁰ Acts 10.28
- ¹⁰¹ Three does not appear directly as a reference to the one God, but the concept of the triune God is throughout scripture. Matthew 28.19 refers to the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is the trinity. Genesis 1.27 says that man is created in the image of God. This image is body, mind and spirit as Paul wrote about in 1 Thessalonians 5.23. This directly corresponds to God. Father = Mind, Son = body, Holy Spirit = Spirit.
- ¹⁰² Exodus 22.1
- ¹⁰³ 2 Samuel 12.6
- ¹⁰⁴ 2 Samuel 12.15, 18 son died at birth, 2 Samuel 13.28-29 Amnon murdered by his half-brother Absalom, 2 Samuel 18.9-15 Absalom murdered by Joab, 1 Kings 2.19.25 Adonijah executed by Solomon's orders
- ¹⁰⁵ Luke 19.3
- ¹⁰⁶ Luke 19.8
- ¹⁰⁷ John 11.17
- ¹⁰⁸ John 11.44
- ¹⁰⁹ Revelation 4.6
- ¹¹⁰ Revelation 4.8
- ¹¹¹ Revelation 6.1-8
- ¹¹² Revelation 15.7
- ¹¹³ Exodus 26.3
- ¹¹⁴ Luke 12.52
- ¹¹⁵ Matthew 25.1-2
- ¹¹⁶ Genesis 2.15
- ¹¹⁷ Exodus 20.9
- ¹¹⁸ Joshua 6.3
- ¹¹⁹ Joshua 6.1-21
- ¹²⁰ Revelation 6.12-13
- ¹²¹ Revelation 13.18
- ¹²² Genesis 2.2-3
- ¹²³ Revelation 15.1
- ¹²⁴ Revelation 8.1
- ¹²⁵ Revelation 10.7
- ¹²⁶ Revelation 11.15
- ¹²⁷ John 18.36
- ¹²⁸ Revelation 16.17

Last to Leave

- 129 Genesis 29.20
- 130 Genesis 25.29
- 131 Genesis 29.27
- 132 Genesis 17.12
- 133 1 Peter 3.20b
- 134 Luke 17.14
- 135 Luke 17.17
- 136 Mark 15.33-34
- 137 Matthew 25.1
- 138 Luke 17.12
- 139 Deuteronomy 4.13
- 140 Genesis 6.5
- 141 Genesis 7.12
- 142 Numbers 13.25
- 143 Numbers 14.34
- 144 Exodus 34.28
- 145 Jonah 3.4
- 146 Matthew 4.1
- 147 Mark 1.13
- 148 Acts 1.13
- 149 Genesis 49.28
- 150 Luke 6.13
- 151 Revelation 21.12
- 152 Revelation 21.14
- 153 Revelation 4.4
- 154 Revelation 11.16
- 155 Revelation 7.4
- 156 This is covered in detail in the chapter on the Book of Revelation.
- 157 Revelation 14.3
- 158 Revelation 5.11
- 159 Genesis 22.17
- 160 Revelation 7.9-10
- 161 Revelation 7.9

Rules of Engagement

- 162 <http://www.gospeltruth.net/membership.htm> accessed 11-21-2010
- 163 1 Samuel 25.21 David is angry with Nabal for refusing to help him.
- 164 2 Timothy 3.3 definition of the Godless in the last days
- 165 Matthew 25.5 Judas after betraying Jesus for money
- 166 John 13.27 Jesus speaking to Judas just before Judas left to betray him.
- 167 2 Timothy 3.16
- 168 Psalm 111.10
- 169 Proverb 1.7
- 170 Proverb 22.4
- 171 Revelation 1.12-16
- 172 Revelation 1.20
- 173 Revelation 1.11, 2.1-3.22 The seven churches are located at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.
- 174 Revelation 2.1
- 175 Matthew 25.31-32

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

¹⁷⁶ Matthew 24.3

¹⁷⁷ Matthew 24.35

¹⁷⁸ Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, © 1970 by Zondervan Publishing House, 43 (see the chapter CHECK THE FOUNDATION for more information about this dating problem.)

¹⁷⁹ John 18.36

¹⁸⁰ Matthew 24.36

¹⁸¹ Matthew 13.24-30, 13.36-40

¹⁸² Matthew 13.40

¹⁸³ Matthew 13. 30

¹⁸⁴ John 2.1-9

¹⁸⁵ John 2.5

¹⁸⁶ Matthew 5.21-22

¹⁸⁷ Matthew 5.27-28

¹⁸⁸ Matthew 5.33-34

¹⁸⁹ Matthew 5.38-39

¹⁹⁰ Matthew 5.43-44

¹⁹¹ 2 Peter 1.20-21

¹⁹² See the warning in 2 Peter 2.1-3

¹⁹³ 2 Peter 2.3

¹⁹⁴ Luke 24.45

The Anti-Christ, replacing Jesus

¹⁹⁵ Spanish for Devil

¹⁹⁶ 2 Corinthians 11.4

¹⁹⁷ 1 John 2.18

¹⁹⁸ 2 Corinthians 11.4

¹⁹⁹ 1 John 2.19

²⁰⁰ 1 John 2.22

²⁰¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archbishop_of_Canterbury accessed 12-30-2011

²⁰² -Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, in his book 'Jesus 2000' (in *What in the World!*, 2000, Vol 27, No 3, page 1)

²⁰³ 1 John 4.1-3

²⁰⁴ 2 John 7

The Third Temple

²⁰⁵ Those who believe in the coming millennial reign of 1,000 years of Jesus where he will rule from Jerusalem as the King of the world.

²⁰⁶ Genesis 22

²⁰⁷ 1 Chronicles 21.18-27

²⁰⁸ 1 Kings 5-9; 2 Chronicles 2

²⁰⁹ 1 Kings 9.1-9

²¹⁰ 2 Kings 24-25; 2 Chronicles 36, the writings of Josephus the historian

²¹¹ Daniel 5.4

²¹² Daniel 5.27

²¹³ This instance is recorded in Daniel 5

²¹⁴ Jeremiah 25.11-12 was a prophecy about this time period of captivity. This was discovered by Daniel and led to his prayers for deliverance and restoration of the temple.

²¹⁵ Daniel 9.2

²¹⁵ Luke 2.21-24

Last to Leave

- 216 Luke 2.41-50
- 217 Luke 4.1-12
- 218 John 2.13-16
- 219 Matthew 21ff; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12
- 220 Matthew 27.50-51
- 221 For more information see Exodus 26.31-35; Leviticus 16.
- 222 Acts 2.46
- 223 Acts 3
- 224 Acts 8.1.b
- 225 Matthew 13.55 names the four half-brothers of Jesus as James, Joseph, Simon and Judas.
- 226 Matthew 24.2
- 227 Matthew 24.27
- 228 Matthew 24.36-42
- 229 1 Corinthians 6.19-20
- 230 Ephesians 2.19-22
- 231 1 Peter 2.5
- 232 Ephesians 2.14
- 233 Ephesians 3.6
- 234 Galatians 3.28
- 235 John 6.35
- 236 John 8.12
- 237 John 14.13
- 238 John 14.6
- 239 Matthew 1.23
- 240 Hebrews 9.15
- 241 Revelation 21.22
- 242 Revelation 22.23-27
- 243 1 Corinthians 3.16

The Battle That Never Happens

- 244 Lee had sent a detachment of cavalry soldiers around to attack the enemy from behind. They were intercepted by a young Lt. J. A. Custer who stopped them from completing their mission. If the cavalry had gotten through the battle might have turned out very differently. Yes, the same Custer who died at the Little Big Horn.
- 245 2 Kings 23.25
 - 246 2 Kings 23.29-30a
 - 247 Revelation 16.12
 - 248 Revelation 16.13-14
 - 249 Revelation 16.15
 - 250 1 Thessalonians 5.2
 - 251 Matthew 24.38
 - 252 John 12.47-47
 - 253 Exodus 19.12
 - 254 Genesis 11.1-9
 - 255 Revelation 21.22
 - 256 NLT
 - 257 Genesis 2.1 NLT
 - 258 John 19.30
 - 259 Luke 19.10

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

²⁶⁰ Revelation 20.14

²⁶¹ Revelation 22.20

Heaven, Heaven, or Heaven?

²⁶² 2 Corinthians 12.2

²⁶³ 2 Corinthians 12.2-4

²⁶⁴ 2 Corinthians 12.4

²⁶⁵ Luke 23.42

²⁶⁶ Luke 23.43

²⁶⁷ Revelation 2.7

²⁶⁸ Revelation 22.2

²⁶⁹ Revelation 21.10

²⁷⁰ Genesis 1.1

²⁷¹ Genesis 1.8

²⁷² Genesis 1.8 NASB

²⁷³ Genesis 1.16

²⁷⁴ Isaiah 13.1

²⁷⁵ Isaiah 13.10

²⁷⁶ Isaiah 13.13

²⁷⁷ Isaiah 13.19

²⁷⁸ Isaiah 14.1-2

²⁷⁹ Isaiah 14.3

²⁸⁰ Isaiah 14.11

²⁸¹ Isaiah 14.12 The King James does not translate the name of the King of Babylon. KJV uses the transliterated word Lucifer instead of the translation ‘star of the morning.’ This is covered in detail in the chapter The Milton Mess.

²⁸² Isaiah 14.13

²⁸³ Isaiah 14.14

²⁸⁴ Isaiah 14.15

²⁸⁵ Isaiah 14.16

²⁸⁶ Isaiah 14.19-20

²⁸⁷ Isaiah 14.23

²⁸⁸ This prophetic language is about the king of Babylon and is not a parable about Satan. Satan is not mentioned or eluded to here in any way. See the two chapters that deal with this more directly. The Satan mess and The Milton Mess.

²⁸⁹ The word LUCIFER is transliterated from the Hebrew into 1611 King James English. The correct TRANSLATION is ‘Morning Star.’ This section of scripture is dealing with the King of Babylon and is not referring to Satan.

²⁹⁰ Isaiah chapters 13 & 14

²⁹¹ Isaiah 24.23

²⁹² Isaiah 34.4-5

²⁹³ Ezekiel 32.7-8

²⁹⁴ Joel 2.10

²⁹⁵ Revelation 21.27

²⁹⁶ Ephesians 3.10

²⁹⁷ Ephesians 6.12

²⁹⁸ Luke 10.18

²⁹⁹ Luke 10.1-16

³⁰⁰ Luke 10.17

³⁰¹ Luke 10.18

Last to Leave

³⁰² John 12.31

³⁰³ Luke 10.19

³⁰⁴ Matthew 24.29

³⁰⁵ This is the first heaven or the sky that God created in the book of Genesis.

³⁰⁶ This is the first heaven or the sky. It, like the earth, is created and can be destroyed.

³⁰⁷ This is the third heaven where God has his throne and the believers will spend eternity.

³⁰⁸ This is a taunt against Pharaoh and the land of Egypt. This is the second heaven of symbolic and prophetic language. The covering and darkness represents their loss of power and position as the country is defeated.

One Last Chain of EVENTS

³⁰⁹ Matthew 24.38-39

³¹⁰ This is covered in detail in the chapter on Matthew 24 & 25 later in this book.

³¹¹ Matthew 24.5-14

³¹² Revelation 16.15

³¹³ Luke 16.19-21

³¹⁴ Hebrews 9.27

³¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 15.42-44

³¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 15.50

³¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 15.51

³¹⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5.6

³¹⁹ 2 Corinthians 11.27 see also 1 Thessalonians 5.7, Acts 20.9

³²⁰ Acts 13.36 see also Acts 7:59-60, 1 Corinthians 11:30, 1 Corinthians 15:6,
1 Corinthians 15:20, 1 Thessalonians 4:13, John 11:13

³²¹ Luke 16.23-25

³²² Luke 16.26

³²³ Luke 16.27-31

³²⁴ 1 Corinthians 15.25-25

³²⁵ Revelation 6.9-10

³²⁶ Matthew 24.36

³²⁷ Matthew 24.37-39

³²⁸ Revelation 16.17

³²⁹ Revelation 16.12

³³⁰ Revelation 16.13-14

³³¹ Revelation 16.14

³³² Revelation 16.15

³³³ Revelation 16.16

³³⁴ Revelation 16.17

³³⁵ 1 Corinthians 15.52

³³⁶ 1 Corinthians 15.52

³³⁷ Matthew 25.33

³³⁸ Matthew 13.30

³³⁹ Matthew 25.33

³⁴⁰ 1 Corinthians 15.51

³⁴¹ Revelation 21.27

³⁴² 1 Thessalonians 4.14 This sleep means those who have died.

³⁴³ 1 Thessalonians 4.17

³⁴⁴ Matthew 25.1-13, Matthew 25.31.46

³⁴⁵ 1 Thessalonians 4.17

³⁴⁶ 1 Thessalonians 5.10

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

³⁴⁷ Romans 14.11 & Philippians 2.10

³⁴⁸ Revelation 20.12

³⁴⁹ Revelation 20.15

³⁵⁰ John 14.6

³⁵¹ Matthew 25.46 This is what Jesus said. If you don't believe Him who will you believe?

Some liberal preacher who preaches the words of man instead of the truth of Christ?

³⁵² Revelation 11.15 Remember the seventh of each cycle in the prophetic portion of Revelation always deals with judgment and what happens after the end of time.

The Milton Mess

³⁵³ Isaiah 14.12 KJV

³⁵⁴ The NASB is one the best literal translations in modern English.

³⁵⁵ Isaiah 14.12 NASB

³⁵⁶ Isaiah 14.4

³⁵⁷ Paradise Lost Book VII lines 131-134

³⁵⁸ Revelation 12.7-9

³⁵⁹ Paradise Lost Book 1 line 37-38

³⁶⁰ Paradise Lost Book IV lines 3-4

³⁶¹ Revelation 21.27

³⁶² Revelation 12.7-9

³⁶³ Matthew 12.24

³⁶⁴ Isaiah 14.4, 12

³⁶⁵ Revelation 20.1-2

³⁶⁶ Genesis 3.6

³⁶⁷ 2 Timothy 3.16-17 and, I might add, not to be taken out of context.

The Gospel To The Whole World

³⁶⁸ Matthew 24.14

³⁶⁹ Matthew 24.3

³⁷⁰ Matthew 24.14

³⁷¹ 1 Colossians 1.23

³⁷² John Piper blog post May 14, 2011 <http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/has-the-gospel-been-preached-to-the-whole-creation-already> Accessed June 10, 2014

³⁷³ <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/929-was-the-gospel-preached-throughout-the-whole-world-in-the-first-century>

³⁷⁴ Matthew 28.19

³⁷⁵ Romans 1.8

³⁷⁶ Acts 17.6

³⁷⁷ Colossians 1.6

³⁷⁸ Acts 2.5

³⁷⁹ Matthew 24.2

³⁸⁰ Matthew 24.3

³⁸¹ Matthew 24.14

³⁸² Matthew 28.19

The Olivet Discourse

³⁸³ Matthew 23.13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29

³⁸⁴ The NASB is seen as possibly the best literal translation of the 20th century. Of all translations it is seen as being closest to the original in meaning.

Last to Leave

³⁸⁵ I cover the miscalculations made by millennialist in Chapter 2 [Check the Foundations](#) of this book. They want this to be a future event and ignore the time stamp of verse 34 or worse yet they try and explain it away. Blackstone wants to change the generation from those listening to Jesus and says generation “means the whole existence of Israelites race.” W.E.Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1898), p. 160. The text has nothing to support such an assumption which is based not on the Biblical text but on the need for Blackstone to move the event from the past to the future.

³⁸⁶ “But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.” Romans 2.29 Paul deals with the possibility of Jews being saved in Romans 11.17-24 Saying they would have to be grafted back in. This means they are out without Jesus, and in with Him. See how Jesus spoke about this in Matthew 23.32; Matthew 21.33-45; Matthew 23.35-36 In his excellent book *The Olivet Discourse* Albert Dallas Meserve covers in detail how Jesus predicted the falling away and the punishment of the Jews as they are replaced by the gentiles.

³⁸⁷ Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews – Book XX Section 6
<http://www.ccel.org/j/josephus/works/ant-20.htm> accessed July 14, 2014

³⁸⁸ Albert Dallas Meserve, *The Olivet Discourse a Study of Matthew 24* (San Jose, CA: San Jose Bible College, 1972), Page 23.

³⁸⁹ Acts 11.28

³⁹⁰ Meserve, page 25

³⁹¹ Meserve p. 25

³⁹² <http://newjerusalemcommunity.blogspot.com/2011/01/earthquakes.html> accessed July 13, 2014

³⁹³ <http://newjerusalemcommunity.blogspot.com/2011/01/earthquakes.html> Accessed July 13, 2014

³⁹⁴ Acts 4.13

³⁹⁵ 2 Timothy 1.15

³⁹⁶ 2 Timothy 4.9-10

³⁹⁷ 2 Timothy 4.14-16

³⁹⁸ Meserve page 28

³⁹⁹ Acts 2.5

⁴⁰⁰ Romans 1.8

⁴⁰¹ Colossians 1.5-6

⁴⁰² Colossians 1.23

⁴⁰³ Works of Josephus Book VI, chapter 5 page 847.

⁴⁰⁴ Works of Josephus Book IV, Chapter 9, page 786

⁴⁰⁵ Matthew 23.32-33

⁴⁰⁶ Works of Josephus Book V, Chapter 10, page 821

⁴⁰⁷ Works of Josephus Book VI, Chapter 4, page 843

⁴⁰⁸ See Philip Mauro, 70 Weeks of Daniel, pages 245-246

⁴⁰⁹ IBID

⁴¹⁰ Works of Josephus, Book V, page 810

⁴¹¹ Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Chapter 5 accessed on July 24, 2014 at <http://www.ccel.org/j/josephus/works/war-6.htm>

⁴¹² The Blood Moon Prophecy is an idea popularized by Christian pastors John Hagee and Mark Biltz, which states that an ongoing tetrad which began with the April 2014 lunar eclipse is a sign of the end times. Accessed July 24, 2014 at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_Moon_Prophecy

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

⁴¹³ Christ had declared that his kingdom was not of this world. Yet, with the conversion of Constantine the kingdom was seen by many as being both physical and spiritual. The Holy Roman Empire may have done more harm than good for the spread of true Christianity.

⁴¹⁴ Matthew 13.30

⁴¹⁵ Matthew 25.46

⁴¹⁶ Matthew 25.13

⁴¹⁷ Matthew 25.30

⁴¹⁸ Matthew 25.31-33

⁴¹⁹ Matthew 25.46

⁴²⁰ Matthew 12.39-42

⁴²¹ Matthew 23.32

⁴²² Matthew 23.36

⁴²³ Matthew 23.37-38

⁴²⁴ Matthew 24. 34

The Book of Revelation

⁴²⁵ Revelation 4.1

⁴²⁶ Revelation 1.1

⁴²⁷ 2 Peter 3.8

⁴²⁸ Matthew 24.36-39

⁴²⁹ Ben Witherington III, *Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 149.

⁴³⁰ William Hendriksen in his classic work *‘More Than Conquerors’** divides the book into seven parts. In doing this he forces it into a mold to fit his fixation on the cycle of sevens in the book of Revelation. Seven is mentioned thirty-one times. Many of his observations are vital and key to understanding the book but his outline is forced and unsupported by the text itself. One example of this is his ignoring of the seven thunders in Revelation 10.3-4 as one of the cycles of seven. This oversight means there are eight cycles of seven using Hendriksen reasoning. Among amillennial writers his breakdown is widely accepted. 1. Chapters 1-3 message to the seven churches 2. Chapters 4-7 Seven Seals 3. Chapters 8-11 seven trumpets 4. Chapters 12-14 Woman and man-child 5. Chapters 15-16 The seven bowls 6. Chapters 17-19 The great harlot’s fall and the Beast 7. Chapters 20-22 Judgment and all things new. I agree on the progressive parallelism but disagree and only see four parallel prophecies. This not only better fits the text it also removes many of the objections caused by Hendriksen’s forcing part of the text to fit his theory instead of allowing the text to show him the natural breaks. The introductions to each of the four prophecies are necessary for the full force of their importance to be understood. Each introduction shows the prophecies originating in the third heaven with God and preceding forward to interaction with humanity.

* William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1939, 1967)

⁴³¹ These overlapping or repeating revelations were first called progressive parallelism by William Hendriksen. In his definition there were seven parallel sections of seven parts each that progressed chronologically with each other from the first century finishing up at the end of time. The seven churches do not fit in this system when you line up the seventh church Laodicea up with the victories and celebrations in the other sections. The seven churches are not written in the same style and are addressed to particular churches and their pastors. They are personal and must be forced into Hendriksen mode. I agree with the concept of progressive parallelism and will demonstrate it from the Revelation text but reject his seven within seven as forced and contrived. This progressive parallelism was first proposed by William Hendriksen in his book *More Than Conquerors* written in 1939.

⁴³² Seven thunders are also mentioned but John is not permitted to write about them.

⁴³³ There are four classic or basic ways of interpreting the Book of Revelation. 1. Preterist: This puts the events pictured as taking place during the generation that it was written in. They see the Book of Revelation as being about the Roman Empire at the end of the First century. 2. Historicist: The Book of Revelation is seen as representing or predicting events in history. The images from Revelation are interpreted as being both religious and historic. These events are seen as covering all of history from the time of Christ to the end of time. 3. Futurist: The majority of the Book of Revelation is seen as applying to end times events yet to happen. The symbols are yet to be fulfilled. 4. Idealist: The symbols are not seen as representing certain people or nations but are seen as symbols of the battle between good and evil.

⁴³⁴ Amillennialism is from two Greek words ‘no’ ‘millennialism’ The four major schools of understanding of end time events are. A. Dispensationalism: Based upon seven covenants of God and a Christ who will return to earth to fight a physical battle to establish an earthly kingdom. B. Historic Premillennialism: Jesus will rapture the church out of the world for seven years. Then he will return and set up his earthly kingdom. The interpretation of end time events is much like the Dispensationalism approach. C. Postmillennialism: Believes the world will get better and better until Christ returns and sets up his earthly kingdom. Starting with WWI this fell out of popular culture. By the end of the 20th century it was seen as not a realistic approach to Christ’s return.

D. Amillennialism or no millennium. Sees the struggle between good and evil as a spiritual and physical battle fought between the followers of Christ and those rejecting Christ and working for Satan. When Christ returns time comes to an end and either you go to heaven or hell depending on your relationship with Christ.

⁴³⁵ All three Gospels record Jesus saying he would not drink wine again until he had come into the kingdom. See Mt. 26.29, Mk. 14.25, Lk. 22.18 This was at the last supper. The next day as he was being crucified John 19.29-30 records that “*A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!”*” According to the words and actions of Jesus the Kingdom He so often spoke about has arrived.

⁴³⁶ John 18.36 ‘not of this realm’ literally means ‘not from here.’

⁴³⁷ 1 Thessalonians 4.17

⁴³⁸ Millennialism of all forms is based upon the belief in the great parenthesis or that God had to save the world before he could establish his kingdom on earth. They teach that Jesus set up the church as a stop gap to fill this time period until he can return and rule over the earthly kingdom from the temple in Jerusalem.

⁴³⁹ Revelation 1.20

⁴⁴⁰ See the chart at the end of the chapter to see this pattern in detail.

⁴⁴¹ Acts 18.19

⁴⁴² Numbers 22-24 Tells the story of Balaam and how God finally got his attention through his donkey.

⁴⁴³ 1 Corinthians 5.12-13

⁴⁴⁴ Jezebel led the country astray into idolatry and immorality. See 1 Kings 18-19; 2 Kings 9.22

⁴⁴⁵ Revelation 6.11

⁴⁴⁶ Revelation 3.20

⁴⁴⁷ Ben Witherington III, *Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 109

⁴⁴⁸ Witherington, page 110

⁴⁴⁹ As explained on page 193 footnote number 432

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

⁴⁵⁰ Hendrickson in *More Than Conquerors* has a very good list of both the New Testament and the Old Testament.

⁴⁵¹ 2 Peter 3.8

⁴⁵² Revelation 4.1

⁴⁵³ Witherington III, page 116

⁴⁵⁴ Revelation 5.1-14 introduces or precedes the seven seals; Revelation 5.1-6 introduces or precedes the seven trumpets; Revelation 12.1 thru 14.5 introduces or precedes the seven angels; Revelation 15.1 through 16.1 introduces or precedes the seven bowls. Each introduction has a focus or part of it occurs in heaven with worship before the throne and the lamb. The long introduction before the seven angels has the prehistory to the prophecies section, explaining how all this came about.

⁴⁵⁵ The reference in the 14th Chapter of Revelation to 144,000 is part of the introduction to the third set of sevens in the book. Though it is later in the book of Revelation it is actually earlier in Chronological order.

⁴⁵⁶ Revelation 7.9

⁴⁵⁷ Eugene Peterson, *Reversed Thunder* (1988), p 95.

⁴⁵⁸ The ark contains manna from the wilderness, the Ten Commandments and Aaron's rod that budded. It disappeared during the Babylonian captivity. The Apocrypha says it was added to the treasures of the Babylonian king. Ezra and Nehemiah did not have it when they rebuilt the second temple. The Holy of Holies was empty. Jewish tradition says it may have been hidden before the temple was taken over by the Babylonians.

⁴⁵⁹ Witherington III, page 147

⁴⁶⁰ The parallel section in the seven trumpets and seven bowls seems to be in direct conflict with each other. The trumpets refer to one-third of the items effected being covered while the bowls refer to the whole of each one being effected. The difference is point of perspective. If you are in the two-thirds not touched you will notice but not be directly touched. If you are in the one-third that is touched or effected it appears that your whole world is covered. These are still about the same events but from different points of view.

⁴⁶¹ This goes back to the concept of the three heavens and the second heaven is the place of prophetic authority and power. When the sun or moon or stars fall it is representing power lost and punishment received.

⁴⁶² In the Old Testament Abaddon is a reference to Hades or a place of death and destruction. (Job 31.12; Ps. 88.11; Prov. 15.11) Here it is making a reference to the who is over the evil forces attacking and punishing on the earth for five months.

⁴⁶³ In fact I have found none that have this as in introduction to the section that follows. This is part of a pattern set up in the book and is the logical conclusion based on the way prophecies from God have patterns that repeat or reflect one on another.

⁴⁶⁴ Revelation 12.1

⁴⁶⁵ Galatians 3.16

⁴⁶⁶ Revelation 12.3

⁴⁶⁷ Revelation 12.9

⁴⁶⁸ Matthew 2.13-16

⁴⁶⁹ Matthew 9.8

⁴⁷⁰ Matthew 7.29

⁴⁷¹ This section also mentions 1,260 days. This matches the 1,260 days or the 42 months or the 3 ½ prophetic days from the sixth trumpet of Revelation 11. That is the same number used which parallels the same time in Daniel is not understood and all explanations are lacking. I choose to recognize the occurrences and state the similarities while still seeking a credible explanation.

Last to Leave

472 Luke 10.17

473 Luke 10.18

474 M. Robert Mulholland, *Revelation: Holy Living in a Unholy World* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Francis Asbury Press, 1990) P. 43

475 Mk. 14.25, Mt. 26.29, Lk. 22.18

476 John 19.29-30

477 Revelation 12.12

478 Revelation 12.17

479 It is ironic that the Jews suffer for a savior they have rejected.

480 Revelation 13.7

481 Revelation 17.7

482 Revelation 12.5

483 Revelation 14.1

484 Revelation 7.9

485 Revelation 14.4b

486 Revelation 13.9

487 Revelation 16.6

488 Revelation 16.19

489 Revelation 14.19

490 Revelation 20.4

491 It is estimated that over half of all of humans who have ever lived are alive today. This means judgment will cover half of humanity either going to heaven because they believed in Jesus or half of humanity going to hell because they have rejected the Son of God.

492 Witherington III, page 206

493 Witherington III, Page 207

494 There are differences in the two with one happening to one-third while the other happens to the whole. These difference may merely be due to the different emphasis of the trumpets and the bowls. That they are parallel and progressive is obvious to even the most casual reader.

495 Revelation 16.17

496 Matthew 25.46

497 C.H. Giblin, *The Book of Revelation: The Open Book of Prophecy* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1991), p. 183.

498 Revelation 17.1

499 Revelation 17.14

500 Matthew 25.46

501 Revelation 18.24

502 Revelation 6.10

503 Philippians 2.10-11

504 Revelation 21.1-8

505 Revelation 21. 10-14

506 Revelation 21.22-27

507 Genesis 2.9 & Revelation 2.7; 22.2

508 Revelation 22.1-5

509 Revelation 22.7, 12, 20

The Satan Mess

510 Revelation 21.27

What the Bible Really Says About the End of Time

⁵¹¹ There are some who want to say this verse has a double meaning. They want to believe it is about the King of Babylon and also about Satan. The problem is the only place this is ever stated is in the poem by John Milton. All the other scriptures they use are also taken out of context to prove this one. This verse in Isaiah 14.12 is NOT about Satan.

⁵¹² Genesis 3.1

⁵¹³ Answers to heaven quiz:

1. 3rd heaven God's throne
2. 3rd heaven God's throne
3. 1st heaven the sky
4. 3rd heaven God's throne
5. 1st heaven the sky or 3rd heaven God's throne
6. 1st heaven the sky
7. 3rd heaven God's throne
8. 3rd heaven God's throne
9. 1st heaven the sky
10. 2nd heaven of prophetic language
11. 3rd heaven God's throne
12. 2nd heaven of prophetic language

Last to Leave Final thoughts

⁵¹⁴ Revelation 16.16

⁵¹⁵ Revelation 16.17, 21.6

⁵¹⁶ Revelation 22.21 The last verse in the Bible