

THE PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST LEADING TO THE JUBILEE—THE CHRONOLOGY AND PROPHECIES

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The picture on the cover is an illustration of Matthew 24:27: “For just as the lightning comes out of eastern parts and shines over to western parts, so the presence of the Son of man will be.”

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INTRODUCTION

In a prayer to God Jesus said: “Sanctify them by means of the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:17) And in his conversation with a group of Jews, he said, “The Scripture cannot be nullified.” (John 10:35) Jesus believed that the books of the Hebrew Scriptures were inspired by God.

Few people today believe that the Bible is the word of God, and even those who say they do, have some reservations to particular texts. If we follow the example of Jesus and believe in the full inspiration of the Bible without any reservations, it means we believe that:

Every word in the Bible is inspired by God, though written by human secretaries.

All the nuances and subtleties of the original text are important.

Every account in the Bible is included with a particular purpose and has a particular meaning.

This book analyzes the chronology and prophecies concerning the time of the end and the restoration of all things. Why were all the passages dealing with these issues included in the Bible? We find an answer in Romans 15:4:

⁴ For *all the things* that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope.

We note that Paul speaks about “*all the things* that were written aforetime,” which refers to all the books of The Hebrew Scriptures. This means that the ages of our ancient ancestors found in Genesis chapter 5, and the information in 1 Kings 6:1 that Solomon started to build the temple in the 480th year “after the Sons of Israel came out from the land of Egypt,” are not included just to satisfy our curiosity.

But Paul said that this information is included in the Hebrew Scriptures “for our instruction.” And not only that, but this information, together with the prophecies about the restoration of all things, is written to give us hope!

If we had a father we loved who had been away from us for a long time and we received a letter from him, we would carefully read it several times to ensure we had fully understood all the nuances of what he had written. Our heavenly Father has sent a long letter to us, The Holy Bible, which includes chronological information and prophecies that really give us hope. Will we study this information carefully to ensure that we have fully understood all the nuances?

Unfortunately, the study of prophecies and chronology has been grossly neglected in recent years. This is the reason why I have written this book: to point to all the information God has given us about the restoration of all things. Every chapter gives

us hope by providing details and nuances about an aspect of God's purpose in the restoration of all things.

The chapter that has been particularly important to me is chapter 9 about the Jubilee chronology. It was an aha-moment for me when I realized that just as there are specific appointed times ending at Jesus' first coming and specific appointed times ending at his second coming, there are also specific appointed times ending at the antitypical Jubilee, the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CHRONOLOGY AND THE PROPHECIES OF THE BIBLE SHALL BE UNDERSTOOD

SUMMARY

This book discusses several prophecies and prophetic time periods in the Bible. It is not presumptuous to discuss their fulfillment, as their context indicates they should be understood.

Jesus showed that all the nuances and subtleties of the original text of the Bible are important, which means that a careful study of this text is necessary.

Daniel shows that his prophecies and prophetic time periods were sealed until the time of the end. Then, the servants of God should understand them.

Jesus gave a prophecy about his second coming and his presence, and he showed that his followers would understand its fulfillment. Jesus also spoke about the prophetic time period of “the appointed times of the nations,” and said that it should also be understood.

The last book in the Bible is “A revelation by Jesus Christ, which God gave him.” It contains prophecies, signs, and prophetic time periods, and Jesus shows that his followers should understand these.

A central point in this book is the time prophecies that lead to the great tribulation and the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. These time prophecies are connected with what I call “the Jubilee chronology,” which holds that the Jubilee in Israel is a prophetic type of the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ.

As a background for understanding the Jubilee as prophetic types, I discuss in detail the prophetic types of the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the offerings, as well as those of Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Booths.

The words of Jesus in Luke 20:37 teach us how we should view the text of the Bible, including its chronology and its prophecies:

³⁷ But that the dead are raised up even Moses disclosed, in the account about the thornbush, when he calls Jehovah ‘the God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob.’³⁸ He is a God, not of the dead, but of the living, for they are all living to him.”

These words teach us several important principles:

The first lesson: *The nuances and subtleties of the text of the Bible are important.* The passage shows that one situation can teach us something important about another situation. It shows that even the tense of a verb can be very important. If the text to which Jesus refers had used past tense and said, “I **was** the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” it would not have shown that there would be a resurrection from the dead.

The second lesson: *To understand the text of the Bible, teachers are necessary.* I am certain that almost no reader of Exodus 3:6, to which Jesus refers, would, after reading that Jehovah **is** the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, conclude that these words show there would be a resurrection from the dead. However, after reading Jesus’ words, we understand his argument.

The third lesson: *The teachers we need must have a good knowledge of Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic.* The reason for this is that the basis for the argument of Jesus cannot be understood without a knowledge of Hebrew.

There is no verb in the clause in Exodus 3:6 to which Jesus is referring. A clause without a verb is called a nominal clause and is common in Hebrew. In such clauses, the auxiliary verb “to be” is implied, usually with present meaning; thus, the meaning of the clause is ‘I **am** the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,’ not ‘I **was** the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.’

If a teacher presents the information in the last paragraph to a Bible reader who does not know Hebrew, the Bible reader can check it against Hebrew Bible texts and grammars. But he or she would not personally be able to do the analysis of the Hebrew text in the last paragraph.

BIBLE CHRONOLOGY AND PROPHECIES WILL BE UNDERSTOOD AT THE RIGHT TIME

Those who wrote the various books of the Christian Greek Scriptures held the same view as Jesus: that all the subtleties and nuances of the Bible's text were important. One example is the words of Paul in Romans 15:4:

⁴ For *all the things* that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope.

We note the word *all* with reference to The Holy Scriptures, and the words “for our instruction.” This shows that those who want to serve God should understand the Holy Scriptures. A great part of the Bible consists of prophecies about the future, including different time periods. These are included in “all the things that were written aforetime” — for our instruction.

DANIEL'S PROPHECIES SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD IN THE TIME OF THE END

The book of Daniel has numerous detailed prophecies about the future. The last chapter shows when these prophecies will be understood. I quote Daniel 12:7 (above) and Daniel 12:11, 12 (below):

⁷ And I began to hear the man clothed with the linen, who was up above the waters of the stream, as he proceeded to raise his right [hand] and his left [hand] to the heavens and to swear by the One who is alive for time indefinite: “It will be for *an appointed time, appointed times and a half*. And as soon as there will have been a finishing of the dashing of the power of *the holy people* to pieces, all these things will come to their finish.”

¹¹ “And from the time that the constant [feature] has been removed and there has been a placing of the disgusting thing that is causing desolation, there will be *one thousand two hundred and ninety days*. ¹² “Happy is the one who is keeping in expectation and who arrives at the *one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days!*”

The quoted verses mention three specific prophetic time periods, which should be understood at the right time. I quote Daniel 12:4 (above), 12:8-10 (middle), and 11:33 (below):

⁴ “And as for you, O Daniel, make secret the words and seal up the book, *until the time of [the] end*. Many will rove about, and the [true] knowledge will become abundant.”

⁸ Now as for me, I heard, but I could not understand; so that I said: “O my lord, what will be the final part of these things?” ⁹ And he went on to say: “Go, Daniel, because *the words are made secret and sealed up until the time of [the] end*. ¹⁰ Many will cleanse themselves and whiten themselves and will be refined. And the wicked ones will certainly act wickedly, and no wicked ones at all will understand; but *the ones having insight* will understand.

³³ And as regards *those having insight* among the people, they will impart understanding to the many. And they will certainly be made to stumble by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plundering, for [some] days.

Regarding time, both 12:4 and 12:9 say that the prophecies and the prophetic times should be sealed until the time of the end, when they would be understood. Those who should understand the prophecies are called “the ones having insight” (*maskiḷ*) in 12:10, and 11:33 says that “those having insight” (*maskiḷ*) will teach others. We can learn several important things from Daniel chapters 11 and 12.

The first lesson: *Prophecies and prophetic time periods will be understood in the time of the end.* According to 12:8, the question of Daniel was, “What will be the final part of these things?” The words “these things” must logically refer to the prophecies in chapters 11 and 12. But indirectly, the words must include all the prophecies in the book of Daniel.

The second lesson: *The prophecies and prophetic times are related to “the holy people.”* Because the power of this people will be dashed to pieces after three times and a half, according to 12:7, “the holy people” must be a group of people who are distinguished from all other peoples and can be clearly identified.

The third lesson: *Only those having insight will understand the prophecies, and they will teach others.* No one can just read the prophecies of the Bible and other texts and understand these texts. Those studying the Bible need teachers who can understand the Bible’s text. It is, for example, impossible for most people to understand the prophetic periods of 1,290 days and 1,335 days. It is logical that those having insight, who understand the text of the Bible and teach others, are a part of “the holy people.”

THE PROPHECIES OF JESUS WILL BE UNDERSTOOD

The great prophecy of Jesus about his return and presence is found in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Matthew and Mark only present events that would happen in the future, but Luke also presents a prophetic time period, and I quote Luke 21:24:

²⁴ and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until *the appointed times of the nations* are fulfilled.

After Jesus had presented the events that would happen in the future, including the prophetic time period, he showed that his followers would understand his great prophecy. I quote Luke 21:29-31:

²⁹ With that he spoke an illustration to them: “Note the fig tree and all the other trees: ³⁰ When they are already in the bud, by observing it YOU know for yourselves that now the summer is near. ³¹ In this way YOU also, when YOU see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near.

When the followers of Jesus saw the events of the composite sign of his presence, and the fulfillment of the appointed times of the nations, they should know that “God’s kingdom is near,” (Luke 21:31) “that he is near at the doors.” (Matthew 24: 33) The important point in our context is that, according to Jesus, his servants would

both understand the fulfillment of the events in Jesus' great prophecy and the fulfillment of the appointed times of the nations.

The book of Revelation has many prophecies written in signs, including time prophecies. I quote Revelation 11:2, 3 (above), 12:6 (middle), and 13:5-7 (below):

² But as for the courtyard that is outside the temple [sanctuary], cast it clear out and do not measure it, because it has been given to the nations, and they will trample the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.³ And I will cause my two witnesses *to prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days dressed in sackcloth.*"

⁶ And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there *a thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

⁵ And a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies was given it, and authority to act *forty-two months* was given it.⁶ And it opened its mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name and his residence, even those residing in heaven.⁷ And there was granted it to wage war with the holy ones and conquer them, and authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.

We ascribe Revelation to the apostle John because he was the writer. But Revelation 1:1 puts the situation in the right perspective:

¹ A revelation by Jesus Christ, which God gave him, *to show* (*deiknymi*) *his slaves* the things that must shortly take place. And he sent forth his angel and presented [it] in signs through him to his slave John.

The book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ that John wrote down. The English word "show" is translated from the Greek word *deiknymi*, which means "show, point out; reveal, explain; prove." This means that those whom Jesus calls "his slaves" would understand the prophetic symbols of Revelation.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROPHETIC TYPES AND ANTITYPES

When we are trying to understand prophetic types, we may be tempted to use our imagination and interpret them as we think they mean. Because of this, there are many different competing interpretations of the same Bible texts. To gain insight into the situation from God's perspective, we must carefully examine how the inspired writers of The Christian Greek Scriptures treated the prophetic types found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

A central point in the book is the time prophecies that lead to the great tribulation and the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. These time prophecies are connected with what I call "*the Jubilee chronology*," which holds that the Jubilee in Israel is a prophetic type of the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ.

As background for understanding the Jubilee as prophetic types, I discuss in detail the prophetic types and antitypes of the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the offerings, as well as those of the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Booths. By understanding how the mentioned parts of the Law of Moses are prophetic types

with larger antitypes, it will be easier to see how the different aspects of the Jubilee are also prophetic types with larger antitypes.

THE TABERNACLE, THE PRIESTHOOD, AND THE OFFERINGS AS PROPHETIC TYPES

THESE ARE PROPHETIC TYPES OF THE RANSOM SACRIFICE OF JESUS AND THE WAY TO HEAVEN FOR THE ANOINTED FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

The primary issue we need to explore is whether each basic part of a prophetic type refers to a concrete antitype, or whether we should understand a prophetic type the same way we understand an illustration. An illustration consists of several basic parts. But these parts do not have concrete meaning in themselves; they serve to hold the illustration together as a whole. Together, these basic parts illustrate an important principle or procedure that the listeners should keep in mind or follow.

The words in Hebrews 8:5 may illustrate how the different parts of prophetic types have concrete antitypes:

⁵ These men are offering sacred service in *a typical representation* (*hypodeigma*) and *a shadow* (*skia*) of *the heavenly things*; just as Moses, when about to construct the tent, was given the divine command: For He says: “*See that you make all things after their pattern* (*typos*) *that was shown to you in the mountain.*”

These words show that the Tabernacle was a typical representation of heavenly things. Were the words “a typical representation” used as an illustration? Were they used only to show that we who live on the earth must worship Jehovah in his Tabernacle, just as his heavenly sons worship him in heaven? Or should the existence of the Tabernacle, where the priests offered sacrifices to Jehovah every day *remind* us that we should also worship Jehovah privately in our homes?

The Tabernacle did not serve as a general reminder to the Israelites or to us. The Tabernacle had to be constructed exactly according to the pattern that Moses was shown when he spoke with Jehovah’s angel on the mountain. This means that each of the basic parts of the Tabernacle has a concrete antitypical application. I will discuss some examples:

The priests performed their service in the Holy compartment of the Tabernacle. But the High Priest entered the Most Holy one time a year, on the Day of Atonement. What are the antitypes? We read Hebrews 9:11, 12, 24:

¹¹ However, when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have already taken place, he passed through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹² *He entered into the holy place*, not with the blood of goats and of young bulls, but with his own blood, once for all time, and obtained an everlasting deliverance for us...²⁴ For Christ did not enter into *a holy place* made with hands, which is a copy (*antitypos*) of the reality (*alethinos*), *but into heaven itself*, so that he now appears before God on our behalf.

The quotation shows that the Most Holy in the Tabernacle was a prophetic type of heaven. In Hebrews 10:19-22, there is a further identification:

¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have boldness for the way of entry into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰which he opened up for us as a new and living way *through the curtain, that is, his flesh*, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us approach with sincere hearts and complete faith, having had our hearts sprinkled clean from a wicked conscience and our bodies bathed with clean water.

How could the curtain between the Holy and the Most Holy picture the flesh of Jesus? First Corinthians 15:50 says that “flesh and blood cannot inherit God’s Kingdom.” The fleshly body of Jesus prevented him from ascending to heaven. However, 10:10 says:

¹⁰By this “will” we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time.

Jesus as the High Priest could not enter the Most Holy, which is heaven, with his fleshly body, just as the curtain prevented the High Priest from entering the Most Holy. When Jesus offered his body, the curtain, which symbolized his body, was taken away, so to speak. Jesus was raised as a spirit, according to 1 Corinthians 15:45. And now he could enter heaven.

In Israel, the priests served at the temple and offered sacrifices to Jehovah. Who were the antitype of the priests? Paul uses the pronouns “we” and “us,” and verse 22 speaks about “our bodies bathed with clean water.” This was a requirement of the priests before they entered the Holy compartment, showing that these persons were antitypical priests. But to whom does the word “we” refer? We read Hebrews 3:1:

¹Consequently, holy brothers, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest whom we acknowledge—Jesus.

Those mentioned in this verse are both the children and the brothers of Jesus, as 2:11-13 says. They look to Jesus as their High Priest, and that they have the “heavenly calling” identifies them as priests. To show this, I again quote Hebrews 10:19, 20:

¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have boldness for the way of entry into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰which he opened up for us as a new and living way *through the curtain, that is, his flesh*.

The priests could enter the Holy compartment, but not the Most Holy compartment. However, because of the new situation with the ransom sacrifice, Paul points to an expansion of the type implied by what happened when Jesus died. We read Matthew 27:51:

⁵¹And look! the curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two, from top to bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split.

The curtain had prevented the priests in Israel, who entered the Holy, from entering the Most Holy. But now this curtain, symbolized by the body of Jesus, was torn in two. Hebrews 10:20, quoted above, shows that, contrary to what happened in Israel, the underpriests with a heavenly hope could, because of the ransom sacrifice, enter “the holy place,” which is the Most Holy, symbolizing heaven. The

requirement was that each one of the underpriests also sacrificed his body, just as Jesus did.

The High Priest entered the Most Holy with blood on the Day of Atonement each year. This was a type of Jesus Christ who entered into heaven with the value of his blood, as we read in Hebrews 9:24-26:

²⁴ For Christ did not enter into a holy place made with hands, which is a copy (*antitypos*) of the reality (*alethinos*), **but into heaven itself, so that he now appears before God on our behalf.** ²⁵ This was not done to offer himself often, as when the high priest enters into the holy place from year to year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Otherwise, he would have to suffer often from the founding of the world. But now he has manifested himself once for all time at the conclusion of the systems of things to do away with sin through the sacrifice of himself.

The action of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement foreshadowed that Jesus would die a sacrificial death, that he would be resurrected, and that he would ascend to heaven to present the value of his sacrificed blood before Jehovah.

However, the High Priest offered two animals, a bull and a goat, which also have a prophetic meaning. We read in Leviticus 16:11-16:

¹¹ “**Aaron will present the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement in behalf of himself and his house;** afterward he will slaughter the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself. ¹² “He will then take the fire holder full of burning coals from the altar before Jehovah and two handfuls of fine perfumed incense, and he will bring them inside the curtain. ¹³ He will also put the incense on the fire before Jehovah, and the cloud of the incense will envelop the Ark cover, which is on the Testimony, so that he may not die. ¹⁴ “He will take some of the bull’s blood and spatter it with his finger in front of the cover on the east side, and he will spatter some of the blood with his finger seven times before the cover. ¹⁵ “**He will then slaughter the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the curtain and do with its blood the same as he did with the bull’s blood; he is to spatter it toward the cover and before the cover.** ¹⁶ “He must make atonement for the holy place concerning the acts of uncleanness of the Israelites and concerning their transgressions and their sins, and that is what he should do for the tent of meeting, which is located among them in the midst of their acts of uncleanness.

The Scriptures show that the ransom sacrifice will be applied to two different groups. The blood of the bull that made atonement for the High Priest and his family would foreshadow the application of the ransom sacrifice for the spiritual priests, the 144,000 with the heavenly calling. And the blood of the goat for the people of Israel would foreshadow the application of the ransom sacrifice for those who will live in the earthly paradise.

Table 1.1 Types and antitypes of the Tabernacle, the priests, and the offerings

PROPHETIC TYPE	ANTITYPE
The High Priest.	Jesus Christ.
The priests.	Anointed Christians with the heavenly calling.

The Most Holy (the holy place).	Heaven.
The Holy.	The situation of the anointed Christians on the earth.
The curtain between the Holy and Most Holy.	The body of Jesus.
Temple sacrifices.	The sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus.
The High Priest into the Most Holy with blood.	The sacrificial death of Jesus, and the presentation of his blood to Jehovah in heaven.
The blood of the bull.	The ransom sacrifice applied to those with the heavenly calling.
The blood of the goat.	The ransom sacrifice applied to those with the earthly hope.

From the discussion above, we understand that the basic parts of a prophetic type have concrete antitypical fulfillments. This means prophetic types are not like illustrations, where we are taught only one or more basic principles or procedures.

When we study prophetic types, we cannot just ask what the whole prophetic type *reminds us of*, but we must ask for the antitypical fulfillment of each part.

THE FESTIVALS AS PROPHETIC TYPES

THE THREE FESTIVALS WERE CELEBRATED TO THANK GOD FOR THE HARVEST OF THE DIFFERENT CROPS. THEY WERE PROPHETIC TYPES OF HOW GROUPS OF HUMANS ARE HARVESTED FOR ETERNAL SALVATION

Regarding prophetic types, we read in Hebrews 10:1:

¹ For since the Law has a shadow of the good things to come, but not the very substance of the things, [men] can never with the same sacrifices from year to year which they offer continually make those who approach perfect.

These words show that much of the law is prophetic, serving as types whose antitypes are found in the time of the end. I will now discuss the antitypes of the festivals in Israel.

Three times every year, the able-bodied, ceremonially clean, Israelite men had to go to Jerusalem for the festivals. Paul shows that these festivals, as well as the sabbaths, were prophetic types. I quote Colossians 2:16, 17:

¹⁶ Therefore, do not let anyone judge you about what you eat and drink or about the observance of a festival or of the new moon or of a sabbath. ¹⁷ Those things are a shadow of the things to come, but the reality belongs to the Christ.

Paul says that the observances of the three festivals were “a shadow” (a prophetic type), and the body that cast the shadow (the antitype) would come with the Christ.

The festivals were celebrated to thank God for different agricultural harvests and to remember important events in the nation's history.

Passover marked the start of the spring barley harvest, and it commemorated the exodus from Egypt and the freedom from slavery there.

Pentecost (The Feast of Weeks) marked the harvest of the first ripe fruits of the wheat harvest (Exodus 23:16), and it commemorated the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

The Feast of Booths (The Feast of Ingathering) marked the final harvest of fruit and grain in the autumn. It commemorated the 40 years of wandering in the desert, when they had only temporary shelters.

The different compartments of the tabernacle, the priests, and the offerings were prophetic types of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus and the way to heaven for the 144,000 humans who will reign with Jesus in the heavenly kingdom. The three festivals were prophetic types of the harvest of humans for salvation, expressed through the offerings of three different *firstfruits*: Passover pointed to Jesus Christ, Pentecost pointed to the anointed Christians with a heavenly hope, and the Feast of Booths pointed to the great crowd with an earthly hope.

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE ANTITYPICAL PASSOVER

The Passover on Nisan 14 was a memorial of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt and the 'passing over' of their firstborn when Jehovah destroyed the firstborn of the Egyptians. The Passover lamb was roasted whole over fire and eaten rapidly during the night with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Paul discusses the antitype of the Passover lamb in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8:

⁶ YOUR [cause for] boasting is not fine. Do YOU not know that a little leaven ferments the whole lump? ⁷ Clear away the old leaven, that YOU may be a new lump, according as YOU are free from ferment. For, indeed, *Christ our passover has been sacrificed*. ⁸ Consequently *let us keep the festival*, not with old leaven, neither with leaven of badness and wickedness, but with unfermented cakes of sincerity and truth.

Paul's words in verse 7 show that Jesus Christ was the antitypical Passover lamb. When Paul says, "let us keep the festival," he shows that there is an antitypical celebration of the Passover. The Passover was followed by seven days of the Festival of Unfermented Cakes, and during these days, it was forbidden to have any leaven in the homes of the Israelites. Leaven is a symbol of sin, and as Paul indicates, celebrating the antitypical Passover means avoiding the leaven of badness and wickedness, which is described in detail in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11.

At the first Passover in Egypt, the Israelites were commanded to take the blood of the Passover lamb and smear it on the two doorposts and the top of the doorways of their houses. The firstborn in the houses with blood were not killed when the Egyptian firstborn were killed. This is a prophetic type of the blood of Jesus that saves the anointed Christians, as we see in Ephesians 1:7 (above), and Hebrews 12:22, 23 (below):

⁷ By means of him we have the *release by ransom through the blood of that one*, yes, the forgiveness of [our] trespasses, according to the riches of his undeserved kindness.

²² But YOU have approached a Mount Zion and a city of [the] living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and myriads of angels, ²³ in general assembly, and *the congregation of the firstborn who have been enrolled in the heavens*, and God the Judge of all, and the spiritual lives of righteous ones who have been made perfect.

It is not possible to apply the word “firstborn” in the expression, “the congregation of the firstborn” to any other group than the firstborn in Egypt that were saved by the blood of the Passover lamb, and who were the prophetic type of the anointed Christians with a heavenly hope. Those who have approached heavenly Jerusalem have been released by the blood of Jesus Christ.

There is also a prophetic type pointing to Jesus at the Festival of Unfermented Cakes, which lasted seven days after the Passover. I quote Leviticus 23:9-13:

⁹ Jehovah continued to speak to Moses, saying: ¹⁰ “Speak to the Israelites and tell them, ‘When you eventually come into the land that I am giving you and you have reaped its harvest, you must bring *a sheaf of the firstfruits* of your harvest to the priest. ¹¹ And he will wave the sheaf back and forth before Jehovah to gain approval for you. The priest should wave it on the day after the Sabbath. ¹² On the day you have the sheaf waved, you must offer a sound young ram in its first year, as a burnt offering to Jehovah. ¹³ Its grain offering will be two tenths of an e’phah of fine flour mixed with oil, as an offering made by fire to Jehovah, a pleasing aroma.

In contrast with the two loaves offered as the firstfruits of wheat on Pentecost, which contained leaven, the sheaf of the firstfruits of the barley that was offered on Nisan 16 of the Festival of Unfermented Cakes, no leaven was offered along with it. The reason was that this offering of the *firstfruits* of barley was a prophetic type of Jesus Christ, who did not have sin (leaven), while the two loaves of wheat with leaven that were offered at Pentecost were a prophetic type of the 144,000 anointed ones who had sin (leaven).

The words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:20 are:

²⁰ However, now Christ has been raised up from the dead, *the firstfruits* of those who have fallen asleep [in death].

In Colossians 1:18, Paul refers to Jesus as “*the firstborn* of the dead,” which means that he was the first one to receive a resurrection leading to everlasting life. But in 1 Corinthians 15:20, he is referred to as “*firstfruits*,” which must refer back to the festivals in Israel, particularly to Passover and the Feast of Unfermented Cakes. Jesus was the antitype of the sheaf of *the firstfruits* of the barley harvest. In harmony with this, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead on Sunday, Nisan 16, 33 CE., on the same day that the priest offered the sheaf of barley to Jehovah.

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE ANTITYPICAL PENTECOST

Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks was celebrated 50 days after Passover as the end of the barley harvest, and it marked the start of the wheat harvest. The laws regarding Pentecost are found in Exodus 23:16, 17 (above) and Leviticus 23:15-17 (below):

¹⁶ Also, you are to observe the Festival of Harvest of the first ripe fruits of your labors, of what you sow in the field; and the Festival of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the field the results of your labors. ¹⁷ Also, you are to observe the Festival of Harvest of the first ripe fruits of your labors, of what you sow in the field; and the Festival of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the field the results of your labors.

¹⁵ “You are to count seven sabbaths from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you bring the sheaf of the wave offering. They should be complete weeks. ¹⁶ You will count off 50 days until the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then you should present a new grain offering to Jehovah. ¹⁷ *You should bring from your dwelling places two loaves as a wave offering.* These should be made of two tenths of an e'phah of fine flour. They should be baked with leaven, as first ripe fruits to Jehovah.

The prophetic type was that two loaves made of fine flour and leaven, as the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, should be presented as a wave offering to Jehovah. The two loaves were baked with leaven, which is a symbol of sin. The antitype of these two loaves is the 144,000 humans, who are taken from sinful mankind to become God's adopted sons with a heavenly hope.

Confirming this application are James 1:18 (above) and Revelation 14:1, 4 (below):

¹⁸ It was his will to bring us forth by the word of truth, so that we would become *a kind (tis) of firstfruits* of his creatures.

I quote Revelation 14:1, 4:

¹ Then I saw, and look! the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who have his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads... ⁴ These are the ones who did not defile themselves with women; in fact, they are virgins. These are the ones who keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes. *These were bought from among mankind as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.*

The word “*firstfruits*” has only meaning in relation to the three festivals in Israel. We have already seen that Jesus was the antitypical firstfruits of those offered at the Feast of Unfermented Cakes. Therefore, the 144,000 anointed Christians will naturally be the antitypes of the two loaves that were offered as firstfruits of the wheat harvest at Pentecost.

There is a small detail in James 1:18 that is compatible with the view that Jesus is the antitypical firstfruits of the barley harvest offered at Passover, while the anointed Christians are the antitypical firstfruits of the wheat offered at Pentecost. This is the Greek pronoun *tis* following the noun *aparkhe* (“firstfruit”). The pronoun *tis* means “some” or “certain.” This pronoun shows that the anointed Christians James refers to in his letter are not antitypes of all kinds of firstfruits that were offered at the festivals. But they are “certain firstfruits” among other firstfruits.

It is fitting that the first time when sinful humans were anointed with holy spirit to become heirs of the heavenly kingdom was on the day of Pentecost in the year 33 CE, the same year when Jesus died and became the ransom sacrifice.

Revelation 14:4 shows that the 144,000 anointed followers of Jesus who are “bought from among mankind” are antitypical *firstfruits*.

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE ANTITYPICAL FESTIVAL OF BOOTHS

The Festival of Booths (The Feast of Ingathering) marked the final harvest of fruit and grain in the autumn. I quote Exodus 23:16, 17 (above) 34:22 (middle), and Deuteronomy 16:13-15 (below):

¹⁶ Also the festival of harvest of the first ripe fruits of your labors, of what you sow in the field; and the festival of ingathering at the outgoing of the year, when you gather in your labors from the field. ¹⁷ On three occasions in the year every male of yours will appear before the face of the [true] Lord, Jehovah.

²² “And you will carry on your festival of weeks with *the first ripe fruits of the wheat harvest, and the festival of ingathering at the turn of the year.*

¹³ “The festival of booths you should celebrate for yourself seven days *when you make an ingathering from your threshing floor and your oil and winepress.* ¹⁴ And you must rejoice during your festival, you and your son and your daughter and your man slave and your slave girl and the Levite and the alien resident and the fatherless boy and the widow, who are inside your gates.

Exodus 34:22 mentions “the first ripe fruits of the wheat harvest,” and Deuteronomy 16:13 mentions “an ingathering from your threshing floor and your oil and winepress.” The *firstfruits* of grain, oil, and wine were offered during the seven days of the festival, together with 70 bulls and other animals.

There is one account in the Christian Greek Scriptures that is an antitype of the Festival of Booths. I quote Leviticus 23:33, 34, 39, 40 (above) and Revelation 7:9, 10, 13-17 (below):

³³ And Jehovah continued to speak to Moses, saying: ³⁴ “Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the festival of *booths* (*sukkā*, Greek *skēnē*) for seven days to Jehovah...

³⁹ However, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when YOU have gathered the produce of the land, YOU should celebrate the festival of Jehovah seven days. On the first day is a complete rest and on the eighth day is a complete rest. ⁴⁰ And YOU must take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, *the fronds of palm trees and the boughs of branchy trees and poplars of the torrent valley, and YOU must rejoice before Jehovah YOUR God seven days.* ⁴¹ And YOU must celebrate it as a festival to Jehovah seven days in the year.

⁹ After these things I saw, and, look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; *and there were palm branches in their hands.* ¹⁰ *And they keep on crying with a loud voice, saying: “Salvation [we owe] to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.”...*

¹³ And in response one of the elders said to me: “These who are dressed in the white robes, who are they and where did they come from?” ¹⁴ So right away I said to him: “My lord, you are the one that knows.” And he said to me: “These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ That is why they are before the throne of God; and they are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple; *and the One seated on the throne will spread his tent* (*skēnoō*) *over them.* ¹⁶ They will hunger no more nor thirst anymore, neither will

the sun beat down upon them nor any scorching heat,¹⁷ because the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes.”

What we see in Revelation 7:9-17 is a great crowd without number celebrating the antitypical Festival of Booths. There are three parallels:

The first parallel: The great crowd has palm branches in their hands; the same was true with those celebrating the Festival of Booths. The Greek word for palm branch is *foiniks*, and this word is used both in Revelation 7:9 and in the Septuagint version of Leviticus 23:40.

The second parallel: The last crop was now harvested, and all the people would rejoice for the food Jehovah had given them to sustain their lives. They would “rejoice before Jehovah.” (Leviticus 23:40) The members of the great crowd are also rejoicing with a loud voice and are ascribing salvation to Jehovah and the Lamb. (Revelation 7:10)

The third parallel: The reason for living in booths for seven days, was that the people should commemorate how Jehovah kept them alive during their 40-year wandering in the desert. The booths symbolized Jehovah’s protection. Revelation 7:15 says that “the One seated on the throne will spread his tent (*skēnoō*) over them.”

Leviticus 23:33 (The Septuagint) uses the Greek word *skēnē* (hut, tent”) and Revelation 7:15 uses the corresponding verb *skēnoō* (“to erect a hut or tent”). When the Israelites celebrated the festival of Booths, they erected booths that reminded them of Jehovah’s protection during their 40 years in the desert. The promise in Revelation 7:15 is that Jehovah will erect booths for the great crowd as a means for their protection.

There can be no doubt that the great crowd is portrayed as celebrating the antitypical Feast of Booths. This is seen in the three parallels discussed above and in the fact that the Greek words for “fronds of palm trees” in Leviticus 23:33 (The Septuagint) and Revelation 7:9 are similar, and the same is true for “booth” or “tent” in Leviticus 23:33 and Revelation 7:15.

On the basis of the points above, we must draw the conclusion that just as Jesus and his sacrifice were the antitypes of Passover, and the harvesting of the group of 144,000 who will reign with Jesus in the heavenly kingdom, are the antitype of Pentecost, the harvesting of the members of the great crowd in Revelation 7 are the antitype of the Feast of Booths.

We can support this conclusion from a different angle. The offering of the firstfruits of the grain, oil, and vine together with animals throughout the whole feast is described in Numbers 29:12-34. The offering of the bulls indicates that the various sides of the Feast of Booths are prophetic types with antitypes, connected with the time of the end.

The text has the following description of the offerings of the bulls throughout the seven days of the festival, with the decrease of one bull each day:

- First day: 13 bulls

- Second day: 12 bulls
- Third day: 11 bulls
- Fourth day: 10 bulls
- Fifth day: 9 bulls
- Sixth day: 8 bulls
- Seventh day: 7 bulls
- Total: 70 bulls over seven days (plus one final bull on the eighth day).

The number 70 represents 7 multiplied by 10, and these numbers symbolize heavenly and earthly perfection in the Bible. Because the account of the antitypical Feast of Booths describes how God will construct the booths and how the great crowd will survive the great tribulation with the possibility of eternal salvation, there is one passage indicating the significance of the number 70, namely, Genesis 10:1-29. I quote Genesis 10:32:

³² These were the families of the sons of Noah according to their family descents, by their nations, and from these the nations were spread about in the earth after the deluge.

Noah had the three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and the following numbers show the families and nations descending from each of them:

- Japheth's line: 14 descendants
- Ham's line: 30 descendants
- Shem's line: 26 descendants

When we add the descendants of each one of Noah's sons, we find that 70 families or nations descended from Noah. All humans who live on the earth today descend from these 70 families.

It is likely that the 70 bulls offered during The Feast of Booths represent the 70 families descended from Noah, showing that when Jehovah "will construct the booths" for those who celebrate the antitypical Feast of Booths, this possibility includes all those who descended from Noah. Supporting this conclusion are the words in Revelation 7:9 that the great crowd comes from "all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues," who are descendants of the 70 families.

Table 1.2 Types and antitypes of the festivals

PROPHETIC TYPE	ANTITYPE
The Passover lamb.	Jesus Christ.
The firstfruits of the barley harvest, the sheaf without leaven offered at the Passover	Jesus Christ.
The two loaves with leaven as the firstfruits of the wheat harvest offered at Pentecost.	The harvest of the 144,000 anointed followers of Jesus with the heavenly hope.

The firstfruits of wheat, oil and vine offered at the Festival of Booths	The harvest of the great crowd who will survive the great tribulation.
The 70 bulls offered at the Festival of Booths	The offering of salvation of all humans who descend from the 70 families descending from Noah.

This chapter has discussed some background issues of the chapters dealing with chronology and prophecies. The next chapter discusses chronology.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CALCULATION OF THE 69 WEEKS UNTIL THE FIRST COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

SUMMARY

To understand the prophetic expressions in the Bible, we need the right keys. Nine keys necessary to understand and believe the prophecies and prophetic times are listed.

The most important aspect of this book is that the Bible provides specific prophetic times by which we can calculate the exact time for the first coming of Jesus Christ, his second coming, and the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ.

This chapter discusses the prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27 about the 69 weeks of years by which the Jews in the first century could calculate the time for the coming of the Messiah.

The 69 weeks started when the word went out to restore and build Jerusalem. This happened in the year 20 of Artaxerxes I, which is universally believed to be 445 BCE. Based on astronomical cuneiform tablets and other historical material, the chapter concludes that year 20 of Artaxerxes I is 455 BCE and that the 69 weeks of years after which the Messiah would come ends in 29 CE.

The calculation of the 69 weeks, with one day representing one year, is a pattern for calculating the appointed times of the nations, ending in 1914 CE.

For the past 100 years, the Bible Students and Jehovah's Witnesses have believed that in 1914 CE, the appointed times of the nations ended, the kingdom of God was established in the heavens, the presence of Jesus began, and the time of the end started. Today, 112 years have passed since 1914, and this old system of things is still standing. Is it time to abandon the belief in 1914 as a prophetic year? My answer is

an emphatic no! In the following chapters, I will present the biblical reasons for the importance of 1914.

The prophecy about the 69 weeks that will be discussed in this chapter has a pattern for the chronology that leads to 1914.

The Bible contains two distinct types of material that require different approaches for treatment.

First: We have the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. To understand these, we must find every place where a particular doctrine is mentioned, study these, and then draw our conclusion.

Second: We have the kind of material where only half of what we need is found in the Bible — prophecies about the future and time periods — and we must find the other half ourselves — the fulfillment of the prophecies and time periods.

It is obvious that the second part is more problematic than the first one. In connection with the basic doctrines, we can refer to concrete texts, and these texts allow us to establish each doctrine clearly. In connection with prophecies and time periods, we ourselves must determine their fulfillment, and we may err.

The important point here is expressed in Daniel 12:8-10 (above) and Matthew 24:32-36 (below):

⁸Now as for me, I heard, but I could not understand; so that I said: “O my lord, what will be the final part of these things?” ⁹And he went on to say: “Go, Daniel, because the words are made secret and sealed up until the time of [the] end. ¹⁰ Many will cleanse themselves and whiten themselves and will be refined. And the wicked ones will certainly act wickedly, and no wicked ones at all will understand; but the ones having insight will understand.

³²“Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, YOU know that summer is near. ³³ Likewise also YOU, when YOU see all these things, know that he is near at the doors. Truly I say to YOU that this generation ³⁴will by no means pass away until all these things occur. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. ³⁶ “Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.

Daniel asked about the prophecies that the angel had given him, and which are written in Daniel chapters 11 and 12. The angel said that these prophecies would be sealed until the time of the end, and at that time “the ones having insight will understand.”

As an answer to the disciples’ question about when his presence (*parousia*) and the conclusion of the system of things (the time of the end) would be, Jesus described various events in the world that together would be a sign.

The quoted words show that when the followers of Jesus saw this sign, they would know that he had returned and was present.

Jesus explicitly said that his followers should know the generation of his presence, but not the day or hour of his final judgment.

The words of the angel and of Jesus show that the followers of Jesus who live in the time of the end should understand the prophetic material, which is only half-written in the Bible. And most importantly in connection with this study is that Jesus said that his followers should understand a basic subject of this study, “the appointed times of the nations.” (Luke 21:24)

To find the fulfillment of the prophetic material, we need to identify the keys that we must use.

THE KEYS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE PROPHETIC EXPRESSIONS IN THE BIBLE

To understand the prophecies and prophetic times mentioned in the Bible, we need to entertain certain basic beliefs and understandings that I call keys. Prophetic material can only be understood in light of these keys.

KEY 1: *Believing that every word in the Bible is inspired by God.*

This basic key can be construed on the basis of the words of Jesus and Paul in John 10:35 (above), Luke 24:44 (middle), and 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 (below):

³⁵ If he called ‘gods’ those against whom the word of God came, and yet the Scripture cannot be nullified.

⁴⁴ He now said to them: “These are my words which I spoke to YOU while I was yet with YOU, that all the things written in the law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms about me must be fulfilled.”

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproof, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work.

Jesus refers to the Scriptures that could not be nullified. These “scriptures” consisted of the law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. This is still the division of the 39 books of The Hebrew Scriptures known as The Old Testament. These were inspired by God and could not be nullified

The first words of 2 Timothy 3:16 is “*all* scripture.” These words have no reference; therefore, they have no meaning. In no way could they refer to The Christian Greek Scriptures (The New Testament), because only a few books of The New Testament existed when Paul wrote his letter.

One alternative translation of the first part of 2 Timothy 3:16, which I prefer, is: “*Every* scripture *that* is inspired of God is beneficial for teaching...” In the ancient Christian congregations, there were catalogs of which scriptures were a part of the Christian canon, which include the 29 books of The New Testament. On this basis, the words of Paul have meaning: Every scripture that is inspired by God — the scriptures mentioned in the catalogs — are beneficial for teaching.... The scriptures

that are inspired by God (the canon) are the 29 books of the Christian Greek Scriptures. Thus, the 66 books of the Bible are inspired by God, and they cannot be nullified.

KEY 2: *Understanding and believing that every account in the Bible is included with a particular purpose and has a particular meaning.*

Prophetic time is an important part of the text of the Bible, as we see in Acts 1:6, 7 (above) and Mark 1:14, 15 (below):

⁶ When, now, they had assembled, they went asking him: “Lord, are you restoring **the kingdom to Israel** at this time?” ⁷ He said to them: “It does not belong to YOU to get knowledge of **the times** (*kbronos*) or **seasons** (*kairos*) which the Father has placed in his own jurisdiction.

¹⁴ Now after John was put under arrest Jesus went into Gal'i-lee, preaching the good news of God ¹⁵ and saying: “**The appointed time** (*kairos*) has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near. Be repentant, YOU people, and have faith in the good news.”

The basic meaning of the Greek word *kbronos* is “unspecified time” and *kairos* means “a specified time” or “an appointed time.” Jesus told his disciples that God’s purpose includes unspecified times (*kbronos*) and specified times (*kairos*). But at that moment when Jesus was about to ascend to heaven, God had not revealed these times and the specified times (“seasons”) to the disciples.

The words of Jesus, as recorded in Mark 1:15, are particularly important. Jesus had now started his great preaching work about the kingdom of God, because “the appointed time (*kairos*) has been fulfilled.” I will later return to the meaning of Jesus’ words. However, so far, they indicate that there were prophetic times or periods that could be calculated, pointing to the coming of Jesus.

We must believe that every word in the Bible, including the prophecies and prophetic numbers, is included with a purpose and should be understood.

KEY 3: *Understanding and believing that the Scriptures contain prophetic times that can be calculated.*

The book of Daniel mentions several specified prophetic times, and in Daniel 12:6-12, there are four keys that we need to know to understand the importance of the year 1914:

⁶ Then one said to the man clothed with the linen, who was up above the waters of the stream: “How long will it be to the end of the wonderful things?” ⁷ And I began to hear the man clothed with the linen, who was up above the waters of the stream, as he proceeded to raise his right [hand] and his left [hand] to the heavens and to swear by the One who is alive for time indefinite: “It will be for an appointed time, appointed times and a half. And as soon as there will have been a finishing of the dashing of the power of **the holy people** to pieces, all these things will come to their finish.”

⁸ Now as for me, I heard, but I could not understand; so that I said: “O my lord, what will be the final part of these things?”

⁹ And he went on to say: “Go, Daniel, because *the words are made secret and sealed up until the time of [the] end* (*et qets*).¹⁰ Many will cleanse themselves and whiten themselves and will be refined. And the wicked ones will certainly act wickedly, and no wicked ones at all will understand; but the ones having insight will understand.

¹¹ “And from the time that the constant [feature] has been removed and there has been a placing of *the disgusting thing that is causing desolation*, there will be *one thousand two hundred and ninety days*.

¹² “Happy is the one who is keeping in expectation and who arrives at the *one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days*!

Verse 6 speaks of “*the holy people*.” This must be a distinct people that is separated from other peoples, because the prophecy says that 3 1/2 times will elapse over it, and then its power will be dashed to pieces. This can only happen to a united and distinct people and not to people in general.

KEY 4: *Understanding and believing that there is a time period called “the time of the end,” and that this period can be identified.*

The prophecies and prophetic time periods should be understood in the time of the end.

KEY 5: *Understanding and believing that the time of the end began in the year 1914.*

The year 1914 is so important that the great prophecy of Jesus and a great number of prophecies in Daniel and Revelation cannot be understood without understanding the place of this year in Jehovah God’s plan for the restoration of all things.

KEY 6: *Understanding and believing that in the time of the end, God has a people who is clearly identified and separated from other peoples.*

Because many prophecies are fulfilled on this people, we need to identify this people. Verses 6, 11, 12 speak of the specific time periods, 3 1/2 times, 1,290 days, and 1,335 days that will be fulfilled on *the holy people*.

Key 7: *Understanding and believing that the disgusting thing that causes desolation” will appear in the time of the end, and that it can be identified.*

Verse 11 speaks of an entity called “the disgusting thing that causes desolation,” which will appear in the time of the end. We need to identify this entity because *it plays a particularly important role* in calculating the time prophecies.

KEY 8: *Understanding and believing that there are specified time periods that will be fulfilled on the people of God, which can be calculated.*

These keys do not say anything that directly bears on the year 1914. However, they demonstrate that the Holy Scriptures encompass specific time periods, which can be calculated once we have identified “*the holy people*,” and “*the disgusting thing that causes desolation*.”

Among the first keys to use is the one about “the time of the end.” How can this period be fixed in relation to the stream of time from the prophet Daniel and to our time? The symbols written in the book of Revelation will also be understood in the time of the end. The key to understanding when “the time of the end” is, is found in Revelation chapter 17. Verse 3 speaks about a wild beast with seven heads and ten horns. The heads are identified in verses 8-11:

⁸ The wild beast that you saw was, but is not, and yet is about to ascend out of the abyss, and it is to go off into destruction. And when they see how the wild beast was, but is not, and yet will be present, those who dwell on the earth will wonder admiringly, but their names have not been written upon the scroll of life from the founding of the world.

⁹ “Here is where the intelligence that has wisdom comes in: The seven heads mean seven mountains, where the woman sits on top. ¹⁰ *And there are seven kings: five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet arrived, but when he does arrive he must remain a short while.* ¹¹ *And the wild beast that was but is not, it is also itself an eighth [king], but springs from the seven, and it goes off into destruction.*

The “kings” have characteristics of the beasts that are mentioned in the book of Daniel, chapter 7. These beasts represent world powers, and, therefore, the “kings” must also represent world powers. John says that five have fallen in his time: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece had fallen. One “king” or world power existed: the Roman Empire. The seventh world power, which can be identified as Anglo-America (Britain and the USA together), would be the seventh “king.”

The wild beast itself was an eighth world power that would spring from the other seven and exist contemporaneously with the seventh. It would exist, then be in the abyss, and not exist. Then it would come up from the abyss and exist again. The beast can be identified as the League of Nations, which was in the abyss during World War II, but came to life as the United Nations after the war.

The calculation of the 1,290 days in Daniel 12:11 cannot be made if we have not identified the disgusting thing causing desolation.”

KEY 9: *Understanding and believing that the time of the end is connected with the time when the seventh and eighth world powers exist, and this relates to the 20th and 21st centuries.*

Verse 11 in Daniel chapter 12 connects the disgusting thing that causes desolation with the time of the end and one of the prophetic times. In the first fulfillment, the disgusting thing was a political entity, namely, the Roman armies that surrounded Jerusalem. We see this when comparing Matthew 24:15-16 with Luke 21:20-21. These armies were disgusting because they stood on the holy ground of the temple. The disgusting thing caused the desolation of a religious entity, the city of Jerusalem, and its inhabitants when the city was destroyed in 70 CE.

Jesus demonstrated that there was a second fulfillment of the prophecy regarding the disgusting thing that would cause desolation in the time of the end. We read Matthew 24:3, 14-22:

³ While he was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately, saying: “Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things (*synteleias tou aionos*)?”

¹⁴ And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end (*telos*) will come.

¹⁵ “Therefore, when YOU catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation, as spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place, (let the reader use discernment,) ¹⁶ then let those in Ju·de’a begin fleeing to the mountains.

¹⁷ Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house; ¹⁸ and let the man in the field not return to the house to pick up his outer garment. ¹⁹ Woe to the pregnant women and those suckling a baby in those days! ²⁰ Keep praying that YOUR flight may not occur in wintertime, nor on the sabbath day; ²¹ for then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world’s beginning until now, no, nor will occur again.

The Greek expression *synteleias tou aionos* (“the conclusion of the system of things”) in Matthew 24:3 can be shown to have the same meaning as the Hebrew expression *‘et qēts* (“time of the end”) in Daniel 12:9.¹ Thus, the setting of the words of Jesus in Matthew chapter 24 is the time of the end when the prophetic word should be understood.

This shows that the words of Jesus found a miniature fulfillment in the first century CE, until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. But the larger and final fulfillment would be in the time of the end. The preaching of the good news to all the nations did not happen in the first century. But it has happened today, and the word “end” (*telos*) in 24:14 refers to the endpoint of the time of the end. This “end” corresponds with the great tribulation mentioned in 24:21, which will be greater than any other tribulation, including the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Thus, the disgusting thing that causes desolation would exist in the time of the end.

As mentioned above, in the first century, the disgusting thing was a political entity (the Roman armies) that would cause desolation for a religious entity (the city Jerusalem). In Revelation chapter 17, which I have already quoted from, the political entity (the wild beast with seven heads and ten horns = the United Nations) will cause desolation of the religious entity (the harlot, Babylon the great). There are several threads that connect this wild beast with the disgusting thing that causes desolation.

KEY 10: *Understanding that the disgusting thing that causes desolation, which is the League of Nations and the United Nations, would exist in the time of the end, in the 20th and 21st centuries.*

Table 2.1 The keys that are necessary to understand to understand the prophecies

1. See my book, *When Was the Book of Daniel Written? A Philological, Linguistic, and Historical Approach*, chapter 8.

KEY 1	<i>Believing that every word in the Bible is inspired by God.</i>
KEY 2	<i>Understanding and believing that every account in the Bible is included with a particular purpose and has a particular meaning.</i>
KEY 3	<i>Understanding and believing that the Scriptures contain prophetic times that can be calculated.</i>
KEY 4	<i>Understanding and believing that there is a time period called “the time of the end,” and that this period can be identified.</i>
KEY 5	<i>Understanding and believing that the time of the end began in the year 1914.</i>
KEY 6	<i>Understanding and believing that in the time of the end, God has a people who is clearly identified and separated from other people.</i>
KEY 7	<i>Understanding and believing that the disgusting thing that causes desolation” will appear in the time of the end, and that it can be identified.</i>
KEY 8	<i>Understanding and believing that there are specified time periods that will be fulfilled on the people of God, which can be calculated.</i>
KEY 9	<i>Understanding and believing that the time of the end is connected with the time when the seventh and eighth world powers exist, and this relates to the 20th and 21st centuries.</i>
KEY 10	<i>Understanding and believing that the disgusting thing that causes desolation, which is the League of Nations and the United Nations, would exist in the time of the end, in the 20th and 21st centuries.</i>

The keys will be elucidated in different chapters of the book. They show that the 20th and 21st centuries are the times of fulfillment for important prophecies. Because all the accounts in the Bible are included with a particular purpose and have a particular meaning, including the prophetic times, we need to take a closer look at the prophetic periods that are mentioned.

THE PROPHETIC TIMES LEADING TO THE FIRST COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

I have already quoted the words of Markus 1:15. When Jesus started his preaching work, he said, “The appointed time (*kairos*) has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near.” The appointed time (*kairos*) leading to the coming of Jesus Christ is found in Daniel 9:24, 25:

²⁴ There are seventy weeks that have been determined upon your people and upon your holy city, in order to terminate the transgression, and to finish off sin, and to make atonement for error, and to bring in righteousness for times indefinite, and to imprint a seal upon vision and prophet, and to anoint the Holy of Holies.

²⁵ And you should know and have the insight [that] from the going forth of [the] word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until Mes·si’ah [the] Leader, there will be seven weeks, also sixty-two weeks. She will return and be actually rebuilt, with a public square (*rehob*) and moat (*haruts*), but in the straits of the times.

²⁶ “And after the sixty-two weeks Mes·si’ah will be cut off, with nothing for himself. “And the city and the holy place the people of a leader that is coming will bring to their ruin. And the end of it will be by the flood. And until [the] end there will be war; what is decided upon is desolations.

²⁷ “And he must keep [the] covenant in force for the many for one week; and at the half of the week he will cause sacrifice and gift offering to cease. “And upon the wing of disgusting things there will be the one causing desolation; and until an extermination, the very thing decided upon will go pouring out also upon the one lying desolate.”

Who is this Anointed One (the Messiah), the Leader, who is mentioned in verse 25? I will first analyze the words. The word *māshīah* is an adjective with the meaning “anointed,” and *nāgid* is a substantive meaning “leader; ruler.” It is clear that the adjective does not modify the substantive, thus giving it the meaning “the Anointed Leader,” because the adjective occurs before the substantive and not after it. Thus, *nāgid māshīah* represents an appositional phrase, “Messiah, the Leader.”

Corroborating this is the fact that in verse 26, *māshīah* occurs alone. The word *māshīah* occurs 38 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. In 11 instances, *māshīah* is preceded by Jehovah, so the meaning is “Jehovah’s anointed.” In 4 instances, *māshīah* is preceded by *kōhēn* (“priest”), so the meaning is “the anointed priest.” In 23 instances *māshīah* is modified by “my,” “his,” or “your,” with the pronouns referring to God.

Only in Daniel 9:25, 26 is the word *māshīah* standing alone without any determination. The word *nāgid* occurs 43 times and, in most cases, it refers to the ruler over God’s people. The word can also refer to a lower-ranking leader, for example, the temple’s chief. According to 1 Samuel 10:1, Jehovah’s anointed (*māshah*, the verb corresponding to the substantive *mashiah*) Saul, was to become ruler (*nāgid*) over his people. In the versions, we find the following renderings of *nāgid māshīah*:

Theodotion: *kristou* = Christ.

The Latin *Vulgate*: *Christum ducem* = Christ, leader.

The Ethiopic translation: *Krestos negus* = Christ (as a proper name), king.

The Syriac *Peshitta*: *meshihā malkā* = the anointed, king.

Regarding the identity of the Anointed One, the Leader, we should keep in mind that although the word *māshīah* can be applied to any person who is anointed to an office, and thus it can refer both to priests and kings, there is just one person in the Hebrew Scriptures, apart from Melchizedek, who is both priest and king (Psalm 110:1, 4; Zechariah 6:13), and that is the coming Messiah. Corroborating this is the fact that *māshīah* in Daniel 9:25, 26 is unqualified and therefore does not refer to *one* who is anointed, but to *the* Anointed One.

The Messiah would arrive after the sixty-ninth “week,” according to Daniel 9:26. Most commentators agree that the “weeks” each represent seven years, which means that 69 weeks are 483 years.² What would mark the beginning of these years? Daniel 9:25 says that the starting point was “the issuing of the word to restore and build Jerusalem.” After this starting point, the city would “be restored and built with streets (*rehōb*) and trenches (*hārūts*).” I will analyze these words.

The word *rehōb* comes from a root meaning “wide; broad.” It occurs 43 times in the Hebrew Bible and often refers to a broad plaza or an open area within the city gate used as a marketplace. Alternatively, the word could be used with a collective meaning, referring to the city’s streets.

For example, Esther 4:6 says that the servant of Esther went to Mordecai in the square (*rehōb*) of the city. But according to 6:9, Mordecai was led on horseback through the city’s streets (*rehōb*). The context in Daniel 9 suggests that the single *rehōb* refers to the city’s streets. There were many plazas or squares in Jerusalem before the city was destroyed, and the city would not be restored by building a single square. Therefore, because *rehōb* is used in connection with the verbs “restore” and “build,” it is evidently used in a collective sense, indicating the restoration of either the squares or the streets of the city.

The verb *hārats* means “to cut,” and the substantive *hārūts* literally means “the cut” (“what is cut”). Because *hārūts* occurs only once in the Hebrew Bible, its reference is not clear. In the Aramaic Zakkur inscription (800–775 BCE), a deep trench (*hārūts*) is connected with the building of a wall. Such a trench was cut into the rock outside the city wall to increase its height. Regarding Jerusalem, Montgomery says: “The great cutting in the natural rock along the northern wall of Jerusalem is a marked feature of the city’s defenses.”³

For the Hebrew word *hārūts*, the Theodotion translation of Daniel uses *teikhos*, which refers to a wall, particularly a city wall. The Latin Vulgate uses *murus*, which also means “wall.” Because of these renderings, and because *hārūts* is connected with a wall in Aramaic, I take the word *hārūts* as a collective, referring to the trenches that

2. J. Wood, *The Book of Daniel*, 252. Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1385, has the definition “a week of years,” and the lexicon refers to *The Community Rule*, earlier called *The Manual of Discipline*, 10:7, 8, which speaks of “seasons, years, weeks of years.” This was the document dealing with the organization of the Qumran community.

3. J. A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, page 380.

were cut in the rock outside the walls to make them higher. So, the prophecy speaks of a complete restoration of the streets and plazas within the city, and of the city walls and their outer trenches. When these were restored, the city would be more difficult to conquer.

I will return to the beginning of the period of 69 weeks and ask: When did the word “to restore and build Jerusalem” go forth? Could it be the decree of Cyrus in 538/37 BCE? This decree said that a temple for the God of the heavens should be built, but it does not mention the city of Jerusalem. According to Ezra 7:8, 9, Ezra went up to Jerusalem in the 7th year of Artaxerxes, and this year has also been suggested as the starting point. However, the word from Artaxerxes I related to the beautifying of the house of Jehovah, as seen in Ezra 7:27, and not to the restoring and building of Jerusalem and its walls.

The real starting point must be related to Nehemiah. Hanani told Nehemiah that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down and its gates were burned with fire. According to Nehemiah 2:5, Nehemiah asked King Artaxerxes I for permission to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the city. The verb used is *bānā*, and many translations use the word “rebuild” to translate this verb. But the meaning of the verb is “to build.”

This is the same verb that is found in Daniel 9:25. Nehemiah 2:8 shows that Nehemiah asked for timber to build the gates of the castle belonging to the temple, for the walls of the city, and for the house where Nehemiah would stay. There was also a need for work to build the city as a whole, because in 2:17, Nehemiah says that “Jerusalem is devastated.”

Thus, the work of Nehemiah fulfills the words of Daniel 9. The journey from Shushan to Jerusalem would take about four months, and Nehemiah’s words to start the building work could have been spoken in the beginning of the 5th Jewish month Ab. This must be the time when the 69 weeks began.⁴

Which year corresponds to the 20th year of Artaxerxes I? According to the traditional chronology, this is the year 445/444. However, dated cuneiform tablets from the reigns of Darius I, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes I, and various Greek and Egyptian sources indicate that Artaxerxes I began his reign ten years earlier than universally believed, in 475/474, rather than in 465/464. This means that the 20th year of Artaxerxes I is 455/454 BCE.

The evidence is as follows: There are 3 known cuneiform tablets with celestial positions that are connected with the reign of Artaxerxes I.⁵ The tablet BM 33478 was dated in year 24 of Artaxerxes I by Sachs and Hunger, but they admit that the celestial positions do not fit that year. A study of the celestial positions in all the regnal years of Artaxerxes I, Artaxerxes II, and Artaxerxes III reveals a perfect fit of the positions on BM 33478 only in 465/464.

According to the traditional chronology, this is year 21 of Xerxes and the accession year of Artaxerxes I. The cuneiform tablet BM 33478 states that, in the year when

4. Jerome used Nehemiah’s 20th year of Artaxerxes I as the starting point; G. L. Archer Jr., *Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel*, 97.

5. A. J. Sachs and H. Hunger, *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia*, 1:56–60.

the celestial positions were observed, an intercalary Addaru (an extra month 13) was added. However, the accession year of Artaxerxes I did not have an intercalary Addaru. Therefore, this tablet suggests that the traditional chronology is wrong, and 465/464 was not the accession year of Artaxerxes I.

However, the 10th year of Artaxerxes I had an intercalary Addaru, and this may suggest that 465/464 was the 10th year, and not the 1st year of the reign of Artaxerxes I. The cuneiform tablet BM 32235 mentions the year in which Xerxes died, which was his 21st year. Two lunar eclipses are also mentioned on the tablet, one whose position in relation to the constellation Sagittarius is described, and the other is said to have occurred in month VIII, and its magnitude is described. There were two lunar eclipses in the years 465/464 and 475/474, respectively, and it is interesting that the eclipses of 475/474 fit the description on the tablet perfectly, whereas those of 465/464 fit only approximately. This suggests that 475/474 was the accession year of Artaxerxes I, and that his 20th year was 455/454.⁶

Based on the 20th year of Artaxerxes I being 455/454, the first seven weeks (49 years) it took to build the city ended in 406/405, and the following 62 weeks, at the end of which the Messiah would appear, ended in the year 29/30 CE. This fits exactly the time when Jesus Christ started his work.

Most lexicons and textbooks point to 445/444 BCE as the year 20 of Artaxerxes I. This is a tradition that has simply been repeated over and over again from scholar to scholar. I have studied all the known astronomical cuneiform tablets with their celestial positions from the reigns of Xerxes, Artaxerxes I, Artaxerxes II, and Artaxerxes III.

My conclusion, as my short presentation above illustrates, is that Artaxerxes I began his reign ten years earlier than the textbooks indicate and that his year 20 corresponds to 455/454.

A detailed study of this material is presented in my book, as referred to in note 6. The parameters for the celestial positions of the cuneiform tablets I mentioned are written in this book, and the positions can be checked using an Astro-program.

No scholar has published a study comparing all the mentioned cuneiform tablets, the historical Persepolis tablets, and relevant Egyptian material as a basis for calculating the regnal years of Artaxerxes I. Thus, the information in this chapter is unique and can only be found in my book on Persian chronology. (See note 6)

6. The evidence in favor of a coregency between Xerxes and Darius I is discussed in R.J. Furuli, *Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, and Persian Chronology, Persian Chronology and the Length of the Babylonian exile of the Jews*, Second edition (2012), pages 192–238; the evidence for the beginning and end of the reign of Artaxerxes I in 475/74 is discussed on pages 239–295.

The mothers of John the Baptist and Jesus were relatives, and according to Luke 1:36, John was six months older than Jesus. This affects the timing of Jesus' public ministry, as Luke 3:1-2 dates the start of John the Baptist's mission to the 15th year of Emperor Tiberius. Tiberius had a joint rule of the provinces with Augustus, probably from October 12 CE. Augustus died on 19 August 14 CE (Julian calendar),⁷ and on 17 September 14 CE (Julian calendar),⁸ the senate named Tiberius emperor; thus, the 15th year of Tiberius can be counted from three different dates.

Because Luke 3:1 uses the words “*Emperor* Tiberius,” and the title “Emperor” was first applied to Tiberius after the death of Augustus, we can exclude October 12 CE as the date to count from, so we are left with 19 August or 17 September of the year 14 CE. John the Baptist began his mission in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar, which corresponds to a period between August 28, 28 CE, and August 29, 29 CE. Because John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus, and assuming both Jesus and John started their missions at the age of 30, Jesus began his public service between February/March 29 CE and February/March 30 CE.⁹ This is 483 years after the 20th year of Artaxerxes I.

Table 2.1 lists the rulers mentioned in the 15th year of Tiberius in Luke 3:1, and their regnal years show that the prophecy in Daniel 9:24–27 was fulfilled in the year 29/30 CE. A person who can write in detail and accurately about the future must have been directed by God, and he must be an honest person. When such a person dates the different visions of his book, we must accept these dates as correct.

Table 2.1 The fifteenth year of Emperor Tiberius

15th year of Tiberius Caesar	Aug./Sept. 28 CE to Aug./Sept. 29 CE
Pontius Pilate, governor in Judea	26–36 CE¹⁰
Herod Antipas, governor in Perea and Galilee	4 BCE–39 CE¹¹

7. Augustus died on August 17, 14 CE, Gregorian calendar.

8. Tiberius was named emperor on September 15, 14 CE, Gregorian calendar.

9. Luke 3:23 says: “And Jesus himself was *about thirty years* when he began [his service].” The meanings of the particle *bāsei* are “like, as, about.” Most Bible translations use “about” in this verse. Does Luke imply that Jesus could have been 29 or 31 years, as well as 30 years? No, because Luke uses *bāsei* in a more specific way, as the following examples show: Acts 13:18 says that Israel was “about forty years in the desert.” In this text, Luke uses the particle *bās*, which is a synonym to *bāsei* and has the meaning “about” as well. So, the word “about” does not mean that the time could be 39 or 41 years (Numbers 14:34; Deuteronomy 2:7). It means “40 years,” but not necessarily exactly 40 years to the very day. Luke 23:44 says that darkness came over the earth when Jesus was fastened to the pole “about (*bāsei*) the sixth hour.” This does not mean that the darkness came at the fifth or the seventh hour, but rather not exactly at the beginning of the sixth hour. This is what Matthew 27:41 and Mark 15:33 say. From Luke’s use of the word “about,” we must conclude that Jesus was 30 years old when he began his service, but not necessarily on the very day he turned 30. John was of the tribe of Levi, and Levites began their service when they were 30 years old. (Numbers 4:46, 47)

10. J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX*, page 456.

11. Ibid., 457; W. E. Filmer, *The Chronology of the Reign of Herod the Great*, pages 283–298.

Philip, governor in Iturea and Trachonitis	4 BCE–34 CE¹²
Lysanias, governor of Abilene	Unknown¹³
Annas, high priest	6–15 CE¹⁴
Caiaphas, high priest	18–36 CE¹⁵

Could ordinary people in the days of Jesus understand the prophecy about the 69 weeks? The obvious answer is Yes. The basic principle for understanding the time prophecies in the Bible is that every account in the Scriptures is included with a specific purpose and meaning. And the purpose is, of course, that the servants of God should understand his word.

Luke 3:15 (NIV) says:

The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ.

John the Baptist started his work in the year before Jesus, or in the year 29, when Jesus began his work. Luke shows that the people at that time were “waiting expectantly” for the Messiah. Some people argue that this expectation was based on the testimony of the shepherds when Jesus was born, and the situation with the astrologers at a later time. But if the people were aware of the birth of the Messiah, then the Messiah had already come, so why should they continue to be “waiting expectantly” for the Messiah? Moreover, why would the people expect the Messiah 30 years after his birth?

The only place where the Messiah is mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures is in Daniel 9:25, and “*ho kebristos*” (“the Christ”), which is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew *māshīah* was used by Luke. This suggests that Luke and the people had Daniel 9:25 in mind. The beginning of the Zadokite document from Qumran says:

And at the end of the wrath of 390 years from [the time when] he punished them by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babel. . . . For 20 years, they had been blind, like those who are groping for the way. . . . Then he caused a teacher of righteousness to guide them in the way of his heart.¹⁶

The mentioned time started when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, which was 607 BCE. If we count 390 years from this year, we come to 217 BCE. By adding 20 years more, we come to the year 197 BCE. Then the teacher of righteousness came into the scene, and the Qumran community was established. The

12. J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX*, page 457.

13. Lysanias, son of Ptolemaus, “king” of Chacus and Coele-Syria, was killed by Mark Antony in 36 BCE. This is not the Lysanias that Luke refers to. Josephus refers to another Lysanias, “Abila, which had the Lysanian tetrarchy.” (Josephus 20.7.1 § 138). J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX*, page 457.

14. Annas remained a powerful political figure for many years after he ended his position as high priest in 15 CE.

15. Filmer, *The Chronology of the Reign of Herod the Great*, page 298.

16. The *Damascus Document* (CD) 1:4–11. Translated by R. J. Furuli.

quoted words show that the Qumran community could calculate the correct time, year by year, back to the days of Nebuchadnezzar II. And other people could, of course, do the same.

Time could be calculated into the past in two ways, 1) by the use of the Seleucid calendar, which started in 312 BCE, when Seleucus Nicator conquered Babylon, and 2) by counting sabbath years. In 1 Maccabees 4:52, for example, we read about the one hundred and forty-eighth year of the Seleucid calendar.

The word of Nehemiah to restore and build Jerusalem was uttered in year 20 of Artaxerxes I when Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem. (Nehemiah 2:1–8) The actions of Nehemiah of reading the whole law (8:18), which should be done on The Festival of Booths in the sabbath year, suggest that this year was a sabbath year. The releasing events mentioned in 5:7–12 support this conclusion. If this is correct, the Jews could simply count the sabbath years, including the Jubilee years, back to Nehemiah's arrival in Jerusalem, and find the beginning of the 483 years (69 weeks).

Josephus wrote his books at the end of the first century CE. He mentions several sabbath years in BCE, and this indicates that he must have had lists of sabbath years.¹⁷

The evidence suggests that people in the first part of the 1st century CE could calculate the 70 weeks; therefore, they were “waiting expectantly” for the Messiah when John the Baptist started his work.

17. Sabbath years mentioned by Josephus: Year 134 BCE, *Antiquities* 13.8.1 (13.2.30); 43 BCE(?), 14.10.6 (14.206); 36 BCE, 14.15.2 (14.470, 475).

CHAPTER THREE

THE CALCULATION OF THE APPOINTED TIMES OF THE NATIONS

SUMMARY

The appointed times of the nations are mentioned in the prophecy of Jesus regarding his second coming and presence. His words show that his followers should be able to understand and calculate the length of the appointed times of the nations.

The chapter shows that there is both a linguistic and thematic parallel between Luke 21:24, where the appointed times of the nations is mentioned, and Daniel chapter 4, where 7 appointed times are mentioned. The conclusion is that the appointed times of the nations, represent 7 appointed times, and calculated in the same way as the 69 weeks in Daniel chapter 9, taking one day for each year, the length of the appointed times of the nations is 2,520 years.

The beginning of these times is the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II, which is universally believed to have occurred in 587 BCE. The chapter refers to Babylonian astronomical data and to historical documents from different countries. The conclusion is that Jerusalem was destroyed in 607 BCE, and that the times of the nations of 2,520 years ended in 1914 CE.

The expression “the appointed times of the nations” is found in Luke 21:24, in the great prophecy of Jesus about his presence and his coming as the judge of all the nations in the great tribulation. I quote Luke 21:24-33:

²⁴ and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until *the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled.*

²⁹ With that he spoke an illustration to them: “Note the fig tree and all the other trees: ³⁰ When they are already in the bud, by observing it YOU know for yourselves that now the summer is near. ³¹ In this way YOU also, when YOU *see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near.* ³² Truly I say to YOU, *This generation will by no means pass away* until all things occur. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away (Matthew 24:36) “*Concerning that day and hour nobody knows,* neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.

Jesus says that when his followers see “these things occurring,” which includes the sign consisting of events in the world and the fulfillment of the appointed times of the nations, they should know that “the kingdom of God is near.” But they should not know the day and hour for the coming (*erkehomai*) of the Son of man as the judge in the great tribulation. We should have this in mind when we now study the expression, “the appointed times of the nations.”

The words of Jesus show that his followers should be able to understand and calculate the appointed times of the nations.

FINDING THE REFERENCE OF THE APPOINTED TIMES OF THE NATIONS

One key to understanding the Holy Scriptures, as I demonstrated in the second chapter, is the belief that every account in the Scriptures is included with a specific purpose and has a specific meaning. This includes the expression “the appointed times of the nations (*kairoi ethnōn*). In addition to this basic principle, Jesus said that his followers should understand what these words referred to, as I have shown previously.

Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 offer many clues to understanding the different expressions, particularly that the same things are sometimes expressed in different words from different angles. But there is nothing in these three chapters that can throw any light on the meaning and fulfillment of “the appointed times of the nations.”

Because this expression should be understood, the next step is to search for the Greek words *kairos* (“appointed time”) and *ethnos* (“nation”) in The Christian Greek Scriptures. The word *kairos* occurs 80 times. But only in two places is the word connected with a particular time period that is fulfilled: in Mark 1:15 (above) and Revelation 12:14 (below).

¹⁵ and saying: “*The appointed time* (*kairos*) has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near. Be repentant, YOU people, and have faith in the good news.”

¹⁴ But the two wings of the great eagle were given the woman, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place; there is where she is fed for *a time* (*kairos*) and *times* (*kairos*) and *half a time* (*kairos*) away from the face of the serpent.

The words in Mark evidently refer to the prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27 about the 69 weeks until the Messiah should come. This appointed time was fulfilled in the year

29 CE, and therefore, cannot refer to the appointed times of the nations, which, according to the context, would last after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

The first verse in Revelation says that the prophecies of this book refer to a time after the book was written, about 98 CE. Therefore, the mentioned 3 1/2 appointed times cannot refer to “the appointed times of the nations,” which, according to Luke 21:22-24, would include the situation in Jerusalem in the last part of the first century CE.

This means that we cannot find any clue in The Christian Greek Scriptures regarding the meaning and reference of the appointed times of the nations. Therefore, we must look for clues in The Hebrew Scriptures.

Let us first do some reasoning.

In Matthew 24:15, Jesus urged readers to exercise discernment regarding “the disgusting thing that causes desolation.” Jesus may or may not at this time have made some comments regarding the identity of this disgusting thing (Matthew 24:15, 16; Luke 21:20, 21), but Jesus exhorted his followers to use discernment. To do that, the disciples who did not hear the Hebrew words of Jesus at the time he uttered them had to rely on the later recorded Greek translation of his words, *bdelugma tēs erēmōseōs*, while those who heard Jesus’ words could look for the Hebrew words he used.

How could they come to an understanding of these words by using discernment? By looking up similar words in the Septuagint, or, if Hebrew was their mother tongue, by looking for Hebrew words with a similar meaning. In both cases, only four passages containing a reference to “disgusting thing(s)” can be identified, namely, Daniel 8:13, 9:27; 11:31; and 12:11. By reading these passages in context, could help the identification of the disgusting thing.

This is an important principle: When prophetic words appear in The Christian Greek Scriptures, we must look to The Hebrew Scriptures to determine whether they come from one of the Hebrew books. This is especially important when the Christian Greek Scriptures offer few clues about the meaning of particular prophetic words.

In his great prophecy, Jesus referred several times to the book of Daniel. In Matthew 24:1, 2, he referred to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, which is mentioned in Daniel 9:26, 27, in Matthew 24:21, he referred to the great tribulation, which is mentioned in Daniel 12:1. In Matthew 24:30 and 25:31, he referred to the Son of man, who is mentioned in Daniel 7:13. Moreover, the Kingdom of God is the principal theme of Daniel, as it is also the theme in the great prophecy of Jesus. (Matthew 24:14; 25:31) And there are some words in the Greek text of Matthew 24 whose equivalents are found in the Hebrew text of Daniel, such as *synteleia* (“conclusion”; Hebrew, *qēts*), which is used 23 times in Daniel and one time in Matthew 24:3. There can be no doubt that Jesus had Daniel in mind when he uttered his great prophecy.

Jesus referred to the book of Daniel several times in his great prophecy. Daniel can also help us understand the reference of “the appointed times of the nations.”

THE LINGUISTIC AND THEMATIC PARALLELS BETWEEN LUKE 21:24 AND DANIEL CHAPTER 4

The Greek words of Jesus in Luke 21:24, *kairoi ethnōn*, have no other clues in Luke except that the subject is “Jerusalem.” Therefore, if these words are to have any meaning for us, we must look for clues in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The first question to ask is in which language the words were uttered. Jesus either used Hebrew or Aramaic, and the evidence suggests that he spoke Hebrew to his disciples. However, the evangelists show that Jesus also used Aramaic words. If Jesus spoke in Hebrew, he most likely used the plural form of *mō‘ēd*, where Luke has *kairos*. Both the word *mō‘ēd* and the word *kairos* refer to a specific time, an appointed time. If we look at the passages where this word is used in the Hebrew Scriptures, we find that it is stipulated by numbers indicating specific times only once, in Daniel 12:7: “one appointed time, appointed times and a half.” Both the Greek Septuagint and Theodotion¹⁸ use *kairos* in this passage.

In the Aramaic text of Daniel 7:25, we find the same numbers mentioned, and the Aramaic word used is *‘iddān*, which shows that *‘iddān* in Aramaic and *mō‘ēd* in Hebrew both refer to an appointed time. Interestingly, both the Septuagint and Theodotion use *kairos* both in Daniel 7:25 and 12:7. The Aramaic word *‘iddān* is also stipulated by numbers in Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32. Thus, we see that there are only three chapters in the Hebrew Scriptures where the Hebrew or Aramaic word for “appointed time” is stipulated or qualified by a particular number.

If Jesus spoke Aramaic or used Aramaic words, he would have used *‘iddān* in Luke 21:24, but because people in his day understood both Hebrew and Aramaic, regardless of which language Jesus used, the three mentioned chapters in Daniel would be the only ones that could be antecedents of *kairoi ethnōn* in Luke 21:24.

While the Hebrew *mō‘ēd* of Daniel 12:7 and the Aramaic *‘iddān* of 7:25 are translated by *kairos* in the Septuagint and in Theodotion, the four examples of *‘iddān* in Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32 are translated by the plural form of *etos* (“year”) in the Septuagint and by *kairos* in Theodotion. The rendering *etos* in the Septuagint is an interpretative translation, which deviates from the usual rendering of *kairos* for *‘iddān*. And as mentioned, the Greek translation of Theodotion, which is much closer to the Hebrew and Aramaic texts of Daniel than the Septuagint, and which is the one that is quoted most often by the writers in The Christian Greek Scriptures, has *kairos* also in Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32.

Thus, one or more of the three mentioned passages must have been what Jesus had in mind in Luke 21:24. But which one? The contexts of Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 indicate that the mentioned time periods are fulfilled during the time of the end, during the presence of Jesus Christ. Because the appointed times of the nations

18. The Theodotion translation is a Greek translation of the book of Daniel that is closer to the Hebrew and Aramaic text than the Septuagint. When the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures quoted from the book of Daniel, they most often quoted the Theodotion translation rather than the Septuagint.

include events from the first century CE, Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 cannot be the appointed times of the nations.

Whether Jesus used the Hebrew word *mō'ed* or the Aramaic word *'iddān*, the natural Greek equivalent for a writer of the Christian Greek Scriptures to choose would be *kairos*. This shows that there is a definite *linguistic* link between Luke 21:24 and Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32.

There is a linguistic parallel between “the appointed times” in Luke 21:24 and the seven times in Daniel chapter 4: The Aramaic word ‘iddān means “appointed time” just as the Greek word kairos. Thodotion’s Greek translation of Daniel uses kairos in Daniel chapter 4 where the Aramaic text has ‘iddān.

The linguistic correspondence between Luke 21:24 and Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32 shows that the appointed times of the nations are seven in number.

In Luke 21:24, the city of Jerusalem is connected with the appointed times of the nations. Jerusalem would be trampled upon by the nations during the appointed times of the nations. But what is the reference of “Jerusalem”?

THE REFERENCE OF “JERUSALEM” IN LUKE 21:24

Most people would take the word “Jerusalem” as a reference to the city of Jerusalem, which is mentioned in the context. But that is not necessarily the case.

In the Bible, a city can have at least three references: 1) the inhabitants of the city, 2) the material part of the city (houses, walls, and brickwork), and 3) what the city represents or stands for. The city as a geographical place is referred to in Matthew 2:1, and the inhabitants are referred to when “Capernaum” is used in Matthew 11:23. The most important use in our context is 3), so let us look at some examples. Second Kings 23:19 speaks of “the towns of Samaria.” But “Samaria,” which itself was a town, evidently represented or stood for the whole Northern Kingdom; the same is true in Ezekiel 16:46.

On this basis, when we find the word “Jerusalem” in Luke 21:24, we cannot at the outset know what it refers to. When we look at the use of cities in prophetic contexts in the Hebrew Scriptures, what the prophets evidently had in mind, in most cases, is what the city represented. This suggests that “Jerusalem” in Jesus’ prophecy in Luke 21:24 refers neither to the people of Jerusalem nor to the city as a geographical place, but rather to Jerusalem in its representative sense.

Against this, it can be argued that Jesus had the literal destruction of the city of Jerusalem in mind, as shown in Luke 21:20, and that in this verse, “Jerusalem” must refer to the city and its inhabitants. So, if “Jerusalem” in verse 24 does not refer to the literal city of Jerusalem, then the single word “Jerusalem” must be used in two different senses in the near context of verses 20 and 24. But is this natural?

Taking Biblical patterns into account, there is nothing strange or uncommon in such use. In Matthew 2:1, “Jerusalem” refers to the city as a geographical area, but in verse 3, “Jerusalem” refers to the inhabitants of the city. In Matthew 11:23, 24, Jesus first uses “Sodom” to refer to the city, but “the land of Sodom” refers to the inhabitants. It is even possible to use a single definite substantive in two different senses within the context of the same thought or sentence.

In John 2:19, we read: “In answer Jesus said to them: “Break down this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” Grammatically the pronoun “it” must refer to “this temple” (the literal temple), but in verse 20, it is stated that he referred to “the temple of his body.” This means that “the temple” that should be broken down was the literal temple in Jerusalem, but the temple that should be raised up was a spiritual one. The references of words can also change in prophecies.

DIFFERENT USES OF “JERUSALEM” AND “ISRAEL”

If Jesus in Luke 21:24 had the literal city Jerusalem in mind, this would require that the Jews continued to be God’s chosen people, or at least that they would become his chosen people again at the end of the appointed times of the nations. However, this contradicts the Scriptures. Exodus 19:5, 6 shows that the Jews would not always be the people of God, but only if they fulfilled the condition of obeying Jehovah’s laws. The people did not do that, and at a certain point in time, they received their last chance to repent during a period of seventy weeks. (Daniel 9:24–27) When they did not repent, they were rejected. On this basis, it would be strange if Jesus uttered a prophecy alluding to a restoration of the literal city of Jerusalem at the end of those “appointed times of the nations”.

In the Christian Greek Scriptures, “Israel” can refer to two distinct groups. In Galatians 6:16, Paul speaks of “the Israel of God,” implying that there is another Israel that does not belong to God. The same is implied by the words “Israel in a fleshly way” in 1 Corinthians 10:18, and it is explicitly stated in Romans 9:6–8.

It is interesting to see how this difference between the two Israels or Jerusalems is expressed in the prophecies. For example, in Isaiah chapter 60 there is a prophecy regarding Zion or Jerusalem (v. 14). The words of this prophecy are not applied to fleshly Jews or to the literal Jerusalem, but rather to the “New Jerusalem,” as the following parallels show:

Table 3.1 *Different uses of “Jerusalem”*

Isaiah 60:1–2, 19	Revelation 21:23
Isaiah 60:3	Revelation 21:24
Isaiah 60:11, 20	Revelation 21:25
Isaiah 60:5	Revelation 21:26

Jeremiah 31:31 has a prophecy about a new covenant “with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.” These words are quoted in Hebrews 8:7–13, and it is implied that the law covenant would be abolished. Then the words of Jeremiah are

quoted in Hebrews 9:14, 15, and it is shown that “Israel” and “Judah” in the prophecy do not refer to the literal “Israel” and “Judah,” but to “the ones (anointed Christians) who have been called.” Based on the passages above, we must conclude that it is extremely unlikely that the prophetic use of “Jerusalem” in Luke 21:24 refers to the literal city Jerusalem or its inhabitants.

JESUS' USE OF FIGURATIVE WORDS IN HIS GREAT PROPHECY

In Matthew 24:2, Jesus speaks about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. The disciples connected this with the return and presence of Jesus and the conclusion of the system of things. Jesus described a sign of events that would occur in the first century, culminating in the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in 70 CE. This sign would have its larger and final fulfillment in the time of the end.

I compare Matthew 24:15-21 and Luke 21:20-24:

¹⁵ “Therefore, *when YOU catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation*, as spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place, (let the reader use discernment,) ¹⁶ *then let those in Ju-de'a begin fleeing to the mountains*. ¹⁷ Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house; ¹⁸ and let the man in the field not return to the house to pick up his outer garment. ¹⁹ Woe to the pregnant women and those suckling a baby in those days! ²⁰ Keep praying that YOUR flight may not occur in wintertime, nor on the sabbath day; ²¹ *for then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again*.

²⁰ “Furthermore, *when YOU see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near*. ²¹ *Then let those in Ju-de'a begin fleeing to the mountains*, and let those in the midst of her withdraw, and let those in the country places not enter into her. ²² because these are days for meting out justice, that all the things written may be fulfilled. ²³ Woe to the pregnant women and the ones suckling a baby in those days! For there will be great necessity upon the land and wrath on this people; ²⁴ *and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations*; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled.

I will now compare some events of the sign that literally were fulfilled in Judea and its environs, and that have the larger and final fulfillment in the time of the end.

In the year 66 CE, the armies of the Roman general Gaius Cestius Gallus encircled Jerusalem and conquered parts of the city, including parts of the temple area. When the armies were on the point of conquering the whole city, they retreated, and the city was no longer surrounded. Now the followers obeyed the words of Jesus and fled from Judea to the mountains.

Let us connect this situation with the prophecy of Jesus. If we compare Matthew 24:15 with Luke 21:20, we understand that the disgusting thing that causes desolation was the Roman armies — seeing the disgusting thing and the surrounding armies should cause the same reaction of fleeing to the mountains. These armies were disgusting because in 66 CE, they stood on the temple area with their banners, which they offered to as if they were divine. The Roman armies caused desolation when they returned to Jerusalem in 70 CE and destroyed the city.

The fulfillment of all the parts of Jesus' prophecy about the disgusting thing in the first century was literal; it happened in Judea, and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed. However, the prophecy would have its larger and final fulfillment in the time of the end, in the 20th and 21st centuries. And this fulfillment must be both literal and figurative. Let us see.

In chapter 2, I showed that the disgusting thing that causes desolation in the time of the end is the organization, the United Nations, represented by the wild beast with seven heads and ten horns in Revelation chapter 17. Can we draw a parallel with the Roman armies of the 1st century CE? In the first century, the Roman armies represented a political entity that would cause the destruction of a religious entity, Judea and the city of Jerusalem. In our time, the United Nations is the political entity representing all nations of the world. Its symbol, the wild beast, will cause desolation of a religious entity, Babylon the Great, all religions in opposition to the true religion of the world, which is also mentioned in Revelation chapter 17. The United Nations is a disgusting thing because it is hailed as the only hope for mankind for peace and security. Thus, it is a rival to the established God's kingdom.

When the followers of Jesus saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies, those who were in Judea should flee to the mountains. Figuratively, when the United Nations ascended from the abyss in 1945, those who saw this should act like those in Judea in the first century CE. How so?

The religious entity that corresponds to Judea and Jerusalem is Babylon the Great, which will be desolated and destroyed by the United Nations. Fleeing to the mountains during the time when the United Nations is visible is expressed in Revelation 18:4:

⁴ And I heard another voice out of heaven say: "Get out of her, my people, if YOU do not want to share with her in her sins, and if YOU do not want to receive part of her plagues.

The followers of Jesus who were in Judea and Jerusalem in the first century CE, and who did not flee to the mountains, probably lost their lives. Those who do not get out of Babylon the great will experience "death and mourning and famine" according to 18:8.

The last clauses of the quotation above from Luke 21:24 say:

and *Jerusalem* will be trampled on by the nations, until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled.

The reason for my long discussion above of the literal and figurative application of the disgusting thing that causes desolation is to find the meaning and reference of "Jerusalem" in verse 24.

When "Jerusalem" in the bigger and final fulfillment in the time of the end of the prophecy of the disgusting thing that causes desolation is figurative, we have strong reasons to view "Jerusalem" in the fulfillment

of the prophecy about the appointed times of the nations as figurative as well.

What does “Jerusalem” refer to at the point of time when the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled?

In the literal fulfillment in the first century of Jesus’ prophecy, Judea was a literal district, and Jerusalem was a literal city from which those who saw the Roman armies should flee. In the bigger and final figurative fulfillment, Judea and Jerusalem represent Babylon the Great, from which people who see and understand the function of the United Nations must flee.

In a similar way, the destruction in 70 CE was of the literal city of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem, literally speaking, would “fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations,” as Luke 21:24 says. But the word “Jerusalem” at the end of the appointed times of the nations does not refer to the literal city Jerusalem more than Judea refers to the literal district in the Middle East. I will show in the next section that the word “Jerusalem” in Luke 21:14 refers to the kingdom of God, which is the setting and the basic theme of the great prophecy of Jesus.

THE WORD “JERUSALEM” AS THE KINGDOM OF GOD

When we reject a literal interpretation of “Jerusalem” in Luke 21:24, we need to find a definition of its prophetic use. Jehovah gave David a promise of an everlasting kingdom (1 Chronicles 17:11–15), and this kingdom was associated with Jerusalem. (1 Chronicles 29:23; Isaiah 24:23; Jeremiah 3:17) Jerusalem is called “the town of the grand King” (Psalm 48:1, 2), and Jesus applied these words to Jerusalem in his day, even though there was no human king in the city. (Matthew 5:35) The prophecies in Isaiah chapter 60 about Jerusalem, which I have quoted above, are applied to the heavenly Jerusalem, which is God’s kingdom, in Revelation 21:23-26.

Hebrews 11:10 refers to “a city,” which Abraham waited for, and in 12:22, this city is called “heavenly Jerusalem.” In Hebrews 12:28, we learn that this city represents “a kingdom that cannot be shaken,” and this kingdom must be God’s Kingdom. The difference between the literal Jerusalem and “the one to come” is also mentioned in Hebrews 13:14.

On the basis on the passages referred to above, I conclude that the name “Jerusalem” stands for the Kingdom of God.

THE TRAMPLING OF “JERUSALEM”

The word “until” in Luke 21:24 indicates that the trampling of “Jerusalem” (the Kingdom of God) would end at a certain point of time, when “the appointed times of the nations” ended. Thus, a restoration is implied in the words of Luke 21:24, and

this restoration is prophetically mentioned in many places in the Bible, including in Acts 3:19-21. Taking this restoration as a point of departure helps us to see that “Jerusalem” stands for the Kingdom of God and also helps us to understand how this Kingdom was trampled upon during the appointed times of the nations.

A restoration is mentioned in Acts 15:15, 16, namely, “to rebuild the booth of “David”. (Amos 9:11, 12)¹⁹ What is this “booth of David”? The Watchtower of 1949, page 281, answers that it is “the royal house of David made up of the heirs to the kingdom covenant,” and this is a good explanation. The first members of this royal house were connected with the Christian congregation from the day of Pentecost in 33 CE.

The prophecy about the booth of David and its restoration parallels Luke 21:24 because David’s booth represents the Kingdom of God or Jehovah’s throne on the earth, and this dynasty of kings is connected with Jerusalem. (1 Chronicles 29:23) Thus, the restoration of “Jerusalem” after “the appointed times of the nations” have ended is another way of speaking about the rebuilding of “the booth of David”. This “booth” did not fall in 70 CE, when Jerusalem was destroyed (as implied in Luke 21:20–23), but it fell when the last king of David’s dynasty, Zedekiah, lost his kingdom in 607 BCE. (Ezekiel 21:26, 27)

THE BEGINNING OF THE TRAMPLING

The Greek verb *pateō* (“tread on; trample”) is rendered by Bible translations with future tense: “and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations.” Would not the future tense contradict the view that the trampling already had begun some time ago and had continued for many years by the time Jesus gave the prophecy? Not necessarily.

In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the future tense occurs 1,625 times, of which 18 are periphrastic futures, i.e., constructions with a finite verb in the future tense followed by a participle. In Luke chapter 21, we find 26 examples of simple future and three examples of periphrastic future. So, the question is whether there is a difference in meaning between simple future and periphrastic future in the Christian Greek Scriptures.

When we consider this question, we should keep in mind that rarely can we say something like: “Because of the use of this particular tense, this author *must* mean . . .” We can better say: “The use of this particular tense *corroborates* this meaning . . .” The simple future and periphrastic future can have about the same meaning, and they can also have different meanings. In Luke 21, Jesus’ words are quoted; which form of the Hebrew or Aramaic verb could he have used in Luke 21:24?

Because Luke only used periphrastic future in 2.6 percent of instances with future reference, i.e., Luke makes an exception in his default use of tense and deliberately

19. See also Psalm 78:67–70, which indicates that a “tent” or “booth” may represent a dynasty of kings.

shifts to periphrastic future, it is logical that the Hebrew or Aramaic verbs used in these instances had a different meaning compared with the verbs used in the other 97.4 percent instances.

We find an example that is a good parallel in 2 Samuel 7:16:

And your house and your kingdom will certainly be steadfast (The Septuagint: simple future) to time indefinite before you; your very throne will become (The Septuagint: future + perfect participle) one firmly established to time indefinite.

The important point in this passage is that at its time of writing, David already had ruled as a king for many years. Nevertheless, the passage says that his kingdom “will be steadfast” and “will become firmly established” to time indefinite. This shows that both Greek simple future and periphrastic future can refer to a future situation, which is already in place and has held for some time. Why did the Greek translator choose a periphrastic future in this verse? Probably because the Hebrew text has an imperfect of the verb “to be/become” plus a passive participle.

We also find an interesting example in Isaiah 47:7:

And you kept saying: To time indefinite I shall prove to be (The Septuagint: future + present participle) the mistress, forever.

The daughter of the Chaldeans was already the mistress, but her wish was that this should continue forever. This is expressed in the Septuagint by a periphrastic future, but the Hebrew text has no participle, but only an imperfect of the verb “to be/become.” This indicates that both the Hebrew imperfect and the imperfect plus participle, and the Greek simple future and periphrastic future, can refer to a situation that has existed for some time and will continue into the future.

The problem in both languages is that there is no single verb form that can unambiguously convey that a situation has existed for some time and will continue into the future. This means that to signal such a thought, either two verbs (one referring to the past/present and one to the future) must be used, or the context, together with the use of one verb or a combination of one finite verb and a participle could also signal that situation.

A situation that has existed for a long time and will continue into the future is a special situation. The easiest way to signal such a situation would be to use a verb construction that is special (or rare) as well. The use of imperfect + participle is very rare in Hebrew, so when such a construction occurs, the reader may rightly expect something unusual. The same is true in Greek, where a future plus participle is rare as well.

Thus, the rare use of a periphrastic future in Luke 21:24 would be a strong way to signal that the trampling upon “Jerusalem” had lasted for some time and would continue into the future—rather than using a simple future. And because the

periphrastic future is so rare in Greek, it is most likely a translation of a Hebrew imperfect plus participle.²⁰

We also have some interesting examples in The Christian Greek Scriptures. In Acts 13:10, we read:

And Paul said: “O man full of every sort of fraud and every sort of villainy, you son of the Devil, you enemy of everything righteous, will you not quit distorting (future plus participle) the right ways of Jehovah?”

Clearly, the actions described by the periphrastic future in this verse do not solely refer to the future, because this man evidently had already distorted the ways of Jehovah for some time.

In Mark 13:13 we read:

and you will be objects of hatred (future plus present participle) by all people on account of my name.

The disciples had already been an object of hatred when these words were uttered. And in Acts 6:4 we read:

But we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

Most manuscripts have a simple future in this verse, but Codex Cantabrigiensis (D) has future + present participle. The twelve had already “devoted themselves to prayer,” and they would continue to do so into the future as well.

The passages above show that a periphrastic future may describe a situation that has already lasted for some time while also indicating that it will continue into the future. This shows that the expression “Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations,” expressed with the periphrastic future, need not refer only to the future; the trampling may have been occurring for some time already when Luke wrote his book.

The use of periphrastic future in the clause “and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations” may indicate that the trampling was going on already and would continue into the future.

THE TREE IN DANIEL CHAPTER 4 AND JERUSALEM IN LUKE 21:24

The book of Daniel is the only biblical book where the words ‘*et qets*’ (“time of the end”) is mentioned, and nations coming and going on the world scene are put into a temporal frame relative to the Kingdom of God. (Daniel 2:36-45; 7:3-12; 8:3-25; 11:2-45; 12:7-13) The time of the coming of the Messiah, the king of God’s Kingdom, is also mentioned (9: 24-27), and so it would be fitting if the time of the

20. If Jesus spoke Aramaic where imperfect plus participle is used more often than in Hebrew, the same argument would hold.

coming of the Messiah in the power of the Kingdom and the elevation of the booth of David would be mentioned as well.

The dream of Nebuchadnezzar II was given at a critical time in the history of God's people, when the Davidic dynasty was cut down, and the person who received the dream was the one who executed it as the acting servant of Jehovah. The subject of the dream is, according to Daniel 4:17:

that people living may know that *the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind* and that to the one whom he wants to, he gives it and *he sets up over it even the lowliest one of mankind.*

Clearly, the dream relates to the Kingdom of God!

Trees, twigs, and stumps are often used to symbolize kingdoms and dynasties of kings. (Ezekiel 17:1–24; particularly v. 23) Isaiah 10:33–11:10 shows how trees that represent kingdoms will be cut down, but a twig out of the stump of Jesse will be fruitful. Also, in Jeremiah 23:5 and Zechariah 6:12–13, the Messiah is depicted as a sprout. In Isaiah 53:3, 7–9, the Messiah is portrayed as “*the lowliest of mankind*” (cf. Matthew 11:29), which fits the description of “*the lowliest of mankind,*” whom God “sets up over” the kingdom. (Daniel 4:17)

Just as a city that is the capital of a kingdom can symbolize the whole kingdom; similarly, a tree can symbolize a kingdom. I quote Daniel 4:10-17 (above) and Luke 21:24 (below):

¹⁰ “Now the visions of my head upon my bed I happened to be beholding, and, look! *a tree in the midst of the earth, the height of which was immense.*” ¹¹ The tree grew up and became strong, and its very height finally reached the heavens, and it was visible to the extremity of the whole earth. ¹² Its foliage was fair, and its fruit was abundant, and there was food for all on it. Under it the beast of the field would seek shade, and on its boughs the birds of the heavens would dwell, and from it all flesh would feed itself.

¹³ “I continued beholding in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, look! a watcher, even a holy one, coming down from the heavens themselves. ¹⁴ He was calling out loudly, and this is what he was saying: “*CHOP the tree down, and cut off its boughs. SHAKE off its foliage, and scatter its fruitage.* Let the beast flee from under it, and the birds from its boughs. ¹⁵ However, LEAVE its rootstock itself in the earth, even with a banding of iron and of copper, among the grass of the field; and with the dew of the heavens let it be wet, and with the beast let its portion be among the vegetation of the earth. ¹⁶ *Let its heart be changed from that of mankind, and let the heart of a beast be given to it, and let seven times (‘iddanin) pass over it.*” ¹⁷ By the decree of watchers the thing is, and [by] the saying of holy ones the request is, *to the intent that people living may know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind and that to the one whom he wants to, he gives it and he sets up over it even the lowliest one of mankind.*”

²⁴ and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until *the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled.*

I have already argued that the “Jerusalem” mentioned in Luke 21:24 stands for God's kingdom. The last words of Daniel 4:17 indicate that the tree also stands for God' kingdom. It was Nebuchadnezzar who lost his mind and ate grass like an

animal. But the words “*the Most High is ruler in the kingdom of mankind*” refer to Jehovah God, and he gives the kingdom of mankind to whom he wants and puts *the lowliest one of mankind* over it. This could not refer to Nebuchadnezzar, because God is not installing kings in the nations of the world.

Based on the discussion above, we are now in a position to outline the parallels between Daniel 4:10–17 and Luke 21:24.

Table 3.2 Parallels between Daniel 4 and Luke 21

Jerusalem = the Kingdom of God.	The tree = the Kingdom of God.
Jerusalem is trampled on.	The tree is cut down.
The trampling occurs during the appointed times of the nations.	The stump of the tree is without sprouts during a period of seven appointed times.
Jerusalem will no longer be trampled upon after the appointed times of the nations have ended.	The stump of the tree will sprout after seven appointed times.

It is important to note that there is both a topical and a linguistic parallel between Daniel chapter 4 and Luke 21:24. The topical (thematic) parallel is seen in Table 3.2, and the linguistic parallel is seen in the word *kairoi* (Aramaic *‘iddānīn*) in Luke 21:24, which parallels *kairoi* —(Aramaic *‘iddānīn*) in Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32.

There is both a linguistic and a topical (thematic) parallel between “the appointed times” in Luke 21:24 and the 7 times in Daniel chapter 4. This suggests that when Jesus spoke about “the appointed times of the nations” he had the words of Daniel 4:16, 23, 24, 32 in mind.

Because Luke 21:24 is a part of a prophecy, where only half of what we need is written, we must always be open to the possibility that our interpretation (the half we need to find ourselves, i.e., the intended application) is wrong.

However, the words of Jesus that his followers should understand his great prophecy also include “the appointed times of the nations.” There are only three instances in the Hebrew Scriptures where “appointed time” is qualified by a number. And only the four instances of the Aramaic word *‘iddānīn* (Greek, *kairoi*) in Daniel chapter 4 occur in a chapter where God’s Kingdom is mentioned.

Because there is both a linguistic and a topical parallel between Luke 21:24 and Daniel chapter 4, my application of the appointed times of the nations has a strong basis.

CALCULATING THE APPOINTED TIMES OF THE NATIONS

I will start with a comparison between two important time prophecies, namely, Mark 1:15 and Luke 21:24:

¹⁵ and saying: “*The appointed time has been fulfilled* (*plerōō*), and the kingdom of God has drawn near.

²⁴ and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until *the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled* (*plerōō*).

The verb translated as “fulfilled” is *plerōō*, with the meaning “to fill, make full, fill up.” When Jesus spoke about “the appointed time,” he referred to the 69 weeks, or 483 years, from year 20 of Artaxerxes, which is 455 BCE., to year 29, when Jesus began his public ministry as the promised Messiah. These 483 years had now been filled, just as a jar is gradually filled by water.

The same verb *plerōō* is also used in the prophecy about the appointed times of the nations. This suggests that these appointed times, in a similar way, must be filled, just as a jar is gradually filled with water. Jesus speaks of the time period as “the appointed time” in the singular, viewing the 483 years from a collective perspective. In his great prophecy, he speaks of “appointed times” in the plural. By this, he stresses that there are a number of times that must be filled before the end of the appointed times of the nations, comes. Because the same verb is used, we can conclude that “the appointed times of the nations” should be calculated in the same way as the 69 weeks or 483 years to the first coming of the Messiah.

If we accept that the “seven times” in Daniel chapter 4 represent “the appointed times of the nations,” first, we must know how many days seven times represent. Revelation 11:2, 3 shows that 42 months equal 1,260 days, or 30 days per month. In 7 years, there are 84 months, which add up to 2,520 days.

However, since the Davidic line of kings who represented the Kingdom of God was not restored a mere 2,520 days after Zedekiah was removed in 607 BCE, we must apply the prophetic rule that one day represents one year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6) so that the 2,520 days can scripturally have a greater fulfillment. In keeping with this, the 7 appointed times would prophetically amount to 2,520 years.²¹ As we saw above, “the appointed times of the nations” is the time from the destruction of Jerusalem, when the last king of the dynasty of David reigned, until God’s heavenly kingdom is established.

But how do we find the right starting point? Almost all lexicons and textbooks tell readers that Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar II in 587 (or 586) BCE. If we count 2,520 years from this time, we arrive in 1934 (or 1935) when nothing

21. As I showed in chapter 2, the prophecy of 69 weeks to the coming of the Messiah must also be calculated on the basis that one day represents one year.

unusual happened. However, if we start with 607 BCE and calculate 2,520 years, we arrive at the year 1914, which was the year of the start of World War I.

A common problem or tradition in academia is that a conclusion drawn by a scholar 50, 100, or even 200 years ago, is authoritatively repeated from generation to generation without ever being reexamined or scrutinized for accuracy. Please consider the following example:

“Spinach is good for your health because of its high iron content!” This claim has been repeated over and over again in nutrition books and health magazines in a great part of the 20th century. Cartoonists have made use of it for humorous design, and children have been fed, more or less against their will with this green. Yet the claim turns out to be wrong; its basis is a misunderstanding. Due to a typographical error by a printer of the decimal-point location in the 1920s, the iron content was placed ten times too high. The error was not discovered, because no one made an inquiry, until 1979 when G. W. Lohr of the University of Freiburg routinely checked the old numbers and found that they were wrong. It may be added that the iron of spinach is not in the form that the body easily can absorb.²²

The primary piece of evidence in favor of the year 587 is the Babylonian astronomical diary VAT4956. A German article calculating astronomical positions on this tablet appeared in 1915,²³ and these calculations suggested that Nebuchadnezzar II destroyed Jerusalem in 587 BCE. For the next 70 years, the conclusions of Neugebauer and Weidner were used in all lexicons and textbooks, and no one published an article showing that they had independently translated the tablet and checked the astronomical positions obtained in 1915. In 1988, an English translation of the tablet was published by H. Hunger.²⁴ This English translation made by Hunger was close to the German translation made 73 years earlier, but the volume has no astronomical calculations. From the comments at the end of the entry, it appears that the calculations made by Neugebauer and Weidner were accepted by Hunger.²⁵

In 2005, I visited the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin. I collated the tablet, and I took electronic pictures of its signs. Later, I studied the tablet at magnified views of each sign, but several signs were not clearly identifiable. In particular, many of the celestial bodies associated with the planets were difficult to identify. I discovered that Neugebauer and Weidner had made all their calculations starting one day wrong, and Hunger’s comments show that he followed suit. A one-day difference in the calculation of lunar positions gives very different results.

22. *Science Digest*, February 1979, page 16.

23. P.V. Neugebauer and E.F. Weidner, “Ein astronomischer Beobachtungstext aus dem 37. Jahre Nebukadnesars II (567/566).” *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Klasse* 67,2 (RERO)0809719-41slsp

24. A. Sachs and H. Hunger, *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts From Babylonia*, Volume I, (1988).

25. Hunger has written that he never has collated the tablet VAT4956; he made his translation based on black and white pictures of the tablet taken before World War II.

On the basis of my study of VAT4956 and several other relevant astronomical tablets, I wrote a book dealing with the Neo-Babylonian Chronology.²⁶ I calculated the 14 lunar positions on VAT4956, and my conclusion for the year 568/567, which is the year pointed to by Neugebauer and Weidner and Hunger, is that seven of the positions have an excellent fit, five do not fit at all, and two are inaccurate. But all the 14 lunar positions have an excellent fit twenty years earlier, in the year 588/87.²⁷ This suggests that Nebuchadnezzar II conquered Jerusalem in 607 BCE and not in 587 BCE.

The excellent fit of the 14 lunar positions on VAT4956 in the year 588/87, which is year 37 of Nebuchadnezzar II, suggests that year 18 of Nebuchadnezzar II, when Jerusalem was destroyed, is 607 BCE.

No scholar has published a study comparing all the mentioned cuneiform tablets, the historical babylonian tablets, and relevant Greek and Egyptian material as a basis for calculating the regnal years of Nebuchadnezzar II. Thus, the information in this chapter is unique and can only be found in my book on Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian chronology. (See note 25)

I have also studied cuneiform business tablets dated to the kings of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. And 90 of these tablets have dates indicating that each Neo-Babylonian king reigned longer than the traditional chronology allows. This means that the traditional chronology is destroyed, and the dated tablets support the view that the Neo-Babylonian Empire is 20 years longer than the chronology found in lexicons and textbooks.

26. R. J. Furuli, *Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian and Persian Chronology — Volume II, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian Chronology*, second edition (2013) pages 45–249; 342–416.

27. The parameters of each lunar position are listed in my book so that they can be checked by any Astro-program.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE TIME SETTING OF JESUS' GREAT PROPHECY

SUMMARY

Different parts of Jesus' great prophecy refer to different time periods. Understanding this is required to understand the prophecy itself.

Examples of prophecies with two different fulfillments are given, and it is demonstrated that the prophecies in Matthew 24:4-22 have two fulfillments. One example is the prophecy about the disgusting thing that causes desolation.

Luke 21:24 about the appointed times of the nations, represents a break in the prophecy between events that were fulfilled in the first century and the larger and final events that are fulfilled in the time of the end. Based on the parallels in Matthew and Mark of this break, we find the following scheme:

Matthew 24:4-22	Miniature fulfillment in the first century CE, the larger and final fulfillment in the time of the end.
Matthew 24:23-28	Fulfilled between 70 CE and 1914
Matthew 24:29-51	Fulfilled in connection with the great tribulation

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMONSTRATIVE WORDS

In Matthew 24, the demonstrative adjective *ekeinos* (“that, that one, he”) occurs 10 times, and the demonstrative pronoun *houtos* (“this, this person or thing”) occurs 8 times. Both demonstrative words refer to the past, to words or situations that previously were mentioned. But there is also a demonstrative adverb that refers to the future, namely *tote* (“then, at that time, from that time”), which occurs 8 times in Matthew chapter 24. Louw and Nida define this word in the following way: “a point of time subsequent to another point of time — ‘then’.”

Taking note of these words is important for understanding the nuances of particular sentences. And I will refer to them in the discussions of the text.

In the last chapter, I pointed out that the disciples asked their questions because Jesus, with reference to Daniel 9:26, said that Jerusalem and the temple should be destroyed. They associated the time of the end mentioned in Daniel 12:4, 5 with the return and presence of Jesus, equating it with the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened in 70 CE.

When the disciples asked their questions, no part of the Christian Greek Scriptures had yet been written. And today, when we have the whole Bible, we understand that the disciples, in reality, asked for two completely different things. Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed in 70 CE, but the time of the end and the return and presence of Jesus would occur in the distant future.

PROPHECIES WITH TWO FULFILLMENTS

To understand how Jesus could give one answer to the disciples' questions that included two different things that would happen at two different times, we need to recognize that some prophecies have one fulfillment, while others have two fulfillments at two different times. I will give two examples of prophecies with a double fulfillment.

The prophet Habakkuk lived in the 8th century BCE, and I quote the prophecy in Habakkuk 1:5-7 (above) and Acts 13:40, 41 (below):

⁵ "See, YOU people, among the nations, and look on, and stare in amazement at one another. Be amazed; for there is an activity that one is carrying on in YOUR days, [which] YOU people will not believe although it is related. ⁶ For here I am raising up the Chal·de'ans, the nation bitter and impetuous, which is going to the wide-open places of earth in order to take possession of residences not belonging to it. ⁷ Frightful and fear-inspiring it is. From itself its own justice and its own dignity go forth.

⁴⁰ Therefore see to it that what is said in the Prophets does not come upon YOU, ⁴¹ Behold it, YOU scorners, and wonder at it, and vanish away, because I am working a work in YOUR days, a work that YOU will by no means believe even if anyone relates it to YOU in detail."

Habakkuk's prophecy was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar II destroyed Jerusalem in 607 BCE. The words of Paul show that after the time when the prophecy was fulfilled on Nebuchadnezzar, there would be someone of whom the Chaldeans were a prophetic type. And Jerusalem was destroyed again in 70 CE by the Romans.

Malachi has a prophecy about the great day when Jehovah will judge his enemies, and we read in 4:5, 6:

⁵ "Look! I am sending to YOU people E·li'jah the prophet before the coming of the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah. ⁶ And he must turn the heart of fathers back toward sons, and the heart of sons back toward fathers; in order that I may not come and actually strike the earth with a devoting [of it] to destruction."

The important point is that God will send Elijah, the prophet, before his “great and fear-inspiring day.” This prophecy is quoted two times by Jesus, in Matthew 11:12-15 (above) and 17:10-13 (below):

¹² But from the days of *John the Baptist* until now the kingdom of the heavens is the goal toward which men press, and those pressing forward are seizing it. ¹³ For all, the Prophets and the Law, prophesied until John; ¹⁴ and if YOU want to accept it, *He himself is 'E-li'jah* who is destined to come.’ ¹⁵ Let him that has ears listen.

¹⁰ However, the disciples put the question to him: “Why, then, do the scribes say that E·li'jah must come first?” ¹¹ In reply he said: “E·li'jah, indeed, is coming and will restore all things. ¹² However, I say to YOU that *E·li'jah has already come* and they did not recognize him but did with him the things they wanted. In this way also the Son of man is destined to suffer at their hands.” ¹³ *Then the disciples perceived that he spoke to them about John the Baptist.*

Jesus shows that the prophet Elijah was the prophetic type, and John the Baptist was the antitype — the fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy that Elijah should come before Jehovah’s great and fear-inspiring day. But can we see a problem here, or rather a question? John the Baptist fulfilled Malachi’s prophecy about the coming of the prophet Elijah. But Jehovah’s great and fear-inspiring day did not come. How can that be?

The answer is that a miniature fulfillment of Jehovah’s great and fear-inspiring day occurred in the year 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed, and 1,1 million people died, and 97,000 were captured. However, the larger and final fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy about Elijah and Jehovah’s great and fear-inspiring day was not fulfilled in the first century CE. Jesus showed this in his words in Matthew 16:28 – 17:9:

²⁸ Truly I say to YOU that there are some of those standing here that will not taste death at all until first *they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*” ¹ Six days later Jesus took Peter and James and John his brother along and brought them up into a lofty mountain by themselves. ² And *he was transfigured before them*, and his face shone as the sun, and his outer garments became brilliant as the light. ³ *And, look! there appeared to them Moses and E·li'jah, conversing with him.* ⁴ Responsively Peter said to Jesus: “Lord, it is fine for us to be here. If you wish, I will erect three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for E·li'jah.” ⁵ While he was yet speaking, look! a bright cloud overshadowed them, and, look! a voice out of the cloud, saying: “This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved; listen to him.” ⁶ At hearing this the disciples fell upon their faces and became very much afraid. ⁷ Then Jesus came near and, touching them, said: “Get up and have no fear.” ⁸ When they raised their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus himself only. ⁹ And as they were descending from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying: “Tell *the vision* to no one until the Son of man is raised up from the dead.”

Jesus told his disciples who were present that they should not die before they *saw* the Son of man coming in his kingdom. This was fulfilled six days later when Jesus was transfigured before them. Please note that this was “a vision,” as verse 9 says. This vision showed Jesus in his kingdom, with Moses and Elijah by his side. This shows that Moses and Elijah were prophetic types, and the antitypes should occur when Jesus was present and God’s kingdom was established.

Peter was one of those who saw this vision, and he wrote about his experience in 2 Peter 1:16-18:

¹⁶No, it was not by following artfully contrived false stories that we acquainted YOU with the power and *presence* (*parousia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it was by having become eyewitnesses of his magnificence. ¹⁷For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when words such as these were borne to him by the magnificent glory: “This is my son, my beloved, whom I myself have approved.” ¹⁸Yes, these words we heard borne from heaven while we were with him in the holy mountain.

Peter says in verse 16 that the vision referred to the presence of Jesus. And Jesus said in Matthew 16:28 that the vision referred to his kingdom. As I will discuss later, the kingdom of God was established when Jesus’ presence started. And this did not happen in the first century when John the Baptist was a prophetic antitype of the prophet Elijah. But because Moses and Elijah are seen in the vision, this shows that they would have antitypes during Jesus’ presence when the heavenly kingdom was established, before the real great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah.

Revelation was written around 98 CE, and the first verse tells that the fulfillment of the symbols of the book will occur in the future. I quote 11:3-7, which has some resemblance to the transfiguration of Jesus:

³ And I will cause my two witnesses to prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days dressed in sackcloth.” ⁴ These are [symbolized by] the two olive trees and the two lampstands and are standing before the Lord of the earth.

⁵ And if anyone wants to harm them, fire issues forth from their mouths and devours their enemies; and if anyone should want to harm them, in this manner he must be killed. ⁶ These have the authority to shut up heaven that no rain should fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every sort of plague as often as they wish. ⁷ And when they have finished their witnessing, the wild beast that ascends out of the abyss will make war with them and conquer them and kill them.

The names of Moses and Elijah are not mentioned, but the actions of the two witnesses show that they are antitypes of Moses and Elijah. Both the transfiguration on the mountain and the account of the two witnesses show that John the Baptist was a miniature fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy that Elijah should come before Jehovah’s great and inspiring day. The larger and final fulfillment would occur during Jesus’ presence when the kingdom was established.

EXPRESSIONS WITH TWO FULFILLMENTS IN JESUS’ GREAT PROPHECY

The disciples asked for a sign, and one part of the sign was the disgusting thing that causes desolation. I quote Matthew 24:15-22:

¹⁵ “Therefore, when YOU catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation, as spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place, (let the reader use discernment,) ¹⁶ then let those in Ju-de’a begin fleeing to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the man

on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house;¹⁸ and let the man in the field not return to the house to pick up his outer garment.¹⁹ Woe to the pregnant women and those suckling a baby in those days!²⁰ Keep praying that YOUR flight may not occur in wintertime, nor on the sabbath day;²¹ for then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again.²² In fact, unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short.

Jesus refers to the book of Daniel and its prophecies about the disgusting thing that causes desolation, and Jesus also identified the disgusting thing, according to Luke 21:20-24:

²⁰ “Furthermore, when YOU see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near.²¹ Then let those in Ju·de'a begin fleeing to the mountains, and let those in the midst of her withdraw, and let those in the country places not enter into her;²² because these are days for meting out justice, that all the things written may be fulfilled.²³ Woe to the pregnant women and the ones suckling a baby in those days! For there will be great necessity upon the land and wrath on this people;²⁴ and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled.

I mark the parallels in the two accounts with the same colors. The important point is that Jesus identifies the disgusting thing that causes desolation with the Roman armies that surrounded Jerusalem. When the followers of Jesus saw the disgusting thing that causes desolation, they should begin fleeing to the mountains. And when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, they should begin fleeing to the mountains. The reason was that there would follow a great tribulation, according to Matthew 24:21, and that the inhabitants of Jerusalem would fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive to all the nations.

In 66 CE, the Roman general Gaius Cestius Gallus's armies surrounded Jerusalem. But when they were on the point of capturing the city, they retreated. The followers of Jesus now saw their opportunity and fled from the city. In 70 CE, the Roman general Titus' armies surrounded the city and destroyed it, and 1,1 million people were killed, and 97,000 were taken as prisoners.

The Roman armies were disgusting in the eyes of God because they stood on the holy ground of the temple with their standards, to which they sacrificed. And they caused desolation by surrounding and destroying Jerusalem in 70 CE.

Jesus' prophecy about the disgusting thing that causes desolation was fulfilled in the first century CE, in the years 66 and 70 CE. However, when we study the book of Daniel, we realize that this prophecy will have a bigger and final fulfillment in the time of the end. I quote Daniel 9:26, 27 (above) and 12:8-11 (below):

²⁶ “And after the sixty-two weeks Mes·si'ah will be cut off, with nothing for himself. “*And the city and the holy place the people of a leader that is coming will bring to their ruin.* And the end of it will be by the flood. And until [the] end there will be war; what is decided upon is desolations. ²⁷ “And he must keep [the] covenant in force for the many for one week; and at the half of the week he will cause sacrifice and gift offering to cease.

“And upon the wing of disgusting things there will be the one causing desolation; and until an extermination, the very thing decided upon will go pouring out also upon the one lying desolate.”

⁸ Now as for me, I heard, but I could not understand; so that I said: “O my lord, what will be the final part of these things?” ⁹ And he went on to say: “Go, Daniel, because the words are made secret and *sealed up until the time of [the] end*. ¹⁰ Many will cleanse themselves and whiten themselves and will be refined. And the wicked ones will certainly act wickedly, and no wicked ones at all will understand; but the ones having insight will understand. ¹¹ “And from the time that the constant [feature] has been removed *and there has been a placing of the disgusting thing that is causing desolation*, there will be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.

The setting in Daniel 9:26,27 of the disgusting thing that causes desolation is the 70 weeks that ended in 36 CE and the destruction of Jerusalem that occurred in 70 CE. But the setting of Daniel chapter 12 is the time of the end, which is mentioned in verses 4 and 9. The disgusting thing that causes desolation is connected with the period of 1,290 days, one of the three time periods that will be fulfilled on the people of God in the time of the end.

The words about those in Judea beginning to flee to the mountains were clearly fulfilled in the first century CE. But there are words in the prophecy that only can be fulfilled in the time of the end. I quote Matthew 24:14 (above), 24:21 (middle), 24:29, 30 (below):

¹⁴ And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.

²¹ for then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again.

²⁹ “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 heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ And then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The words about preaching the good news of the kingdom in all the earth as a witness to all the nations show that the prophecy relates to the whole world, not only to events in Judea in the first century CE. The good news was not preached to all the nations in the first century CE. But this is done today.

The words about the great tribulation had a miniature fulfilment when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 CE. But this was not the greatest tribulation that had occurred or will occur. The destruction in the great flood in Noah's days was probably bigger than the destruction in 70 CE, and the future great tribulation will be the biggest one that ever has occurred. The words that all the tribes of the earth will see (= understand) that the Son of man is coming on the clouds must also refer to the future.

The quoted examples demonstrate that some prophecies have two fulfillments. But how can we know what is what? How can we know which words have a

miniature fulfillment in the first century and a larger and final fulfillment in the time of the end, and which words are only fulfilled in the time of the end? To answer this question, we need to understand the setting of Jesus' great prophecy, that some parts of it refer to different time periods.

THE TIME SETTING OF JESUS' GREAT PROPHECY

One part of the prophecy has double fulfillment, a miniature fulfillment in the first century CE and a larger and final fulfillment in the time of the end. The other part has only one fulfillment in connection the great tribulation at the end of the time of the end. There are some words in the chapter of Luke that separate the two parts, namely Luke 21:24:

²⁴ and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, *until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled.*

The destruction of Jerusalem is mentioned in the verse, indicating that the appointed times of the nations are running after Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 CE. This means that verse 24 separates the two parts of Jesus' great prophecy. I quote the parallels to Luke 21:24, namely Matthew 24:23-28 and Mark 13:21-23:

²⁴ and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, *until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled.*

²³ “Then (*tote*) if anyone says to YOU, ‘Look! Here is the Christ,’ or, ‘There!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will give great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the chosen ones. ²⁵ Look! I have forewarned YOU. ²⁶ Therefore, if people say to YOU, ‘Look! He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out; ‘Look! He is in the inner chambers,’ do not believe it. ²⁷ For just as the lightning comes out of eastern parts and shines over to western parts, so the presence (*parousia*) of the Son of man will be. ²⁸ Wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

²¹ “Then (*tote*), too, if anyone says to YOU, ‘See! Here is the Christ,’ ‘See! There he is,’ do not believe [it]. ²² For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will give signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, the chosen ones. ²³ YOU, then, watch out; I have told YOU all things beforehand.

All the verses quoted above represent the time between the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE and the time of the end that started in 1914. We note that the demonstrative adverb *tote* occurs both in Matthew 24:23 and Mark 13:21 after the words about the great tribulation. This adverb has the meaning, “from this time”, and its use confirms that Matthew 24:23-28 and Mark 13:21-23 refer to events that would happen *after* the great tribulation in 70 CE. Table 4.1 illustrates the whole setting of Jesus' great prophecy.

Table 4.1 The setting of Jesus' great prophecy — A comparison between Matthew 24, Luke 21, and Mark 13

MATTHEW 24	LUKE 21	MARK 13
33-70 CE	33-70 CE	33-70 CE
¹ Departing now, Jesus was on his way from the temple, but his disciples approached to show him the buildings of the temple. ² In response he said to them: “Do YOU not behold all these things? Truly I say to YOU, By no means will a stone be left here upon a stone and not be thrown down.” ³ While he was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately, saying: “Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence (<i>parousia</i>) and of the conclusion of the system of things?” ⁴ And in answer Jesus said to them: “Look out that nobody misleads YOU; ⁵ for many will come (<i>erkhōmai</i>) on the basis of my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many. ⁶ YOU are going to hear of wars and reports of wars; see that YOU are not terrified. For these things must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁶ “For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another. ⁸ All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress. ⁹ “Then (<i>tote</i>) people will deliver YOU up to tribulation and will kill YOU, and YOU will be objects of hatred by all the nations on account of my name. ¹⁰ Then (<i>tote</i>), also, many will be stumbled and will betray one another and will hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and mislead many; ¹² and because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off. ¹³ But he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved. ¹⁴ And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then (<i>tote</i>) the end will come. ¹⁵ “Therefore, when YOU catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation, as spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place, (let the reader use discernment,) ¹⁶ then	⁵ Later, as certain ones were speaking concerning the temple, how it was adorned with fine stones and dedicated things, ⁶ he said: “As for these things that YOU are beholding, the days will come (<i>erkhōmai</i>) in which not a stone upon a stone will be left here and not be thrown down.” ⁷ Then they questioned him, saying: “Teacher, when will these things actually be, and what will be the sign when these things are destined to occur?” ⁸ He said: “Look out that YOU are not misled; for many will come (<i>erkhōmai</i>) on the basis of my name, saying, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The due time has approached.’ Do not go after them. ⁹ Furthermore, when YOU hear of wars and disorders, do not be terrified. For these things must occur first, but the end does not [occur] immediately.” ¹⁰ Then (<i>tote</i>) he went on to say to them: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; ¹¹ and there will be great earthquakes, and in one place after another pestilences and food shortages; and there will be fearful sights and from heaven great signs. ¹² “But before all these things people will lay their hands upon YOU and persecute YOU, delivering YOU up to the synagogues and prisons, YOU being haled before kings and governors for the sake of my name. ¹³ It will turn out to YOU for a witness. ¹⁴ Therefore settle it in YOUR hearts not to rehearse beforehand how to make YOUR defense, ¹⁵ for I will give YOU a mouth and wisdom, which all YOUR opposers together will not be able to resist or dispute. ¹⁶ Moreover, YOU will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of YOU to death; ¹⁷ and YOU will be objects of hatred by all people because of my name. ¹⁸ And yet not a hair of YOUR heads will by any means perish. ¹⁹ By endurance on YOUR part YOU will acquire YOUR souls. ²⁰ “Furthermore, when YOU see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped	³ And as he was sitting on the Mount of Olives with the temple in view, Peter and James and John and Andrew began to ask him privately: ⁴ “Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are destined to come to a conclusion?” ⁵ So Jesus started to say to them: “Look out that nobody misleads YOU. ⁶ Many will come (<i>erkhōmai</i>) on the basis of my name, saying, ‘I am he,’ and will mislead many. ⁷ Moreover, when YOU hear of wars and reports of wars, do not be terrified; [these things] must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁸ “For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, there will be earthquakes in one place after another, there will be food shortages. These are a beginning of pangs of distress. ⁹ “As for YOU, look out for yourselves; people will deliver YOU up to local courts, and YOU will be beaten in synagogues and be put on the stand before governors and kings for my sake, for a witness to them. ¹⁰ Also, in all the nations the good news has to be preached first. ¹¹ But when they are leading YOU along to deliver YOU up, do not be anxious beforehand about what to speak; but whatever is given YOU in that hour, speak this, for YOU are not the ones speaking, but the holy spirit is. ¹² Furthermore, brother will deliver brother over to death, and a father a child, and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death; ¹³ and YOU will be objects of hatred by all people on account of my name. But he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved. ¹⁴ “However, when YOU catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation standing where it ought not (let the reader use discernment), then (<i>tote</i>) let those in Ju-de’a begin fleeing to the mountains. ¹⁵ Let the man on the housetop not come down, nor go inside to take anything out of his house; ¹⁶ and let the man in the field not return to the things behind to pick up his outer garment.

(<i>tote</i>) let those in Ju-de'a begin fleeing to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house; ¹⁸ and let the man in the field not return to the house to pick up his outer garment. ¹⁹ Woe to the pregnant women and those suckling a baby in those days! ²⁰ Keep praying that YOUR flight may not occur in wintertime, nor on the sabbath day; ²¹ for then (<i>tote</i>) there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. ²² In fact, unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short.	armies, then (<i>tote</i>) know that the desolating of her has drawn near. ²¹ Then (<i>tote</i>) let those in Ju-de'a begin fleeing to the mountains, and let those in the midst of her withdraw, and let those in the country places not enter into her; ²² because these are days for meting out justice, that all the things written may be fulfilled. ²³ Woe to the pregnant women and the ones suckling a baby in those days! For there will be great necessity upon the land and wrath on this people; ²⁴ and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations;	¹⁷ Woe to the pregnant women and those suckling a baby in those days! ¹⁸ Keep praying that it may not occur in wintertime; ¹⁹ for those days will be [days of] a tribulation such as has not occurred from [the] beginning of the creation which God created until that time, and will not occur again. ²⁰ In fact, unless Jehovah had cut short the days, no flesh would be saved. But on account of the chosen ones whom he has chosen he has cut short the days.
70-1914 CE	70-1914 CE	70-1914 CE
²³ "Then (<i>tote</i>) if anyone says to YOU, 'Look! Here is the Christ,' or, 'There!' do not believe it. ²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will give great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the chosen ones. ²⁵ Look! I have forewarned YOU. ²⁶ Therefore, if people say to YOU, 'Look! He is in the wilderness,' do not go out; 'Look! He is in the inner chambers,' do not believe it. ²⁷ For just as the lightning comes out of eastern parts and shines over to western parts, so the presence (<i>parousia</i>) of the Son of man will be. ²⁸ Wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.	²⁴ and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations, until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled.	²¹ "Then (<i>tote</i>), too, if anyone says to YOU, 'See! Here is the Christ,' 'See! There he is,' do not believe [it]. ²² For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will give signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, the chosen ones. ²³ YOU, then, watch out; I have told YOU all things beforehand.
THE GREAT TRIBULATION	THE GREAT TRIBULATION	THE GREAT TRIBULATION
²⁹ "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 heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ And then (<i>tote</i>) the sign of the Son of man will appear (<i>erkhomai</i>) in heaven, and then (<i>tote</i>) all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation, <i>and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.</i> ³¹ And he will send forth his angels with a great trumpet sound, and they will gather his chosen ones together from the four	²⁵ "Also, there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth anguish of nations, not knowing the way out because of the roaring of the sea and [its] agitation, ²⁶ while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ And then (<i>tote</i>) <i>they will see the Son of man coming (erkhomai) in a cloud with power and great glory.</i> ²⁸ But as these things start to occur, raise yourselves erect and lift YOUR heads up,	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 out of heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ And then (<i>tote</i>) <i>they will see the Son of man coming (erkhomai) in clouds with great power and glory.</i> ²⁷ And then (<i>tote</i>) he will send forth the angels and will gather his chosen ones together from the four winds, from earth's extremity to heaven's extremity. ²⁸ "Now from the fig tree learn the illustration: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and puts forth

winds, from one extremity of the heavens to their other extremity. ³² “Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, YOU know that summer is near. ³³ Likewise also YOU, when YOU see all these things, know that he is near at the doors. ³⁴ Truly I say to YOU that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. ³⁶ “Concerning <i>that day and hour nobody knows</i>, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ For just as the days of Noah were, so the presence (<i>parousia</i>) of the Son of man will be. ³⁸ For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; ³⁹ and they took no note until <i>the flood came (erkhomai) and swept them all away, so the presence (parousia) of the Son of man will be.</i> ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken along and the other be abandoned; ⁴¹ two women will be grinding at the hand mill: one will be taken along and the other be abandoned. ⁴² Keep on the watch, therefore, because <i>YOU do not know on what day YOUR Lord is coming (erkhomai).</i> ⁴³ “But know one thing, that if the householder had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have kept awake and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ On this account YOU too prove yourselves ready, because <i>at an hour that YOU do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming (erkhomai).</i> ⁴⁵ “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ Happy is that slave <i>if his master on arriving finds him doing so.</i> ⁴⁷ Truly I say to YOU, He will appoint him over all his belongings. ⁴⁸ “But if ever that evil slave should say in his heart, ‘My master is delaying,’ ⁴⁹ and should start to beat	because <i>YOUR deliverance is getting near.”</i> ²⁹ With that he spoke an illustration to them: “Note the fig tree and all the other trees: ³⁰ When they are already in the bud, by observing it YOU know for yourselves that now the summer is near. ³¹ In this way YOU also, when YOU see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly I say to YOU, This generation will by no means pass away until all things occur. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. ³⁴ “But pay attention to yourselves that YOUR hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, <i>and suddenly that day be instantly upon YOU</i> ³⁵ <i>as a snare.</i> For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth. ³⁶ Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that YOU may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man.”	its leaves, YOU know that summer is near. ²⁹ Likewise also YOU, when YOU see these things happening, know that he is near, at the doors. ³⁰ Truly I say to YOU that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things happen. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³² “<i>Concerning that day or the hour nobody knows</i>, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father. ³³ Keep looking, keep awake, for YOU do not know when the appointed time is. ³⁴ It is like a man traveling abroad that left his house and gave the authority to his slaves, to each one his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to keep on the watch. ³⁵ Therefore keep on the watch, for <i>YOU do not know when the master of the house is coming (erkhomai)</i>, whether late in the day or at midnight or at cockcrow or early in the morning; ³⁶ in order that when he arrives suddenly, he does not find YOU sleeping. ³⁷ But what I say to YOU I say to all, Keep on the watch.”
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his fellow slaves and should eat and drink with the confirmed drunkards, ⁵⁰ <i>the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect</i> and in an hour that he does not know, ⁵¹ and will punish him with the greatest severity and will assign him his part with the hypocrites. There is where [his] weeping and the gnashing of [his] teeth will be.		
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At the beginning of the chapter, I stressed the importance of the demonstrative adjective *ekeinos* (“that, that one, he”), the demonstrative *houtos* (“this, this person or thing”), and the demonstrative adverb *tote* (“then”). Now I will discuss the noun *parousia* (“presence”) and the verb *erkhomai* (“come”), stressing the importance of understanding their meaning and difference.

Jesus used both words in the same context, which indicates their difference. I quote Matthew 24:37-39:

³⁷ For just as ^{t30} And then (*tote*) the sign of the Son of man will appear (*erkhomai*) in heaven, and then (*tote*) all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation, *and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* he days of Noah were, so the presence (*parousia*) of the Son of man will be. ³⁸ For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; ³⁹ and they took no note until the flood came (*erkhomai*) and swept them all away, so the presence (*parousia*) of the Son of man will be.

We note that the word *parousia* is parallel with “the days of Noah.” This means that *parousia* refers to a period of time, a presence, and not to an instantaneous coming. However, the Greek word *erkhomai* with the meaning of an instantaneous coming, is also used, and it is applied to the end of “the days of Noah.”

Here we see the situation that is evident throughout Jesus’ whole prophecy. Jesus returns and is present (parousia), and at the end of his presence, he is coming (erkhomai) as the judge in the great tribulation.

All four occurrences of *erkhomai* must refer to the end of Jesus’ presence when he comes (*erkhomai*) as the judge in the great tribulation. I quote Matthew 24:30, 39, 42, 44:

³⁰ And then (*tote*) the sign of the Son of man will appear (*erkhomai*) in heaven, and then (*tote*) all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation, *and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

³⁹ and they took no note until *the flood came (erkhomai) and swept them all away, so the presence (parousia) of the Son of man will be.*

⁴² Keep on the watch, therefore, because *YOU do not know on what day YOUR Lord is coming (erkhomai).*

⁴⁴On this account YOU too prove yourselves ready, because *at an hour that YOU do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming (er~~k~~homai)*.

*The meaning of the noun **parousia** is “presence.” Its use in Matthew 24 indicates that Jesus has returned and is here — though invisible. The verb **er~~k~~homai** means “to come,” and in Matthew 24, when Jesus is the subject, it refers to his coming as judge in the great tribulation at the end of his presence.*

CHAPTER FIVE

THE THEME AND FOCUS OF JESUS' GREAT PROPHECY: GOD'S KINGDOM HAS DRAWN NEAR

SUMMARY

To understand the depth of the great prophecy of Jesus, we need to understand its theme and focus.

This chapter shows that the main point of the prophecy is God's kingdom. Jesus said that God's kingdom had drawn near because he, its king, was present among them. After he ascended to heaven, his followers could not preach that God's kingdom had drawn near because Jesus was no longer there.

*A part of the sign is the preaching **this** good news of the kingdom, the same message of the kingdom that Jesus preached. This means that the message that should be preached is that God's kingdom has been established and that Jesus Christ is present and rules as king in his kingdom.*

*The chapter also shows the difference between the Greek words *parousia* ("presence") and *erkhomai* ("to come"). Jesus' presence started in 1914 and ends with the great tribulation, and his coming as the judge in the great tribulation occurs at the end of his presence.*

The great prophecy of Jesus is written in Matthew 24, Luke 21, and Mark 13. I will now discuss the theme and the focus of this prophecy.

THE PRESENCE OF JESUS AND THE COMING SYSTEM OF THINGS

We find the question of the disciples in Matthew 24:3:

³ While he was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately, saying: “Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be **the sign of your presence** (*parousia*) and of **the conclusion of the system of things** (*synteleias tou aionos*)?”

Jesus had told the disciples that he would go away and then come back. The disciples spoke Hebrew, and which words did they use in their question? It is likely that they said something like *mā 'ōt pānekhā wegets ha 'ōlam*? Literally it means *mā* (what) *'ōt* (sign) *pānekhā* (your presence) *wegets* (and conclusion) *ha 'ōlam* (the system of things)?

Matthew translated *pānekhā* with the Greek words *tēs sēs parousias* (“the your presence”). The reason why the disciples did not use the Hebrew words *bō'kē* (“your coming”), and Matthew did not use the Greek word *erkhomai* (“to come”) may be implied in Matthew 24:23-27:

²³ “Then if anyone says to YOU, ‘Look! Here is the Christ,’ or, ‘There!’ do not believe it. “Then if anyone says to YOU, ‘Look! Here is the Christ,’ or, ‘There!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false Christs⁺ and false prophets will arise and will give great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the chosen ones. ²⁵ Look! I have forewarned YOU. ²⁶ Therefore, if people say to YOU, ‘Look! He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out; ‘Look! He is in the inner chambers,’ do not believe it. ²⁷ For just as the lightning comes out of eastern parts and shines over to western parts, so the presence (*parousia*) of the Son of man will be.

The disciples expected that Jesus would return as a man in Israel. If he were to come to a place in the country other than where they were, they wanted to know the sign indicating that he had returned. So, they could start looking for him, just as the quoted verses imply.

The Mishnah is a Jewish book that presents the sayings of different rabbis from before the common era to the middle of the third century CE, when the book was written. Here we find the belief in *'ōlam habbā*, (“the coming system of things”), where peace and happiness will exist.

According to Luke 18:30, Jesus spoke about “the coming system of things” (*'ōlam habbā*), and in Luke 18:34, 35, he contrasts “this system of things” with “that system of things” that is connected with the resurrection. The disciples evidently believed in the coming system of things” (*'ōlam habbā*) as other god-fearing Jews did, and they connected this coming system of things (*'ōlam habbā*) with the presence of Jesus.

We note that, according to verse 27, Jesus used the same word the disciples used (Hebrew: *pānē*, Greek: *parousia*). This shows that the disciples posed a reasonable question. But he shows that he would not return as a man. But his presence would be heralded just like lightning, and no person would be seen.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PRESENCE (PAROUSIA) AND COMING (ERKHOMAI) OF JESUS

It is important not to confuse the two Greek words *parousia* (“presence”) and *erkhomai* (“to come”). Both words play an important role in the great prophecy of

Jesus. But they refer to different sides of Jesus' return. One example of the difference is found in Matthew 24:37-42:

³⁷ For just as the days of Noah were, so *the presence* of the Son of man will be. ³⁸ For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; ³⁹ and they took no note until the flood came (*erkehomai*) and swept them all away, so *the presence* of the Son of man will be. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken along and the other be abandoned; ⁴¹ two women will be grinding at the hand mill: one will be taken along and the other be abandoned. ⁴² Keep on the watch, therefore, because YOU do not know on what day YOUR Lord *is coming* (*erkehomai*).

Jesus compares his presence (*parousia*) with the days of Noah before the flood, when Noah built the ark and preached to the people (2 Peter 2:5). The presence of Noah before the flood ended when “the flood came (*erkehomai*) and swept them all away.” Jesus said that “so the presence of the Son of man will be.”

This means that Jesus would return and be present, and at the end of his presence he would come (*erkehomai*), and a situation similar to the flood would result. Verses 40 and 41 further develop the illustration of Jesus. Just as Noah, his wife, his sons, and their wives were taken into the ark and survived the flood, similarly, at the end of Jesus' presence (*parousia*), one will be taken along, and one will be left. We note that this situation, which Jesus compares with the flood, is said to be when “Your lord is coming (*erkehomai*).” I will later show that “your lord” does not refer to Jesus. But indirectly the clause refers to the coming of Jesus.

Thus, Jesus returns and is present; during his presence (*parousia*), different things will happen, just as happened before the flood. At the end of his presence, he will come (*erkehomai*) in a similar way as the flood came (*erkehomai*) and with a similar result.

The important point that Jesus' coming (*erkehomai*) occurs at the end of his presence (*parousia*) is expressed by verses 29, 30:

²⁹ “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 heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ And then the sign of the Son of man *will appear* (*erkehomai*) in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation, and they will see (*horao*) the Son of man *coming* (*erkehomai*) on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and the tribes of the earth *will see* (*horaō*) the Son of man coming (*erkehomai*) on the clouds of heaven. The Greek word *horaō* can refer to seeing with one's eyes or understanding something. In Romans 1:20, we find the Greek word *horaō* with the prefix *kat-*, and what is “seen” are *the invisible* qualities of God. These invisible qualities “are seen” indirectly, by “what he has made (created).” In a similar way, the Son of man “is seen,” or understood indirectly, because of “the sign of the Son of man.”

The point in our context is that “the coming (erkehomai) of the Son of man occurs when he will judge the people at the end of his presence (parousia)

THE KINGDOM OF GOD HAD DRAWN NEAR WHEN JESUS WAS ON THE EARTH

The kingdom of God (the kingdom of the heavens) is mentioned only three times in Jesus’ great prophecy: Matthew 24:14, 25:1, and Luke 21:31. Yet the kingdom of God is the setting and theme of this prophecy. To understand this, we need to examine Jesus’ preaching about the kingdom of God. The first examples of this are Matthew 3:2 (above), Mark 1:15 (middle), and Luke 10:9 (below)

² “REPENT, for the *kingdom of the heavens has drawn near* (eggizō).”

¹⁵ and saying: “The appointed time has been fulfilled, and *the kingdom of God has drawn near* (eggizō).

⁹ and cure the sick ones in it, and go on telling them, ‘*The kingdom of God has come near* (eggizō) to YOU.’

In our context, the verb eggizō (“draw near, be present”) is important. When it stands without an object, as is the case in these verses, the meaning is, “to approach, draw near; to be at hand.” (Mounce). The corresponding substantive eggys has the meaning “near as to place; near as to time; close at hand.” (Mounce).

What did Jesus mean when he said, “The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near”? The nation of Israel, with kings in the line of David, was God’s kingdom in the past. This kingdom was destroyed when Nebuchadnezzar II captured Jerusalem in 607 BCE. From that time, God did not have a kingdom that encompassed the earth.

I showed in chapter 2 that Daniel 9:24-27 describes the appointed time from the year 20 of Artaxerxes I in 455 BCE until 29 CE, when Jesus began his preaching and presented himself as the promised Messiah. According to Mark 1:15, quoted above, Jesus referred to this appointed time and said that when this appointed time was fulfilled, it meant that “the kingdom of God has drawn near.”

God’s kingdom is in the heavens, and therefore, it is also called the kingdom of God or the kingdom of the heavens. This means that God’s kingdom is not on the earth. This is a real kingdom, because according to Matthew 18:3, Jesus spoke of those who enter the kingdom of the heavens, and according to 8:11, he spoke of those who will feast in the kingdom of the heavens.

In view of this, how can we understand Jesus’ words that the kingdom of God has drawn near, here on earth? We can understand this by reading Luke 11:20 (above) and 17:20 (below):

²⁰ But if it is by means of God's finger I expel the demons, *the kingdom of God has really overtaken* (*fīhanō*) **YOU**.

²⁰ But on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said: "The kingdom of God is not coming with striking observableness, ²¹ neither will people be saying, 'See here!' or, 'There!' For, look! *the kingdom of God is in YOUR midst*."

God's finger refers to his spirit, and the point in 11:20 is that when Jesus expelled demons with the help of God's spirit, this showed that he had, and used the power of God's kingdom. This meant that God's kingdom had "overtaken" them. The Greek word *fīhanō* means "to advance, make progress, to come up with, come upon." (Mounce). So, Jesus' meaning was that his use of God's power showed that God's kingdom had come upon them; it was a reality.

According to Luke 17:20, 21, the kingdom of God was in the midst of the Pharisees, because he, who was the king in this kingdom, and who demonstrated that he used the power of the kingdom, was in their midst. This accords with the words of Mark 1:15, which have been quoted above; that now, when the appointed time had been fulfilled, the kingdom of God had drawn near.

The words "the kingdom has drawn near" meant that the king of the kingdom, Jesus Christ, was in their midst, and he and his disciples used the power of the kingdom to expel demons and heal sicknesses.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL AGAIN DRAW NEAR

The question of the disciples was what the sign of the presence of Jesus and the conclusion of the system of things (= the time of the end) was. I have already argued that the setting and theme of the great prophecy of Jesus is the kingdom of God. Jesus told one prophetic illustration which stresses this point. We read Luke 19:11-15:

¹¹ While they were listening to these things he spoke in addition an illustration, because he was near Jerusalem and they were imagining that the kingdom (*basileia*) of God was going to display itself instantly. ¹² Therefore he said: "A certain man of noble birth traveled to a distant land to secure kingly power (*basileia*) for himself and to return. ¹³ Calling ten slaves of his he gave them ten mi'nas and told them, 'Do business till I come.' ¹⁴ But his citizens hated him and sent out a body of ambassadors after him, to say, 'We do not want this [man] to become king over us.' ¹⁵ "Eventually when he got back after having secured the kingly power, he commanded to be called to him these slaves to whom he had given the silver money, in order to ascertain what they had gained by business activity.

Why did the disciples expect that the kingdom of God "was going to display itself instantly"? Evidently, because such a situation was described in the book of Daniel, which they knew, where prophecies about God's kingdom abound. The disciples most likely had Daniel 7:13, 14 in mind:

¹³ “I kept on beholding in the visions of the night, and, see there! with the clouds of the heavens someone like a son of man happened to be coming; and to the Ancient of Days he gained access, and they brought him up close even before that One.” ¹⁴ And to him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him. His rulership is an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be brought to ruin.

Daniel speaks of “the Son of man,” and Jesus had referred to himself as the Son of man several times. The quotation shows that the Son of man will receive kingly power over all the nations. The disciples evidently expected this to happen instantly.

Jesus corrected his disciples’ view and spoke about his future return. He was of “noble birth,” and he traveled to a distant land, to heaven. When he had received kingly power (literally: “the kingdom”), he would return and settle the accounts with his servants. This illustration indicates that Jesus’ presence signifies the receipt of kingly power and the establishment of God’s kingdom.

In addition to the book of Daniel, the book that speaks most about God’s kingdom is Revelation. And the accounts of the kingdom in this book parallel the illustration of Jesus. This book was written shortly before the start of the second century CE, and the first verse states that its prophecies refer to the future.

I quote Revelation 11:15-17 (above) and 12:7-12 (below):

¹⁵ And the seventh angel blew his trumpet. And loud voices occurred in heaven, saying: *“The kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will rule as king forever and ever.”* ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who were seated before God upon their thrones fell upon their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying: “We thank you, Jehovah God, the Almighty, the One who is and who was, *because you have taken your great power and begun ruling as king.*

⁷ And war broke out in heaven: Mi’cha’el and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon and its angels battled ⁸ but it did not prevail, neither was a place found for them any longer in heaven. ⁹ So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him.

¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice in heaven say: *“Now have come to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been hurled down, who accuses them day and night before our God!*

¹¹ And they conquered him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their witnessing, and they did not love their souls even in the face of death.

¹² On this account be glad, YOU heavens and YOU who reside in them! Woe for the earth and for the sea, *because the Devil has come down to YOU, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time.”*

Revelation 11:15 shows that at a particular time after the year 98, when Revelation was written, the kingdom of the world became the kingdom of Jehovah God and his Son Jesus Christ. This shows that Jesus did not have the power of the kingdom of the world when he was on the earth. This aligns with the word in his illustration that he had to go to heaven to receive kingly power. Jehovah God has always been

omnipotent and all-powerful, but now 11:16 says that God “has taken your great power” in connection with the humans on the earth.

Revelation 12:7-12 shows that Satan, the Devil, at a particular time, is thrown out of heaven. Now, Jesus Christ has the authority in the kingdom of God, according to verse 10. We also note that Satan is thrown out of heaven and Jesus received the authority in the kingdom of God “*a short period of time*” before Satan is bound in the abyss. (Revelation 20:1-3)

The important point in our context is that Jesus says his second coming means he will receive kingly power, and that throwing the Devil out of heaven coincides with the time when Jesus receives kingly power. Because Jesus will judge his enemies and bind the Devil at the end of his presence, the mentioned “*short period of time*” must refer to the same period as the presence of Jesus.

THE GREAT PROPHECY OF JESUS SHOWS THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD HAS DRAWN NEAR

I have previously shown that the presence (*parousia*) of Jesus begins when he receives kingly power, and that he, at the end of his presence, is coming (*erkehomai*) and acts as judge over the people of the earth and over the Devil and his demons. I will now show that the setting and theme of the great prophecy of Jesus is that the kingdom of God has drawn near. I quote from Matthew 24:32-36 (above), Mark 13:28-32 (middle), and Luke 21:29-31 below:

³² “Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, YOU know that summer is near (*eggys*).³³ Likewise also YOU, when YOU see all these things, know that *he is near* (*eggys*) *at the doors*.³⁴ Truly I say to YOU that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur.³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.³⁶ “Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.

²⁸ “Now from the fig tree learn the illustration: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and puts forth its leaves, YOU know that summer is near (*eggys*).²⁹ Likewise also YOU, when YOU see these things happening, know that *he is near* (*eggys*), *at the doors*.³⁰ Truly I say to YOU that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things happen.³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.³² “Concerning that day or the hour nobody knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father.

²⁹ With that he spoke an illustration to them: “Note the fig tree and all the other trees:³⁰ When they are already in the bud, by observing it YOU know for yourselves that now the summer is near (*eggys*).³¹ In this way YOU also, when YOU see these things occurring, know that *the kingdom of God is near* (*eggys*).³² Truly I say to YOU, This generation will by no means pass away until all things occur.³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.

Let us compare the three important sentences:

Matthew 24:33: *he is near* (*eggys*), *at the doors*.

Mark 13:29: *he is near* (eggys), *at the doors*.

Luke 14:31: *the kingdom of God is near* (eggys).

The disciples asked for a sign that Jesus had returned and was present, and that the system of things (the time of the end) was a reality. Matthew 24:33 and Mark 13:29 show that he is near at the doors. And Luke 14:31 shows that the sign means that the kingdom of God has drawn near.

This shows that the presence of Jesus and the conclusion of the system of things coincide in time with the establishment of the kingdom of God.

Luke does not refer to the Son of man, but to the kingdom of God.

The words “he is near at the doors” — he is present —means that the kingdom of God is near.

When Jesus was on the earth and said “the kingdom has drawn near (eggizō) (the verb corresponding to the substantive eggys)” the meaning was that he, the king in the kingdom of God, was in their midst using the power of the kingdom. However, as the quotations from Revelation 11:15-17 and 12:7-12 show, the heavenly kingdom with power over all other kingdoms would first be established in the distant future, compared with the days of Jesus on the earth.

The three phrases that I am discussing show that the presence of the Son of man is the same as the establishment of the kingdom of God. Or, expressed with different words: The “return” of Jesus means that the kingdom of God becomes established — Jesus Christ is now present, and the kingdom of God is present.

This aligns perfectly with the illustration in Luke 19:11-15 about the man of noble birth who would travel to a land far away. And when he had received kingly power, he would return.

The setting of the three sentences that I have discussed is the illustration of the fig tree. When the leaves come, we know that the warm season is here (eggys). What we can learn from the leaves of the fig tree is expressed in the following way:

Matthew 24:33:

Likewise also YOU, when YOU see all these things, *know* that it is near (eggys) at the doors

Mark 13:29:

Likewise also YOU, when YOU see these things happening, *know* that it is near (eggys), at the doors.

Luke 21:31:

In this way YOU also, when YOU see these things occurring, *know* that the kingdom of God is near (eggys).

The key word in all three sentences is “know.” And the point stressed by all three evangelists is that when the followers of Jesus saw all the events that fulfill the sign

he described, *they will know* that Jesus had returned and was present, and that the kingdom of God had been established.

Matthew wrote some words that support Luke's assertion that the kingdom of God has drawn near, albeit from a different perspective. We find the words in Matthew 24:14:

¹⁴ And *this* (*boutos*) *good news of the kingdom* will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end (*telos*) will come.

We note that the good news of the kingdom that would be preached as a part of the sign is determined by the demonstrative pronoun *boutos* (*this*). A demonstrative pronoun must refer back to something, so to what does "*this*" refer? There was a difference between the preaching of the kingdom of Jesus and his disciples when he was on the earth and the preaching of the kingdom after he had ascended to heaven.

Matthew 4:17 tells that Jesus preached that "the kingdom of the heavens *has drawn near*," and he instructed his apostles to preach the same message. As I have already shown, Luke 17:21 shows that the reason for this preaching was that Jesus, the king in God's kingdom, was in their midst. I quote three scriptures illustrating the preaching of Jesus:

Matthew 4:17

¹⁷ From that time on Jesus commenced preaching and saying: "Repent, YOU people, for *the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near*."

Matthew 10:7

⁷ As YOU go, preach, saying, *'The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.'*

Luke 17:20, 21

²⁰ But on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said: "The kingdom of God is not coming with striking observableness,²¹ neither will people be saying, 'See here!' or, 'There!' For, look! *the kingdom of God is in YOUR midst*."

However, when Jesus had ascended to heaven, his followers could not preach that the kingdom of God had drawn near because he was not among them. But as the five quotations from Acts below show, after the death of Jesus, his followers preached only about the coming kingdom of God. What did they preach?

According to 2. Timothy 4:1, they knew that the kingdom of God would come in the future because the coming kingdom is connected with the future manifestation of Jesus. Second Peter 1:11 shows that one important aspect of preaching the kingdom of God was that persons who repented and began to serve God could gain entrance into the kingdom of God.

Acts 8:12

¹² But when they believed Philip, who was *declaring the good news of the kingdom of God* and of the name of Jesus Christ, they proceeded to be baptized, both men and women.

Acts 19:8

⁸ Entering into the synagogue, he spoke with boldness for three months, giving talks and *using persuasion concerning the kingdom.*

Acts 20:25

²⁵ “And now, look! I know that all of YOU among whom *I went preaching the kingdom* will see my face no more.

Acts 28:23

²³ They now arranged for a day with him, and they came in greater numbers to him in his lodging place. And he explained the matter to them by *bearing thorough witness concerning the kingdom of God* and by using persuasion with them concerning Jesus from both the law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening.

Acts 28:31

³¹ *preaching the kingdom of God to them* and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with the greatest freeness of speech, without hindrance.

2 Timothy 4:1

¹ I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is destined to judge the living and the dead, *and by his manifestation and his kingdom.*

2 Peter 1:11

¹¹ In fact, thus there will be richly *supplied to YOU the entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

Now we can understand the determination “*this*” to “the good news of the kingdom.” It was Jesus who gave the sign. *This* good news of the kingdom, the good news of the kingdom that Jesus preached: “the kingdom has drawn near”; “the kingdom is in your midst” should again be preached as a part of the sign of his presence and the conclusion of the system of things. And, as we have seen, this is supported by Luke 21:31:

³¹ In this way YOU also, when YOU see these things occurring, *know that the kingdom of God is near.*

When the followers of Jesus saw all the events that together constituted the sign, they would know that the kingdom of God was near. And this message was what they would preach.

Table 5.1 The presence and coming of Jesus

	THE PRESENCE OF JESUS (<i>parousia</i>)	THE COMING OF JESUS (<i>erkehomai</i>)
Matthew 24:14	Preaching this good news of the kingdom.	The end (<i>telos</i>).
Luke 21:31. 32	The kingdom is near.	All these things occur.
Matthew 24:33	He is near at the doors.	
Matthew 24:37, 39	His presence (<i>parousia</i>) is like the days of Noah.	The coming (<i>erkehomai</i>) of the Son of man.

The contrast in Matthew 24 is between the presence (*parousia*) of Jesus and his coming (*erkehomai*) at the end of his presence. During his presence, *this* good news of the established kingdom will be preached, and “the end” (*telos*) is the same as his coming. Luke 21 shows that the kingdom is near during his presence — the kingdom has been established. When the last of “all these things” occurs, then the end (*telos*), which is his coming (*erkehomai*) is there.

The presence of Jesus is a period of time like the days before the flood. Just as the flood took away all those who were not in the ark, the coming (*erkehomai*) of Jesus will take away the people who are not serving God.

The setting and focus of Jesus’ great prophecy is the kingdom of God, that this kingdom has been established. When Jesus’ disciples saw the events of the composite sign, they would know that Jesus was present and that the kingdom of God had been established. This was the message that the followers of Jesus should preach.

THE QUESTIONS OF THE DISCIPLES TO JESUS (MATTHEW 24:3)

SUMMARY

To understand the depth of the great prophecy of Jesus, we need to understand the background for the disciples' questions.

The expression "all these things" refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in Daniel 9:26.

*Jesus had told the disciples that he would go away and return with kingly power, and they believed that he would return to Israel. He had told them that they would search for him, and they asked for a sign showing that he had returned, so they could start searching for him. That was the reason why they probably used the Hebrew word *panʾæ*, translated with the Greek word *parousía*, both meaning presence.*

This part of their question was based on what Jesus had told them, and probably also on Daniel 7:13, 14 about the Son of man who receives kingly power.

*Their question about "the conclusion of the system of things" was based on Daniel 12:4-7, which say that the power of the holy people will be dashed to pieces, and this is connected with the time of the end. I show that the Hebrew expression *ʾet qēts* ("time of the end") is identical with the expression *synteleías tou aiōnos*. ("the conclusion of the system of things").*

The disciples believed that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the presence of Jesus as king, and the time of the end would occur at the same time.

Jesus had visited the temple, and he was departing from the temple area when the disciples ask the questions that we find in Matthew 24:3:

³ While he was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately, saying: “Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?”

We can better understand Jesus’ answer if we understand what the disciples meant with the different parts of their question. Generally speaking, the background of the disciples’ questions and Jesus’ answer is the prophecy in Daniel 9:26, 27:

²⁶ “And after the sixty-two weeks Mes·si’ah will be cut off, with nothing for himself. “And the city and the holy place the people of a leader that is coming will bring to their ruin. And the end of it will be by the flood. And until [the] end there will be war; what is decided upon is desolations. ²⁷ “And he must keep [the] covenant in force for the many for one week; and at the half of the week he will cause sacrifice and gift offering to cease. “And upon the wing of disgusting things there will be the one causing desolation; and until an extermination, the very thing decided upon will go pouring out also upon the one lying desolate.”

These words are part of a prophecy stating that the Jewish people would receive a time of grace of 70 weeks of years to put an end “to transgression and make atonement for error” (9:24). After 7 weeks plus 62 weeks, the promised Messiah would come, and in the middle of the 70th week, “sacrifice and gift offering will cease.”

Verse 26 implies that the nation of Israel would not “make atonement for error,” which was the purpose of the 70 weeks. This is seen by the words in verse 26 that “the city and the holy place” will be brought to ruin.

Jesus took the prophecy in Daniel 9:26, 27 as his point of departure, and we read in Matthew 24:1, 2:

¹ Departing now, Jesus was on his way from the temple, but his disciples approached to show him the buildings of the temple. ² In response he said to them: “Do YOU not behold all these things? Truly I say to YOU, By no means will a stone be left here upon a stone and not be thrown down.”

What does “all these things” refer to? The disciples pointed to the temple buildings. However, from the Mount of Olives, Jesus and the disciples had a panoramic, elevated view of the old city of Jerusalem. So, it is likely that “all these things” referred to the whole city of Jerusalem, because Daniel said that both the city and the holy place would be destroyed.

We find the reaction of the disciples in Matthew 24:3:

³ While he was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately, saying: “Tell us, When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence (*parousia*) and of the conclusion of the system of things (*synteleias tou aiōnos*)?”

When the disciples asked when “these things” would be, they evidently meant the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. However, they associated two things with this destruction: the presence (*parousia*) of Jesus, and the conclusion of the system of things (*synteleias tou aiōnos*). Why did they do that?

THE TIME OF THE END

The Greek word *synteleia* refers to the end or to the last part of something. Jesus and the disciples spoke Hebrew, but they quoted the Greek Septuagint when writing the books of the Bible, and the Greek Theodotion translation when quoting from Daniel.

The first part of Daniel 9:26 says:

And the end (*qēts*, *synteleia*) will be like the flood; until the end (*qēts*, *kairos synteleia*) there will be war.

We see that the Hebrew noun *qēts* (“conclusion”) corresponds to the Greek noun *synteleia* (“conclusion”). The conclusion or end mentioned in 9:26 refers to the conclusion or end when Jerusalem and the temple in the future would be destroyed. Therefore, when Jesus spoke about the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, it would be natural to combine this with the Hebrew word *qēts* from 9:26, which Matthew translated with the Greek word *synteleia*.

Daniel 9:26 uses *synteleia* one time and *kairos synteleia* (“the conclusion of the appointed time”) one time. So why does Matthew use *synteleia aion* (“the conclusion of the system of things”) and not *kairos synteleia* (“the conclusion of the appointed time”) in Matthew 24:3?

The reason most likely is that the Hebrew word *‘olām* (Greek: *aiōn*) had a different meaning when Daniel wrote his book compared with the meaning of the word when Matthew wrote his book. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the noun *‘olām* is used with the meaning “time indefinite” — a time whose end is not known, which may or may not be eternal.

However, in the last centuries of BCE, *‘olām* had received a new meaning. It still had the meaning “a time whose end is not known,” but the new meaning was that it was applied to the characteristics of a time period whose end is unknown. In other words, *‘olām* was not only applied to time but also to a particular time period whose situation or system differed from other time periods, and which could be translated by “system of things.”

The Mishna is a Jewish book, which presents the sayings of different rabbis from the time before the common era to the middle of the third century CE, when this book was written. In Pirke Avot 4:16, we read:

Rabbi Yaakov said: This system of things (*hā‘olām haẓẓā*) is like an antechamber before the system of things to come (*hā‘olām habba’*). Prepare yourself in the antechamber so that you may enter the banqueting hall.

Rabbi Yaakov lived in the last part of the second century CE, and he used the noun *‘olām* in the sense of “a time period characterized by particular events and actions.” He speaks of the present *‘olām* (“the present system of things”) and of the coming *‘olām* (“the coming system of things”). This shows that sometime after the last book of the Hebrew Scriptures was written and the last part of the second century CE, the Hebrew word *‘olām*, whose meaning was “a period of time whose

length we do not know,” got the additional meaning “a time period characterized by particular actions and events, “a system of things.”

The Greek word corresponding to the Hebrew word *‘ōlām* is *aiōn*, which both has the meanings “a time whose end we do not know” (often translated as ‘eternal’) and “system of things.” When Jesus and his disciples used the Hebrew word *‘ōlām*, this is translated by the Greek word *aiōn*. There is one example of the words of Jesus that perfectly fit into our discussion, namely, Luke 18:28, 29 (above) and Mark 10:29, 30 (below):

²⁸ But Peter said: “Look! We have left our own things and followed you.” ²⁹ He said to them: “Truly I say to YOU, There is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God ³⁰ who will not in any way get many times more in *this period of time* (*kairos houtos*), and in *the coming system of things* (*aiōn erkhomai*) everlasting life.”

²⁹ Jesus said: “Truly I say to YOU men, No one has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the good news ³⁰ who will not get a hundredfold now in *this period of time* (*kairos houtos*), houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, with persecutions, and in *the coming system of things* (*aiōn erkhomai*) everlasting life.

When Mark and Luke used the words *aiōn erkhomai*, (“the coming system of things”), Jesus used the Hebrew words *‘ōlām habba’*, the same words that Rabbi Yaakov used 150 years later, according to the Mishna. This shows that when Jesus was on the earth, the Hebrew word *‘ōlām* had already received the new meaning of “system of things.” We also note that Matthew used the Greek words *kairos houtos* (“this appointed time”) for “the present system of things.” This supports the meaning of *aiōn* as a special time period with particular characteristics.

I will now return to the question why Matthew used the words *synteleia aiōn* in Matthew 24:3, and I quote Daniel 9:26 once more (above) and Daniel 12:4, 13 (below):

²⁶ And the end (*qēts, synteleia*) will be like the flood; until the end (*qēts, kairos synteleia*) there will be war.

⁴ “And as for you, O Daniel, make secret the words and seal up the book, until the time of [the] end (*‘et qēts kairos synteleia*). Many will rove about, and the [true] knowledge will become abundant.”

¹³ “And as for you yourself, go toward the end (*qēts*); and you will rest, but you will stand up for your lot at the end of the days (*qēts yōm, synteleia hēmera*).

In all three expressions regarding the end, the noun *synteleia* is used, also in Daniel 9:26, which Jesus refers to in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem. That Matthew used the noun *synteleia* is therefore logical. The noun *synteleia* is modified one time with *hēmeron* (“days”) and two times with *kairos* (“appointed time”) in Daniel chapter 12, but not with *aiōn*. There is a particular reason for this, namely, that *aiōn* at this time only referred to time and not to “a time period characterized by particular events.” This is seen in Daniel 9:7, where *aiōn* (Hebrew: *‘ōlām*) is used with the meaning “time indefinite.”

However, when Matthew wrote his book, *aiōn* had received a meaning close to the meaning of *kairos* — (*kairos* = “appointed time”); *aiōn* = (“a time period characterized by particular events.”) Because of the additional meaning ascribed to *aiōn*, Matthew used the phrase *synteleia aiōn*, rather than *synteleia kairos*, as in Daniel 9:26. We note, however, that Jesus, both in Luke 18:29 and Mark 10:30 use *kairos* and *synteleia* in parallel, showing that both words can have about the same meaning.

There is one more conclusion we can draw from this material that is based on Daniel 12:4:

⁴“And as for you, O Daniel, make secret the words and seal up the book, until *the time of [the] end* (*kairos synteleia*, ‘*ēt qēts*). Many will rove about, and the [true] knowledge will become abundant.”

Daniel speaks about “the time of the end,” which is expressed by the Hebrew phrase ‘*ēt qēts* — (‘*ēt* = “appointed time”; *qēts* = “end, conclusion.”) The Herew phrase is rendered in the Septuagint as *kairos synteleia*. Because *kairos* is used as a synonym for *aiōn*, the phrase *synteleia aiōn* (“the system of things”) of Matthew in 24:3 is the same as “the time of the end.” Thus, the disciples asked when Jerusalem and the temple will be destroyed, and what the sign of his presence and the time of the end would be.

One conclusion to this discussion is that Matthew has borrowed the phrase synteleia aiōn in Matthew 24:3 from Daniel 9:26, which Jesus referred to when he spoke about the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

Another conclusion is that “the conclusion of the system of things” (synteleia aiōn) in Mattew 24:3 is identical with «the time of the end» (‘ēt qēts, kairos synteleia) in Daniel 12:4.

THE PRESENCE OF JESUS

In the first part of the question in Matthew 24:3, the word “presence” (*parousia*) is used, and we must ask whether this word refers to something punctual or instantaneous, or whether it refers to a period of time, just as does *synteleia* in the same verse. The word *parousia* occurs 24 times in The Christian Greek Scriptures.

According to Greek lexicons, the word was used in Hellenism for the presence of the gods and the visit of a ruler or a high official.²⁸ It is not found in the Septuagint but occurs in the extra-canonical books of Judith (10:18), 2 Maccabees (8:12; 15:21), and 3 Maccabees (3:17), all with the meaning “presence.” Josephus used the word to

28. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 5:859.

refer to the presence of God in the Shekinah.²⁹ Its use in The Christian Greek Scriptures indicates that it refers to a period of time.

In Matthew 24:37–39, the *parousia* of the Son of man parallels “*the days* of Noah” and not “*the day* of Noah,” and in Philippians 2:12, *parousia* is contrasted with *apousia* (“absence”). Some lexicons have the punctual meaning “arrival” in addition to “presence.” I have checked the Classical Greek references for the meaning “arrival” in six lexicons, but in all cases, the meaning “presence” is possible, and the lexicons have not given a single clear example of the instantaneous meaning “arrival.” All 24 examples of *parousia* in the Christian Greek Scriptures accord with the meaning “presence.” So, *parousia* refers to a period of time, just as does *synteleia* in Matthew 24:3.

The disciples probably spoke Hebrew when they asked Jesus. But which Hebrew word did the apostles use? There are at least four candidates, as seen in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 *The Hebrew word from which parousia is translated*

1	<i>mā 'ot bo' akā</i>	What is a sign of your coming?
2	<i>mā 'ot bi' akā</i>	What is a sign of your having gone in?
3	<i>mā 'ot bi' meshobebkā</i>	What is a sign of your having returned?
4	<i>mā 'ot panākā</i>	What is a sign of your presence?

Entry 1 is based on the translation of the Hebrew New Testament by F. Delitzsch. He uses the infinitive construct of the verb *bo'* (“come”), but that is a misleading translation of the Greek *parousia* (“presence”), because *bo'* and *parousia* have different semantic ranges. This is particularly clear when he also uses *bo'* to translate the verb *erkbomai* (“come”).

Entry 2 uses the substantive *bi'ā* from the root *bō'*. This word occurs only once in the Hebrew Scriptures, in Ezekiel 8:5, with the meaning “entrance.” In the Dead Sea Scrolls, the word is used 29 times, basically with the meaning “entrance.” One example of a verbal meaning is The Dead Sea Scrolls 3Q15 11:13: “on the left as you enter.” So, the substantive can be used for the act of entering a place. In the Mishnah, *bi'ā* is basically used with the meaning “sexual relations” (“to come into a woman”).

In the 14th century CE, the Jewish writer Shem-Tob ben Isaac Ibn Shapruth wrote a polemic against Christians, presenting a Hebrew text of Matthew.³⁰ In 24:3, 27, 39, he used the substantive *bi'ā* where the Greek text has *parousia*. The Syriac Peshitta has the word *me'titā*, (“coming”), and the same is true with the Peshitta text in *The New Covenant Aramaic Peshitta Text with Hebrew Translation*. But the Hebrew translation in this book has *bi'ā*.

The problem with the substantive *bi'ā* in relation to the Greek substantive *parousia* is that we cannot be certain if the match is exact. The basic references of *bi'ā* are “entrance” and “going in,” and while *parousia* implies that someone has come in and

29. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 3.8.5 (202); 9.4.3 (55).

30. Shem-Tob ben Isaac Ibn Shaprut, Matthew, Hebrew, incorporated as a separate chapter in 'E'ven bo'chan.

is inside, we cannot be certain whether *bī'ā* can be used in this sense or whether it only describes the first phase of entering a place.

Entry 3 uses a participle of the Hebrew verb *shūb* (“return”). This seems to be a good candidate because Jesus’ illustration taught the disciples that he would go away and then return. How such a participle can be used is seen in Ezekiel 38:8:

In the final parts (*'aharīt*) of the years you will come (*bo'*, qal imperfect 2nd p. masc. sing.) to a land that has been brought back (or, that has been returned) (*shūb* polel participle) from the sword.”

The piel stem in verbs like *shūb* which has a vowel and not a consonant in the middle, is called polel. This stem often has a resultative meaning—the patient is led through the end of an action and into the resultant state; the stress being on the state. For example, the verb *bārak* (“bless”) is almost exclusively used in the piel stem—the person (the patient) is led into a state of blessedness. The participle of a verb can function as a noun, and whether the reference is to the past, present, or future must be construed from the context.

In Ezekiel 38:8, the time is present completed (English present perfect progressive) “has been returned.” Both the context and the resultative nature of the piel/polel stem are behind the meaning “has been returned.” We also note from the verse that there is a contrast between the imperfect of *bo'* (“will come”) and the polel participle of *shūb* (“has been returned”). So, if the apostles used the polel participle of *shūb*, which is *meshobebkā*, that would be a possible basis for the Greek translation *parousia*.

Entry 4 uses the Hebrew substantive *pānā* whose basic meaning is “face, presence.” There are good reasons to believe that the disciples used the word *pānā*. It can be used as an adverbial (*lepānekā*) with the meaning “before you,” and it can be used in the sense of “your presence” (*pānākā*). This is the case in Job 2:7. The RSV translates *pānā* more than one hundred times with “presence.” In the DSS, *pānā* is used more than 50 times with the meaning of “presence,” as in 1QHa 9:27: “Nothing is hidden, nor does anything exist apart from your presence (*miḥpānākā*, *mi*, [“from”], *l* [“to”], *pānā* [“face”], *kā* [“your”]).

The Mishnah also uses *pānā* in the sense of “presence,” as in Eruvin 7:11: “But they do not exact penalty for a man not in his presence (*bepānāw*, *be* [“in”], *pān* [“face”], *āw* [“his”]).

The discussion above shows that the use of the infinitive construct of *bo'* [entry 1], as we find in the translation of Delitzsch, is a bad choice because *bo'* (“coming”) does not match the Greek substantive *parousia*. The noun *bī'ā* [entry 2] is a better choice, but because we do not know with certainty whether it refers only to the entrance into a place or a state, or whether it refers to a place or state that has been reached (having come into the place/state, thus being present), we cannot know whether it exactly fits *parousia*. The polel participle of *shūb* [entry 3] is a possible choice because it matches the Greek substantive *parousia*, but this meaning is not certain.

Because *pānā* [entry 4] has the lexical meaning “presence,” it is very likely that the disciples used this noun in their question in Matthew 24:3.

The conclusion is that the Hebrew word *qēts* (Greek: *synteleia*) in the last part of the apostles’ question in Matthew 24:3 is directly based on the book of Daniel, and the Hebrew word *‘ōlām* (Greek: *aiōn*) is indirectly based on Daniel. The word in the first part of the question is indirectly based on Daniel, on the words that the Son of man was coming with the clouds (Daniel 7:13, 14), and that the coming of the Messiah was mentioned in connection with the destruction of the temple (9:25, 26). It was directly based on the words of Jesus that he would go away and then return, and because they wanted a sign indicating that he had returned, they most likely used the noun *pānā*.

The important point is that Jesus understood that the apostles asked about his presence, and not about his coming. We see this in Matthew 24:37-39:

³⁷ For just as the days of Noah were, so the presence (*parousia*) of the Son of man will be.

³⁸ For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; ³⁹ and they took no note until the flood came (*erkbomai*) and swept them all away, so the presence (*parousia*) of the Son of man will be.

We note that the word *parousia* is parallel with “*the days* of Noah.” This means that *parousia* refers to a period of time, a presence, and not to an instantaneous coming. However, the Greek word *erkbomai* with the meaning of an instantaneous coming, is also used, and it is applied to the end of “the days of Noah.”

*Here we see the situation that is evident throughout Jesus’ whole prophecy: Jesus returns and is present (*parusia*), and at the end of his presence he is coming as the judge in the great tribulation.*

WHY THE APOSTLES ASKED FOR A SIGN

Jesus had several times told his disciples that he would go away and then return, as we see in Luke 17:22 (above), 18:8 (middle), and 19:10-27 (below):

²² Then he said to the disciples: “Days will come when YOU will desire to see one of the days of the *Son of man* but YOU will not see [it].

⁸ Nevertheless, when *the Son of man* arrives, will he really find the faith on the earth?”

¹⁰ For *the Son of man* came to seek and to save what was lost.” ¹¹ While they were listening to these things he spoke in addition an illustration, because he was near Jerusalem and they were imagining that the kingdom of God was going to display itself instantly. ¹² Therefore he said: “*A certain man of noble birth traveled to a distant land to secure kingly power for himself and to return.*” ¹³ Calling ten slaves of his he gave them ten mi’nas and told them, ‘Do business till I come.’ ¹⁴ But his citizens hated him and sent out a body of ambassadors after him, to say, ‘We do not want this [man] to become king over us.’

¹⁵ “*Eventually when he got back after having secured the kingly power*, he commanded to be called to him these slaves to whom he had given the silver money, in order to ascertain what they had gained by business activity. ¹⁶ Then the first one presented himself, saying, ‘Lord, your mi’na gained ten mi’nas.’ ¹⁷ So he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave! Because in a very small matter you have proved yourself faithful, hold authority over ten cities.’ ¹⁸ Now the second came, saying, ‘Your mi’na, Lord, made five mi’nas.’ ¹⁹ He said to this one also, ‘You, too, be in charge of five cities.’ ²⁰ But a different one came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your mi’na, that I kept laid away in a cloth. ²¹ You see, I was in fear of you, because you are a harsh man; you take up what you did not deposit and you reap what you did not sow.’ ²² He said to him, ‘Out of your own mouth I judge you, wicked slave. You knew, did you, that I am a harsh man, taking up what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow?’ ²³ Hence why is it you did not put my silver money in a bank? Then on my arrival I would have collected it with interest.’ ²⁴ “With that he said to those standing by, ‘Take the mi’na from him and give it to him that has the ten mi’nas.’ ²⁵ But they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten mi’nas!’— ²⁶ ‘I say to YOU, To everyone that has, more will be given; but from the one that does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ²⁷ Moreover, these enemies of mine that did not want me to become king over them BRING here and slaughter them before me.’”

That Jesus should go away and then return was connected with the expression “the Son of man” that he applied to himself. Luke 17:22 suggests that at some point of time, the Son of man would not be present. Luke 18:8 implies that the Son of man would be absent and then return. The illustration in Luke 19:10-27 about a man of noble birth who would travel to a distant land “to secure kingly power” and then “to return” is also connected with the Son of Man.

THE MEANING OF “THE SON OF MAN”

There is nothing special about the expression “Son of man.” In Hebrew, the corresponding words *ben hā’ādām* is a common expression for “a human being” or “a man.” And the corresponding Greek expression *ho anthrōpos* has the same general meaning. This means that the three examples of “Son of man” in the quotations above would not, at the outset, have any special meaning for the listeners. The reference would be general, to one who was a human being.

Why would “the Son of man” get a special meaning, we may say “a technical meaning” in the minds of the disciples? The expression “Son of man” is found in Daniel 7:13, 14:

¹³ “I kept on beholding in the visions of the night, and, see there! with the clouds of the heavens someone like *a son of man* happened to be coming; and to the Ancient of Days he gained access, and they brought him up close even before that One. ¹⁴ And to him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him. His rulership is an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be brought to ruin.

In this vision, the Son of man is in heaven, and he receives “rulership and dignity and kingdom.” This shows that the expression “Son of man,” which is a common expression for “a human being” does not always refer to “human beings” generally.

But “the Son of man” in this text is used in a technical sense, referring to one “human being” who is given kingly power in heaven.

But why would the disciples understand that “the Son of man” in the words of Jesus was not a general expression for “human being” but was used in a technical sense? Chapter 7 in Daniel is written in Aramaic and “Son of man” is written as *bar ’enosb*. Jesus spoke Hebrew, but there are several examples of him also using Aramaic words. If he, in the passages quoted above spoke Hebrew, but among his Hebrew words, used the Aramaic words *bar ’enosb*, his disciples would immediately understand that “the Son of man” was used in a technical sense, and that Jesus referred to the prophecy of Daniel.

Immediately before the illustration from Luke 19:10-27 quoted above, Jesus refers to “the Son of man.” And his following illustration is based on the prophecy about the Son of man in Daniel 7:13, 14, which his disciples may have understood. But how would his disciples understand this illustration?

THE SIGN OF THE PRESENCE OF JESUS

When Jesus told the illustration in Luke 19:10-27, he was in the land of Israel, not far from Jerusalem, and the disciples naturally understood him to mean that he would return to the land of Israel as king. This is supported by their question in Acts 1:6:

⁶ When, now, they had assembled, they went asking him: “Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?”

Now we have a background for understanding the disciples’ question regarding the sign of Jesus’ presence and the conclusion of the system of things:

The disciples expected that Jesus would go away and then return to the land of Israel as king. If he were to come to another part of the land than they were, they wanted to know what the sign was that he had returned, so they could search for him.

This view of the disciples was based on the words of Jesus that he would go away and then return, and on his words in John 7:32-36 (above) and 13:33 (below):

³² The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things about him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees dispatched officers to get hold of him. ³³ Therefore Jesus said: “I continue a little while longer with YOU before I go to him that sent me. ³⁴ **YOU will look for me, but YOU will not find me**, and where I am YOU cannot come.” ³⁵ Therefore the Jews said among themselves: “Where does this [man] intend going, so that we shall not find him? He does not intend to go to the [Jews] dispersed among the Greeks and teach the Greeks, does he? ³⁶ What does this saying mean that he said, ‘YOU will look for me, but YOU will not find me, and where I am YOU cannot come?’”

³¹ Hence when he had gone out, Jesus said: “Now the Son of man is glorified, and God is glorified in connection with him. ³² And God will himself glorify him, and he will glorify him immediately. ³³ Little children, **I am with YOU a little longer. YOU will look for me;**

and just as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I go YOU cannot come,’ I say also to YOU at present.

The disciples did not have a good understanding of what would happen in the future. They understood that Jesus was “the Son of man” mentioned in Daniel 7:13, 14, and that he would go away to receive kingly power, and that he would return to Israel as king. They also understood that Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed

Their question was about when Jerusalem would be destroyed. But why did they associate the return of Jesus with the destruction of Jerusalem? This was a logical conclusion because the prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple is found in Daniel 9:26, and the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah and his cutting off is found in 9:25-27. Associating Jesus’ return with the destruction of Jerusalem would therefore be logical.

Jesus understood the background of the disciples’ question: that they wanted to know the sign that he had returned, so they could start looking for him. We see this in Matthew 24:23-27:

²³ “Then if anyone says to YOU, ‘Look! Here is the Christ,’ or, ‘There!’ do not believe it.

²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will give great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the chosen ones. ²⁵ Look! I have forewarned YOU. ²⁶ Therefore, if people say to YOU, ‘Look! He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out; ‘Look! He is in the inner chambers,’ do not believe it. ²⁷ For just as the lightning comes out of eastern parts and shines over to western parts, so the presence of the Son of man will be.

The disciples believed that Jesus would return as a man who had received kingly power to the land of Israel. But the words in the quotation imply that he would not return as a man. So, there was no purpose to search for him. The words of verse 27 also imply, without saying so directly, that his return would be invisible.

Table 6.2 The basis for the disciples’ three questions in the book of Daniel

When will these things [the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple] be?	And the city and the holy place the people of a leader that is coming will bring to their ruin. (Daniel 9:26)
What will be the sign of your presence?	Until Messiah, the Leader, there will be seven weeks, also sixty-two weeks. (Daniel 9:25)
What will be the sign of the conclusion (<i>synteleia</i>) of things?	And the end of it will be by the flood. And until the end there will be war. (Daniel 9:26)

Jesus words in Matthew 24:1, 2 are based on Daniel 9:26, and the disciples’ three questions were also directly or indirectly based on Daniel 9:25, 26, and 7:13, 14.

THE FULFILLMENT OF MATTHEW 24:4-22

SUMMARY

I showed in chapter 4 that some prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures have two fulfillments, one miniature fulfillment in the first century and the larger and final fulfillment in the time of the end.

This is also the case with Matthew 24:4-22. In the verses, sometimes the miniature fulfillment in Judea is directly mentioned, and we must find the larger and final fulfillment in the time of the end. Other times, the larger and final fulfillment in the time of the end is directly mentioned by referring to all the nations of the world. Then we must find the miniature fulfillment.

I first analyze all the miniature fulfillments of Matthew 24:4-22. Then follows an analysis of the greater and final fulfillments.

The time setting discussed in chapter 4 shows that verses 4-22 had a miniature fulfillment between the years 33 and 70, and that they have a larger and final fulfillment between 1914 and the great tribulation. I will now discuss these two fulfillments in detail.

THE MINIATURE FULFILLMENT IN THE FIRST CENTURY CE

The expression “miniature fulfillment” means that the prophetic words of Jesus that later would be fulfilled on a worldwide scale were now fulfilled on a smaller scale, on the Jewish nation. I will discuss each verse in turn.

⁴ And in answer Jesus said to them: “Look out that nobody misleads YOU;⁵ for many will come on the basis of my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.

The expression “come on the basis of my name” does not mean that they will say, “I am Jesus.” But the Hebrew idiom is to claim the same authority as the person. The Hebrew word *māshiah* means “the anointed one,” the one who is appointed. The

word is applied to kings, priests, and prophets who are appointed to an office. So, the words regarding Christ mean that persons will come claiming to be appointed by God.

We can see the general view of the people when someone would claim to be appointed by God in the words of Luke 3:15 (above) and John 1:19-21 (below):

¹⁵ Now as the people were in expectation and all were reasoning in their hearts about John: “May he perhaps be the Christ?”

¹⁹ Now this is the witness of John when the Jews sent forth priests and Levites from Jerusalem to him to ask him: “Who are you?” ²⁰ And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed: “I am not the Christ.” ²¹ And they asked him: “What, then? Are you E·li’jah?” And he said: “I am not.” “Are you The Prophet?” And he answered: “No!”

The Jewish people waited for the Meshiah, Elijah, and “the prophet,” so it would not necessarily be difficult for an impostor to persuade someone that he was appointed by God.

In his writings, Josephus mentions different persons who claimed that they were appointed by God, such as Theudas, who persuaded a great number of people that he was a prophet:

It came to pass, while [Cuspius] Fadus was procurator of Judea [44-46 CE], that a certain charlatan, whose name was *Theudas*, persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the Jordan river; *for he told them he was a prophet*, and that he would, by his own command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it. Many were deluded by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to take any advantage of his wild attempt but sent a troop of horsemen out against them. After falling upon them unexpectedly, they slew many of them and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem.³¹

Josephus speaks of “another body or wicked men” who claimed divine inspiration and mastered a group of thirty thousand men:

258. There was also *another body of wicked men* gotten together, not so impure in their actions, but more wicked in their intentions, which laid waste the happy state of the city no less than did these murderers. 259. *These were such men as deceived and deluded the people under pretense of Divine inspiration*, but were for procuring innovations and changes of the government; and these prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, *and went before them into the wilderness, as pretending that God would there show them the signals of liberty*. 260. But Felix thought this procedure was to be the beginning of a revolt; so he sent some horsemen and footmen both armed, who destroyed a great number of them.

261. But *there was an Egyptian false prophet* that did the Jews more mischief than the former; for he was a cheat, and *pretended to be a prophet also*, and got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him; 262. these he led round about from the wilderness to the mount which was called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place; and if he could but once conquer the Roman garrison and the people, he intended to domineer over them by the assistance of those guards of his that were to break into the city with him. 263. But Felix prevented his

31. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 20.97-98.

attempt, and met him with his Roman soldiers, while all the people assisted him in his attack upon them, insomuch that when it came to a battle, the Egyptian ran away, with a few others, while the greatest part of those that were with him were either destroyed or taken alive; but the rest of the multitude were dispersed everyone to their own homes, and there concealed themselves.³²

Jesus had prophesied that Jerusalem would be destroyed. The Egyptian false prophet did the opposite, by leading his 30,000 men into the city and trying to conquer the Roman garrison. He and the other men who claimed Messianic authority wanted to preserve Jerusalem as a Jewish city.

⁷ “For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another. ⁸ All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress.

There were many wars in the first century:

The Roman conquest of Britain between 43 and 96 CE.

A Roman civil war following the death of Emperor Nero in 68 CE.

The Roman – Parthian wars 54 BCE – 217 CE.

The Revolt of Boudica against the Roman occupation of Britain in 60- 61 CE.

The Jewish — Roman war with the siege of Jerusalem in 66 CE, the destruction of the city in 70 CE, and the fall of the last Jewish fortress at Masada in 73 CE.

There were food shortages in the first century CE. The Christian prophet Agabus prophesied about a great famine, according to Acts 11:28:

²⁸ One of them named Ag'a·bus rose and proceeded to indicate through the spirit that a great famine was about to come upon the entire inhabited earth; which, for that matter, did take place in the time of Claudius.

Emperor Claudius reigned between 41 and 54 CE. Historians confirm a great famine in Judea and Rome between 45 and 48 CE, as well as during the reign of Nero between 51 and 63 CE. Famine is often the result of war.

Jesus also mentioned earthquakes. There was an earthquake when Jesus was fastened to the pole. There was a major earthquake in 60 or 61 CE that destroyed the city Laodicea in the Lycus Valley in Asia Minor. There was also a major earthquake in 62 CE that damaged Pompeii and Herculaneum in Campania, Italy.

Because only major earthquakes were mentioned by sources in the first century CE, there would also have been a number of other great earthquakes in that century.

⁹ “Then people will deliver YOU up to tribulation and will kill YOU, **and YOU will be objects of hatred by all the nations on account of my name.** ¹⁰ Then, also, many will be stumbled and will betray one another and will hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and mislead many; ¹² and because of the increasing of lawlessness the

32. Josephus *The Jewish War* 2:258-261.

love of the greater number will cool off.¹³ But he that has endured to the end (*telos*) is the one that will be saved.

These words focus on the fulfillment in the time of the end, because “all the nations” will hate the followers of Jesus. As a comment to the words of Jesus that his followers will be persecuted in the first century, I will only quote Acts 8:1:

¹ Saul, for his part, was approving of the murder of him. On that day great persecution arose against the congregation that was in Jerusalem; all except the apostles were scattered throughout the regions of Ju·de’a and Sa·mar’i·a.

There is no doubt that the Christians were persecuted in the first century CE, as the prophecy says.

I will comment on the last clause in 24:13, “But he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved (*sōzō*).” How would the disciples understand the Greek word *sōzō* (“save, rescue”)? The Hebrew word that Jesus spoke was evidently *yāsha*, which was translated by the Greek word *sōzō*. Both words have the meaning “to be rescued, delivered.” The disciples understood the word in this sense because when they were on the point of drowning, they asked Jesus to save (*sōzō*) their lives. (Matthew 8:25)

Jesus did not tell them from what those who endured to the end would be saved. However, he used the same word *yāsha* (“save”) in Matthew 24:22, and here it means being rescued from the great tribulation that occurred in 70 CE. This means that “the end” (*telos*) in 24:13 is the same as the great tribulation in 24:22. Thus, Jesus says that those who endure as his true followers until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, would not die in this great tribulation.

¹⁴ And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.

These words relate directly to the fulfillment in the time of the end because all the nations of the inhabited earth are mentioned. The followers of Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom throughout the Middle East in the first century CE. But traveling from place to place was time-consuming, and this meant that only a restricted number of people could be reached with the good news.

Paul wrote in Colossians 1:23:

²³ provided, of course, that YOU continue in the faith, established on the foundation and steadfast and not being shifted away from the hope of that good news which YOU heard, and which was preached *in (en) all creation that is under heaven*. Of this [good news] I Paul became a minister.

The preposition *en* followed by dative, as here, has the meaning “in, among.” So, the good news was not preached *for* “all creation that is under heaven” but *among* these. And the phrase “under heaven” refers to the nations in the Middle East. These words show a miniature fulfillment of the prophecy about the preaching of the good news to all the nations in the first century CE.

¹⁵ “Therefore, when YOU catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation, as spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place, (let the reader discernment,) ¹⁵ then let those in Ju·de’a begin fleeing to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house; ¹⁸ and let the man in the field not return to the house to pick up his outer garment. ¹⁹ Woe to the pregnant women and those suckling a baby in those days! ²⁰ Keep praying that YOUR flight may not occur in wintertime, nor on the sabbath day.

The district of Judea is mentioned, and in contrast to the words in verse 14 about preaching to all the nations, the words in verses 15-20 had a literal fulfillment in the first century CE.

The situation developed as follows: In 66 CE, a Jewish revolt broke out, and after that, the Roman armies under Gaius Cestius Gallus surrounded Jerusalem. For five days, they attacked the temple wall, and on the sixth day, they succeeded in undermining it. A Roman victory was in sight. But suddenly, for apparently no good reason, Gaius Cestius Gallus withdrew his armies, which suffered considerable casualties at the hands of the pursuing Jews while they were retreating.

Now the followers of Jesus understood they had to flee from a city that had been surrounded — now that the armies had retreated. And they fled the city, just as Jesus had said. For three years, there was peace. But in 70 CE, the Roman armies under General Titus surrounded the city, and after less than six months of siege, the city was conquered and destroyed, along with its temple.

According to Luke 21:20, 21, the Roman armies were “the disgusting thing that causes desolation.” Why were the Roman armies disgusting? The reason was that the armies “were standing where they ought not” (Mark 13:14); “were standing in the holy place” (Matthew 24:15). What does this mean? The Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem, which was the holy city. They proceeded up to the holy ground of the temple, and they brought with them idolatrous standards to which they sacrificed. On the basis of these actions, the armies were disgusting in the eyes of Jehovah God.

The basis for the second part of the name, “causing desolation” is indicated both in Daniel 9:26, 27 and in Luke 21:20. It was the Roman armies that caused the desolation of Jerusalem. So, the name of the disgusting thing that causes desolation is based on the actions of the Roman armies when they destroyed and desolated Jerusalem.

In connection with the flight, Jesus said, according to Matthew 24:17-20:

¹⁷ Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house; ¹⁸ and let the man in the field not return to the house to pick up his outer garment. ¹⁹ Woe to the pregnant women and those suckling a baby in those days! ²⁰ Keep praying that YOUR flight may not occur in wintertime, nor on the sabbath day.

These words stress the urgency of the situation. When the armies had withdrawn, it was important to act quickly. All had to flee, from housetop to housetop, if necessary, and from fields outside the city. Sabbath laws existed in Judea, making it hard for people to travel long distances or carry loads on the sabbath. Moreover, the gates of walled cities were closed. How much more difficult this would make it for

Jewish women in pregnancy or nursing babies to go in haste on foot. Also, the wintertime, with its bad weather, would make it difficult not only for such women but for all other persons in flight. All these words stress the importance of fleeing Judea in haste, regardless of the circumstances.

²¹ for then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. ²² In fact, unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short.

These words refer to the time of the end because the words about the great tribulation. The flood in the days of Noah was probably bigger than the tribulation in 70 CE when Jerusalem was destroyed. And the tribulation at the end of Jesus' presence will include the whole earth and will be far bigger than the destruction of Jerusalem. But the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE was a miniature fulfillment of the prophetic words about the great tribulation.

THE LARGER AND FINAL FULFILLMENT IN THE TIME OF THE END

The setting of the great prophecy of Jesus is his presence and the great tribulation at the end of his presence, and therefore, the larger and final fulfillment of verses 4-22 would occur during this time.

FALSE PROPHETS AND THE HATE OF THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

I will now discuss the fulfillments in the time of the end of Matthew 24:4-22.

⁴ And in answer Jesus said to them: "Look out that nobody misleads YOU; ⁵ for many will come on the basis of my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many.

These words of Jesus related directly to events in the first century CE. But all the religions today, who do not follow the teachings of the Bible, but claiming to represent God and act on his behalf, fulfill these words of Jesus:

⁹ "Then people will deliver YOU up to tribulation and will kill YOU, *and YOU will be objects of hatred by all the nations on account of my name.* ¹⁰ Then, also, many will be stumbled and will betray one another and will hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and mislead many; ¹² and because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off. ¹³ But he that has endured to the end (*telos*) is the one that will be saved.

These words had a miniature fulfillment in the first century in the land of Israel. But the words "all the nations" show that the larger and final fulfillment occurs in the time of the end.

Daniel 12:7 speaks of "the holy people," who, according to the context, are a distinct group of people who can be distinguished from all other peoples. I argue in chapter 10 that "the holy people" are Jehovah's Witnesses. There can be no doubt

that no other Christian denomination in the 20th and 21st centuries fulfills Jesus' prophecy.

Many denominations use the name of Jesus and call themselves Christian. However, the Greek word *nomos* can refer to the name of a person or organization. But it is also used in the sense of "authority" in The Christian Greek Scriptures. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that God's heavenly kingdom has been established with Jesus as king. Because he is king, the Witnesses refuse military service and political involvement, and they preach that God's kingdom has been established for all the nations.

Because of this, the Witnesses have been persecuted both from the authorities and from the public. During World War II, there was a worldwide persecution. More than 4,400 Witnesses were jailed in the USA because they refused military service. In Germany, between 8,000 and 10,000 were jailed and between 2,800 and 4,000 were put in concentration camps because they opposed the Nazi regime.

Today, Christians in general are persecuted by the governments in North Korea, China, Eritrea, Iran, and Yemen. In addition to these countries, Jehovah's Witnesses are persecuted by the governments in other countries as well. In their Yearbooks, there are reports of their preaching work where numbers are given. Each Yearbook lists the total numbers from countries where they preach and the total numbers of countries where they are persecuted by the authorities, and Table 7.1 shows the numbers of these hostile countries in different years.

Table 7.1. Countries where it is too dangerous to publish numbers

Yearbook 1970	10 hostile countries
Yearbook 1980	17 hostile countries
Yearbook 1990	33 hostile countries
Yearbook 2000	30 hostile countries
Yearbook 2010	30 hostile countries
Yearbook 2020	33 hostile countries
Yearbook 2025	35 hostile countries

The point is that the reason for their persecution is that they do not do some things, like military service and politics, and do other things, like preaching the good news of the kingdom, because they literally believe that Jesus is king. Therefore, it can rightly be said that they are persecuted "on account of my name" because they follow his authority as king.

NATION AGAINST NATION AND KINGDOM AGAINST KINGDOM

A particularly important part of the composite sign of the presence of Jesus is Matthew 24:7, 8:

⁷“For nation (*ethnos*) will rise against nation (*ethnos*) and kingdom (*basileia*) against kingdom (*basileia*), and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another. ⁸ All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress.

At first glance, these words may seem rather vague because they are not tied to any particular nations or time. However, the words must be seen in light of Matthew 24:32-34:

³²“Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, YOU know that summer is near. ³³ Likewise also YOU, when YOU see all these things, know that he is near at the doors. ³⁴ Truly I say to YOU that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur.

Jesus said that when you see, you will know. This means that sincere people who would be his followers would understand the meaning of each event that would be a part of the sign he gave. So, according to Jesus, the fulfillment of the words “nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom” was clear enough to be understood. There are two approaches that can help us to find this fulfillment: 1) a careful analysis of the literal meaning of the words, and 2) a careful analysis of how the fulfillment connects with other events that are known.

TOTAL WAR BETWEEN MANY NATIONS

The word *ethnos* (“nation”) has the meaning, “the largest unit into which the people of the world are divided on the basis of their constituting a socio-political community — ‘nation, people.’” (Louw and Nida) The word *basileia* (“kingdom”) has about the same meaning as *ethnos*, though from a different viewpoint. So, the two words are synonyms.

Both *ethnos* and *basileia* are singular. However, the clauses’ construction indicates that many nations and kingdoms will wage war against one another. Is it possible to identify the words used by Jesus as referring to one particular event? If we take his words literally, that is possible.

If we study chapter 11 in the book of Daniel about the wars between the king of the north and the king of the south, we become aware of the nature of wars in the past. The armies of one country fought the armies of another, and one of the armies came out victorious. For centuries after the time of Jesus, wars were fought in a similar way by the armies of different countries. Sometimes, there were coalitions of nations, such as in the Napoleonic wars at the beginning of the 19th century. But still, the wars were fought by the armies of the nations.

However, in the 20th century, a different kind of war emerged: “total war.” Wikipedia has the following definition:

Total war is a type of warfare that includes any and all (including civilian-associated) resources and infrastructure as legitimate military targets, mobilizes all of the resources of society to fight the war, and gives priority to warfare over non-combatant needs.³³

33. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Total_war.

As we see, “total war” means that not only are the armies of the countries engaged, but the whole population is involved in the war one way or another. All countries’ production and civil services contribute to the war. This happened for the first time during World War I, when 70 nations participated.

As shown, the meaning of the Greek noun *ethnos* is: “the largest unit into which the people of the world are divided on the basis of their constituting a socio-political community — ‘nation, people.’” The meaning of the Greek noun *basileia* is: “an area or district ruled by a king — ‘kingdom.’”

We can see a contrast between the words of Jesus and the account in Daniel chapter 11, which contains prophecies of a series of wars. Each war described by Daniel is between “the king of the north” and “the king of the south, and between their armies of these kings. But the words “nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom” point to a war that includes whole nations, and they are compatible with total war, where all the resources of each nation contribute to the war. On this basis, I apply the prophetic words of Jesus in 24:6, 7 to World War I, which began in 1914.

EARTHQUAKES, FOOD SHORTAGES, AND FAMINES

After Jesus mentioned wars, he mentioned food shortages and earthquakes, and, according to the parallel prophecy in Luke 21:11, he also mentioned famines.

Because wars and armed conflicts can be defined differently by different people, it is not possible to calculate an exact number for wars and conflicts in the 20th and 21st centuries. But there have been several hundred wars and conflicts. This is supported by the fact that, as of 2026, there are between 130 and 180 regional active conflicts raging across the planet.

Jesus also mentions earthquakes, and the statistics show that between 1900 and 1999, there were 1,943 major earthquakes with a magnitude of 7.0 or higher. Of these, 136 were great earthquakes with a magnitude of 8.0 or greater. I do not have exact statistics for the 21st century. But there have been between 350 and 700 earthquakes with a magnitude of 7.0 or higher. Of these, 35 had a magnitude of 8.0 or higher.

According to Matthew 24:7, a part of the sign was expressed by the Greek word *limos*, which means “scarcity of food, famine.” The corresponding account in Luke 21:11 also adds *loimos*, with the meaning “widespread contagious disease.” The statistics show that 733 million people globally suffer from hunger, and 2.8 billion cannot afford a healthy diet. Regarding contagious diseases, there were 500 million cases of the 1918-flu, 800 million cases of Covid-19, and 85 million cases of HIV.

What is intriguing is that there is enough healthy food for all the 8 billion people on earth. But due to political disagreements, mismanagement, and ongoing wars and conflicts, food is not distributed where it is needed. There is also no doubt that if money had been spent on information and healthcare rather than weapons, and if political disagreements had been resolved amicably, the number of contagious diseases could have been greatly reduced.

The first part of the sign, according to Matthew 24:6, is that the onlookers will hear reports about a number of battles and situations of instability and disorder.

Verse 7 shows the reason for this, namely, that a number of whole nations will rise against whole nations, and not only that the armies of the nations will wage war against each other.

This situation very well fit what is called “total war,” and the first example of “total war” was World War I.

Jesus’ words about earthquakes, famines, and pestilences have also been fulfilled.

THE BEGINNING OF THE PANGS OF DISTRESS

After Jesus mentioned war, earthquakes, food shortages, and famine, he placed these events in a larger setting. In Matthew 24:8, we read:

⁸ All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress (*ōdin*).

The Greek word *ōdin* has the meaning, “the spasms or pains of a woman in travail, a birth pang.” (Mounce) Jesus used a metaphor in order to illustrate. When a woman is pregnant, a short time before she is going to give birth, she gets labor pains. At first, the intervals between the attacks of labor pains are rather long. But as the birth draws near, the intervals become shorter and shorter until the child is born.

Verse 8 uses *ōdin* in the plural, and the rise of nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom, food shortages, and earthquakes and famines represent the first part of the labor pains. The first of these labor pains is nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom.

The last part of the labor pains, leading to the birth, is the end (*telos*), which is the great tribulation. This will be the greatest catastrophe that has ever occurred because 8 billion+ humans will die. However, all of these, except those who are incorrigibly wicked and have sinned against the holy spirit, will receive a resurrection on Judgment Day with the possibility of serving God and receiving everlasting life.

Because the great tribulation is the final labor pain, it would be fitting that the first labor pain is similar to the last one, though much smaller. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE was a great catastrophe, where 1.1 million people died, according to Josephus. The worldwide flood was also a great catastrophe, and it is likely that more people died in the flood than in the destruction of Jerusalem.

World War I was undoubtedly the greatest catastrophe to have occurred on earth up to that time. Seventy nations participated in the war; between 15 and 22 million soldiers and civilians were killed, and 23 million soldiers were wounded. World War II was also part of the birth pains: 60 nations participated, and between 60 and 80 million people were killed. The birth pains today are such that, as of 2026, there are

between 130 and 180 active regional conflicts worldwide. There is no doubt that we have witnessed the birth pains Jesus spoke of since 1914, and the actual birth will come with the great tribulation.

REVELATION CONFIRMS THE GREAT PROPHECY OF JESUS

The sign of the presence of Jesus and the establishment of God's kingdom is found in Mathew chapter 24, Luke chapter 21, and Mark chapter 13. But there is a parallel to this sign in Revelation 6:1-8:

¹ And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice as of thunder: "Come!" ² And I saw, and, look! a white horse; and the one seated upon it had a bow; and a crown was given him, and he went forth conquering and to complete his conquest. ³ And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say: "Come!" ⁴ And another came forth, a fiery-colored horse; *and to the one seated upon it there was granted to take peace away from the earth so that they should slaughter one another; and a great sword was given him.* ⁵ And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say: "Come!" And I saw, and, look! a black horse; and the one seated upon it had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ And I heard a voice as if in the midst of the four living creatures say: "A quart of wheat for a de·nar'i·us, and three quarts of barley for a de·nar'i·us; and do not harm the olive oil and the wine." ⁷ And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say: "Come!" ⁸ And I saw, and, look! a pale horse; and the one seated upon it had the name Death. And Ha'des was closely following him. And authority was given them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with a long sword and with food shortage and with deadly plague and by the wild beasts of the earth.

The parallel with the sign is that the one seated on the white horse represents Jesus who received his kingly power and who is present in the kingdom of God. Then follows "the beginning of the labor pains." The first labor pain is the one seated on the fiery-colored horse, who would "take the peace away from the earth," representing World War I. Then follow other calamities that also represent the beginning of the labor pains.

Regional conflicts and wars, as well as earthquakes, food shortages, and famines have multiplied since World War I in 1914, just as the pains of a woman in travail.

THE WORLDWIDE PREACHING OF THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM

The basic parts of the composite sign are events that happen in the world. But the followers of Jesus are also fulfilling the sign. We read in Matthew 24:14:

¹⁴ And *this* (*boutos*) *good news of the kingdom will be preached* in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end (*telos*) will come.

We note that "all the nations" are mentioned again, indicating that the basic fulfillment of the prophecy is Jesus' presence and the time of the end. I have already shown the importance of the demonstrative words used in Matthew 24. Verse 14

uses the demonstrative pronoun *houtos* (“*this*”), which must have an antecedent: something it points back to.

The demonstrative pronoun indicates the nature of the good news of the kingdom, because it shows that this good news of the kingdom has been preached before. Jesus made this prophecy, and the demonstrative pronoun “*this*” must refer back to the good news of the kingdom that Jesus preached.

Jesus preached that “the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near,” because he, as the king in the kingdom, was on the earth. This message should again be preached as a part of the sign of his presence.

A few years after the end of World War I, the Bible Students began preaching that God’s kingdom had been established with Jesus as king, and Jehovah’s Witnesses have continued to proclaim this good news of the established kingdom. In fact, the only group in the world who are preaching this message is Jehovah’s Witnesses. This message should be preached as a witness to all the nations, and then the end (*telos*) would come, which evidently refers to the great tribulation.³⁴

*The preaching of **this** good news of the kingdom to all the nations is a part of the sign that Jesus is present and that God’s kingdom has been established.*

The only people who believe that God’s kingdom was established in 1914, and who preach this to all the nations, is Jehovah’s Witnesses.

THE DISGUSTING THING THAT CAUSES DESOLATION³⁵

One part of the sign of the presence of Jesus Christ is the appearance of the disgusting thing that causes desolation. We read Matthew 24:15-18:

¹⁵ “Therefore, when YOU catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation, as spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place, (let the reader use discernment,) ¹⁶ then let those in Ju-de’a begin fleeing to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house; ¹⁸ and let the man in the field not return to the house to pick up his outer garment.

Many who read the words of Jesus have no idea of what Jesus referred to. However, the quoted verses are a part of the sign that Jesus is present and that the kingdom of God has been established. Followers of Jesus should understand all the different events of the sign, as we read in Matthew 24:32-34. Therefore, it is important to identify the disgusting thing that causes desolation by using texts from the Bible. To do that, we need to study the context and all the details of Matthew’s words.

Jesus said that the prophet Daniel had spoken about the disgusting thing. In connection with the book of Daniel, we must keep in mind that there are two Greek

34. Chapter 4 has a detailed discussion of the preaching of “*this* good news of the kingdom.”

35. An alternative translation is “The abomination that causes desolation.”

translations: the Septuagint and the Theodotion translation. The fact is that the Theodotion translation of Daniel is much closer to the Hebrew and Aramaic text than the Septuagint translation. And when Daniel is quoted in the Christian Greek Scriptures, the Theodotion translation is most often used.

A COMPARISON OF THE FOUR REFERENCES OF THE DISGUSTING THING THAT CAUSES DESOLATION

The disgusting thing that causes desolation is mentioned four times in Daniel, and Table 7.2 shows my transcription and translation of the Hebrew text, as well as those of Theodotion and the Septuagint.

Table 7.2 Hebrew and Greek words for “the disgusting thing that causes desolation”

	HEBREW	GREEK THEODOTON	GREEK SEPTUAGINT
8:13	<i>happashsa’ shomem</i> the transgression causing desolation	<i>he hamartia erēmōseōs</i> the sin causing desolation	<i>he hamartia erēmōseōs</i> the sin causing desolation
9:27	<i>shiqqutsim messhomem</i> the wing of disgusting things	<i>bdehyma tōn erēmōseōn</i> disgusting thing causing the desolations	<i>bdehyma tōn erēmōseōn</i> disgusting thing causing the desolations
11:31	<i>hasshsiqquts messhomem</i> the disgusting thing that is causing desolation	<i>bdehyma efanismenon</i> (the) disgusting thing being visible	<i>bdehyma erēmōseōs</i> disgusting thing causing <u>desolation</u>
12:11	<i>shiqquts shomem</i> the disgusting thing that is causing desolation	<i>bdehyma erēmōseōs</i> disgusting thing causing desolation	<i>bdehyma tes erēmōseōs</i> disgusting thing causing the desolation

We see that the writing of the disgusting thing that causes desolation is slightly different. But it is the same object that is referred to in all four places, though in different contexts.

“LET THE READER USE DISCERNMENT”

This is the only place where Jesus asked his readers to use discernment, and he must have had good reasons for using these words. We need not do much research before we discover what very likely was the background for Jesus’ words.

The Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes suppressed the Jews, and he used much force to cause the Jews to leave their religion and accept Greek customs and the worship of the Greek gods. He also built a pagan altar above Jehovah’s altar in the temple. Regarding this act, Flavius Josephus says:

The king [Antiochus IV Epiphanes] also built a pagan altar upon the temple-altar and slaughtered swine thereon, thereby practicing a form of sacrifice neither lawful nor native to the religion of the Jews.³⁶

The Jews, under the leadership of the Maccabees, revolted against Antiochus, and the book of First Maccabees, written about 100 BCE, tells of the founding and early

36. Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities*, 12.5.4 § 253, translated by W. Whiston.

history of the Hasmonean kingdom. This book interprets the pagan altar in the temple as the disgusting thing (abomination) that causes desolation:

On the fifteenth day of Kislev in the year 145 [167 BCE] the king had an abomination of desolation built upon the altar, and in the outlying towns of Judah they built illicit altars, and at the doors of the houses and in the squares they offered illicit sacrifices.³⁷

What did the disgusting thing that causes desolation refer to, according to the writer of 1 Maccabees? The writer does not tell us exactly what it was. But in his commentary on 1 Maccabees, J. A. Goldstein says:

Antiochus IV takes drastic measures to enforce the imposed cult. “Abomination of Desolation,” a framework containing three meteorites representing the three gods of the imposed cult, is placed upon the sacrificial altar of the temple.

An Athenian expert helps direct the practices of the imposed cult. The practices in the temple include monthly sacrifices on the twenty-fifth, sacred prostitution, and violation of the laws of ritual purity.³⁸

This interpretation of the disgusting thing that causes desolation has great ramifications in connection with the inspiration of the Bible. The book of Daniel contains many prophecies. A great number of scholars claim that “the prophecies” of the book are history in prophetic disguise — “the prophecies” were written after the events happened.

One important part of these arguments is that the disgusting thing that causes desolation and a great number of other “prophecies” were references to the actions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. One problem with this theory is that the ancient sources on Antiochus are few and contradictory. So, the history of this king is based on much guesswork and conjecture. In my book, *When Was the Book of Daniel Written? A Philological, Linguistic, and Historical Approach* (2017), I discuss the disgusting thing that causes desolation and other subjects related to Antiochus in detail. And contrary to the universal agreement, I argue that no prophecy in the book of Daniel refers to Antiochus.

In view of the wrong interpretation of the disgusting thing that causes desolation that was circulating in the days of Jesus, we understand why he said, “Let the reader use discernment.”

THE BOOK OF DANIEL POINTS TO A FULFILLMENT IN THE FIRST CENTURY CE

For many prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures, there are few contextual clues to help us find their fulfillment. But the situation is different regarding the disgusting thing that causes desolation.

Table 7.2 above shows that the disgusting thing that causes desolation is mentioned four times in the book of Daniel. Two of these places put the disgusting

37. 1 Maccabees 1.54. All quotations from 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees are taken from the editions of Goldstein.

38. J. A. Goldstein, 1 Maccabees, 163.

thing into a timeline. Daniel 9:24-27 presents a prophecy about 70 weeks of years during which the Jewish nation had the opportunity to repent and return to Jehovah. The promised Messiah would come after 69 weeks of years, a period that ended in the year 29 CE, and he would be cut off in the middle of this week, which is 33 CE.³⁹

Below is my literal translation of Daniel 9:26–27:

²⁶ And after sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off with nothing for himself. And the people of a leader who will come will destroy the city and the holy place. And its end will come by the flood. Until the end, there will be war, and desolations have been decided.

²⁷ He will let the covenant prevail for the many for one week, and in the middle of the week, he will cause sacrifice and gift offering to cease. And upon the wings of abominations, the one causing desolation will come. And this will be until the complete destruction because that which is decided will gush forth upon the one becoming desolate.

I will now make some comments on each clause.

And the people of a leader that will come will destroy the city and the holy place.

These words put the verse in the right time setting. Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed, and that happened in the year 70 CE.

And its end will come by the flood.

In Daniel 11:22, fighting armies are described as “the flood,” and the same meaning probably holds in 9:27: the end of Jerusalem would be brought about by an army that would come like a flood.

Until the end, there will be war.

The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple will be the result of a war that will last until the end of the city.

*And **desolations** (*shāmam*) have been decided.*

The verb *shāmam* (“to desolate”) is used in all four examples of the disgusting thing that causes desolation in Table 7.2. Here, the participle of the verb is used, and it stands alone. This shows that it is the disgusting thing that causes desolation that would cause the desolation of Jerusalem and its temple.

*And upon the **wing of disgusting things (“abominations”)** the one causing **desolation** will come.*

Previously, the end of Jerusalem was said to come “by the flood,” which evidently refers to the armies coming like the flood. Here, another metaphor is used, “upon the wing.” In Habakkuk 1:8, the Babylonian army is said to “fly like the eagle,” and the armies that will destroy Jerusalem and the temple is said to come “upon the wing of disgusting things” — the army will come quickly just like a flying bird. Later, I will

39. See my book, *My Beloved Religion — And The Governing Body*, pages 66-69.

show which army this refers to. And the plural “disgusting things” may refer to the parts of this army.

The important point is that the disgusting thing that causes desolation is faithful to its name because it is the one that will cause the desolation of Jerusalem and its temple.

*And this will be until the complete **destruction**, because that which is decided will gush forth upon the one becoming desolate.*

Here, the clause “and its end will come by the flood” may be anticipated because it is said that the end “will gush forth” like water upon the one becoming desolate.

In Daniel 9:26, 27, the disgusting thing that causes desolation is connected with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple that occurred in the year 70 CE.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE DISGUSTING THING THAT CAUSES DESOLATION IN THE FIRST CENTURY CE

In the last section, I showed that the disgusting thing that causes desolation was the entity that would destroy Jerusalem and its temple. But the identity of the disgusting thing was not given.

Jesus used Daniel’s words as a point of departure, and he also identified the disgusting thing that causes desolation; we can see this when we compare the words of the three evangelists in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3 A comparison with Matthew 24, Luke 21. and Mark 13

MATTHEW 24:15-22	LUKE 21:20-24	MARK 13:14-20
¹⁵ “Therefore, <i>when YOU catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation</i>, as spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place, (let the reader use discernment,) ¹⁶ then <i>(tote)</i> let those in Ju-de’a begin fleeing to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house; ¹⁸ and let the man in the field not return to the house to pick up his outer garment. ¹⁹ Woe to the pregnant women and those suckling a baby in those days! ²⁰ Keep praying that YOUR flight may not occur in wintertime, nor on the sabbath day; ²¹ for then <i>(tote)</i> there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world’s beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. ²² In fact, unless	²⁰ “Furthermore, <i>when YOU see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then (tote) know that the desolating of her has drawn near.</i> ²¹ Then <i>(tote)</i> let those in Ju-de’a begin fleeing to the mountains, and let those in the midst of her withdraw, and let those in the country places not enter into her; ²² because these are days for meting out justice, that all the things written may be fulfilled. ²³ Woe to the pregnant women and the ones suckling a baby in those days! For there will be great necessity upon the land and wrath on this people; ²⁴ and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations;	¹⁴ “However, <i>when YOU catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation standing where it ought not</i> (let the reader use discernment), then <i>(tote)</i> let those in Ju-de’a begin fleeing to the mountains. ¹⁵ Let the man on the housetop not come down, nor go inside to take anything out of his house; ¹⁶ and let the man in the field not return to the things behind to pick up his outer garment. ¹⁷ Woe to the pregnant women and those suckling a baby in those days! ¹⁸ Keep praying that it may not occur in wintertime; ¹⁹ for those days will be [days of] a tribulation such as has not occurred from [the] beginning of the creation which God created until that time, and will not occur again. ²⁰ In fact, unless Jehovah had cut short the days,

those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short.		no flesh would be saved. But on account of the chosen ones whom he has chosen he has cut short the days.
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The green text is similar in all three cases, and the brown text is similar in Matthew and Mark and quite similar in Luke. The blue and red texts are similar in Matthew and Mark but different in Luke. This is a good basis for identification. When Matthew and Mark mention the disgusting thing that causes desolation, Luke mentions the encamped armies that would surround Jerusalem. This means that these armies are the disgusting thing that causes desolation. This is supported by the fact that the word *desolating* is used in Luke 21:20 in connection with Jerusalem and the armies. This perfectly corroborates Daniel 9:26, 27. I will now look at the details.

THE BASIS FOR THE NAME “THE DISGUSTING THING THAT CAUSES DESOLATION”

There is something in the words of Luke that seems awkward, namely, the words that when you see Jerusalem encamped by armies, then those seeing this should begin fleeing to the mountains. How could people who were inside a city surrounded by armies leave the city and flee to the mountains?

The historical situation turned out to make Luke’s words logical. In 66 CE, a Jewish revolt broke out, and after that, the Roman armies under Gaius Cestius Gallus surrounded the city. For five days, they attacked the temple wall and succeeded in undermining it on the sixth day. A Roman victory was in sight. But suddenly, for apparently no good reason, Gaius Cestius Gallus withdrew his armies, which suffered considerable casualties at the hands of the pursuing Jews while they were retreating.

Now, the followers of Jesus understood that they had to flee from a city that was surrounded, now that the armies had retreated. And they fled the city, just as Jesus had said. For three years, there was peace. But in the year 70 CE, the Roman armies under General Titus surrounded the city, and after less than six months of siege, the city was conquered and destroyed, together with its temple.

Why were the Roman armies called “the disgusting thing”? The reason was that the armies “were standing where they ought not” (Mark 13:14); “were standing in the holy place.” (Matthew 24:15) What does this mean? The Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem, which was the holy city. They proceeded up to the holy ground of the temple, and they brought with them idolatrous standards to which they sacrificed. Based on these actions, the armies were disgusting in the eyes of Jehovah God.

The basis for the second part of the name, “causes desolation,” is indicated both in Daniel 9:26, 27 and in Luke 21:20. It was the Roman armies that caused the desolation of Jerusalem. So, the name of the disgusting thing that causes desolation is based on the actions of the Roman armies when they desolated Jerusalem.

In connection with the flight, Jesus said, according to Matthew 24:17-20:

⁷ Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house; ¹⁸ and let the man in the field not return to the house to pick up his outer garment. ¹⁹ Woe to the pregnant women and those suckling a baby in those days! ²⁰ Keep praying that YOUR flight may not occur in wintertime, nor on the sabbath day

These words stress the urgency of the situation. When the armies had withdrawn, it was important to act quickly. All had to flee, from housetop to housetop, if necessary, and from fields outside the city. Sabbath laws existed in Judea, and it was hard for people to travel long distances or carry loads on the sabbath. Moreover, the gates of walled cities were closed. How much more difficult this would make it for Jewish women in pregnancy or nursing babies to go in haste on foot. Also, the wintertime with its bad weather would make it difficult, not only for such women, but for all other persons in flight. All these words stress the importance of fleeing Judea in haste, regardless of the circumstances.

The Roman armies could be said to be “a disgusting thing” because they entered the holy city of Jerusalem, including the holy area of the temple. They brought with them their standards, to which they sacrificed.

The Roman armies could be said to be those “that causes desolation” because they destroyed Jerusalem and its temple.

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHECY OF THE DISGUSTING THING IN THE TIME OF THE END

How can we know that the words about the disgusting thing that causes desolation will receive a larger fulfillment than they did in the first century CE? Immediately before the words about the disgusting thing in Mathew 24:15, Jesus said that a part of the sign of his presence was that “*this* good news of the kingdom” should be preached as a witness *to all the nations*. This did not happen in the first century CE, but it has happened in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Moreover, the act of desolation by the disgusting thing that causes desolation is connected with the great tribulation (Matthew 24:21). The miniature fulfillment of this great tribulation was in the year 70 CE. But the verse says about the magnitude of the great tribulation, “such... as will not occur again.” The great tribulation that is mentioned in Revelation chapters 17 and 19 is much greater than anything that has ever happened. Therefore, the future great tribulation is the fulfillment of Matthew 24:21, and the present disgusting thing that causes desolation will play a role in the destruction and desolation in the coming great tribulation.

We should also note that the disgusting thing that causes desolation is mentioned in the prophecy of the 1,290 days that will be fulfilled in the time of the end.⁴⁰ (Daniel

40. See chapter 10 for a discussion of the 1,290 days.

12:11) This shows without any doubt that the prophecy of the disgusting thing that causes desolation will have the greater and final fulfillment in the time of the end.

To identify the present disgusting thing that causes desolation, we must look for something standing in the holy place that will contribute to the desolation of something corresponding to Jerusalem and the temple in the first century CE.

LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT POLITICAL ENTITY

Matthew 24:32-36 says that the followers of Jesus should understand the sign of his presence described in Matthew 24:4-22, including the disgusting thing that causes desolation. Revelation 1:1 says that God gave the contents of the book of Revelation to Jesus in order “to show his slaves the things that must shortly take place”. This means God’s servants should identify the disgusting thing that causes desolation in the time of the end.

LEARNING THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING OF PROPHETIC SYMBOLS IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL AND REVELATION

To find the parallel of the disgusting thing that causes desolation in the first century CE, we must look for a political entity that corresponds to the Roman armies, which, in God’s eyes, is a disgusting thing, and which will destroy a religious entity corresponding to apostate Jerusalem in 70 CE.

Jesus referred to the book of Daniel several times, including Daniel’s words about the disgusting thing that causes desolation. In this book, we also find the key to understanding symbols in Revelation. I quote Daniel 7:1-8, 13, 14, 17:

¹ In the first year of Bel’shaz’zar the king of Babylon, Daniel himself beheld a dream and visions of his head upon his bed. At that time he wrote down the dream itself. The complete account of the matters he told.² Daniel was speaking up and saying:

“I happened to be beholding in my visions during the night, and, see there! the four winds of the heavens were stirring up the vast sea.³ And *four huge beasts* were coming up out of the sea, each one being different from the others.⁴ “*The first one was like a lion*, and it had the wings of an eagle. I kept on beholding until its wings were plucked out, and it was lifted up from the earth and was made to stand up on two feet just like a man, and there was given to it the heart of a man.

⁵ “And, see there! another beast, *a second one, it being like a bear*. And on one side it was raised up, and there were three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and this is what they were saying to it, ‘Get up, eat much flesh.’

⁶ “After this I kept on beholding, and, see there! *another [beast], one like a leopard*, but it had four wings of a flying creature on its back. And the beast had four heads, and there was given to it rulership indeed.

⁷ “After this I kept on beholding in the visions of the night, and, see there! *a fourth beast, fearsome and terrible and unusually strong*. And it had teeth of iron, big ones. It was devouring and crushing, and what was left it was treading down with its feet. And it was something different from all the [other] beasts that were prior to it, and it had ten horns.

¹³ “I kept on beholding in the visions of the night, and, see there! with the clouds of the heavens someone like *a son of man* happened to be coming; and to the Ancient of Days he gained access, and they brought him up close even before that One. ¹⁴ *And to him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him.* His rulership is an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be brought to ruin.

¹⁷ “*As for these huge beasts, because they are four, there are four kings that will stand up from the earth.*” ¹⁸ But the holy ones of the Supreme One will receive the kingdom, and they will take possession of the kingdom for time indefinite, even for time indefinite upon times indefinite.’

Here, we have a key to the understanding of the symbols of Revelation. As verse Daniel 7:17 shows, each beast symbolizes a king and a kingdom. Because the vision was given to Daniel, who lived during the Babylonian kingdom, we can identify the first beast as the Babylonian Empire, the second is the Medo-Persian Empire, and the third is the Greek Empire. The fourth beast is the Roman Empire, from which a small horn grew up (verse 8), a horn that represents the next empire.⁴¹

An important point in Daniel chapter 7 is that the mentioned empires are viewed as beasts in relation to God’s kingdom that is mentioned in verses 13 and 14.

THE WILD BEAST MENTIONED IN REVELATION CHAPTER 13

We must assume that the symbols of Revelation can be interpreted in the same way as the symbols in the book of Daniel, including the beasts in Revelation. I quote Revelation 13:1, 2:

¹ And it stood still upon the sand of the sea. And I saw *a wild beast ascending out of the sea*, with ten horns and seven heads, and upon its horns ten diadems, but upon its heads blasphemous names. ² Now the wild beast that I saw was *like a leopard*, but its feet were as *those of a bear*, and its mouth was *as a lion’s mouth*. And the dragon gave to [the beast] its power and its throne and great authority.

The wild beast had characteristics of a lion, a bear, and a leopard. This shows that the remnants of the empires symbolized by the same animals in Daniel chapter 7 must be parts of this wild beast. Because it has seven heads, the remnants of all seven world empires must be parts of it. But there is much more to the wild beast, and I quote verses 7, 8, 16, 17.

⁷ And there was granted it to wage war with the holy ones and conquer them, and *authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation* ⁸ *And all those who dwell on the earth will worship [serve] it*; the name of not one of them stands written in the scroll of life of the Lamb who was slaughtered, from the founding of the world.

¹⁶ And it puts under compulsion *all persons*, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the slaves, that they should give these a mark in their right hand or upon their forehead, ¹⁷ and that nobody might be able to buy or sell except a person having the mark, the name of the wild beast or the number of its name.

41. An identification of this small horn and other details is outside of the scope of this study.

Verse 7 shows that the wild beast has authority over every tribe, people, and nation, and verse 8 shows that all humans worship it⁴²; verse 16 and 17 show that it also has authority over all the people on the earth.

Based on all this information, what does this wild beast symbolize? I make the identification on the basis of Matthew 4:8, 9 (above) and Revelation 12:10-12 (below):

⁸ Again the Devil took him along to an unusually high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, ⁹ and he said to him: “All these things I will give you if you fall down and do an act of worship to me.”

¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been hurled down, who accuses them day and night before our God!

¹¹ And they conquered him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their witnessing, and they did not love their souls even in the face of death. ¹² On this account be glad, YOU heavens and YOU who reside in them! Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to YOU, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time.”

Matthew 4:8, 9 shows that Satan, the Devil is the ruler over all the nations of the world. And his rulership stands in opposition to the kingdom of God with the authority of Jesus Christ. This is the same kingdom as the one that is mentioned in Daniel 7:14, which stood in contrast to the four beasts mentioned in the verses before.

Because the kingdom of God was established in heaven in the year 1914, all other nations are, in reality, rebel governments, because they refuse to surrender their sovereignty to God’s kingdom. Therefore, the wild beast must be a symbol of all the governments of the kingdoms in this world that are in opposition to God’s kingdom.

The wild beast in Revelation chapter 13 is a symbol of all the governments of the nations on the earth, which are ruled by Satan, the Devil. They are symbolized as a wild beast because they, from God’s viewpoint, are rebel governments that do not accept the supreme power of the kingdom of God.

THE IMAGE OF THE WILD BEAST, WHICH IS THE WILD BEAST MENTIONED IN REVELATION CHAPTER 17

Another wild beast is mentioned in Revelation 13:11. It has two horns like a lamb but speaks like a dragon. And it deceives the humans on the earth, as we read in 13:14:

⁴² The Greek word *peoskynēō* that is translated as “worship” can also mean “do obeisance” or “serve”. So, the logical conclusion is that all humans, except a few, support the wild beast in one way or another.

¹⁴ And it misleads those who dwell on the earth, because of the signs that were granted it to perform in the sight of the wild beast, while *it tells those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the wild beast* that had the sword-stroke and yet revived.

What is this image of the wild beast? It turns out to be a color picture of the wild beast described in chapter 13, and it is mentioned in Revelation chapter 17. I quote 17:3:

³ And he carried me away in [the power of the] spirit into a wilderness. And I caught sight of a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored wild beast that was full of blasphemous names and that had seven heads and ten horns.

This wild beast is similar to the one mentioned in chapter 13. Both have seven heads and ten horns. The difference is that the wild beast mentioned in 17:3 is scarlet-colored and replete with blasphemous names. This is the image of the wild beast that is mentioned in chapter 13. What does it mean to be an image of the wild beast mentioned in chapter 13, which is a symbol of the governments of all the nations of the world that are ruled by Satan, the Devil?

There is an identification in 17:8-11:

⁸ The wild beast that you saw was, but is not, and yet is about to ascend out of the abyss, and it is to go off into destruction... ⁹ “Here is where the intelligence that has wisdom comes in: The seven heads mean seven mountains, where the woman sits on top. ¹⁰ And there are seven kings: five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet arrived, but when he does arrive he must remain a short while. ¹¹ And the wild beast that was but is not, it is also itself an eighth [king], but springs from the seven, and it goes off into destruction.

These words were written at the end of the first century. At that time, five world empires had fallen: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and the Greek Empire. One existed, namely the Roman Empire, and one had not yet arrived: the Anglo-American Empire—or, perhaps, we may say the American Empire.

The Anglo-American Empire and the remnant of the six previous empires represent the seven heads on the wild beast mentioned in chapter 13 and the image of this wild beast mentioned in chapter 17. But what does the text say that the wild beast itself in chapter 17 symbolizes?

Verse 11 says that it is the eighth king and that “it springs from the seven” or is “out of the seven”. This description applies only to one entity: the United Nations. It is an eight “World Empire” with its 193 member nations.

The fulfillment of verse 8 is that the wild beast “was” from 1920 in the form of the League of Nations; it “is not” because it was in the abyss during World War II, and it ascended out of the abyss in 1945 as the United Nations.

The wild beast in Revelation chapter 13 is a symbol of all the human governments in the world that are ruled by Satan, which are in opposition to God’s kingdom.

The wild beast in Revelation 17 symbolizes the United Nations. This wild beast is an image of the wild beast in Revelation chapter 13

because it represents the “World Government” of the 193 member states, symbolized by the wild beast in chapter 13.

The kingdom of God, with its king Jesus Christ, has received authority over the world of humans. This means that all human governments are rebel governments. The United Nations represents all these rebel governments. Therefore, it is standing in a holy place — in the place where God’s kingdom should have been standing. Because of this, the United Nations is a disgusting thing in the eyes of God.

LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT RELIGIOUS ENTITY

In the fulfillment in the first century, the disgusting thing that causes desolation was a political entity — the Roman armies, which acted on a religious entity — Jerusalem and its temple, representing the apostate people of God. The political entity caused the desolation of the religious entity. We have found the present political entity, which is the present disgusting thing that causes desolation, to be the United Nations. Now we must find the religious entity that this political entity will desolate.

This religious entity is mentioned in Revelation chapter 17, and I quote verses 1-6:

¹ And one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying: “Come, I will show you the judgment upon *the great harlot* who sits on many waters,² with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, whereas those who inhabit the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

³ And he carried me away in [the power of the] spirit into a wilderness. And I caught sight of a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored wild beast that was full of blasphemous names and that had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and was adorned with gold and precious stone and pearls and had in her hand a golden cup that was full of disgusting things and the unclean things of her fornication. ⁵ And upon her forehead was written a name, a mystery: *“Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth.”* ⁶ And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood± of the holy ones and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.

I will now look for the identification of Babylon the Great. Because verse 2 says that the kings of the earth (the nations) committed fornication with her, she cannot refer to political entities. Verses 1, 15, 18 give us some clues:

¹ And one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying: “Come, I will show you the judgment upon *the great harlot who sits on many waters*.

¹⁵ And he says to me: *“The waters that you saw, where the harlot is sitting, mean peoples and crowds and nations and tongues.*

¹⁸ And *the woman whom you saw means the great city that has a kingdom over the kings of the earth.*"

Babylon the great is a worldwide entity because the waters on which she sits are a symbol of the humans in all the earth, and she has kingly power over the kings of the earth. The wild beast in Revelation chapter 13 has political power over all the humans on earth. When Babylon the Great has the power over all the humans on the earth, this suggests that she is a symbol of a religious entity. Chapter 18 offers more clues supporting this identification, and I quote verses 3, 4, 21, 23, and 24.

³ For because of the wine of the anger *of her fornication all the nations have fallen [victim]*, and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and *the traveling merchants of the earth became rich due to the power of her shameless luxury.*"

⁴ And I heard another voice out of heaven say: "Get out of her, my people, if YOU do not want to share with her in her sins, and if YOU do not want to receive part of her plagues. ⁵ *For her sins have massed together clear up to heaven, and God has called her acts of injustice to mind.*

²¹ And a strong angel lifted up a stone like a great millstone and hurled it into the sea, saying: "*Thus with a swift pitch will Babylon the great city be hurled down*, and she will never be found again.

²³ and no light of a lamp will ever shine in you again, and no voice of a bridegroom and of a bride will ever be heard in you again; because your traveling merchants were the top-ranking men of the earth, *for by your spiritistic practice all the nations were misled.* ²⁴ *Yes, in her was found the blood of prophets and of holy ones and of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth.*"

Verse 3 mentions the kings and the traveling merchants. This shows that the harlot neither is political nor commercial. The kings and all the nations committed fornication (*porneia*) with her. The only meaning of *porneia* in the Christian Greek Scriptures is sexual intercourse between persons who are not married to each other. But the Hebrew Scriptures speak of spiritual fornication by worshipping idols. The fornication between the harlot and the nations must be spiritual, which is of a religious nature.

Verse 5 speaks of her sins that "have massed together clear up to heaven," which points to a violation of the laws of God. Verse 21 says that the harlot will be hurled down like a great millstone that is hurled into the sea, and Matthew 18:6 uses the same words about one who "stumbles one of these little ones who put faith in me." Verse 23 says that all the nations were misled by her spiritistic practices. Such practices include various acts that lead people to come into contact with wicked spirits. It may include the worship of images and idols.

Verse 24 shows that the harlot has the responsibility for the killing "of prophets and holy ones and all those who have been slaughtered on the earth." The different religions of the world have supported all the wars that have been fought on the earth, and therefore, they have the responsibility for all those who have been killed. According to Matthew 23:35, Jesus said that the religious leaders in Israel were responsible for "all the righteous blood spilled on earth."

All the points in the quoted verses suggest that Babylon the Great is a religious entity. Because Babylon the Great has power over all the nations and all the humans on the earth, it must be a symbol of all the religions of the earth that are in opposition to the true religion.

Babylon the Great

- *sits over many waters (17:1) which symbolizes peoples, crowds, nations, and tongues. (17:15)*
- *has kingly power over the kings of the earth. (17:18)*
- *all the nations have fallen victim to her fornication. (18:3)*
- *the travelling merchants have become rich because of her. (18:3)*
- *because of her injustice, her sins have massed together clear up to heaven. (18:5)*
- *all nations have been misled by her spiritistic practices. (18:23)*
- *she is responsible for the blood of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth. (18:24)*

If we take all these points into account, just as the wild beast in Revelation chapter 13 is a symbol of all the governments of the nations on the earth that are in opposition to God's kingdom, Babylon the Great must be a symbol of all the religions on the earth that are in opposition to the only true religion.

THE UNITED NATIONS WILL DESOLATE BABYLON THE GREAT

The Roman armies showed that they were the disgusting thing that causes desolation when they destroyed and desolated Jerusalem in the year 70 CE. In a similar way, the United Nations will show that it is the disgusting thing that causes desolation when it destroys and desolates Babylon the Great in the great tribulation.

We read about this in Revelation 17:16-18:

¹⁶ *And the ten horns that you saw, and the wild beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her devastated and naked, and will eat up her fleshy parts and will completely burn her with fire.* ¹⁷ For God put [it] into their hearts to carry out his thought, even to carry out [their] one thought by giving their kingdom to the wild beast, until the words of God will have been accomplished. ¹⁸ And the woman whom you saw means the great city that has a kingdom over the kings of the earth.”

The wild beast, which is the United Nations, and the ten horns, which symbolize member nations, will make Babylon the Great devastated and naked, and they will burn the harlot with fire, so she becomes desolate.

The following tables express the conclusions of this study about the disgusting thing:

Table 7.4 The disgusting thing that causes desolation in the first century CE

The disgusting thing.	The Roman armies that besieged Jerusalem.
Standing in a holy place.	The temple area in Jerusalem.
Causes desolation.	The Roman armies desolated Jerusalem in 70 CE.

Table 7.5 The disgusting thing that causes desolation in the time of the end

The disgusting thing.	The United Nations.
Standing in a holy place.	The area where God's kingdom should be standing.
Causes desolation.	The United Nations will desolate Babylon the Great in the great tribulation.

THE REACTION TO THE SIGNAL

Jesus showed that when the disgusting thing that causes desolation became visible, this was a signal that required action. We read in Matthew 24:15-18:

¹⁵ “Therefore, when YOU catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation, as spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place, (let the reader use discernment,) ¹⁶ then let those in Ju·de’a begin fleeing to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house; ¹⁸ and let the man in the field not return to the house to pick up his outer garment.

As I have shown, when the armies of Gaius Cestius Gallus retreated from Jerusalem in 66, the followers of Jesus saw this as a signal and fled the city. Because of this, they were not among the 1,1 million Jews who were killed when the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem in 70 CE.

In a similar way, when the League of Nations emerged from the abyss in 1945 in new garb as the United Nations, this was a signal to all right-minded persons to flee from Babylon the Great, which the United Nations would desolate in the great tribulation.

In the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him, and which John wrote down, a similar signal is given to right-minded persons. We read in Revelation 17:4:

⁴ And I heard another voice out of heaven say: “Get out of her, *my people*, if YOU do not want to share with her in her sins, and if YOU do not want to receive part of her plagues.

Besides the fact that the quoted words parallel Jesus’ statement that his followers would have to flee to the mountains when the Roman armies withdrew, these words also show that the Jews’ departure from Babylon and returned to their land in 537 BCE served as a prophetic type of sincere people coming out of Babylon the Great—that is, out of false religion.

We see this as well when we compare 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 (above) with Isaiah 52:10, 11 (below):

¹¹ Turn away, turn away, *get out of there, touch nothing unclean*; get out from the midst of her, keep yourselves clean, YOU who are carrying the utensils of Jehovah. ¹² For YOU people will get out in no panic, and YOU will go in no flight. For Jehovah will be going even before YOU, and the God of Israel will be YOUR rear guard.

¹⁴ Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness? ¹⁵ Further, what harmony is there between Christ and Be'li-al? Or what portion does a faithful person have with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement does God's temple have with idols? For we are a temple of a living God; just as God said: "I shall reside among them and walk among [them], and I shall be their God, and they will be my people."

¹⁷ *"Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves,"* says Jehovah, *'and quit touching the unclean thing'*; *"and I will take YOU in (eisdekhomai)."* ¹⁸ *"And I shall be a father to YOU, and YOU will be sons and daughters to me,"* says Jehovah the Almighty."

The phrase "my people" in Revelation 18:4 refers to the prophetic type of God's people in captivity in Babylon who left Babylon. The words in Isaiah 52 are prophetic types predicting that the Jews—who, at the time when Isaiah wrote these words, had not yet been taken captive to Babylon—would depart from Babylon. Paul applies the words of Isaiah 52:11, 12 as prophetic types, the corresponding antitypes being truth-seekers departing from false religions, both in Paul's day and in the time of the end. The parallels between Isaiah 52:11 and 2 Corinthians 6:17 share the same characteristics.

In 2 Corinthians 6:17, we find the Greek word (*eisdekhomai*), which means "to accept the presence of a person with kindness—to welcome, to receive, to accept, to have as a guest" (Mounce). This word stands in contrast to the word (*eiserkhomai*) in verse 17, which means "to go or come out" (Mounce). The point is that those who get out of Babylon the Great, will, like the people of God who went out of Babylon, "be taken in." Jehovah will welcome everyone who comes out of Babylon the Great as his guest, and they will gain a personal relationship with him.

I have now discussed the miniature fulfillments of Matthew 4:22 between the years 33 and 70, and the greater and final fulfillments in the time of the end between the year 1914 and the great tribulation. I will now discuss Matthew 24:30-51, which are fulfilled in connection with the great tribulation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE FULFILLMENT OF MATTHEW 24:29-51

SUMMARY

This is the longest chapter because several words of Jesus in these 23 verses call for a detailed analysis.

This applies to:

Celestial phenomena.

The sign of the Son of man.

The gathering of the chosen ones.

The illustration of the fig tree.

The generation that will not pass away.

Heaven and earth will pass away.

One will be taken along and the other will be abandoned.

Verses 40-51 have the same theme: Keep on the Watch because you do not know when the Son of man comes. Of the six illustrations connected with this theme, there is an in-depth analysis of the illustration about the faithful and discreet slave.

In chapter 4, I demonstrated that Matthew 24:4-22 had a miniature fulfillment in the first century and its greater and final fulfillment in the time of the end, in the 20th and 21st centuries, that verses 23-28 have been fulfilled between 70 CE and 1914, and that 24:29-51 refer to the great tribulation.

I have discussed the miniature fulfillment and the greater and final fulfillment of 24:4-22, and I will now discuss the prophecies that will be fulfilled in relation to the great tribulation, according to 24:29-51.

CELESTIAL PHENOMENA

The first prophetic words in Matthew 24:29, 30, which follow the comments on the period between 70 and 1914 CE, introduce the great tribulation, which is the focus in the following verses.

²⁹ “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 heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”³⁰ And then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

I will now make a detailed analysis of these verses.

THE PLACE OF VERSES 29 AND 30 IN THE TIME SETTING OF MATTHEW CHAPTER 24

I will first look at the time setting of these words by comparing Matthew 24:29 (above), Mark 13:24 (middle), and Luke 21:25 (below):

²⁹ “Immediately (*enthys*) after (*meta*) the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

²⁴ “But in (*en*) those days, after (*meta*) that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light.

²⁵ “Also, there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth anguish of nations, not knowing the way out because of the roaring of the sea and [its] agitation.”²⁶ while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Luke does not mention the great tribulation. But Matthew and Mark connect the celestial phenomena with “the tribulation” and with “those days.” In Matthew 24:29, “those days” are in genitive, and “the tribulation” is in accusative. A literal translation of the whole expression would be “those days’ tribulation,” which shows that “those days” are equivalent to “the tribulation.” Mark uses the Greek preposition *en* (“in, with, by”), indicating that the celestial phenomena occur during “those days,” i.e., during the tribulation.

But what does the preposition *meta* mean in this context? The meaning of *meta* is: “with genitive, ‘with’, with accusative, ‘after’, and with dative, ‘among’.” (Gramcord Lexicon). I have already shown that the phrase after *meta* consists of “the tribulation” in accusative and “those days” in genitive. Because these words form one phrase, we can conclude that *meta* is followed by both the accusative and the genitive. This means that *meta* can both have the meaning “with” and “after.”

There is one word that can help us decide the situation, namely, *enthys* with the meaning “immediately, at once, suddenly.” (Gramcord Lexicon). Because *enthys* modifies *meta*, a literal rendering must be “immediately after those days’ tribulation.” Does this mean that the celestial phenomena will occur after the tribulation is

completed? The answer is no. The reason for this answer is the way Mark uses the preposition *en*. He uses this preposition to show that the celestial phenomena will occur “during (*en*) those days.” And because he shows that “those days are equivalent to “the tribulation,” he shows that the celestial phenomena will occur during the tribulation and not after it.

Matthew’s words “Immediately after those days’ tribulation” refer to the time immediately after the beginning of “those days’ tribulation” and not after the tribulation is completed.

THE CELESTIAL PHENOMENA

In the first century CE, copies of the books of the Hebrew Bible were scarce and expensive. But portions of the Hebrew Scriptures were read every sabbath in the synagogues, and the Law of Moses was also read publicly on Mondays and Thursdays. Because of this, sincere people who wanted to serve God were well versed in the Scriptures.

When Jesus gave his prophecy about the darkening of the sun and the moon, and that stars would fall from heaven, they would naturally have associated this with the second and third chapters in Joel’s prophecies because Jesus’s words are similar to Joel’s words.

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE CELESTIAL PHENOMENA IN THE FIRST CENTURY CE

First, I quote Joel 2:28-31 and 3:5, and then I show what the Christian Greek Scriptures say about the fulfillment of the prophecy in the first century CE:

²⁸ “And after that it must occur that I shall pour out my spirit on every sort of flesh, and YOUR sons and YOUR daughters will certainly prophesy. As for YOUR old men, dreams they will dream. As for YOUR young men, visions they will see. ²⁹ And even on the menservants and on the maidservants in those days I shall pour out my spirit. ³⁰ “And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ The sun itself will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, ***before the coming of the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah.***

¹⁵ Sun and moon themselves will certainly become dark, and the very stars will actually withdraw their brightness.

The time of the fulfillment of the prophecy was “the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah,” which is the great tribulation. However, this prophecy had a miniature fulfillment in the first century as well, as we see in Acts 2:14-20:

¹⁴ But Peter stood up with the eleven and raised his voice and made this utterance to them: “Men of Ju-de’a and all YOU inhabitants of Jerusalem, let this be known to YOU and give ear to my sayings. ¹⁵ These [people] are, in fact, not drunk, as YOU suppose, for it is the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ On the contrary, this is what was said through the prophet Joel, ¹⁷ ““And in the last days,” God says, “I shall pour out some of my spirit upon every sort of flesh, and YOUR sons and YOUR daughters will prophesy and YOUR young men

will see visions and YOUR old men will dream dreams;¹⁸ and even upon my men slaves and upon my women slaves I will pour out some of my spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will give portents in heaven above and signs on earth below, blood and fire and smoke mist;²⁰ the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and illustrious day of Jehovah arrives.

The chapter describes how holy spirit was poured out on the 120 followers of Jesus who were gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in 33 CE. The spirit caused them to speak different languages, and those who listened to this, thought they were drunk.

Peter showed that this was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that holy spirit would be poured out on all kinds of people. We also note that Joel's prophecy spoke about celestial phenomena. But this part of the prophecy was fulfilled 37 years later, in 70 CE, when Jerusalem was destroyed.

How was this part of the prophecy fulfilled? When Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 CE, the city was burned. I quote Josefus:

So he [General Titus] gave orders to the soldiers both to burn, and to plunder the city. Who did nothing indeed that day: but on the next day they set fire to the repository of the archives, to Acra, to the council house, and to the place called Ophlas: at which time the fire proceeded as far as the palace of queen Helena, which was in the middle of Acra. The lanes also were burnt down; as were also those houses that were full of the dead bodies of such as were destroyed by famine.⁴³

What can be seen when a whole city is burned? The smoke from the fires will darken the sun during the day, and the glare and reflections of the fires will make the moon look like blood at night. Josephus says that 1,1 million people were killed, and that fulfills Joel's words about blood.

Jesus' words in Matthew 24:29 were that "the stars will fall (*piptō*) from the sky." In Jesus' time, people did not think of stars as enormous celestial bodies; rather, they viewed them as small lights in the sky. We can understand the meaning of Jesus' words in light of what we read about the sorcerer Elymas in Acts 13:11:

¹¹ Well, then, look! Jehovah's hand is upon you, and you will be blind, not seeing the sunlight for a period of time." Instantly a thick mist and darkness **fell upon** (*piptō*) him, and he went around seeking men to lead him by the hand.

In English, "darkness fell" is a common expression, just as it was in Greek—as seen in the phrase "Instantly, a thick mist and darkness fell (*piptō*) upon him." When Jesus said that "the stars will fall (*piptō*) from the sky," he probably used the Hebrew word *nāfal* ("fall"), which Matthew translates with the Greek word *piptō* ("to fall"). By using the word "fall" in relation to the stars, his listeners would understand that the light of the stars was turned into darkness.

This understanding is confirmed by the words in Joel 3:5, which are a part of the prophecy Jesus referred to:

43. Josefus, *The Jewish War*, Book 6, chapter 6, point 3.

¹⁵ Sun and moon themselves will certainly become dark, and *the very stars will actually withdraw their brightness.*

The smoke from the fires that would darken the sun during the day, would also darken the stars during the night. This is a fulfillment of the words that *“the very stars will actually withdraw their brightness.”*

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE CELESTIAL PHENOMENA IN THE TIME OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION

How can we know that the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy that Peter described in his speech on the day of Pentecost was a miniature fulfillment, and that the larger and final fulfillment will occur at the end of the time of the end?

The answer is that Joel 2:31 associates the celestial phenomena with “the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah.” This day will affect all people on the earth, and the tribulation that occurred when Jerusalem was destroyed was just a miniature fulfillment of the fear-inspiring day of Jehovah. We also note that Jesus used about the same words as Joel, and in Matthew 24:29, he associates the same celestial phenomena with the tribulation at the end of his presence when he comes as the judge.

How can we understand Jesus’ prophetic words about the celestial phenomena? I quote Matthew 24:29 one time more:

²⁹ “Immediately (*euthys*) after (*meta*) the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers (*dynamis*) of the heavens will be shaken.

When the whole human society all over the earth will be destroyed and removed, this will cause many fires whose smoke will darken the sun during the day and prevent the moon to give its light during the night. The stars “will fall from heaven” by “withdrawing their brightness,” as Joel 3:15 says, because of the smoke from the fires. What is the meaning of the words, “the powers of heaven will be shaken”?

In Genesis 1:26, the Hebrew word for “heaven” refers to the atmosphere, and in Genesis 2:4, it refers to the universe. In many other contexts, it refers to the place where Jehovah is. Because the sun, moon, and stars are mentioned, and they are seen in the atmosphere, it is likely that “heaven” in Matthew 24:29 refers to the atmosphere.

The word *dynamis* means “power, strength, ability,” and what is the normal strength or ability of the atmosphere with the sun, moon, and the stars? We learn this in Genesis 1:14, 15:

¹⁴ And God went on to say: “Let luminaries come to be in the expanse of the heavens to make a division between the day and the night; and they must serve as signs and for seasons and for days and years. ¹⁵ And they must serve as luminaries in the expanse of the heavens to shine upon the earth.”

The power of the sun and the moon is to give light to humans during the day and the night. And because of these heavenly bodies, humans can know about seasons

and years. Because of the fires and the smoke in the great tribulation, the light of the sun, the moon, and the stars is lost. A way to express this could be to say that the power or ability of the atmosphere with the heavenly bodies was shaken.

Based on this analysis, I conclude that there is no reason to believe that Jesus' words imply that, in the great tribulation, the earth will be attacked from the universe. All the words of Jesus show that the different sides of the great tribulation will occur on the earth.

THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN

When Jesus spoke about celestial phenomena, he mentioned a sign different from the composite sign of his presence. I quote Matthew 24:30:

³⁰ And then (*tote*) the sign of the Son of man will appear (*fainō*) in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation, and they will see (*borao*) the Son of man coming (*erkbomai*) on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The sign of the Son of man is completely different from the sign consisting of several events that Jesus gave to indicate his presence. Jesus refers to the words in Daniel 7:9-10, 13, 14:

⁹ "I kept on beholding until there were thrones placed and the Ancient of Days sat down. His clothing was white just like snow, and the hair of his head was like clean wool. His throne was flames of fire; its wheels were a burning fire. ¹⁰ There was a stream of fire flowing and going out from before him. There were a thousand thousands that kept ministering to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand that kept standing right before him. ***The Court took its seat, and there were books that were opened.***

¹³ "I kept on beholding in the visions of the night, and, see there! ***with the clouds of the heavens someone like a son of man happened to be coming;*** and to the Ancient of Days he gained access, and they brought him up close even before that One. ¹⁴ ***And to him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him. His rulership is an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be brought to ruin.***

The situation is the judgment seat of Jehovah, and the Son of man is coming with the clouds of heaven. And he was given rulership and dignity and kingdom. This is a vision of God's heavenly court where there are no clouds. So, the clouds and the whole situation are not literal but figurative.

Jesus applied this coming with the clouds of the Son of man to the great tribulation. But if Jesus received the kingdom when he started his presence in the year 1914, why would he be given rulership and kingdom in the great tribulation? In several places in The Hebrew Scriptures, we find the words, "God has become king." He has been king as long as the human family has existed because he has all power. But these words refer to different situations concerning his people, Israel, during his rulership, when his authority expanded at different times.

The great tribulation means that all the enemies of Jesus will be taken away, and his kingdom will be expanded as his thousand-year reign begins, and he will be both the king and the judge of humankind.

After his resurrection, Jesus became an immortal spirit, and no human can see him, as Paul shows in 1 Timothy 6:15, 16:

¹⁵ This [manifestation] the happy and only Potentate will show in its own appointed times, [he] the King of those who rule as kings and Lord of those who rule as lords, ¹⁶ the one alone having immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom not one of men has seen or can see. To him be honor and might everlasting. Amen.

These words cannot apply to Jehovah God because it cannot be said “he alone having immortality,” because Jesus also has immortality. (Hebrews 7:16, 25) But among those who rule as kings and lords, Jesus is the only one having immortality. After Jesus ascended to heaven, “not one of men has seen or can see” him. Therefore, his second coming must be invisible.

But what do the words “they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven” mean? The words in Daniel 7:13 about his coming with the clouds were figurative, and the same must be the case in Matthew 24:30. But how should we understand the Greek word *horaō* (“to see”)? The basic meaning of the word is “to see.” But according to Louw and Nida, it can also mean “to acquire information, with focus on the event of perception, to come to understand as a result of perception.” One example of the meaning “understand” is Romans 1:20:

²⁰ For his invisible [qualities] are clearly seen (*kathoraō*) from the world’s creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship, so that they are inexcusable.

What is **clearly seen** (*kathoraō*), are God’s **invisible qualities**. These invisible qualities are understood (*kathoraō*) because we see what God has created. This shows that the coming of the Son of man with the clouds will not be seen by the literal eyes, but it will be understood.

The noun *parousia* means “presence”; it refers to a period of time where a person or thing is here. The verb *erkbomai* means “to come”; it refers to an instantaneous event of arrival. However, the word *erkbomai* in Matthew 24:30 is Greek present participle, which means that the focus is not on an instantaneous moment but his coming stretches over some time. The reason may be that his “coming” means that he is judging the whole world of mankind in the great tribulation, which takes some time.

A result of his coming is described in Matthew 24:30, which I quote one more time:

³⁰ And then (**tote**) the sign of the Son of man will appear (*fainō*) in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves (*koptō*) in lamentation, and they will see (*horaō*) the Son of man coming (*erkbomai*) on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The meaning of the verb *koptō* is “to smite, cut; to cut off or down, to beat oneself in mourning, lament, bewail.” (Mounce) The verb is future middle, and because the

middle form can be reflexive, the rendering “will beat themselves” is fine. Lamenting and beating themselves are the reactions of the tribes of the earth when they “see the Son of man” — when they understand that he is judging them.

The relationship between the celestial events in 24:29 and the coming of the Son of man in 24:30 is expressed by the demonstrative adverb *tote*. The use of this adverb at the beginning of verse 30 shows that the catastrophe of the extensive burning, whose smoke will darken the sun, moon, and the stars, will appear first, and then (*tote*), after this has occurred, will the sign of the Son of man be seen in heaven and “all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation.”

The sign of the presence of Jesus includes different events between the year 1914 and the great tribulation.

The sign of the Son of man means that people on the earth during the great tribulation will understand that he has received kingly power from God and that he now is judging all the people.

THE GATHERING OF THE CHOSEN ONES

The demonstrative adverb *tote* is not found in 24:31, but the verse starts with the Greek conjunction *kai* (“and”). This indicates that the action of this verse occurs contemporaneously with the sign of the Son of man appearing in heaven and all the tribes of the earth beating themselves in lamentation. At this time, the angels will gather the chosen ones. I quote Matthew 24:31:

³¹ And he will send forth his angels with a great trumpet sound, and they will gather his chosen (*ho elektos*) ones together from the four winds, from one extremity of the heavens to their other extremity.

The important question in connection with this verse is who the chosen ones are. To understand its meaning, we need to study how Jesus and his followers use “the chosen ones” in different contexts.

TO WHOM DOES JESUS REFER WHEN HE USES THE EXPRESSION “HIS CHOSEN ONES”?

Jesus uses the expression “the chosen ones” three times in his great prophecy. I quote Matthew 24:22 (above), 24:24 (middle), and 24:31 (below):

²² In fact, unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones (*eklektos*) those days will be cut short.

²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will give great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the chosen ones (*eklektos*).

³¹ And he will send forth his angels with a great trumpet sound, and they will gather his chosen ones (*eklektos*) together from the four winds, from one extremity of the heavens to their other extremity.

It is logical to conclude that all three expressions refer to the same group. But who are they?

THE USE OF THE WORD “CHOSEN” IN THE HEBREW AND GREEK SCRIPTURES

Jesus spoke Hebrew, and the word he evidently used was *bāhīr*, which means “chosen.” This word occurs 13 times in The Hebrew Scriptures. It is applied to king Saul in 2 Samuel 21:6, to king David in Psalm 89:3, to Moses in Psalm 106:23, and as a prophecy of Jesus in Isaiah 42:3. In most cases, is *bāhīr* applied to his people, Israel, as in Isaiah 45:4. We see that the word can refer to different persons, and the correct reference we can only find by the help of the context.

The corresponding Greek word *eklektos* (“chosen”) is used 22 times in The Christian Greek Scriptures. In the first century, when The Christian Greek Scriptures were written, only people who would reign with Jesus Christ in the heavenly kingdom were gathered. The word *eklektos*, with reference to the group of anointed followers of Jesus is used seven times. (Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12; 2 Timothy 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1; 2:9; Revelation 17:14)

The word can also be used in the general sense “to choose.” In the illustration in Luke 18:1-7, “God’s chosen ones” refer to any servant of God, because, when Jesus told the illustration, no one was yet anointed with God’s spirit. In Romans 16:13, the word *eklektos* is applied to one person named Rufus, and in 2 John 1:1, it is applied to “the chosen lady,” which is likely a reference to a congregation. Paul also speaks about “the chosen angels” in 1. Timothy 5:21.

Because the word “chosen” can refer to so many different persons, we must always carefully consider the context when we look for the reference of a particular occurrence.

In connection with the three occurrences of *eklektos* in Matthew chapter 24, it is clear that they cannot refer to anointed Christians. If this is claimed, it would be an anachronism, because, when Jesus uttered these words, no person in Judea, except Jesus, had been anointed with holy spirit, and the word “Christian” was not yet coined. This means that the three occurrences of *eklektos* in Matthew 24 must refer to persons chosen by God, and the context must indicate who these are.

THE TWO GROUPS THAT ARE CHOSEN BY GOD

We learn from Matthew 24:31 that “the chosen ones” will be present when Jesus comes as the judge, because then “the chosen ones” will get their reward. This leads us to Revelation chapter 7, where two groups of God’s faithful servants are presented. I quote verses 4-9:

⁴ And I heard the number of those who were sealed, *a hundred and forty-four thousand*, sealed out of every tribe of the sons of Israel: ⁵ Out of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand sealed; out of the tribe of Reu’ben twelve thousand; out of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand; ⁶ out of the tribe of Ash’er twelve thousand; out of the tribe of

Naph'ta·li twelve thousand; out of the tribe of Ma·nas'sēh twelve thousand; ⁷ out of the tribe of Sim'e·on twelve thousand; out of the tribe of Le'vi twelve thousand; out of the tribe of Is'sa·char twelve thousand; ⁸ out of the tribe of Zeb'u·lun twelve thousand; out of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand;

⁹ After these things I saw, and, look! *a great crowd*, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands... So right away I said to him: "My lord, you are the one that knows." And he said to me: "These are the ones that come out of *the great tribulation* (*thlipsis megas*), and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The first group is called "the sons of Israel." However, this is not a reference to the nation of Israel, as Levi and Joseph are included. They were sons of Jacob (Israel), but they were not counted among the 12 tribes. On the other hand, Dan was one of the tribes, but his name is not found in verses 4-8. This means that these 144,000 refer to anointed Christians who are a part of spiritual Israel and not members of fleshly Israel.

The second group is described as "a great crowd from all the nations." Neither of these groups is directly said to be chosen by God. But because both groups will get everlasting life, both groups are chosen by God.

THE "CHOSEN ONES" IN MATTHEW 24:31 DO NOT INCLUDE THE ANOINTED CHRISTIANS

If both groups mentioned in Revelation 7 are chosen by God, how can we say that the "chosen ones" in Matthew 24 do not refer to the anointed Christians? The reason is that the anointed Christians will not be on the earth when the angels "gather the chosen ones" (Matthew 24:31). And the anointed ones will not survive the great tribulation. Let us see.

The resurrection of anointed Christians is mentioned in Revelation 6:9-11:

⁹ And when he opened the fifth seal, *I saw underneath the altar the souls of those slaughtered because of the word of God and because of the witness work that they used to have.* ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying: "Until when, Sovereign Lord holy and true, are you refraining from judging and avenging our blood upon those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ *And a white robe was given to each of them;* and they were told to rest a little while longer, until the number was filled also of their fellow slaves and their brothers who were about to be killed as they also had been.

The blood of sacrifices, which represents the life of each creature, runs down beneath the altar. Their blood is their souls. The persons referred to had sacrificed their lives, and receiving a white robe indicates that they had been resurrected. After their resurrection, they had to wait some time until God would avenge their blood.

The number that had to be filled is not 144,000, but the number of servants God wants to sacrifice their lives in faithfulness to him. This relates to the issue raised by the Devil that humans would not serve God out of love, but only if they had advantages by serving him. In our context, verses 9-11 show that the heavenly

resurrection will occur a time before the great tribulation, while this old system of things still stands.

That the resurrection of the members of the 144,000 anointed servants of God will occur before the great tribulation can also be seen by Romans 16:20 (above) and Revelation 17:14 (below):

²⁰ For his part, the God who gives peace will crush Satan under YOUR feet shortly. May the undeserved kindness of our Lord Jesus be with YOU.

¹⁴ These will battle with the Lamb, but, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings, the Lamb will conquer them. Also, those called and chosen (*eklektos*) and faithful with him [will do so].”

When Jesus comes and judges Satan and his seed in the great tribulation, the anointed Christians will be a part of the army of Jesus. They will crush Satan under their feet, as Romans 16:20 says. And they will be a part of the army of Jesus, as Revelation 17:14 says. Because of this, the anointed Christians cannot be a part of “the chosen ones” whom the angels will gather in connection with the great tribulation.

THE “CHOSEN ONES” REFER TO PEOPLE WHO WILL SURVIVE THE GREAT TRIBULATION

One way to know that events or groups mentioned in different places in the Bible are identical is to find identifying marks in the events or groups. Two groups with the same identification are found in Revelation 7:9, 14, and Matthew 24:21, 22:

⁹ After these things I saw, and, look! *a great crowd*, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands...¹⁴ So right away I said to him: “My lord, you are the one that knows.” And he said to me: “These are the ones that *come out of the great tribulation* (*thlipsis megas*), and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

²¹ for then there will be *great tribulation* (*thlipsis megas*), such as has not occurred since the world’s beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. ²² In fact, unless those days were cut short, no *flesh would be saved*; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short.

There are three parallels between Revelation 7:9, 14, and Matthew 24:21, 22:

Parallel 1: The words “great tribulation” must refer to the same situation, to what is happening when Jesus comes as the judge.

Parallel 2: According to Acts 7:10, God delivered Jacob “*out of* all his tribulations,” which means that he survived his tribulations. In a similar way, the great crowd will “come *out of* the great tribulation” and survive it. This parallels the words “be saved” in Mathew 24:22, which means that some people will survive the great tribulation mentioned there.

Parallel 3: Those who are saved are called “flesh,” which means that human beings will be saved from the great tribulation, and in a similar way, the great crowd consists of human beings who will survive the great tribulation as humans (flesh) here on earth.

The first part of the great prophecy of Jesus (Matthew 24:3-22) contains types that received a miniature fulfillment in the first century, culminating in the tribulation in 70 CE, when Jerusalem was destroyed. How can we describe the types and antitypes of Matthew 24:21, 22, and Revelation 7:9, 14?

In 70 CE, the Roman army under General Titus besieged Jerusalem for 142 days. There was a terrible situation in the city with famine and death. According to Josephus, 1,1 million Jews died, and 97,000 survived and became prisoners. Let us look one more time at Matthew 22:21, 22:

²¹ for then there will be *great tribulation* (*thlipsis megas*), such as has not occurred since the world’s beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. ²² In fact, unless those days were cut short, *no flesh would be saved*; but on account of *the chosen ones* those days will be cut short.

Jesus said that because God cut short the tribulation — it lasted only 142 days — so *flesh* would be saved. This “flesh” was the 97,000 who survived, and who would not have been saved alive if the tribulation had been longer. This group of 97,000 is the prophetic type, and the great crowd who will be saved through the great tribulation is the antitype.

We note that the “flesh” that was saved when Jerusalem was destroyed is expressed in a different way, as “the chosen ones”. Jesus said that the tribulation would be cut short on account of the chosen ones or for the sake of the chosen ones. Those who were saved because the tribulation was cut short were the 97,000 “flesh” who survived. This means that these 97,000 survivors were “the chosen ones.”

But how could these people, most of whom were worshippers of Jehovah — they had come to the city to worship Jehovah — but they were not followers of Jesus, be said to be “the chosen ones”? We may illustrate the situation with Isaiah 45:1:

¹ This is what Jehovah has said to his anointed one, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have taken hold of, to subdue before him nations, so that I may ungird even the hips of kings; to open before him the two-leaved doors, so that even the gates will not be shut:

The Persian king Cyrus worshipped the Babylonian god Marduk as well as other gods, and he was not a servant of Jehovah. But in this situation, as a king who would conquer the Babylonian king Nabonid and free the Jews from their Babylonian captivity, Isaiah says that he was Jehovah’s anointed one. He was “anointed” or chosen to do this one action.

In a similar way, the 97,000 who survived the destruction of Jerusalem were not anointed followers of Jesus. But they were the ones whom Jehovah had chosen to be saved from the tribulation. This does not imply some kind of predestination. But it implies that Jehovah had decided that a small group of humans, “the flesh,” would

survive the destruction of the city. Because of this, they can rightly be called “the chosen ones.”

By way of conclusion, I quote Matthew 24:31 (above) and Revelation 7:13-17 (below):

³¹ And he will send forth his angels with a great trumpet sound, and they will gather his chosen (*ho elektos*) ones together from the four winds, from one extremity of the heavens to their other extremity.

¹³ And in response one of the elders said to me: “These who are dressed in the white robes, who are they and where did they come from?” ¹⁴ So right away I said to him: “My lord, you are the one that knows.” And he said to me: “***These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation***, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ That is why they are before the throne of God; and they are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple; and the One seated on the throne will spread his tent over them. ¹⁶ They will hunger no more nor thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat down upon them nor any scorching heat, ¹⁷ because the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes.”

The first quotation shows how the angels gather all the members of the great crowd (his chosen ones), and the second quotation shows how those who have been gathered will survive the great tribulation and the blessings they will receive.

That the angels “will gather the chosen ones” (Matthew 24:30), means that they will gather the members of the group that are chosen by God to survive the great tribulation. This group is the great crowd that is mentioned in Revelation 7:9, 14.

We have seen that verse 29 in Matthew chapter 24 introduces the great tribulation, verse 30 discusses the sign of the Son of man, and verse 31 shows how angels gather the great crowd that will survive the great tribulation. After this, there is a sequence of 11 verses, whose focus is on the great tribulation, and which connects the great tribulation with the presence of Jesus. I quote Matthew 24:32-41:

³² “Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, YOU know that summer is near. ³³ Likewise also YOU, when YOU see all these things, know that he is near at the doors. ³⁴ Truly I say to YOU that this generation (*genea*) will by no means pass away until all these things occur. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.

³⁶ “Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ For just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be. ³⁸ For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; ³⁹ and they took no note until the flood came (*erkebomai*) and swept them all away, so the presence (*parousia*) of the Son of man will be.

⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken along and the other be abandoned; ⁴¹ two women will be grinding at the hand mill: one will be taken along and

the other be abandoned.⁴² Keep on the watch, therefore, because YOU do not know on what day YOUR Lord is coming.

I will first discuss the reference of this sequence, which is Jesus' presence, and his coming as the judge in the great tribulation at the end of his presence. Then I will make a detailed analysis of the different parts.

The theme verses, which sum up the core message of the sequence, are verses 37 and 38:

³⁷ For just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be. ³⁸ For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; ³⁹ and they took no note until the flood came (*erkehomai*) and swept them all away, so the presence (*parousia*) of the Son of man will be.

There are two parallels here:

- 1) Between the days of Noah before the flood and the presence of Jesus.
- 2) Between the coming of the flood and the coming of the Son of man.

The illustration of the fig tree shows that the followers of Jesus should know the time for the presence of Jesus because of the composite sign Jesus gave.

THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE FIG TREE

Several aspects of this illustration need clarification. I quote Matthew 24:32, 33 one more time:

³² “Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, YOU know that summer (*theros*) is near (*eggys*). ³³ Likewise also YOU, when YOU see all these things, know that he is near at the doors.

The important word is the Greek adverb *eggys* with the meaning “near, close to,” (UBS Lexicon); “a position relatively close to another position — ‘near, nearby.’” (Louw and Nida); near, as to place; close at hand.” (Mounce)

THE SUMMER IS NEAR

The basic meaning of the Greek adverb *eggys* is “to be near.” But it can also mean “to be here.” One example is Romans 10:8:

⁸ But what does it say? “The word is near (*eggys*) you, (*eimi*) in your own mouth and in your own heart”; that is, the “word” of faith, which we are preaching.

In Romans 10:8, *eggys* is parallel to *eimi* (“to be, to become”) in the Greek present. The point is not that the word will come soon, but that the word has already come (*eggys*) and is in your mouth and in your own heart.

There are also three passages in Luke that confirm the same, Luke 10:11 (above), 17:21 (middle), 21:30, 31 (below):

¹¹ ‘Even the dust that got stuck to our feet from YOUR city we wipe off against YOU. Nevertheless, keep this in mind, that the kingdom of God has come near (*eggysizō*).’

²¹ neither will people be saying, ‘See here!’ or, ‘There!’ For, look! the kingdom of God is in YOUR midst (*entos*).’

³⁰ When they are already in the bud, by observing it YOU know for yourselves that now the summer (*theros*) is near (*ēde eggys*). ³¹ In this way YOU also, when YOU see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near.

The basic message of Jesus was: “God’s kingdom has come near.” This is expressed in Luke 10:11. What Jesus meant with these words is seen in Luke 17:21, where Jesus said: “The kingdom of God is in your midst.” He was the king of the heavenly kingdom, and because he was on the earth, he could say that the kingdom of God was in their midst. On this basis, we can say that the words, “The kingdom has come near,” mean that the kingdom *is here* (*eggys*).

In Luke 21:30, *eggys* is modified by the adverb *ēde* with the meaning “now, already” (UBS Lexicon); “a point of time preceding another point of time and implying completion — ‘already.’ (Louw and Nida) “before now, now, already” (Mounce). The use *ēde* together with *eggys* in Luke 21:30 shows that the illustration means that when they saw the fig tree and other trees in bud, they would know that summer (the warm season) *had arrived*. This must also be the meaning of the same illustration in Matthew 24:32, even though the adverb *ēde* (“already”) does not occur in this passage.

*The context shows that the phrase “the summer is near (*eggys*)” in the illustration about the fig tree in the great prophecy of Jesus (Matthew 24:32), has the meaning, “the summer is here,” and not that the summer will come soon.*

“HE IS NEAR AT THE DOORS”

What is the antecedent of the pronoun “he” in Matthew 24:33? Normally, we expect a masculine noun in the previous clause(s). But there is no such noun in the previous clauses. The closest masculine noun is “man” in the expression “the Son of man” in verse 30. Grammatically speaking, “the Son of man” is too distant from “he” to be its antecedent.

But Jesus also used thematic antecedents, as we have seen in connection with the demonstrative pronoun “this” in Matthew 24:14, whose antecedent is not in the previous text but in the message Jesus preached. On this basis, we must accept that “he” refers back to “the Son of man” in verse 30.

How shall we understand the expression “he is near at the doors”? I have shown that the adverb *eggys*, with the basic meaning “be near,” can also mean “be here, be present.” This was seen in the meaning of Jesus’ words: “The kingdom of God is near.” These words meant that the kingdom of God was present because he, as the king in the kingdom, was present.

That the words “he is near at the doors” are the same as saying “he is present,” can be seen by a comparison of Matthew 24:30 (above) and Luke 21:30, 31 (below):

³² “Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, YOU know that summer is near (*eggys*). ³³ *Likewise also YOU, when YOU see all these things, know that he is near (*eggys*) at the doors.*

³⁰ When they are already in the bud, by observing it YOU know for yourselves that now the summer (*theros*) is near (*ēde eggys*). ³¹ *In this way YOU also, when YOU see these things occurring, know that the kingdom of God is near (*eggys*).*

The words “he is near at the doors” are the same as saying “the kingdom of God is near” or “the Son of man is present.”

The context shows that the clause, “He is near at the doors” means that “he (the king of the kingdom) is present.”

“THIS GENERATION WILL BY NO MEANS PASS AWAY”

The basic message of the sequence of verses (Matthew 24:32-42) is that when the followers of Jesus saw the events expressed by the composite sign, they would know that “this generation (*genea*)” would not pass away before the end (*telos*) would come. I quote Matthew 24:32:

³² Truly I say to YOU that this generation (*genea*) will by no means pass away until all these things occur.

The question regarding this text is: What is “this generation” and when will it be? When I became a Witness in 1961, the words of Psalm 90:10 were applied to the word *genea*:

¹⁰ In themselves the days of our years are seventy years; And if because of special mightiness they are eighty years.

The Hebrew word *dōr* (“generation”) is mentioned in verse 1, and, in our view, the great tribulation was likely to occur within 80 years from 1914, when the first part of the sign was seen. But that did not happen. There were two errors in our reasoning:

- We had not made a thorough study of the words *genea* and *dōr*.
- We used “generation” as a specific time indicator to measure the time from the beginning of the presence of Jesus to the great tribulation.

THE WORDS *GENEA* AND *DŌR* DO NOT REFER TO TIME BUT TO PEOPLE

As we see in English, Greek, and Hebrew, words can have different meanings and refer to different things in the world. The Greek word *genea* and the Hebrew word *dōr* do not refer to time but to a group of people. One example is Daniel 9:1 (above) and Matthew 1:17 (below):

¹ In the first year of Da·ri'us the son of A·has·u·e'rus of the seed (*zera'*, *genea*) of the Medes, who had been made king over the kingdom of the Chal·de'ans;

¹⁷ All the generations (*genea*), then, from Abraham until David were fourteen generations, and from David until the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon until the Christ fourteen generations.

In Daniel 9:1, the Hebrew text has *zera'* meaning “seed,” but the Septuagint has *genea*, showing that this Greek word refers to people. In Matthew 1:17, *genea* refers to one group of people that follows another group of people, and this is the same way we use the word “generation” in English.

The basic definition of the Hebrew word *dōr* and the Greek word *genea* is “a large group of people whose lifespans are overlapping.” This means that a generation does not have a specific beginning or a specific end. But the beginnings and ends of those who constitute a generation set limits for the generation’s beginning and its end.

THE OVERLAPPING PARTS OF A GENERATION

The issue we are discussing is the meaning of the words “this generation,” what is included in the word “generation” (*genea*, *dōr*), and the reference of the word.

“THIS WICKED GENERATION” IN THE DAYS OF MOSES

I will first consider the way Moses used the word “generation” (*dōr*), and I quote Deuteronomy 1:35, 36 (above) and Numbers 32:10-13 (below):

³⁵ ‘Not one among these men of **this evil generation** (*dōr*) will see the good land that I swore to give to YOUR fathers, ³⁶ except Ca'leb the son of Je·phun'neh. He will see it, and to him and to his sons I shall give the land upon which he trod, by reason of the fact that he has followed Jehovah fully.

¹⁰ Consequently Jehovah’s anger blazed on that day so that he swore, saying, ¹¹ ‘The men who came up out of Egypt from twenty years old upward will not see the soil of which I have sworn to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, because they have not followed me wholly, ¹² except Ca'leb the son of Je·phun'neh the Ken'iz·zite and Joshua the son of Nun, because they have followed Jehovah wholly.’ ¹³ So Jehovah’s anger blazed against Israel and he made them wander about in the wilderness forty years, until **all the generation** (*dōr*) that was doing evil in the eyes of Jehovah came to their end.

Moses used the words “this evil generation” in Deuteronomy 1:35. Which people were included in “this evil generation”? Numbers 32:11 says that “this evil generation” included all the men (*'isb*) from twenty years upward who went out of Egypt, and 600,000 able-bodied men left Egypt. The end of the mentioned generation came during the 40-year sojourn in the desert. But what was the beginning? Several thousand of the 600,000 men were old, up to one hundred years

or more, and all of these above twenty years belonged to “this evil generation.” This means “this evil generation” began at least 140 years before it ended. Thus, “this evil generation” lasted at least 140 years.

The definition of “generation” is “a large group of people whose lifespans overlap.” One important point here is that “this evil generation” consisted of the thousands of overlapping lifespans of the 600,000 men, excluding those under 20 years old.

Moses called all the Israelites who wandered in the desert for 40 years “this evil generation.” This generation lasted at least 140 years.

“THIS GENERATION” IN THE DAYS OF JOSHUA

Joshua, Caleb, and those below twenty years who came out of Egypt were the only ones who entered the promised land. Joshua led Israel, and he served Jehovah and the people excellently. In connection with his death, we learn something about the word “generation” (*dōr*), and I quote Judges 2:6-10 (above) and Joshua 23:1-4 (below):

⁶ When Joshua sent the people away, then the sons of Israel went their way, each to his inheritance, to take possession of the land. ⁷ And the people continued to serve Jehovah all the days of Joshua and all the days of the older men who extended their days after Joshua and who had seen all of Jehovah’s great work that he did for Israel. ⁸ *Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah, died at the age of a hundred and ten years.* ⁹ So they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Tim’nath-he’res in the mountainous region of E’phra’im, on the north of Mount Ga’ash. ¹⁰ *And all that generation (*dōr*) too were gathered to their fathers,* and another generation (*dōr*) began to rise after them that did not know Jehovah or the work that he had done for Israel.

¹ And it came about many days after Jehovah had given Israel rest from all their enemies all around, when Joshua was old and advanced in days, ² that Joshua proceeded to call all Israel, *its older men and its heads and its judges and its officers*, and to say to them: “As for me, I have grown old, I have advanced in days. ³ And as for YOU, YOU have seen all that Jehovah YOUR God did to all these nations on YOUR account, because Jehovah YOUR God was the one who was fighting for YOU. ⁴ See, I assigned to YOU by lot these nations that remain as an inheritance for YOUR tribes, and all the nations that I cut off, from the Jordan to the Great Sea at the setting of the sun.

Joshua was part of the generation mentioned in Judges 2:10, and he lived for 110 years. In addition to him, the older men who are mentioned in Joshua 31:2 are included in this generation. If some elders were born 40 years before Joshua died and became as old as he, the last one would die 70 years after Joshua’s death. This means the mentioned generation could have lasted at least 180 years, since it ended when the last elder mentioned died. Again, we see that overlapping of a great number of lifespans is the basic meaning of the word “generation.”

The writer of Judges mentions the generation of Joshua and the elders, and this generation lasted at least 180 years.

“THE WICKED AND ADULTEROUS GENERATION” IN THE DAYS OF JESUS

Jesus traveled throughout the land of Israel and preached about the kingdom of God. But the accounts of the evangelists show that very few people believed in him. Because of the people’s bad actions and lack of faith, Jesus condemned them. He used the following words:

“Wicked generation”: Matthew 12:45 and Luke 11:29.

“Wicked and adulterous generation”: Matthew 12:39; 16:4.

“Wicked and sinful generation”: Mark 8:38.

“Unbelieving and perverse generation”: Matthew 17:17 and Luke 9:41.

Which people are included in the term “generation” (*genea*) mentioned by Jesus? I quote Luke 11:29-32:

²⁹ When *the crowds were massing together*, he started to say: “*This generation is a wicked generation*”; it looks for a sign. But no sign will be given it except the sign of Jo’nah.³⁰ For just as Jo’nah became a sign to the Nin’e·vites, in the same way will the Son of man be also to this generation.³¹ The queen of the south will be raised up in the judgment with the men of this generation and will condemn them; because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Sol’o·mon, but, look! something more than Sol’o·mon is here.³² The men of Nin’e·veh will rise in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it; because they repented at what Jo’nah preached; but, look! something more than Jo’nah is here.

This wicked generation included the crowds that were massing together. Jesus did not know each one of these crowds, and his general expression of calling them wicked shows that this “wicked generation” included all the Jews living in Israel. This is supported by the words “unbelieving and perverse generation” in Matthew 17:17 and Luke 9:41. All the Jews in Israel, except a few, were unbelieving, and therefore they belonged to the “unbelieving and perverse generation” mentioned by Jesus. When I use the words “all the Jews,” I refer to the Jews in general. But there were also a few that did not belong to this “wicked and adulterous generation.”

The situation is exactly the same as the one quoted above from Deuteronomy 1:35, where Moses called the whole nation of those who wandered in the desert for 40 years “this wicked generation.”

What is the length of “this wicked and adulterous generation”? The prophetess Anna was 84 years old when she saw the child Jesus in the temple. (Luke 2:37). And we must assume that there were persons in Israel who were older than Anna, one hundred years or more. Children who were born in the same year as Jesus would have been 33 years old when Jesus condemned this wicked and adulterous

generation. If some of these lived for one hundred years or more, the length of “the wicked and adulterous generation” would be at least 200 years.

But how can the words of Matthew 23:29-36 fit into the conclusion that “the wicked and adulterous generation” is at least 200 years long?

²⁹ “Woe to YOU, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because YOU build the graves of the prophets and decorate the memorial tombs of the righteous ones,³⁰ and YOU say, ‘If we were in the days of our forefathers, we would not be sharers with them in the blood of the prophets.’³¹ Therefore YOU are bearing witness against yourselves that YOU are sons of those who murdered the prophets.³² Well, then, fill up the measure of YOUR forefathers.

³³ “Serpents, offspring of vipers, how are YOU to flee from the judgment of Ge·hen’na?

³⁴ For this reason, here I am sending forth to YOU prophets and wise men and public instructors. Some of them YOU will kill and impale, and some of them YOU will scourge in YOUR synagogues and persecute from city to city;³⁵ that there may come upon YOU all the righteous blood spilled on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zech·a·ri’ah son of Bar·a·chi’ah, whom YOU murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.³⁶ Truly I say to YOU, *All these things will come upon this generation.*

Some of the scribes and the Pharisees had bloodguilt, and they would be punished for this. Jesus said that “all these things” (including the punishment) would come upon this generation, and it came when Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 70 CE. If Jesus spoke these words in the year 33, the punishment came 37 years later. Would not this show that “the wicked and adulterous generation” was much shorter than 200 years?

The answer is No. I have stressed that the definition of a generation is “a large group of people whose lifespans overlap.” In the situation with “the wicked and adulterous generation” in the days of Jesus, there were tens of thousands of lifespans that overlapped each other. So, this generation could not have lasted 37 years. However, the point is that the judgment Jesus said would come within this generation occurred 37 years after he uttered his words, not at the end of “this generation.”

It is true that a great part of the Jewish population was killed when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 CE. But a great number of “this wicked and adulterous generation” were still living. So, this event would not shorten the length of this generation, which I have calculated to be at least 200 years.

Jesus called all the inhabitants of Israel in his day for “this wicked and adulterous generation” and “this unbelieving and perverse generation,” except the few believers. This generation lasted at least 200 years.

“THIS GENERATION” IN THE GREAT PROPHECY OF JESUS

I am now reaching the climax of the discussion of “the generation”; what Jesus meant by his words about “this generation” in Matthew chapter 24:34. I quote Matthew 24:32-36:

³² “Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, YOU know that summer is near. ³³ Likewise also YOU, when YOU see all these things, know that he is near at the doors. ³⁴ Truly I say to YOU that this generation (*genea*) will by no means pass away until all these things occur. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. ³⁶ “Concerning that day and hour, nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.

I will now analyze these words.

THE DEMONSTRATIVE WORDS OF MATTHEW CHAPTER 24

One side of Matthew chapter 24 that greatly helps our understanding of Jesus’ words is the chapter’s demonstrative markers. The demonstrative adjective *ekeinos* (“this, that”) occurs ten times, and the demonstrative pronoun *houtos* (“this, that”) occurs eight times. When a demonstrative word is used, we know that a noun has already been mentioned directly or indirectly. So, we must look at the context and find the antecedent of the demonstrative word, that is, what it refers back to.

The antecedent can be lexical or thematic. When the antecedent is a noun previously mentioned, the situation is lexical; when the antecedent is the same idea but not the same word, the situation is thematic.

Two antecedents: The antecedent of “*that* (*ekeinos*) slave” in 24:46 is “the faithful and discreet slave” in verse 45 (grammatical antecedent), and the antecedent of “*this* (*houtos*) good news of the kingdom” in 24:14 is “the good news of the kingdom” that Jesus preached (thematic antecedent). Peter, John, Paul, and others preached about a kingdom that would come in the future, but Jesus preached that the kingdom is here, it is in your midst. And *this* good news of the kingdom —the kingdom is here — should be preached as a part of the sign of the presence of Jesus.

Two other antecedents: The antecedent of “all *these* (*houtos*) things” in 24:2 is “the buildings of the temple” that are mentioned in verse 1 (thematic antecedent). The antecedent of “*those* (*ekeinos*) days” in 24:22 is “the great tribulation” in verse 21 because the tribulation consists of days (thematic antecedent).

THE IDENTIFICATION OF “THIS GENERATION” MENTIONED IN MATTHEW 24:34

Jesus said that “this (*houtos*) generation (*genea*)” will by no means pass away. There is no lexical antecedent because the word *genea* is not previously used. So, the antecedent is thematic. The word *genea* refers to a large group of people whose lifespans overlap. This means that, while *genea* does not refer to time, a certain time is implied, because all the overlapping life spans are related to the time each one is living.

The antecedent of “this generation” is also a situation where time is implied. Verse 33 has the clause “When *you* see all these things,” and “this generation” must be related to the pronoun “*you*” — this generation to which *you* belong, in which your life span overlaps other lifespans.

There is also an implied beginning and end to “this generation,” namely “all these things” that the members of “this generation” (*you*) will see (verse 33) and that will occur while this generation exists (verse 34). The important question, therefore, is: What is the antecedent of “all these things”? This antecedent is not lexical but thematic. And the antecedent to “all these things” is all the events of the sign mentioned by Jesus that are listed in 24:4-22, the first event being the hearing of “wars and reports of wars” (verse 6), and the last event being the great tribulation (verse 21). So, “this generation” would exist throughout the entire time the composite sign occurred, and because of all the overlapping life spans, it had to start before the first event and end after the last event.

To fully understand the generation we are now identifying, we must grasp the framework of Jesus’ great prophecy. The disciples asked about a sign that he had returned and was present, and they associated this with the future destruction of the temple. The events described by the sign would, on a smaller scale, occur during the first century CE, until the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. But the greater and final fulfillment would happen during the presence of Jesus. This is shown by the words in 24:21 that the great tribulation is greater than any previous event and any event that will come, and verse 30, that the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven. These things did not happen in the first century CE.

In chapter 3 of this book, I argued that the presence of Jesus and the time of the end began in the year 1914 CE. This matches the words of Matthew 24:6, 7 of wars because World War I began in 1914. As I have stressed, the word *genea* does not refer to a time period with a particular beginning and end. But because of all the overlapping life spans, it implies time. If the first event Jesus mentioned refers to World War I in 1914, “this generation” would have lasted from that year until the last event Jesus mentioned, the great tribulation.

We cannot know the exact length of this generation. But according to Matthew 24:33, Jesus said, “When you see (*horaō*) these things, you will know.” So, his followers will know when “this generation” would be.

We can use the information in the Bible regarding what the Hebrew word *dōr* and the Greek word *genea* refer to. The generation in the days of Moses was at least 140 years long, the generation in the days of Joshua was at least 180 years long, and the generation in the days of Jesus was at least 200 years long. The Hebrew and Greek words meaning “generation” refer to a large group of people whose lifespans overlap, and the length of the generations that are specially mentioned in the Bible is between 140 and 200 years. This means that the last event mentioned by Jesus, the great tribulation, would occur at the latest 140 to 200 years after the year 1914.

According to the length of the generations mentioned in the Bible, “this generation” in Matthew 24:34 can be between 140 and 200 years.

There is another important statement in Matthew 24:36 where we must find the antecedent:

³⁶ “Concerning that (*ekeinos*) day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.

The Greek words for “day and hour” have not been mentioned previously. Thus, the antecedent must be thematic. Verse 33 contains the words “he (the Son of Man) is near at the doors,” and verse 30 refers to his coming (*erkbomai*)— that “they will see the Son of Man coming (*erkbomai*) on the clouds of heaven.” This “coming” must be the antecedent to “that day and hour.” Verses 37–42 support this with the illustration of the flood.

Verse 37 begins with the conjunction “for” (*gar*), linking what follows to the statement that “that day and hour nobody knows.” The presence (*parousia*) of the Son of Man is compared to the days before the flood, when people were unaware of the impending catastrophe, while the coming (*erkbomai*) of the Son of Man is likened to the arrival of the flood, which “swept them all away.”

The purpose of the parable of the Flood is evident in verse 42:

⁴² Keep on the watch, therefore, because YOU do not know on what day YOUR Lord is coming (*erkbomai*).

The words in verse 42 show that “that day and hour” mentioned in verse 36 refers to the time of the Son of Man’s coming (*erkbomai*) as the judge during the great tribulation.

Based on how “generation” (Hebrew: *dōr*; Greek: *genea*) is used in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the Christian Greek Scriptures, Jesus’ words regarding “this generation” indicate that the great tribulation would occur within a timeframe with the maximum of 200 years from the year 1914. However, the day and the hour of the great tribulation are known only to Jehovah God.

THE GENERATION THAT WILL NOT PASS AWAY

When we read the Word of God, it is important that we read the text carefully and do our utmost to understand the details.

THE REFERENCE OF THE PRONOUN “YOU”

I start by again quoting Matthew 24:32-37:

³² “Now learn from the fig tree as an illustration this point: Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and it puts forth leaves, YOU know that summer is near. ³³ Likewise also **YOU**, *when YOU see (*horao*) all these things, know that he is near at the doors.* ³⁴ Truly I say to YOU that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things

occur. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. ³⁶
“Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.

To whom does the pronoun “*you*” (plural) refer?

Firstly, it refers to the disciples who asked the questions, persons who were followers of Jesus, who had not been baptized and anointed with holy spirit.

Secondly, the pronoun refers to all the anointed followers of Jesus who lived in the first century CE before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Thirdly, it refers to followers of Jesus who live during his presence and the conclusion of the system of things. These are primarily persons who look forward to living in the earthly paradise and, secondly, the few anointed followers of Jesus who live during this time.

THE TIME LIMIT BASED ON THE JUBILEE CHRONOLOGY

In chapter 9, I will discuss the Jubilee chronology; to stress my point, at this point, I am anticipating this chronology.

I have shown that because a generation represents the overlapping of life spans of all who live at a certain time, and because of this, generations in the past could be 200 years or more. The first part of the sign mentioned by Jesus that was connected with the generation that “will by no means pass away” before the great tribulation comes, was World War I, which started in 1914.

Does this suggest that “this generation” can span as much as 200 years from 1914? The answer is No! The chronology of the antitypical Jubilee limits this generation. I demonstrate that the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ is the antitypical sabbath, which is the seventh period of Jehovah’s 7,000-year-long day of rest.

On the sixth day, Jehovah created Adam, and later he created Eve. According to the Jubilee chronology, the thousand-year reign of Jesus will begin 6,000 years after Jehovah made his last creation, which was Eve. We know that in the year 1975, 6,000 years had elapsed since the creation of Adam. However, since we do not know how much time elapsed between the creation of Adam and Eve, we cannot determine the day and hour when Jesus will come as the judge during the great tribulation. (Matthew 24:36)

But what do we know? There is a limit on the time that elapsed between Adam and Eve, as we see in Genesis 4:25 (above) and 5:3 (below):

25 And Adam proceeded to have intercourse again with his wife and so she gave birth to a son and called his name Seth, because, as she said: “God has appointed another seed in place of Abel, because Cain killed him.”

3 And Adam lived on for a hundred and thirty years. Then he became father to a son in his likeness, in his image, and called his name Seth.

Because Set was born when Adam was 130 years old, Eve was created less than 130 years after Adam's creation. This means the thousand-year reign of Jesus will begin less than 130 years after 1975. This can be further limited. Today marks 51 years since 1975. Because the thousand-year reign has not begun, we know that at least 51 years passed between the creation of Adam and Eve. This opens a window of 79 years (to the birth of Set) during which Eve was created.

What happened after Eve's creation and before the birth of Set? Cain and Abel were born, and they grew up. Abel became a herder of sheep, while Cain became a cultivator of the ground. Then Cain killed Abel. The time for this to happen must be subtracted from the 79 years mentioned to determine when Eve was created.

The conclusion is that the year 1975 is the last certain point we know of in the stream of time — 6,000 years after Adam's creation. Because of this, we know that great tribulation and the Jubilee sabbath, which is the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ, will begin in much less than 79 years. And this means that the generation "that by no means will pass away" before the great tribulation comes and the beginning of the Jubilee begins, also ends in much less than 79 years from the present.

We know that the limit of "this generation" is 130 years from the year 1975 or 79 years from the present time.

Because of the chronological information in the Holy Scriptures, we know we can expect the beginning of the antitypical Jubilee, the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ, in much less than 79 years from the present.

"HEAVEN AND EARTH WILL PASS AWAY"

It is very important that we carefully analyze Jesus' words to avoid misunderstanding.

THE APPARENT CONTRADICTION

I will now discuss the problem connected with the words of Jesus regarding heaven and earth. I quote Matthew 24:35 (above) and Matthew 5:18 (below)

³⁵ *Heaven and earth will pass away* (*parerkbomai*, future middle indicative), but my words will by no means pass away.

¹⁸ Truly I say to you *that sooner would heaven and earth pass away* (*parerkbomai*, aorist active subjunctive), *than* for one smallest letter or one stroke of a letter to pass away from the Law until all things take place.

Jesus uses emphatic language in both passages. His point in both sayings is that God's words, whether the law of Moses or the prophecies of Jesus, will never pass

away; they will always be fulfilled. As a guarantee for this, he says in one place that heaven and earth will never pass away, and in the other place, that heaven and earth will pass away.

This apparent contradiction is also seen in the gospel of Luke, and I quote Luke 21:33 (above) and Luke 16:17 (below):

³³ **Heaven and earth will pass away** (*parerkbomai*, *future middle indicative*), but my words will by no means pass away.

¹⁷ Indeed, **it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away** (*parerkbomai*, *aorist active infinitive*), **than** for one stroke of a letter of the Law to go unfulfilled.

It is not logical that Jesus would contradict himself; therefore, we must seek a solution to this apparent contradiction.

In his illustrations, Jesus often used figurative language. But the contrast between the word of God, which never will pass away but always will come true and heaven and earth, requires that his words refer to the literal heavens and the literal earth.

The same verb, *parerkbomai*, is used in all four passages, and it means “to pass by, pass away” (Accordance Lexicon); “be removed” (Mounce).

The key to the solution is the difference between the indicative mood, which expresses real facts and certainty, and the subjunctive mood, which expresses wishes, doubts, and hypothetical or unreal situations.

GREEK GRAMMAR POINTS TO A SOLUTION

The Greek aorist form often refers to the past, but it can also refer to the present and future. It has an indicative form, which expresses facts and certainty, and a subjunctive form, which expresses hypothetical and unreal situations. Languages always evolve, and new forms are created. Many grammarians believe that the Greek future has developed from the aorist subjunctive. In any case, the nuances of aorist subjunctive are close to the nuances of future.

A.T. Robertson says regarding Greek future:

The Modal Aspect of the Future.

The future indicative is not merely a tense in the true sense of that term, expressing the state of the action. It is almost a mode a par with the subjunctive and imperative...The modal aspect of the fut. ind. [future indicative] is seen in its expression of *will* and *feeling*. Like the subj. [subjunctive] the fut. ind. may be merely *futuristic*, *volitional*, or *deliberative*. (author's italics).⁴⁴

Robertson says that Greek future does not only express factual situations. But it can also express wishes, hypothetical and unreal situations. No grammarian will dispute that. I will give some examples from Matthew and Luke. Greek future does not have a special form for subjunctive, only indicative, and as Robertson wrote,

44. A.T. Robertson. *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (1934), page 872.

orist subjunctive has in many instances the same meaning as future indicative. We see this in Luke 11:5 (above) and Matthew 21:3 (below):

⁵ Further, he said to them: “Who of YOU will have (fut. act. indic.) a friend and will go (fut. mid. indic.) to him at midnight and say to him (aor. act. subj.), ‘Friend, loan me three loaves.

³ And if someone says (aorist act. subj.) anything to YOU, YOU must say (fut. act. ind) , ‘The Lord needs them.’ At that he will immediately send (fut. act. indic.) them forth.”

In both passages, orist active subjunctives are used in parallel with future active indicatives. We should also note that the use of none of the verbs describe facts and certainty, but they describe hypothetical or possible situations.

I list three more examples of future indicatives that are hypothetical: Matthew 18:21 (above), Matthew 11:16 (middle), and Luke 11:18 (below):

²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him: “Lord, how many times is my brother to sin (fut. act. indic.) against me and am I to forgive (fut. act. indic.) him? Up to seven times?”

¹⁶ “With whom shall I compare (fut. act. indic.) this generation?

¹⁸ So if Satan is also divided (aorist indic. pass.) against himself, how will his kingdom stand (fut. act. indic.)

When we speak about the future, we speak about things that have not happened. Therefore, it is logical that the Greek future indicative often describes hypothetical situations, as we see in the five passages quoted above.

HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE PERISHABLE

I start with quoting Matthew 24:35 one time more:

³⁵ **Heaven and earth will pass away** (*parerkehōmai*), but my words will by no means pass away.

The verb form that Matthew and Luke used is future middle indicative, and our interest is to understand the application of this verb form in the light of the use of this verb form that is discussed above.

There is one text in The Hebrew Scriptures that is quoted in The Christian Greek Scriptures that can help us, namely, Hebrews 1:10-12:

¹⁰ And: “You at [the] beginning, O Lord, laid the foundations of the earth itself, and the heavens are [the] works of your hands. ¹¹ They themselves will perish (*apollymi*, fut. mid ind.), but you yourself are to remain continually; and just like an outer garment they will all grow old (fut. pass. ind.), ¹² and you will wrap them up (fut. act. ind.) just as a cloak, as an outer garment; and they will be changed (fut. pas. ind.), but you are the same, and your years will never run out.”

In verse 11, the verb *apollymi* has the meaning “destroy, ruin, lose” (Gramcord Lexicon). So, the verse speaks about the destruction of the earth and the heavens. The verb is future middle indicative, so the action is similar to the actions of the verbs in the five examples that are quoted above. We can learn what this means by

studying verses in two Psalms that discuss God's eternity in contrast with the perishable heaven and earth. First, I quote Psalm 148:1-6:

¹ Praise Jah, YOU people! Praise Jehovah from the heavens, Praise him in the heights. ² Praise him, all YOU his angels. Praise him, all YOU his army. ³ Praise him, YOU sun and moon. Praise him, all YOU stars of light. ⁴ Praise him, YOU heavens of the heavens, And YOU waters that are above the heavens. ⁵ Let them praise the name of Jehovah; For he himself commanded, and they were created. ⁶ And he keeps them standing forever, to time indefinite. A regulation he has given, and it will not pass away.

The heavens are mentioned several times in Psalm 148:1-4, and I will translate verses 5 and 6 and analyze them:

⁵ It was he who made the command and created.

⁶ And he causes them to stand (*'āmad*) forever and ever. He has made a decree, and it will not pass away.

The subject is the heavens, including the stars, and the predicate is the verb *'āmad* ("to stand"). The adverbial is "forever and ever." The Hebrew noun *'ōlām* is in many Bible translations incorrectly rendered as "forever." Its meaning is "a time whose end is not known," which means that the reference may or may not be forever. However, in verse 6, the noun *'ad*, which also means "a time whose end is not known," follows *'ōlām*. This suggests emphasis, and I render the two words as "forever and ever."

The Hebrew form of the verb *'āmad* in 148:6 is imperfect hifil, and this is very important for the meaning. The hifil stem is causative, and it means that one person causes another person to do something, or causes an action to be performed or a state to continue. The verb *'āmad* is a state, and there is no action. Hebrew imperfect often indicates durative or continuous action, or that a state continues to stand.

Thus, the point in the six verses in Psalm 148 is that God created the heavens with the stars, which are not intrinsically eternal. But God causes the heavens and the stars to remain forever. A good example is the Sun, which constantly loses mass and, after a long time, will be extinguished. The matter of the Sun that is burning up is not eternal. When verse 6 says that the heavens, including the Sun, are eternal, it means that God, at one point in time, must supply energy to the Sun, like a man who supplies more firewood to an oven whose firewood is on the point of burning up.

I will now discuss Psalm 102:24-27, which are the verses quoted in Hebrews 1:10-12:

²⁴ I proceeded to say: "O my God, Do not take me off at the half of my days; Your years are throughout all generations. ²⁵ Long ago you laid the foundations of the earth itself, And the heavens are the work of your hands. ²⁶ They themselves will perish (Hebrew: *'abad*, Greek: *apollymi*) but you yourself will keep standing (Hebrew: *'āmad*, Greek: *diamenō*). And just like a garment they will all of them wear out. Just like clothing you will replace them, and they will finish their turn. ²⁷ But you are the same, and your own years will not be completed.

The Hebrew verb *‘abad* and the Greek verb *apollumi* have the same meaning: “to destroy, ruin, lose.” This means that the verbs do not necessarily describe full annihilation, but losing something is also possible. The Greek verb *apollymi* in the Septuagint is future middle indicative, which I have shown can have a modal (subjunctive) meaning and refer to hypothetical and possible situations. The same is true with the Hebrew imperfective verb *‘amad*. So, neither the Greek verb nor the Hebrew verb may describe facts and certainty, but both verbs may describe a hypothetical and possible situation.

To understand what the verbs really describe, I will compare Psalm 148:6 (above) with Psalm 102:26, 27 (below):

⁶And he causes them to stand (*‘amad*) forever and ever. He has made a decree, and it will not pass away. (my translation)

²⁶They themselves will perish (Hebrew: *‘abad*, Greek: *apollymi*) but you yourself will keep standing (Hebrew; *‘amad*, Greek: *diamenō*) And just like a garment they will all of them wear out. Just like clothing you will replace them, and they will finish their turn.²⁷ But you are the same, and your own years will not be completed. (NWT84)

Psalm 148:6 consists of two parallelisms, which say the same with different words: The heavens with their stars will always continue to exist.

Psalm 102:26 seems to say the very opposite: “They themselves will perish.” However, what the assertion means is seen in what follows: “just like a garment all of them wear out” and “just like clothing you will replace them.” The writer does not imply that a sudden catastrophe will destroy heaven and earth. But the point is that heaven and earth, which are created by God, are perishable, but he himself stands forever.⁴⁵

A word can have different meanings and different references. The basic meaning and reference are normally used in a translation, but a rare meaning can be used when the context requires it. In view of the fact that Psalm 148:6 says that the heavens with its stars will never be destroyed, and Psalm 102:26 shows that the meaning of the Hebrew word *‘abad* in this context is that heaven and earth will decay, but will not suddenly be destroyed, I translate the first part of Psalm 102:26 as:

²⁶ They themselves *will decay* (*‘abad*), but you yourself continue to stand.

In view of the fact that the Hebrew imperfect can express modality just as Greek future indicative, an alternative translation, which is linguistically possible is the following:

²⁶ They themselves *can decay* (*‘abad*), but you yourself continue to stand.

45. The second law of thermodynamics states that “the total entropy (disorder) of an isolated system must always increase or remain constant over time.” Popularly expressed: Left to itself, any matter will eventually decay and fall apart (or be ruined). Psalm 102:26 expresses this principle.

I use the rendering “will decay” or “can decay” in contrast with NWT84, which has the rendering “will perish.”

The point in Psalm 102:25-27 is that the heavens and the earth that Jehovah has created are perishable, but Jehovah himself, in contrast to this, is eternal.

Let us now turn to Hebrews 1:10-12, where Psalm 102:25-27 is quoted.

¹⁰ And: “You at [the] beginning, O Lord, laid the foundations of the earth itself, and the heavens are [the] works of your hands. ¹¹ They themselves will perish (*apollymi*, fut. mid ind.), but you yourself are to remain continually; and just like an outer garment they will all grow old (fut. pass. ind.), ¹² and you will wrap them up (fut. act. ind.) just as a cloak, as an outer garment; and they will be changed (fut. pas. ind.), but you are the same, and your years will never run out.”

These words include exactly the same ideas as Psalm 102:25-27. The Greek word *apollymi* (“perish”) corresponds to the Hebrew word ‘*abad* (“perish”). In context, *apollymi* means that the earth and the heavens will grow old (“they will wear out,” Psalm 102:26) and be wrapped up and changed (“they will be replaced,” Psalm 102:26).

What is described is not a sudden destruction of earth and heaven, but rather the decay of earth and heaven.

As mentioned, a word can have different meanings and different references. The basic meaning and reference are normally used in translation, but a rare meaning can be used when the context requires it. The basic meaning of *apollymi* is “perish, destroy, kill.” But the noun can also have the meaning of losing something, which means that the thing is not necessarily destroyed. But *apollymi* can also have the rare meaning of “waste,” as we see in Mark 14:3-5:

³ And while he was at Beth'a·ny in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at the meal, a woman came with an alabaster case of perfumed oil, genuine nard, very expensive. Breaking open the alabaster case she began to pour it upon his head. ⁴ At this there were some expressing indignation among themselves: “Why has *this waste* (*apollymi*) of the perfumed oil taken place? ⁵ For this perfumed oil could have been sold for upward of three hundred de·nar'i·i and been given to the poor!” And they were feeling great displeasure at her.

The perfumed oil was not destroyed. But it had decayed by being poured upon the head of Jesus. This was called *apollymi* and it was translated in NWT84 and many other translations as “a waste.” The point is that, when the context requires it, a rare meaning of a word can be linguistically defended.

On the basis of the definition of the word *apollymi* in Hebrews 1:10-12, not as destruction but as decay, I offer the following translation to the first part of Hebrews 1:11:

¹¹ They themselves *will decay* (*apollymi*, fut. mid ind.), but you yourself will remain continually.

In view of what I have previously demonstrated, the future active indicative and the future middle indicative can have the modal meaning of uncertainty or possibility. I offer the following alternative rendering:

¹¹ They themselves **can perish** (*apollymi*, fut. mid ind.), but you yourself will remain continually.

I use the rendering “will decay” or “can perish” in contrast with NWT84, which has the rendering “will perish.”

The point in both translation suggestions is that the Greek text does not say that earth and heaven will be destroyed and reduced to nothing, but rather that they are perishable. And the real point of Hebrews 1:10-12, as well as Psalm 102:25-27, is that Jehovah God is eternal in contrast to what he has created, which is perishable.

The discussion of Psalm 148:1-6, Psalm 102: 25-27, and Hebrews 1:10-12 was a digression and a background for understanding the principal verse of our discussion, namely, Matthew 24:35:

³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away (*parerkbomai*, future middle indicative), but my words will by no means pass away.

The Greek word *parerkbomai* means “to pass beside, pass along, pass by, to pass, elapse, as time, to pass away, be removed,” (Mounce) “to go out of existence.” (Louw and Nida). Because Jesus applies *parerkbomai* to his word, the meaning must be that his word will not “go out of existence”; his word will always be fulfilled. This must also be the meaning of *parerkbomai* as the predicate of heaven and earth. I have shown that, according to The Hebrew Scriptures, heaven and earth are eternal and will never cease to exist.

Because of this, it will mislead the readers to make a translation that contradicts these sayings. The verb is in the future middle indicative, and I have demonstrated with examples that this verb form can convey a modal meaning of uncertainty and possibility. Therefore, I suggest the following translation:

³⁵ Heaven and earth **can pass away** (*parerkbomai*, future middle indicative), but my words will by no means pass away.

I use the rendering “**can pass away**” in contrast with NWT84, which has the rendering “**will pass away**.”

In all the examples that include heaven and earth, the focus is not on the destiny of heaven and earth. But the heaven and earth are used as examples or contrasts. Psalm 102:25, 26, and Hebrews 1:10:11 point out that heaven and earth are perishable and undergo decay. But Psalm 148:6 shows that God will provide them with energy, so they will stand eternally.

According to Matthew 24:35 and Luke 21:33, Jesus used the perishability of heaven and earth as a contrast to his words, which will never perish but will always be fulfilled.

According to Psalm 102:25-27 and Hebrews 1:10-12, the writers used the perishability of heaven and earth as a contrast to the eternity of Jesus Christ and Jehovah God.

According to Matthew 5:18 and Luke 16:17, Jesus used the eternity of heaven and earth to illustrate that the law of God will never go unfulfilled. Jesus' words are formed as an oath in support of the fulfillment of the law.

Table 8:1 lists the different passages. The words that I have translated are seen in blue capital letters.

Figure 8.1 Heaven and earth used as contrasts

Matthew 5:18	¹⁸ Truly I say to you that sooner would heaven and earth pass away (<i>parerkehomai</i> , <i>aorist active subjunctive</i>), than for one smallest letter or one stroke of a letter to pass away from the Law until all things take place.
	THE ETERNITY OF HEAVEN AND EARTH IS USED AS AN EXAMPLE TO SHOW THAT THE LAW OF GOD WILL ALWAYS BE FULFILLED.
Matthew 24:35	³⁵ Heaven and earth CAN pass away (<i>parerkehomai</i> , <i>future middle indicative</i>), but my words will by no means pass away.
	THE PERISHABILITY OF HEAVEN AND EARTH IS USED AS A CONTRAST TO THE WORDS OF JESUS THAT WILL ALWAYS BE FULFILLED.
Luke 16:17	¹⁷ Indeed, it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away (<i>parerkehomai</i> , <i>aorist active infinitive</i>), than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to go unfulfilled.
	THE ETERNITY OF HEAVEN AND EARTH IS USED TO SHOW THAT THE LAW OF GOD WILL ALWAYS BE FULFILLED.
Luke 21:33	³³ Heaven and earth CAN pass away (<i>parerkehomai</i> , <i>future middle indicative</i>), but my words will by no means pass away.
	THE PERISHABILITY OF HEAVEN AND EARTH IS USED AS A CONTRAST TO THE WORDS OF JESUS THAT WILL ALWAYS BE FULFILLED.
Psalm 102: 25-27	²⁵ Long ago you laid the foundations of the earth itself, And the heavens are the work of your hands. ²⁶ They themselves CAN DECAY (Hebrew: <i>'abad</i> , Greek: <i>apolymai</i>) but you yourself will keep standing (Hebrew: <i>'amad</i> , Greek: <i>diamenmo</i>). And just like a garment they will all of them wear out. Just like clothing you will replace them, and they will finish their turn. ²⁷ But you are the same, and your own years will not be completed.
	THE PERISHABILITY OF HEAVEN AND EARTH IS USED AS A CONTRAST TO THE ETERNITY OF JEHOVAH GOD.
Hebrews 1:10-12	¹⁰ And: "You at [the] beginning, O Lord, laid the foundations of the earth itself, and the heavens are [the] works of your hands. ¹¹ They themselves CAN perish (<i>apolymai</i> , <i>fut. mid ind.</i>), but you yourself are to remain continually; and just like an outer garment they will all grow old, ¹² and you will wrap them up just as

	a cloak, as an outer garment; and they will be changed, but you are the same, and your years will never run out.”
	THE PERISHABILITY OF HEAVEN AND EARTH IS USED AS A CONTRAST TO THE ETERNITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

The words in Psalm 102:25-27 are applied to Jehovah, whereas the same words are applied to Jesus in Hebrews 1:10-12. Jesus is never called “Creator” in the Christian Greek Scriptures. However, Jehovah used him to create. I quote Proverbs 8:22-30 (above), Hebrews 1:1 (middle), and Colossians 1:15, 16 (below):

²² *“Jehovah himself produced me as the beginning of his way, the earliest of his achievements of long ago.”* ²³ From time indefinite I was installed, from the start, from times earlier than the earth. ²⁴ When there were no watery deeps I was brought forth as with labor pains, when there were no springs heavily charged with water. ²⁵ Before the mountains themselves had been settled down, ahead of the hills, I was brought forth as with labor pains, ²⁶ when as yet he had not made the earth and the open spaces and the first part of the dust masses of the productive land. ²⁷ When he prepared the heavens I was there; when he decreed a circle upon the face of the watery deep, ²⁸ when he made firm the cloud masses above, when he caused the fountains of the watery deep to be strong, ²⁹ when he set for the sea his decree that the waters themselves should not pass beyond his order, when he decreed the foundations of the earth, ³⁰ *then I came to be beside him as a master worker*, and I came to be the one he was specially fond of day by day, I being glad before him all the time.

¹ God, who long ago spoke on many occasions and in many ways to our forefathers by means of the prophets, ² has at the end of these days spoken to us by means of a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and *through whom he made the systems of things.*

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶ *because by means of him all [other] things were created in the heavens and upon the earth*, the things visible and the things invisible, no matter whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. *All [other] things have been created through him and for him.*

Proverbs 8:22–30 is a clear reference to Jesus. Verse 22 states that “the Wisdom”—that is, Jesus—was Jehovah’s first creation, and verse 30 reveals that “the Wisdom” was the master worker when all things were created. The two opening verses of the Epistle to the Hebrews state that all things were created *through* Jesus, and Colossians 1:16 says that all things were created *through him and for him*. The writer of Hebrews therefore had good reasons to quote Psalm 102:25–27 and apply those words to Jesus. (Hebrews 1:10–12).

It is important to note that the words regarding Jesus in Hebrews 1:11, 12—“you yourself are to remain continually,” and “and your years will never run out.”—refer to the future rather than the past, for as Proverbs 8:22 states, Jesus was Jehovah’s first creation. The only person who is said to have no beginning and no end is Jehovah God. (Psalm 90:2)

ONE WILL BE TAKEN ALONG THE OTHER WILL BE ABANDONED

To understand these words, we need to look at the context, and I quote Matthew 24:37-42

³⁷ For just as the days of Noah were, so the presence (*parousia*) of the Son of man will be.

³⁸ For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered (*eiserkbomai*) into the ark;

³⁹ and they took no note until the flood came (*erkbomai*) and swept them all away (*airō*), so the presence (*parousia*) of the Son of man will be. ⁴⁰ Then (*tote*) two men will be in the field: one will be taken along (*paralambanō*) and the other be abandoned (*afiēmi*); ⁴¹ two women will be grinding at the hand mill: one will be taken along (*paralambanō*) and the other be abandoned (*afiēmi*). ⁴² Keep on the watch, therefore, because YOU do not know on what day YOUR Lord is coming.

There is a parallel between “Noah entered (*eiserkbomai*) into the ark” and “one will be taken along (*paralambanō*).”

According to Genesis 7:1, God told Noah to enter the ark, and verse 7 says he entered it when he was 600 years old. In both verses, the Septuagint uses the verb *eiserkbomai* with the meaning “to go or come in, enter.” (Mounce) The verb in Matthew 24:40 is *paralambanō* with the meaning “to take or bring someone along with.” Example: “He took Peter, John, and James with him and went up into the mountain to pray.” (Lyke 9:28)

The parallel is that, in both cases in connection with Noah and the one taken along, God is the one acting. The verb *paralambanō* in Genesis 7:1 is in *imperative*; God commanded Noah to enter the ark, and Noah followed the command. In connection with the great tribulation, there is no ark to enter or no place to go for safety. God, therefore, “takes the person along with him” to safety, and the verb *paralambanō* expresses this in an excellent way. Thus, the verbs *eiserkbomai* (“enter”) and *paralambanō* (“take along with”) express the same situation of being brought to safety, though from two different angles.

There is also a parallel regarding those who are not brought to safety. The verb *airō* in 24:39, translated as “swept away” means “to take up, lift, raise; bear, carry; **take away**, **remove**; destroy, kill.” (Mounce) The verb *afiēmi*, in verses 40 and 41, means “**to send away**, **dismiss**, suffer to depart; to emit, send forth.” (Mounce) The verbs have both similar and different meanings. The verb *airō* “swept away” is used to show how a large group of people is killed, while *afiēmi* (“be abandoned”) is used to show how one person is not taken along and therefore will be killed.

The setting of the situation described in Matthew 24:40, 41 is the antitype of the flood, namely, the great tribulation: A great number of people will be killed, but some will survive like Noah and his family. Interestingly, this situation is described two other places, in Matthew 24:21, 22 (above) and 24:31 (below):

²¹ for then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. ²² In fact, unless those days were cut short, no *flesh* would be saved; but on account of *the chosen ones* those days will be cut short.

³¹ And he will send forth his angels with a great trumpet sound, and they will gather (*episynagō*) *his chosen ones* together from the four winds, from one extremity of the heavens to their other extremity.

Those who are taken along, according to 24:40, will survive the great tribulation, just as Noah and his family survived the flood. Therefore, they must be identical with “the flesh” (human beings) who are also called “the chosen ones” in 24:22, who will survive the great tribulation.

According to 24:40, two men will be in the field: one will be taken along and the other be abandoned. Two women will be grinding at the hand mill: one will be taken along, and the other will be abandoned. The one man and one woman taken along to survive represent a number of others who will be taken along.

Therefore, 24:31 says that angels “will gather the chosen ones together from the four winds.” The verb in this verse is *episynagō* with the meaning “to cause to come together to, toward, or at a particular location.” (Louw and Nida) The verb in 24:40 is *paralambanō* with the meaning “to take or bring someone along with.” This verb is used with the focus on one person. Vers 31 uses the verb *episynagō* with the meaning “to cause to come together to, toward, or at a particular location” (Louw and Nida) to show how all those who are taken along are gathered as one group with the purpose that they will survive the great tribulation.

The meaning of the words “one is taken along” in Matthew 24:40 is that this person will survive the great tribulation; and conversely, the meaning of the words, “the other will be abandoned” is that this one will not survive the great tribulation.

KEEP AWAKE, BE ON THE WATCH!

We have seen how verses 4-22 in Matthew 24, had a miniature fulfillment in the first century CE, and the greater and final fulfillment in the time of the end. We have further seen how verses 23-28 were fulfilled between 70 and 1914 CE. We have seen that verse 30 introduces the verses related to the great tribulation, and we have discussed verses 29-42, which point to the great tribulation directly or indirectly.

I will now discuss verses 40 to 51, which share the same theme: *Be on the watch; be ready!* Luke 21 discusses the great prophecy of Jesus, and verses 34-36, clearly express the same theme as Matthew 24:29-42:

³⁴ “But pay attention to yourselves that YOUR hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon YOU ³⁵ as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth. ³⁶ *Keep awake*, then, all the time making supplication *that YOU may succeed in*

escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man.”

Luke’s main point is expressed in verse 36: Keep awake, so you will escape “all these things,” which will happen in the great tribulation. The words “standing before the Son of man” have the same meaning as “be taken along” in Matthew 24:41.

I will now discuss Matthew 24:40-51.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ILLUSTRATIONS THAT ARE PROPHECIES AND ILLUSTRATIONS THAT ARE FIGURATIVE

We need a clear understanding of the difference between illustrations with figurative or symbolic meaning and illustrations that are prophecies. When an illustration is a prophecy, its parts refer to concrete persons and concrete future events.

For example, in the illustration of the man of noble birth who traveled to a distant land to secure kingly power and then returned, the man of noble birth refers to Jesus, the distant land to heaven, and the kingly power to the establishment of God’s kingdom with Jesus as king (Luke 19:11-27).

The parts of the illustrations that are figurative do not refer to concrete persons or future events. Some illustrations use concrete events as a pattern for other events. These other events may often point to the future, but because each of the different parts of the pattern does not refer to concrete persons or events, such as “the man of noble birth refers to Jesus,” these illustrations are not prophecies.

Other illustrations, such as the one about the sower, paint a picture of a situation that is or will happen in the real world. But we cannot say that the sower refers to a concrete person, and the road and the rocky places refer to concrete places; this illustration is not a prophecy. (Matthew 13:3-8)

When we now consider the six illustrations in Matthew chapter 24, we should note that in the prophecies about his coming as the judge in the great tribulation, Jesus always refers to himself in the third person as “the Son of man,” and this is not the case in any of the illustrations in Matthew 24:32-51.

The illustration of the fig tree (Matthew 24:32) stresses one important point, namely, that the followers of Jesus should understand the composite sign, knowing the generation in which Jesus’ presence will be, but not the time at the end of his presence when he will come as judge in the great tribulation.

The illustration about the days of Noah (Matthew 24:27-39) stresses that many people will be ignorant when the great tribulation comes and will be swept away; the followers of Jesus must therefore be on the alert and be ready to welcome the Son of man. This turns the reader’s attention to the theme of verses 40-51: *Be on the watch!*

PROVE YOURSELVES READY WHEN JESUS COMES IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION

After Jesus has said that one will be taken along and the other will be abandoned (Matthew 24:40,41), he said, according to verse 42:

⁴² Keep on the watch, therefore, because YOU do not know on what day YOUR Lord is coming.

In order to stress the point to “keep on the watch,” Jesus told three illustrations:

THE LACK OF KNOWLEDGE WHEN THE THIEF IS COMING

⁴³ “But know one thing, that if the householder had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have kept awake and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ On this account ***YOU too prove yourselves ready***, because at an hour that YOU do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming.

According to Matthew 24:32-37, Jesus shows that his followers can know in which generation the great tribulation will occur through the composite sign he has given. But they would not know the exact time of the great tribulation.

In this illustration about the thief, Jesus addresses his followers using the plural pronoun “you.” The illustration shows that just as the householder does not know when the thief is coming, “you” do not know when Jesus will come as the judge in the great tribulation. ***For this reason, it is important to “be ready” at all times.***

In the parable, “the householder” and “the thief,” do not refer to specific people or events. But the illustration stresses the point of being on the watch.

GIVING THE SLAVES FOOD AT THE PROPER TIME

⁴⁵ “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ ***Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so.*** ⁴⁷ Truly I say to YOU, He will appoint him over all his belongings

In the first century, some people were rich and owned slaves. One of these slaves was in charge of the household, and his duty was to give the other slaves food at the time his lord had decided.

This illustration takes the situation of a slave being charge of the household as a point of departure. And the followers of Jesus are asked if they are like such a faithful and discreet slave who gives the other slaves food at the right time.

Those who are wise and faithful like this slave will be appointed over all the belongings of his Lord. In other words, this slave will not only be in charge of giving food to the other slaves. But he will be in charge of the Lord’s whole property.

BEATING HIS FELLOW SLAVES AND DRINKING WITH THE DRUNKARDS

⁴⁸ “But if ever that evil slave should say in his heart, ‘My master is delaying,’⁴⁹ and should start to beat his fellow slaves and should eat and drink with the confirmed drunkards,⁵⁰ the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect and in an hour that he does not know,⁵¹ and will punish him with the greatest severity and will assign him his part with the hypocrites. There is where [his] weeping and the gnashing of [his] teeth will be.

In the first illustration, about the thief, Jesus showed that because his followers did not know the time when he would return, they had to be ready at any time. In the second illustration, about the faithful and discreet slave, Jesus showed that those of his followers who were faithful to him and did what he had asked them to do, would, when he returned, be rewarded.

In the third illustration, about the evil slave, Jesus shows the bad results for the slaves who are not on watch at any time. The slave he mentions says in his heart, “My master is delaying.” Because of this, he lives a dissolute life, beating his fellow slaves and drinking with the drunkards. This slave will be punished.

THE THREE ACCOUNTS ARE ILLUSTRATIONS AND NOT PROPHECIES

Some people have viewed one or all three accounts as prophecies. An analysis of the Greek text shows that this is wrong. I quote verse 45 about the faithful and discreet slave and verse 48 in the account of the evil slave:

⁴⁵ “Who (*tis*) really (*ara*) is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics.

⁴⁸ “But if (*ean*) ever that evil slave should say (*legō*) in his heart, ‘My master is delaying,’

The Greek conjunction *ean* (“if”) and the verb *legō* (“say”) in the subjunctive in verse 48 show that the words about the evil slave are hypothetical. The same situation is seen in verse 45, where the pronoun *tis* (“who”) together with the conjunction *ara* (= then — a marker of the possibility of something — Louw and Nida). The two words together show that this is a possible or hypothetical situation.

So, there is no doubt that all three accounts are illustrations showing the importance for all of Jesus’ followers to be on the watch and be ready at any time.

Table 8.2 Words about being ready in Jesus’ great prophecy

Matthew	
24:42	keep on the watch.
24:44	prove yourselves ready.
Mark	
13: 33	keep looking, keep awake.
13:35	keep on the watch.
13:37	keep on the watch.
Luke	
12:35	let your loins be guarded.

” **let your lamps be burning.**
12:40 **you also, keep ready.**
21:34 **pay attention to yourselves that YOUR hearts never become**
 weighed down.
21:36 **keep awake.**
” **and in standing before the Son of man.**

THE TWO ACCOUNTS DEALING WITH THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE

The illustration about the faithful and discreet slave has received more focus and has been quoted more often than any of the other illustrations in Matthew chapter 24. Therefore, I make a thorough analysis of this illustration, and I quote Matthew 24:45-47:

⁴⁵ “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ Happy is that slave if his master on coming finds him doing so! ⁴⁷ Truly I say to you, he will appoint him over all his belongings.

These words are formed like a question. But the context does not tell us anything about the background of this question. The great prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 have different lengths and different details. There are also other parallel accounts with different details.

Fortunately, there is a parallel account of Matthew 24:43-51 about the faithful and discreet slave and the evil slave, with many details in Luke 12:35-48. I compare the two accounts before discussing the details.

Table 8:3 A comparison between Matthew 24:43-51 and Luke 12:35-48

MATTHEW 24:43-51	LUKE 12:35-48
⁴² Keep on the watch, therefore, because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ “But know one thing: If the householder had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have kept awake and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ On this account, you too prove yourselves ready, because the Son of man is coming at an hour that you do not think to be it. ⁴⁵ “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ Happy is that slave if his master on coming finds him doing so! ⁴⁷ Truly I	³⁵ “Be dressed and ready and have your lamps burning, ³⁶ and you should be like men waiting for their master to return from the marriage, so when he comes and knocks, they may at once open to him. ³⁷ Happy are those slaves whom the master on coming finds watching! Truly I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at the table and will come alongside and minister to them. ³⁸ And if he comes in the second watch, even if in the third, and finds them ready, happy are they! ³⁹ But know this, if the householder had known at what hour the thief would come, he would not have let his house be broken

say to you, he will appoint him over all his belongings.⁴⁸ “But if ever that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying,’⁴⁹ and he starts to beat his fellow slaves and to eat and drink with the confirmed drunkards,⁵⁰ the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect and in an hour that he does not know,⁵¹ and he will punish him with the greatest severity and will assign him his place with the hypocrites. There is where his weeping and the gnashing of his teeth will be.	into.⁴⁰ You also, keep ready, because at an hour that you do not think likely, the Son of man is coming.” ⁴¹Then Peter said: “Lord, are you telling this illustration just to us or also to all?”⁴² And the Lord said: “Who really is the faithful steward, the discreet one, whom his master will appoint over his body of attendants to keep giving them their measure of food supplies at the proper time?⁴³ Happy is that slave if his master on coming finds him doing so! ⁴⁴I tell you truthfully, he will appoint him over all his belongings.⁴⁵ But if ever that slave should say in his heart, ‘My master delays coming,’ and starts to beat the male and female servants and to eat and drink and get drunk,⁴⁶ the master of that slave will come on a day that he is not expecting him and at an hour that he does not know, and he will punish him with the greatest severity and assign him a part with the unfaithful ones.
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There can be no doubt that the account in Luke chapter 12 and Matthew 24 are parallel. This is seen by the red, blue, orange, and green text. The important point is that the account in Luke chapter 12 has a setting that is lacking in Matthew chapter 24. And this setting shows that the words in Matthew 24:45-47 are part of an illustration.

I have already shown that the words about the faithful and discreet slave are not part of the sign of the presence of Jesus because this sign is described in verses 4-22 in Matthew chapter 24. The fact that the words about the faithful and discreet slave also occur in Luke 12:42-44 confirms this, because the sign of the presence of Jesus is not mentioned in this context.

A DISCUSSION OF LUKE 12:35-48

I will now discuss the different details of the text, and I start with Luke 12:35-38:

³⁵ “Be dressed and ready and have your lamps burning,³⁶ and you should be like men waiting for their master to return from the marriage, so when he comes and knocks, they may at once open to him. ³⁷Happy are those slaves whom the master on coming finds watching! Truly I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at the table and will come alongside and minister to them.³⁸ And if he comes in the second watch, even if in the third, and finds them ready, happy are they!

The situation illustrates a master with a group of slaves who is attending a wedding. Weddings in ancient Israel could last seven days, and the illustration shows that the slaves would not know when the master would return from the wedding. The point in the illustration is that the slaves had to be awake and ready to open the door for the master, regardless of when he would return.

To drive home his point that the slaves must be ready at any time, Jesus tells another illustration about a householder who does not know when a thief would break into his house, as we see in verses 39 and 40. This illustration occurs also in Matthew 24:43, 44:

³⁹ But know this, if the householder had known at what hour the thief would come, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also, keep ready, because at an hour that you do not think likely, the Son of man is coming.”

Then Jesus stresses the points of both illustrations and connects them with the coming of the Son of man in verse 40:

“You also, keep ready, because, at an hour that you do not think likely, the Son of man is coming.”

Please note that the master returning from the wedding and the householder are people in the illustrations; therefore, they are not prophetic types of Jesus in any sense or situation. But the actions of the slaves of the master and of the householder illustrate the importance of the disciples of Jesus to be ready when the Son of man returns.

When Peter heard the illustration about the master and his slaves, he asked a question, as we see in verse 41:

⁴¹ Then Peter said: “Lord, do you mean this parable (*pros*) for us, or for everyone? (NIV)

The meaning of this question has been viewed differently because of the possible meanings of the Greek preposition *pros*. This preposition with the accusative can, according to Mounce, be rendered as “to; towards.” But it can also be rendered, “concerning; in respect to.” Because Jesus is speaking to his disciples and not to everyone, I think the meaning of *pros* as “concerning; in respect to” is the correct one. I, therefore, view the NIV rendering of Luke 12:41 as better than the NWT84. In other words, does this illustration refer to us disciples or to everyone?”

The pronoun “us” logically refers to the disciples of Jesus who are mentioned in 12:1, and “everyone” may refer to “a crowd of so many thousands” that are mentioned in the same verse. Peter refers to “this illustration” (*parabolē*), and the demonstrative pronoun “this” must refer to the illustration about the master and the slaves in verses 35-38. ***Thus, Peter’s question is whether the admonition to be ready to open the door for the master at any time only refers to the disciples.***

Jesus does not answer Peter’s question directly, but he tells another illustration that is formed as a question (verse 42):

⁴² “Who really is the faithful steward (*oikonomos*), the discreet one, whom his master will appoint over his body of attendants to keep giving them their measure of food supplies at the proper time? ⁴³ Happy is that slave, if his master on arriving finds him doing so! ⁴⁴ I tell YOU truthfully, He will appoint him over all his belongings.

The illustrations of Jesus consist of words with literal references to historical situations. The situation here is a household (*oikos*) with a master and a slave who serves as the steward or house administrator (*oikonomos*), as well as other slaves with different duties in the household or as workers in the master’s fields. The meals in the household are at the same times every day (“the proper time”), and each slave will get a certain measure of the food supplies at each meal. The duty of the house administrator is to make the food ready at the proper time of the meals, so each slave gets his measure of the food.

Let us then return to the illustrations of “the faithful steward, the discreet one” and “the thief that would come.” Jesus interpreted the illustration in the following way in verse 40:

⁴⁰ you too prove yourselves ready, because the Son of man is coming at an hour that you do not think to be it.

On the basis of these words, Peter asked whether the admonition to “keep ready” was meant only for the disciples of Jesus or for a greater audience.

Jesus did not answer this question directly, but he asked the question, “Who will it be?” “Who will be ready at the unlikely time for the coming of the Son of man?” To stress this point, Jesus connects it to another illustration quite similar to the master-and-slave illustrations. This illustration also includes the master of the house and his steward. The steward is in charge of the household, and his primary duty is to arrange the meals for the other slaves at the times decided by the master and to give each one “his measure of food supplies.”

Please keep in mind that this illustration represents a literal account of what happened in different households in Israel in the first century and that the illustration is not a part of the sign showing that Jesus had returned and was present. A steward who was doing his job by distributing the food to his fellow slaves at the meals was faithful and discreet. The contrast would be the steward who did not do his job but instead was beating his fellow slaves, ate the food supplies, and drank so much wine that he became drunk, as we see in verses 45 and 46:

⁴⁵ But if ever that slave should say in his heart, ‘My master delays coming,’ and should start to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, ⁴⁶ the master of that slave will come on a day that he is not expecting [him] and in an hour that he does not know, and he will punish him with the greatest severity and assign him a part with the unfaithful ones.

This contrast between the two slaves would answer the question of Peter regarding the admonition to keep ready. Which steward was ready by doing his job when his master came? That would, of course, be the faithful steward, the discreet one. And now we better understand the reason why Jesus started his illustration (12:42) with a question: “Who will prove to be like the faithful steward when his master comes?”

Jesus did not say that his admonition to keep ready only related to the disciples of Jesus whom Peter knew. But he left the issue open: “Who will be ready?” In other words, any human being could prove to be faithful and discreet and, therefore, get the reward when his master came.

“The faithful steward, the discreet one” in Luke 12:42, who corresponds to “the faithful and discreet slave” in Matthew 24:45, refers to any follower of Jesus who is doing the will of God and is ready when Jesus comes as the judge in the great tribulation.

Jesus’ questions “Who really is the faithful steward, the discreet one” in Luke 12:42, and “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave” in Matthew 24:45 are appeals to his listeners to be ready when the Son of man comes.

When Jesus comes as the judge in the great tribulation, who will be doing the same work as a householder did in the days of Jesus, who would give the slaves literal food at the proper time?

To understand the full force of Jesus’ illustrations in Luke chapter 12 and the similar illustrations in Matthew 24:42-51, we need to identify *the master* of the steward who is mentioned in verse 45. *This master* does not refer to Jesus Christ, the Son of man. Why can we say that? Because of the personal pronoun “his” (*autos*) in the genitive, that is, “his master.” *The master* of the faithful steward in Luke 12:42 (the same as the faithful and discreet slave in Matthew 24:45) is the owner of the house (*ho kyrios tēs oikias*).

We can draw the same conclusion from Matthew 24:50. This is a part of a hypothetical situation because verse 48 starts with the words, “but if ever” (*ean de eipē*). If the slave becomes wicked, “the master of the slave” (*ho kyrios tou doulou*) will come and punish him. The coming of the Son of man in the great tribulation will be a real event that with certainty will happen. It does not make sense to portray a hypothetical situation and say that if the slave becomes wicked, Jesus, as the master of the slave, will come and punish him. But true to the nature of the illustration, “*the master* of the slave” who will come if the situation turns out to be bad, must be “the master of the house” in the illustration.

This conclusion is supported by the illustration in Mark 13:32-37:

³²“Concerning that day or the hour nobody knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but the Father. ³³Keep looking, keep awake, for you do not know when the appointed time is. ³⁴It is like a man traveling abroad who left his house and gave the authority to his slaves (*doulos*), to each one his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to keep on the watch. ³⁵Keep on the watch, therefore, for you do not know when *the master of the house* (*ho kyrios tēs oikias*) is coming, whether late in the day or at midnight or before dawn or early in the morning, ³⁶in order that when he comes suddenly, he does not find you sleeping. ³⁷But what I say to you, I say to all: Keep on the watch.”

This is an illustration that is similar to the one in Luke 12:35-38. Luke uses the designation “*their master*” (*ton kyrion autōn*) and Mark uses the designation “*the master* of the house” (*ho kyrios tēs oikias*). So, there can be no doubt that “his master” (*ho kyrios autos*) in Luke 12:42 and Matthew 24:45 refer to the master of the house in the illustration and not to the Son of man, Jesus Christ.

But if this is correct, what is the relationship between the illustrations in Luke 12:35-48 and Matthew 24:43-51 and the coming of the Son of man as the judge in the great tribulation? The answer is found in Luke 12:40.

“You also, keep ready, because, at an hour that you do not think likely, the Son of man is coming.”

This is the only thing the illustration in Luke 12:35-38 about the slaves that should be watching shows. And this is the only thing that the illustration about the steward in Luke 12:42-44, who faithfully does his job whenever his master comes, shows.

This means that the details of the illustrations do not have any prophetic meaning. But all the details portray the whole situation whose only purpose is to show the importance of the servants of God being occupied with Christian works and being ready and watching when the Son of man comes in the great tribulation.

A COMPARISON OF THE GREEK DETAILS OF MATTHEW 12:45-47 AND LUKE 14:42-44

The verses of our interest are Matthew 24:45–47, and according to the context, the events described by these verses must occur during the great tribulation. These verses parallel Luke 12:42–44, and I will translate the verses and compare them:

Table 8.4 The translation of the words in Luke 12:42-44 and Matthew 24:45-46

Luke 12:42
Who then (<i>tis ara</i>) will be (<i>estin</i> , present) the faithful steward (<i>oikonomos</i>), the wise one, whom the Lord will appoint (<i>kathistēmi</i> , future) over his household of slaves (<i>therapeia</i>) in order to continue to give (<i>didōmi</i> , pres infn) their food allowance (<i>sitometrion</i>) at the appointed time (<i>kairos</i>)?
Matthew 24:45
Who then (<i>tis ara</i>) will be (<i>estin</i> , present) the faithful slave (<i>doulos</i>), even the wise one, whom the Lord will appoint (<i>kathistēmi</i> , aorist) over his household of slaves (<i>oiketeia</i>) in order to give (<i>didōmi</i> , aorist infn) their food (<i>trofē</i>) at the appointed time (<i>kairos</i>).
Luke 12:43, 44
⁴³ Happy is that slave (<i>doulos</i>) whom the Lord will find (future) doing (present part) this when he comes (aorist part). ⁴⁴ Truly I am telling (present) you that he will appoint him (<i>kathistēmi</i> , future) over all his belongings (<i>hyparxō</i> , pres part).
Matthew 24:46, 47

Happy is that slave (*doulos*) whom the Lord will find (*future*) doing (*present part*) this when he comes (*aorist part*). Indeed, I am telling (*present*) you that he will appoint him (*kathistēmi, future*) over all his belongings (*hyparchō, pres part*).

As we already have seen, the verses in Luke 12 and Matthew 24 are very similar. In Luke 12:42, the person is called “steward” (*oikonomos*), which refers to the slave who is in charge of the household of the master. This is confirmed in verse 43, where the steward is called “slave” (*doulos*). In the parallel in Matthew 24:45, the person is called “slave” (*doulos*). So the situation is exactly the same in both instances. The duties of such slaves were to arrange the meals and give the other slaves the food that they should have at the appointed times; 12:42 uses the word “food allowance” (*sitometrion*)—what the slaves rightly should have—and Matthew 24:45 uses the word “food” (*trofē*). This word can also refer to a “portion,” so there is no real difference between the two words.

In the epithets of the slave, there is the conjunction *kai* (“and”) in Matthew. But this word is lacking in Luke. Literally, Matthew says: “who is the faithful slave *and* the wise (one).” In Greek, the conjunction *kai* needs not always be translated as “and.” In Galatians 6:16, for example, a good translation would be “even,” and I use this translation in Matthew 24:45.

In connection with the duty of the slave and his appointment, Luke uses the verb *kathistēmi* (“appoint”) in the future, while Matthew uses the same verb in the aorist. It is clear from the use of aorist in The Christian Greek Scriptures that it can refer to completed and uncompleted actions. Therefore, there is no linguistic reason to use English past tense or perfect for the aorist verb “appoint” in Matthew 24:45 and to use future in Luke 12:42.

The Greek form *estin* is the present form of the verb *eimi* (“to be”). Greek present is not a tense but the imperfective aspect, and it can be used for past, present, and future. Because Jesus asks a question about a situation that has not yet materialized, and he uses the future form *kathistēmi*, the temporal reference of *estin* must be future. Therefore, I translate “Who then *will be* the faithful steward/slave?” and not “Who then *is* the faithful steward/slave?”

Moreover, in Luke 12:35–40, Jesus admonishes his listeners to be ready. And as his reply to Peter’s question whether Jesus’ illustration only refers to the disciples or to all people, Jesus, in effect, asks: “Who will it be?” This means that each individual must decide, and the appointment as a steward must occur *after* the individual has made his or her decision. Because the words in Matthew 24:45–47 are very similar to the words in Luke 12:42–45, the setting must be the same, namely, who will be on the watch when Jesus comes.

This is confirmed by the words in Mark 13:33–37, which are very similar to the words in Luke 12:35–40. Thus, the appointment in Matthew 24:45, which is expressed by the aorist, must be future and not completed, just as it is in Luke 12:42.

Because Greek aorist is not a tense but only an aspect, the perfective one, it merely focuses on the action to appoint without any details visible as to manner and time,

and the context shows that this action is future. This is exactly the same focus as Greek future. But a similar focus is made by different linguistic factors: In the case of the aorist, the aspect of the verb and the context indicate future reference, while in the other case, the future verb form alone and not the context indicates future reference.

One reason why it is easy to misunderstand the words in Matthew 24:45-47 about the faithful and discreet slave is that the context of these three verses is lacking in Matthew chapter 24. However, when we study the context of the similar words in Luke chapter 12, where we find the illustration of the slaves that should be watching for their master's return at any time, and that the words about the faithful and discreet slave represent the answer Jesus gave to Peter's question, then we realize that the words about the faithful and discreet slave are not a prophecy but an illustration stressing the importance of being occupied with Christian works and being on the watch when Jesus comes in the great tribulation.

The "faithful and discreet slave" refers to any Christian who is faithful and keeping on the watch when Jesus comes as the judge in the great tribulation. It does not refer to a class or group that gives spiritual food during Christ's presence.

The basic point of the illustration is:

"Be occupied with Christian works, and keep on the watch because you do not know the day and hour when the Son of man is coming."

In order to be complete, I will return to the question about the identity of the "your Lord" in the two clauses in Matthew 24:42:

⁴² Keep on the watch, therefore, because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

Who is "your Lord" who is coming in this verse? At first glance, the reference seems to be to Jesus Christ because his coming is mentioned in Matthew 24:30, 39, 44. However, this view has two problems. The first problem is that when the coming of Jesus in the great tribulation is mentioned, the subject is always "the Son of man" and not "the lord." The second problem is that the word "lord" (*kyrios*) is determined with the pronoun "your."

When a substantive is determined in this way, there must be an antecedent, a particular reference. When the words "your lord" are used in a clause, there must be antecedents, that is, both the persons referred to by "your" and "the lord" must be identified, usually before this mention, or in some instances afterward. But there are no such antecedents to "your lord" in the context. I suggest the following solution:

When we look at Table 8:5, we see that the clauses, *"Keep on the watch, therefore, because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming,"* in Matthew 23:42 and *"Be dressed and ready and have your lamps burning,"* in Luke 12:35 have the same green color. The words "keep on the watch" and "be dressed and ready" have the

same meaning, and, therefore, the two passages say the same thing. I have already pointed out that a part of the whole setting of the situation that is mentioned in Luke chapter 12 is lacking in Matthew 24. Because of this, I suggest the following changed setting:

Table 8.5 The changed setting in Luke chapter 12 and Matthew chapter 24

Matthew 24:42 [Luke 12:36-38] Matthew 24:43-44	Luke 12:35-40
⁴² Keep on the watch, therefore, because you do not know on what day your Lord (<i>kyrios</i>) is coming. [³⁶ and you should be like men waiting for their master (<i>kyrios</i>) to return from the marriage, so when he comes and knocks, they may at once open to him. ³⁷ Happy are those slaves whom the master (<i>kyrios</i>) on coming finds watching! Truly I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at the table and will come alongside and minister to them. ³⁸ And if he comes in the second watch, even if in the third, and finds them ready, happy are they!] ⁴³ “But know one thing: If the householder had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have kept awake and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ On this account, you too prove yourselves ready, because the Son of man is coming at an hour that you do not think to be it.	³⁵ “Be dressed and ready and have your lamps burning, ³⁶ and you should be like men waiting for their master to return from the marriage, so when he comes and knocks, they may at once open to him. ³⁷ Happy are those slaves whom the master on coming finds watching! Truly I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at the table and will come alongside and minister to them. ³⁸ And if he comes in the second watch, even if in the third, and finds them ready, happy are they! ³⁹ But know this, if the householder had known at what hour the thief would come, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also, keep ready, because at an hour that you do not think likely, the Son of man is coming.”

I have moved the text in verses 36 to 38 in Luke chapter 12 to a position after verse 42 and before verse 43 in Matthew 24. If this new setting is correct, “your master” in Matthew 24:42 has a clear antecedent. The reference of “lord” (*kyrios*) in Matthew 24:42 is to “the master” (*kyrios*) in Luke 12:36, 37. This understanding will solve both the problems that I have outlined above.

I would like to mention the word “therefore” (*oun*) in Matthew 24:42. It could seem to refer to verses 37 to 41 in Matthew chapter 24. But it is more likely that *oun* refers to the following text. The reason why the persons should keep on watch should be that they do not know the time or hour.

I would like to stress that my suggestion is not an attempt to add anything to the text in Matthew chapter 24. But just as I show there is a setting in Luke chapter 12 for the words about the faithful and discreet slave in Matthew 24:45-47, a setting that

is not written in Matthew chapter 24, the setting in Luke chapter 12 may also be applied to Matthew 24:42.

The word «Lord» in the sentence, «because you do not know on what day your Lord is coming» does not refer to Jesus Christ and his coming in the great tribulation. But «Lord» refers to the illustration about the Lord and his slaves.

THE ANTITYPICAL JUBILEE AND THE APPOINTED TIME ENDING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE JUBILEE

SUMMARY

Exodus 20:11 says that the law regarding six days of work and the sabbath was given after God's pattern of working six days followed by the sabbath. The following discussion shows that 7 times 7 sabbath years followed by the Jubilee also is based on the pattern of six days of creation followed by the sabbath. It is based on the real length of each creation day of 7,000 years each multiplied with 7 days, giving 49,000 years, followed by the 50,000th year which is the Jubilee.

The chapter presents clues and evidence from The Christian Greek Scriptures showing that the actions during the Jewish Jubilee represent prophetic types that are fulfilled during the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ.

Most important is the evidence presented that, just as there were specific appointed times that ended at the first coming of Jesus, and specific appointed times that ended at the second coming of Jesus, there are also specific appointed times that will end when Jesus comes at the end of his presence as the judge in the great tribulation.

It is concluded that we cannot know the exact time of the beginning of the antitypical Jubilee, the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. But a time frame connected with the year 1975 sets a limit for this beginning.

Chapter 1 discussed two scenarios of the Law in ancient Israel, which were prophetic types, and their antitypes can be seen in the time of the end.

The tabernacle, the priests, and the offerings were prophetic types of Jesus and his ransom sacrifice and the way to heaven for the 144,000 anointed followers of Jesus.

The three festivals in Israel that were celebrated because of the harvesting of different crops are prophetic types of the harvesting of humans for salvation, Passover is a prophetic type of Jesus and his ransom sacrifice, Pentecost is a prophetic type of the harvesting of the 144,000 anointed follower of Jesus, and the Feast of Booths is a prophetic type of the harvesting of the great crowd that will live in the earthly paradise.

The basis for viewing the festivals as prophetic types is the words of Paul in Hebrews 10:1 (above) and Colossians 2:16, 17 (below):

¹⁶Therefore let no man judge YOU in eating and drinking or in respect of a festival or of an observance of the new moon or of a sabbath;¹⁷ for those things are a shadow (*skia*) of the things to come, but the reality (*sōma*) belongs to the Christ.

¹ For since the Law has (*ekēhō*) a shadow (*skia*) of the good things to come, but not the very substance (*eikōn*) of the things, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make those who approach perfect.

Paul's words mentioning "a festival" are the basis for viewing Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Booths as prophetic types. Paul also says that the sabbaths are prophetic types, and that is one reason why I take the sabbath years and the Jubilee year as prophetic types. And, as Paul says: "the reality [the antitypes] belongs to the Christ."

The Greek word *skia* means "shadow" and the body casting the shadow, that is, the antitype is in Hebrews 10:1 expressed by the word *eikon*, with the meaning "image." In 8:5, the Greek word *hypodeigma* (typical representation) is a synonym for *skia*. The antitype can be expressed by the Greek words *eidōn* ("image"), *sōma* ("body"), and *alētheia* ("truth"). The words in 10:1 do not say that the whole law represents shadows. But it says that the Law *has* a shadow, which means that parts of the Law represent prophetic types, and Hebrews 8:5 shows that the sacred service of the priests is a typical representation.

The book *My Beloved Religion — and the Governing Body*, second edition, pages 338-343, lists 10 criteria for identifying an account as a prophetic type. Criterion 4) is "Accounts with special or peculiar contents." The Jubilee is a special account, and there is no reason why the actions associated with it should occur every 50th year. Something similar to the Jubilee is not found in any other ancient nation. If we believe that God is behind the law of Moses, he must have had a special reason for creating such an unusual thing as the Jubilee. The conclusion, both because of what Paul wrote, and because the Jubilee is special and peculiar, is that the actions during the Jubilee represent prophetic types.

When God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments, he gave a reason for keeping the sabbath. I quote Exodus: 20:8-11

⁸ "Remembering the sabbath day to hold it sacred, ⁹ you are to render service and you must do all your work six days. ¹⁰ But the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah your God. You must not do any work, you nor your son nor your daughter, your slave man nor your slave girl nor your domestic animal nor your alien resident who is inside your gates. ¹¹ For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything that is in them,

and he proceeded to rest on the seventh day. That is why Jehovah blessed the sabbath day and proceeded to make it sacred.

These words show that God did not inspire the creation account merely to satisfy his people's curiosity. But the account was written as a pattern for the Israelites to follow in their daily lives: to work six days and rest on the seventh day.

In this chapter, I will show that the 7 sabbath years leading to the 50th year, which is the Jubilee also follow the pattern in the creation week described in Genesis chapter 1.

THE JUBILEE REPRESENTS PROPHETIC TYPES

The Bible can be compared to a criminal novel. In the first chapter, the persons are presented, and the crime is committed. Throughout the chapters, threads that cannot be immediately understood are laid down. In the last chapter, the crime is solved, and the perpetrators are punished. And now, with the whole picture in mind, we can revisit the different chapters and understand how each thread fits into the whole.

In Genesis, the persons are presented: Jehovah God, the angels, Adam and Eve, and Satan, and the crime is committed. Throughout the different books in the Bible, threads are laid down showing how the first prophecy about the seed of the woman who will bruise the serpent in its head will be fulfilled. But these threads cannot be immediately understood. The last book of the Bible tells how the crime is solved and how the perpetrators are punished. And now, the different threads in the books can be understood.

This book shows how the original purpose of Jehovah, that the earth will be populated by billions of Adam's descendants, will be fulfilled. One important thread in the Law of Moses is the Jubilee, which grants full liberty to all people. This chapter discusses how the different sides of the Jubilee are prophetic types of the liberty that the people of God will experience during the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ, when all things will be restored.

The 49th year was a sabbath year when all the land rested, and the same was true with the 50th year, which also was a sabbath of complete rest for the land. I will now present the basic characteristics of the Jubilee, and we read Leviticus 25: 4, 8-10:

⁴ But in the seventh year there should occur *a sabbath of complete rest for the land*, a sabbath to Jehovah. Your field you must not sow with seed, and your vineyard you must not prune.

⁸ “You will count off seven sabbath years, seven times seven years, and the days of the seven sabbath years will amount to 49 years. ⁹ You will then sound the horn loudly in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month; on the Day of Atonement, you should cause the sound of the horn to be heard in all your land. ¹⁰ *You must sanctify the 50th year and proclaim liberty (derōr) in the land to all its inhabitants. It will become a Jubilee for you, and each of you will return to his property and each of you should return to his family.*

¹¹ A Jubilee is what that 50th year will become for you. You will not sow seed or reap what

grew on its own from leftover grain nor gather the grapes of unpruned vines. ¹² For it is a Jubilee. It is to be holy to you. You may eat only what the land produces by itself.

The Hebrew noun translated as “liberty” is *derôr*, and its meaning is “freedom; liberty.” (Kohlenberger and Mounce) The liberty or freedom mentioned in verse 10 was particularly applied in five areas:

- 1) All Hebrew slaves were set free, regardless of how long they had been slaves.
- 2) Any land that had been sold, usually because of poverty, was returned to the original owners without compensation.
- 3) Forgiveness of sins. The Jubilee started with the Day of Atonement, when offerings were given for the sins of the High Priest and his family and for the people.
- 4) Even the land experienced freedom, because the Jubilee was a sabbath of complete rest for the land.
- 5) There was liberty in the land for all its inhabitants. The entire year was a festival, a year of freedom for all the inhabitants, and the whole land had a complete rest, as in the sabbath year.

The Jubilee was a year of freedom for all the people, it was a year of restoration of all things, it was a year of rejoicing. It was even freedom for the land that experienced complete rest.

Because Colossians 2:16. 17 says that the Jewish sabbaths are prophetic types; this must include the 49th and 50th years, which were also sabbath years. Paul’s words are direct evidence that the Jubilee represents prophetic types.

Is it possible to find other evidence? In connection with the Jewish festivals, we found evidence that they are prophetic types in single expressions, such as in the use of the word “firstfruits,” and in connection with the Feast of Booths, and in the use of “palm greens” and “booths” in Revelation 7 and Leviticus 23:40. In what follows, I will present similar clues in connection with the Jubilee.

THERE IS A FUTURE ANTITYPICAL SABBATH

MATTHEW 12:8

The law required that the Jews observe the weekly sabbath, and accounts of how they did this are found in The Christian Greek Scriptures. In these Scriptures, there is also information about the sabbath in a prophetic context.

I quote Matthew 12:5-8:

⁵ Or have you not read in the Law that on the Sabbaths the priests in the temple violate the Sabbath and continue guiltless? ⁶ ***But I tell you that something greater than the temple is here.*** ⁷ However, if you had understood what this means, ‘I want mercy and not

sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless ones. ⁸ *For the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath.*"

How shall we understand the relation of Jesus Christ to the sabbath? We find an answer in Galatians 4:4 (above) and Romans 6:16 (below):

⁴But when the full limit of the time arrived, God sent his Son, who was born of a woman and who was under law.

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Paul says that Jesus "was under the law," and he also says that when you obey someone or something, you are a slave of that one. Because the Law was still valid, Jesus had to obey the law. So, he was a slave of the sabbath and not the Lord of the sabbath. When Jesus performed miracles on the sabbath, he did not violate the Law, but he did violate some extreme sabbath rules that the religious leaders had made. The words of Jesus about the temple in Matthew 12:6 may help us understand his words about the sabbath, and we read in John 2:19-22:

¹⁹Jesus replied to them: "Tear down *this temple*, and in three days I will raise *it* up." ²⁰The Jews then said: "This temple was built in 46 years, and will you raise it up in three days?"

²¹*But he was talking about the temple of his body.* ²²When, though, he was raised up from the dead, his disciples recalled that he used to say this, and they believed the scripture and what Jesus had spoken.

The word "temple" in verse 19 is *naos* (masculine singular accusative), and the pronoun *auton* (3rd person masculine singular accusative) is of the same gender, number, and case as *naos*. Linguistically, the English pronoun "it" must refer to the literal temple. Nevertheless, Jesus's reference was not to the literal temple but to "the temple of his body"—he would die and be raised after three days.

When Jesus says in Matthew 12:6, "that something greater than the temple is here," he also refers to "the temple of his body." Because Jesus was a slave of the Law, including the sabbath, it could not rightly be said that he was the Lord of the Jewish sabbath. Therefore, "the sabbath" in the same verse must be viewed as in the same class as "the temple." It had to refer to something beyond the literal sabbath. This means that there must be a future sabbath that Jesus was referring to, over which he is the Lord. And the miracles he made on the literal sabbath would foreshadow the bigger actions of the same kind that would occur on this future sabbath.

As a confirmation, I quote Colossians 2:16, 17 one time more:

¹⁶Therefore, do not let anyone judge you about what you eat and drink or about the observance of a festival or of the new moon or of a sabbath. ¹⁷Those things are a shadow of the things to come, but the reality belongs to the Christ.

The words of Jesus and Paul confirm that there is a future antitypical "sabbath" of which the Jewish sabbaths, including the yearly sabbaths and the Jubilee, must be prophetic types of.

I have quoted Exodus 20:8-11, where we learn that the week of six days and the sabbath on the seventh day was instituted after the pattern of the creation week described in Genesis chapter 1. I claim that the cycle of 7 sabbath years and the 50th Jubilee were also based on the pattern of the creation week. The antitypical sabbath, of which Jesus is the lord, is the first clue supporting the view that the creation week is a prophetic type and pattern of something larger than the weekly workdays and the sabbath.

JEHOVAH'S GREAT SABBATH

HEBREWS 4:1

Genesis chapter 1 describes six days when Jehovah created humans and animals and made the earth habitable for them, and the seventh day when he rested. I quote Genesis 2:1-3:

¹ Thus the heavens and the earth and all their army came to their completion. ² And by the seventh day God came to the completion of his work that he had made, and he proceeded to rest on the seventh day from all his work that he had made. ³ And God proceeded to bless the seventh day and make it sacred, because on it he has been resting from all his work that God has created for the purpose of making.

To rest is a stative verb without any action, and a state continues to hold until something, or someone, stops it. The text in Genesis does not tell how long Jehovah rested. But we can learn about this in Hebrews chapters 3 and 4.

The writer tells that God continued to rest during the 40-year-long sojourn of the Jews in the desert. He refers to Psalm 95:11, where God says that the people would not enter his rest. In the first 11 verses of chapter 4, he shows that God's rest was still holding in the first century CE and that people could enter it. Then the writer looked to the future and wrote in Hebrews 4:8, 9:

⁸ For if Joshua had led them into a place of rest, [God] would not afterward have spoken of another day. ⁹ So there remains a sabbath resting (*sabbatismos*) for the people of God.

The Greek word *sabbatismos* does not refer to the sabbath day, but to the rest people can have on the sabbath day. Jehovah's day of rest, as described in Hebrews, had lasted for 4,000 years, and the words that people will be able to enter God's rest in the future show that Jehovah's day of rest continued to last into the future.

So far in the discussion, we have found three mentions of the concept "sabbath" that can qualify for being an antitype of the Jewish sabbaths, including the Jubilee: the future sabbath of which Jesus is Lord, Jehovah's sabbath day which had lasted more than 4,000 years when Hebrews was written, and the future "sabbath resting" mentioned in Hebrews 4:9. Do these refer to the same prophetic sabbath or to different prophetic sabbaths? We will see.

FREEDOM FROM SIN, DEATH, AND CORRUPTION

ROMANS 8:20, 21

As we saw in the discussion in chapter 1, there is a clear relationship between prophetic types and antitypes. I will now find texts in The Christian Greek Scriptures that have clear relationships to the Jubilee.

In the Jubilee, slaves received their freedom, and land that was sold was returned to the original owner without compensation. Even the land had freedom, since it experienced complete rest. Because of all this, the Jubilee was a year of liberty and rejoicing. Another characteristic of the Jubilee, usually not stressed, was the forgiveness of sins connected with the Day of Atonement, which marked the start of the Jubilee. I quote Leviticus 16:11, 15, 16:

¹¹ “*Aaron will present the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement in behalf of himself and his house;* afterward he will slaughter the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself.

¹⁵ “*He will then slaughter the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the curtain and do with its blood the same as he did with the bull’s blood; he is to spatter it toward the cover and before the cover.*” ¹⁶ “He must make atonement for the holy place concerning the acts of uncleanness of the Israelites and concerning their transgressions and their sins, and that is what he should do for the tent of meeting, which is located among them in the midst of their acts of uncleanness.

The bull, which was the offering for the sin of the high priest and his family, was a prophetic type of Jesus’ sacrifice for his 144,000 anointed followers who will be kings and priests. The goat, which was the offering for the sins of the people, was a prophetic type of Jesus’ sacrifice for all Adam’s descendants.⁴⁶

The Jubilee started on the Day of Atonement on the 10th day of the autumn month Tishri. On that day, all the Israelites in the land started the Jubilee year with freedom from sin, freedom from slavery, and with the restoration of all their properties.

The antitypical fulfillment of the Jubilee is not about freedom from human slavery or the restoration of property. But “the reality (the antitype) belongs to Christ,” according to Colossians 2:17. This means that the antitype relates to the application of the ransom sacrifice and the release from slavery to sin and death for the two different groups that the bull and the goat offered on the Day of Atonement were prophetic types of. And the Jubilee will bring the restoration of all things that the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures have spoken about. (Acts 3:19-21)

FREEDOM AND LIBERTY FOR ALL THE PEOPLE

46. See pages 12-15 where the antitypical fulfillments of the tabernacle, the priests, and the offerings are discussed.

Paul's words show that the different sides of the Jubilee were prophetic types of different aspects of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus and its application. I will consider the Hebrew and Greek words for liberty, and I quote Leviticus 25:10:

¹⁰ You must sanctify the 50th year and proclaim liberty (Hebrew: *derōr*, Greek: *afesis*) in the land to all its inhabitants. It will become a Jubilee for you, and each of you will return to his property and each of you should return to his family.

The Hebrew noun translated as “liberty” is *derōr*, the same word used with the meaning “liberty” in connection with the release of the Hebrew slaves in the Jubilee. The Greek Septuagint translates *derōr* with *afesis*, as it does in the account of the Jubilee in Leviticus 25:10.

The word *afesis* has the meaning “forgiveness; cancellation (of sins); release (of prisoners). (UBS Lexicon) The noun *afesis* is used 18 times in The Christian Greek Scriptures. Fourteen of these refer to the forgiveness of sins, and two refer to the release of something. According to Luke 4:17-18, Jesus used the word *afesis* twice in a quotation from Isaiah 61:1-2. However, the “prisoners” (*aikēmalōtos*) for which Jesus proclaimed freedom were prisoners who were taken in war, while *all* the Israelites experienced freedom in the Jubilee. Therefore, Jesus did not speak about the antitypical Jubilee.

But Paul evidently had the antitypical Jubilee in mind when he wrote his letter to the Romans. I quote Romans 8:1, 2:

¹ Therefore, those in union with Christ Jesus have no condemnation. ² For the law of the spirit that gives life in union with Christ Jesus *has set you free (eleutheroō) from the law of sin and of death.*

Paul did not use the Greek noun *afesis* in verse 2 with reference to the freedom in the antitypical Jubilee. But he used the verb *eleutheroō* with a similar meaning.

The verb *eleutheroō* in verse 2 has the meaning “to cause someone to be set free or to be released” (Louw and Nida), and the corresponding noun *eleutheria* in verses 19 and 21 means “the state of being free.” The noun *afesis* that is used in Leviticus 25:10 for the freedom in the Jubilee means “the process of setting free or liberating.” (Louw and Nida) Thus, the use of *afesis* in Leviticus, focuses on *the process* of becoming free, which is proclaimed, while *eleutheria* in Romans focuses on *the result*, the state of being free. Thus, the two words point to exactly the same thing, the state of being free, but from two different angles.

To whom did Paul address his letters? To anointed followers of Jesus who would receive a heavenly resurrection and who would be priests and kings in the heavenly kingdom. We read in Romans 8:16, 17:

¹⁶ The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ If, then, we are children, we are also heirs—heirs indeed of God, but joint heirs with Christ—provided we suffer together so that we may also be glorified together.

These anointed followers of Jesus, who were spiritual Israelites, as the letter to the Romans stresses, were set free (*eleutheroō*), just as all Israelites were set free in the

Jubilee. From what were these anointed Christians set free? Romans 6:17, 23 say that the members of the congregation in Rome had been slaves to sin and death. And verse 2 in chapter 8 says that through Jesus Christ, they had been *set free* (*eleutheroō*) *from sin and death*.

The bull that was offered on the Day of Atonement, which took away the sins of the high priest and his family, was a prophetic type of how the ransom sacrifice was applied for the anointed followers of Jesus with the heavenly hope. But the goat that was offered for the people on the Day of Atonement was a prophetic type of all other descendants of Adam who would receive the benefits of Jesus' ransom sacrifice. Let us look at the antitype of these offerings by quoting Romans 8:18-21:

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of the present time do not amount to anything in comparison with the glory that is going to be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the creation is waiting with eager expectation for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility (*mataiotēs*), not by its own will, but through the one who subjected it, on the basis of hope ²¹ that the creation itself *will also be set free* (*eleutheroō*) *from enslavement* (*douleia*) to corruption (*fibhōra*) and *have the glorious freedom* (*eleutheria*) *of the children of God*.

I have shown that the Romans were anointed followers of Jesus who had been declared righteous and released from sin and death, and that this was the antitype of the bull offered on the Day of Atonement. However, the antitype of the goat offered for the sins of the people was all the sins of the descendants of Adam, who were bought by Jesus and would receive the benefit of his ransom sacrifice. These are mentioned in Romans 8:18-21, which is quoted above:

These are described with the Greek noun *ktisis* ("the creation"). They have not been anointed with God's spirit, and they are subjected to futility (*metaiotēs*). They are also slaves under sin and death, as the anointed followers of Jesus were. And Paul stresses another side of their slavery, namely "futility."

What does that mean? The noun *metaiotēs* means "vanity, folly, futility," (Mounce) and "pertaining to being useless on the basis of being futile and lacking in content." (Louw and Nida) The noun *fibhōra* means "corruption, decay, ruin, corruptibility, mortality," (Mounce) and "to rot or decay, in reference to organic matter." (Louw and Nida)

When Adam and Eve sinned, their perfect nature was destroyed, and they became imperfect sinners, something their children inherited. It could be said that they were "subjected to futility" because they, on the basis of the laws of heredity, became imperfect sinners, and they would in time die. However, Paul says that "they were subjected to futility...*on the basis of hope*."

Jehovah God could have killed Adam and Eve and created two new humans. In that case, you and I would not have been born because we are descendants of Adam and Eve. Instead of killing Adam and Eve, God let their descendants "be subjected to futility," and this was done "on the basis of hope." God let the descendants of Adam and Eve be born as imperfect sinners into a world with suffering and death to

give each of them the opportunity to become perfect in the future, as Adam and Eve originally were, and give them the opportunity to live forever.

The first expression of this hope is Genesis 3:15:

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He will crush your head, and you will strike him in the heel.”

The hope was connected with the action of the seed of the woman who should crush the head of the serpent. What the scripture really meant is in The Christian Greek Scriptures said to be *a sacred secret*. Moses and the prophets were inspired by God to write different things that illuminated different sides of the first prophecy — they lay down “threads” that were not immediately understood. And the meaning of the prophecy was still a secret.

Peter speaks of the salvation of those to whom he addressed his first letter, and we read in 1 Peter 1:10-12:

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the undeserved kindness meant for you made a diligent inquiry (*ekzētēō*) and a careful search. ¹¹ *They kept on investigating what particular time (kairos) or what season the spirit within them was indicating concerning Christ as it testified beforehand about the sufferings meant for Christ and about the glory that would follow.* ¹² It was revealed to them that they were ministering, not to themselves, but to you, regarding what has now been announced to you by those who declared the good news to you with holy spirit sent from heaven. Into *these very things, angels are desiring to peer.*

The prophets knew that the first prophecy indicated hope for the future. And they made diligent inquiries to understand the purpose of God. Even the angels desired to understand God’s purpose.⁴⁷

There is one important Greek word in the quotation, namely *kairos* (“specific time, appointed time”)

The prophets understood that the suffering of Christ and the glory that would follow would occur at an appointed time (kairos).

According to Hebrews 10:1 “the Law has a shadow of the good things to come.” The part of the Law that particularly stresses *the hope* for the creation that “was subjected to futility” (Romans 8:20) is the Jubilee with liberty of all inhabitants of the land.

I will now return to the words of Paul and show that Romans 8:20, 21 presents the antitypical Jubilee:

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of the present time do not amount to anything in comparison with the glory that is going to be revealed in us.¹⁹ For the creation is waiting with eager expectation for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility (*mataiotēs*), not by its own will, but through the one who subjected it,

47. An analysis of God’s sacred secret and its relation to the first prophecy is found in the article, “The appointed times of the great Jubilee — The sacred secret of God’s administration.” <https://mybelovedreligion.no/2026/07/13/21839/>

on the basis of hope ²¹ that the creation itself *will also be set free from enslavement* (*douleia*) *to corruption* (*ftbora*) and *have the glorious freedom* (*eleutheria*) *of the children of God.*

We have seen that the children of God with the heavenly hope were slaves of sin and death, from which they were set free as an antitype of the slaves that were set free in the Jubilee. However, “the creation,” which refers to all Adam’s descendants who were bought by Jesus, will experience another freedom. *They will “be set free from enslavement to corruption.”*

This means that there will come a time when their fleshly bodies, which at present are imperfect and decaying and lead to death, will become perfect like the fleshly bodies of Adam and Eve before they sinned. For “the creation,” the descendants of Adam, this is the antitype of all the inhabitants in Israel who received their freedom in the Jubilee.

Table 9.1 The antitypes of the Jubilee according to Romans

The offering of the bull for the sins of the high priest and his family.	The ransom sacrifice applied for the 144,000 anointed ones who will be kings and priests.
The offering of the goat for the sins of the people.	The ransom sacrifice applied for all Adam’s descendants.
All slaves received their freedom in the Jubilee.	“(Christ Jesus) has set you free from the law of sin and of death.” (Romans 8:2) The 144,000 anointed followers of Jesus are new creations and will receive a heavenly resurrection.
All inhabitants received their freedom in the Jubilee.	“The creation itself will also be set free from enslavement to corruption” (Romans 8:21) The bodies of Adam’s descendants will become perfect and free from sin during the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ, the antitypical Jubilee.

The prophetic antitypes to the different events in the Jubilee, that have been discussed in this section and in Table 9:1, corresponds to the words of Paul in Colossians 2:16, 17 that the festivals and sabbaths in Israel were prophetic types, and the antitypes are connected with Jesus Christ.

GATHERING ALL THINGS TOGETHER AGAIN IN THE CHRIST

EPHESIANS 1:10

I am discussing clues showing that the Jubilee in Israel is a prophetic type of greater things to come in connection with Jesus Christ, and I quote Ephesians 1:7-10

⁷ By means of him we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the forgiveness of [our] trespasses, according to the riches of his undeserved kindness. ⁸ This he caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and good sense ⁹ in that he made known to

us the sacred secret of his will. It is according to his good pleasure that he himself purposed ¹⁰ for an administration (*oikonomia*) at the full limit (*pleroma*) of the appointed times (*kairos*), namely **to gather all things together** (*anakefalaioō*) **again** in the Christ, **the things in the heavens and the things on the earth**.

There are some similarities between this text and Romans 8:18-21 that are discussed in the previous section.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AN ACCURATE TRANSLATION

The full understanding of the quoted text hinges on the understanding of one single word. The NWT84 includes the adverb “**again**” in the expression “to gather all things together **again**.” But NWT13 and many other translations do not include this adverb.

The reason why this adverb is so important is that when it is included, the gathering of all things refers to a situation where there previously was unity between heaven and earth. If the adverb is deleted, there is no relationship between the words of Paul and the past.

I will show in what follows that there are strong linguistic reasons for the use of the adverb “**again**.”

As mentioned, many translations omit the adverb “**again**”. But the Latin Vulgate (above), the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible (middle), and Jubilee Bible 2000 (below) have a rendering like NWT84:

¹⁰ in dispensationem plenitudinis temporum **instaurare** (“**restore**”) omnia in Christo quae in caelis et quae in terra sunt in ipso

¹⁰ In the dispensation of the fulness of times, to **re-establish** all things in Christ, that are in heaven and on earth, in him.

¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fulfillment of the times he might **restore** all things by the Christ, both those which are in heaven and those which are on earth,

The question is what the real meaning of the verb *anakefalaioō* is. Applying the principles of lexical semantics, we find that the use of “**again**” has a solid basis. Prepositions are often added as prefixes to Greek nouns and verbs to strengthen the meaning or stress a particular side of the meaning. The preposition *ana*, which is the prefix of *anakefalaioō*, often has a distributive or repetitive meaning, as in:

anakainizō (“renew”).

anakainoō (renew, change”).

anakainōsis (“renewal”).

anakamptō (“return”).

ananeoō (“renew”).

ananefō (“to regain senses”).

anastauroō (“fasten to a pole again”)

This repetitive meaning of *anakefalaioō* has long been known by scholars. John Wesley founded the Methodist movement. In 1765, he published his verse-by-verse comments on the Old Testament and the New Testament. I quote from Wesley’s notes on Ephesians 1:10:

That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times - In this last administration of God’s fullest grace, which took place when the time appointed was fully come. **He might gather together into one in Christ - Might recapitulate, re - unite, and place in order again under Christ, their common Head.** All things which are in heaven, and on earth - All angels and men, whether living or dead, in the Lord.

Following are three recent quotations. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. III, page 682, has the following comments on the verb *anakefalaioō*:

Iren. [Irenaeus, c. 130 — c. 200 CE, Church father] used *anakefalaioō* in the sense of gathering together, summation. **Since every summation implies a kind of repetition, the word may sometimes have the direct sense of “to repeat.” The ana- thus assumes an iterative sense which it does not have elsewhere...** Apsines [a Greek philosopher in the 3rd century CE] used *anakefalaioō* with reference to the repetition of an event. The *recapitulare* in Iren. [Irenaeus] is also to be understood in the first instance as repetition, though it is to be noted that it sums up the original and is thus qualitative...In this summation, however, the prominent element may be, not that of repetition, but that of the affirmation and confirmation implied in repetition.

We note the comment on the preposition *ana* (“up, upon, on”), which often is used in an iterative sense (= expressing repetition of a verbal action). The use of this preposition with an iterative meaning at the beginning of the verb *anakefalaioō* could signal the repetitive meaning of doing again, the argument goes.

One example is Romans 13:9, where the commandments have been expressed before, and now they are summed up again (*anakefalaioō*) in the saying, “You must love your neighbor as yourself.” The commentator A.S. Wood in *Ephesians* in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (1978) Vol. 11, page 26, also stresses the repetitive nature of the verb:

The verb *anakefalaioō* (“to bring together”) **means to sum up together again** (Rom 13:9). It is derived not from *kefalē* (“a head”) but from *kephalaion* (a summary, or sum total). When a column of figures was added up, the total was placed at the top.

Several commentators of Ephesians also argue in favor of the repetitive meaning of 1:10. *Galatians and Ephesians* in Meyer’s *Commentary on the New Testament* (1883, 1979), page 322, says in comments on Ephesians 1:10:

Consequently *anakefalaioō*, *summatim recolligere*, “recapitulate summarily,” which is said in Rom xiii 9 of that which has been previously expressed *singulatim*, “individually,” in separate parts, but now is again gathered up in one main point, so that at Rom. *le en touto to logo* denotes that main point in which the gathering up is contained. And **here this main point of gathering up again, unifying all the parts**, lies in Christ.

The four quotations above show that the use of the adverbial “*again*” in NWT84 has a solid linguistic basis. I do not know why the translators of NWT13 deleted this important word. However, a characteristic of this translation is that the subtleties and nuances of the original text are often overlooked and poorly rendered in English.

The words of Paul in Ephesians 1:10, “to gather all things together *again* in the Christ” must refer to the situation before Satan’s rebellion. There was peace in heaven because all spirit creatures served Jehovah. And it was peace in the garden of Eden because the two humans obeyed the laws of God.

This situation will again be established through the Christ — and this is the same as the restoration of all things mentioned by the Hebrew prophets.

THE ANTITYPES OF THE JUBILEE ACCORDING TO EPHESIANS

I will now look at the details in the words of Paul, and I quote Ephesians 1:7-10

⁷By means of him we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the forgiveness of [our] trespasses, according to the riches of his undeserved kindness. ⁸This he caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and good sense ⁹in that *he made known to us the sacred secret of his will*. It is according to his good pleasure that he himself purposed ¹⁰for an administration (*oikonomia*) at the full limit (*pleroma*) of the appointed times (*kairos*), namely *to gather all things together* (*anakefalaioō*) *again* in the Christ, *the things in the heavens and the things on the earth*.

I have now established that the adverb “*again*” has its rightful place in verse 10, and therefore, we can understand the words of Paul. Before Adam and Eve sinned, there was unity between Jehovah and the angels in heaven and the two humans on the earth. The rebellion by Satan and the two humans destroyed this unity, but Paul says that this unity will *again* be established “in the Christ.”

This prophecy is related to the first prophecy, in Genesis 3:15, about the seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent. This prophecy had been *a sacred secret* (*mysterion*) for 4,000 years. First Peter 1: 11 spoke about the prophets that “they were inquiring about which and what kind of appointed time (*kairos*) the spirit in them was prophesying about regarding Christ.” (my translation) The prophets did not understand the sacred secret about the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15, and neither did the angels, according to Peter.

However, Ephesians 1:9 in the quotation above says that “he made known to us *the sacred secret* of his will.” And one side of the sacred secret was God’s will “to gather all things together (*anakefalaioō*) *again* in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth.” This means that the seed of the woman in the first prophecy is Jesus Christ.

The gathering together of all things in heaven and earth means unity, but the words of Paul in Ephesians 1:10 does not give any details about this gathering and this unity. But in Colossians 1:20 he uses some words that both connect the unity

with the first prophecy in Genesis 3:15 and with the Jubilee. I quote Colossians 1:20-22:

²⁰ and through him to *reconcile again* (*apokatalassō*) to himself all [other] things by making peace through the blood [he shed] on the torture stake, no matter whether they are the things upon the earth or the things in the heavens. ²¹ Indeed, YOU who were once alienated and enemies because YOUR minds were on the works that were wicked, ²² he now has *again reconciled* (*apokatalassō*) by means of that one's fleshly body through [his] death, in order to present YOU holy and unblemished and open to no accusation before him.

The basic idea in the quoted verses is reconciliation, expressed by the Greek words *katalassō* and *apokatalassō*. The meaning of *katalassō* in Classical Greek was “the restoration of the original understanding between people after hostility or displeasure.” In The Christian Greek Scriptures, the meaning of *apokatalassō* is “to reestablish proper friendly interpersonal relations after these have been disrupted or broken. (Louw and Nida).

This definition indicates that there were friendly relations between two parties. These friendly relations were broken, but now these friendly relations have been reestablished. This definition justifies the use of the adverb *again* in the rendering “*reconcile again*” in Colossians 1:20.

The English word “reconcile” can be defined in different ways, and to stress that reconciliation is the restoration of something broken — Adam and Eve had a peaceful, harmonious relationship with Jehovah before they sinned — NWT84 uses the adverb *again* in Colossians 1:20. This corresponds with the expression “to gather all things together *again*” in Ephesians 1:10.

According to Romans 8:18-21, that was discussed in the last section, “the sons of God” who will reign with Jesus in the heavens, and “the creation,” Adam’s descendants, who will live on the earth when it becomes a paradise, will receive the glorious freedom of the children of God. The same two groups are mentioned in Colossians 1:20. Paul says that “the things in heaven” will be reconciled with God. The angels need no reconciliation, and therefore, “the things in heaven” must refer to the 144,000 anointed followers of Jesus who will reign with him in heaven. And “the things upon the earth” must refer to those who look forward to living forever on the earth. These two groups will be gathered together *again* in the Christ,” according to Ephesians 1:10.

It is interesting that both the reconciliation *again* of “the things upon the earth or the things in the heavens” (Colossians 1:20) and “to gather all things together *again* in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth.” (Ephesians 1:10) are aspects of the sacred secret, and therefore, are the fulfillment of the first prophecy in Genesis 3:15. I quote Colossians 1:26 (above) and Ephesians 1:8, 9 (below):

²⁶ *the sacred secret* (*mysterion*) that was hidden from the past systems of things and from the past generations. But now it has been made manifest to his holy ones,

⁸This he caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and good sense, ⁹in that he made known to us *the sacred secret* (*mysterion*) of his will. It is according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself.

We have seen how the prophecies about the gathering together of those with a heavenly hope and those with an earthly hope as one group in Christ and that God reconciles both groups with himself is connected with the first prophecy in Genesis 3:15 because both prophecies are a part of *the sacred secret*.

I will now connect these prophecies with the freedom for all slaves and the liberty for all people in the Jubilee. According to Romans 8:2, the sons of God with the heavenly hope were set free from sin and death, of which they had been slaves. And the creation with the earthly hope will in the future “be set free from the enslavement to corruption” — their fleshly bodies will become perfect and without decay.

The freedom of both groups is based on the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And this sacrifice is an antitype of the offerings that occurred on the Day of Atonement in the Jubilee. The offering of the bull for the sins of the high priest and his family was a prophetic type of the application of Jesus’ sacrifice for his 144,000 anointed followers with the heavenly hope. And the offering of the goat for the sins of the people was a prophetic type of the application of Jesus’ sacrifice for “the creation,” all Adam’s descendants.

I will now look at the liberty for all the people in the Jubilee as a prophetic type, and I apply this to Colossians chapter 1 and Ephesians chapter 1.

The important point in Colossians chapter 1 is the word “reconciliation” (*apokatalassis*). I have already presented the definition of the word as “to reestablish proper friendly interpersonal relations after these have been disrupted or broken.” We can see what this implies in Colossians 1:20-22, which I quote once more:

²⁰and through him to *reconcile again* (*apokatalassō*) to himself all [other] things by making peace through the blood [he shed] on the torture stake, no matter whether they are the things upon the earth or the things in the heavens. ²¹Indeed, YOU who were once alienated and enemies because YOUR minds were on the works that were wicked, ²²he now has *again reconciled* by means of that one’s fleshly body through [his] death, in order to present YOU holy and unblemished and open to no accusation before him.

All Adam’s descendants have inherited sin, and their works are wicked. Because of this, they are enemies of God. This was also the case with the Colossians. But Paul says that because of the blood of Jesus that was shed on the torture stake, the Colossians were reconciled with God. This means that they were set free from sin and death, as the Romans with a heavenly hope also were, according to Romans 8:2. The Colossians were declared righteous, which was necessary to receive a heavenly resurrection, which was the hope of the Colossians, according to 1:5.

The application of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus to the Colossians, which caused reconciliation with God, made them free from the slavery under sin and death, and this is the antitype of the liberty of slaves during the Jubilee.

However, the ransom sacrifice of Jesus as the means of liberty should not only be applied to those with a heavenly hope but also “to the things upon the earth,” those with an earthly hope. We get more information about this group in Ephesians.

Just as the Colossians, the Ephesians also had a heavenly hope. I quote Ephesians 1:3, 7:

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in union with Christ...

⁷ By means of him we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the forgiveness of [our] trespasses, according to the riches of his undeserved kindness.

Verse 3 refers to the heavenly hope of the Ephesians, and verse 7 refers to forgiveness of their trespasses because of the ransom sacrifice. Because of this they were set free from sin and death, just as the Romans and the Colossians, and it means liberty for them as an antitype of the slaves that received their freedom in the Jubilee.

In addition, the liberty of those with the heavenly hope, Ephesians 7-10 gives some information that is important for those with the earthly hope.

⁷ By means of him we have the release by ransom through the blood of that one, yes, the forgiveness of [our] trespasses, according to the riches of his undeserved kindness. ⁸This he caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and good sense ⁹in that he made known to us *the sacred secret* of his will. It is according to his good pleasure that he himself purposed ¹⁰for an administration (*oikonomia*) at the full limit (*pleroma*) of the appointed times (*kairos*), *namely to gather all things together* (*anakefalaioō*) *again* in the Christ, *the things in the heavens and the things on the earth*.

The word “administration” (*oikonomia*) does not refer to something concrete like a government or a kingdom. But it refers to a “stewardship,” an arrangement. This arrangement is future; it comes at the full limit of the appointed times. The freedom from sin and death through the ransom sacrifice was something the followers of Jesus had experienced before Paul wrote his letters to them. They were declared righteous as sons of God.

But the sacred secret regarding the fulfillment of the first prophecy in Genesis 3:15, that is mentioned in verse 9, points to a future administration, “to gather all things together (*anakefalaioō*) *again* in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth.” This will particularly affect “the things on the earth,” people who will have the possibility of living forever on the earth. The liberty of these is described in Romans 8:21:

²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility (*mataiotēs*), not by its own will but through him that subjected it, on the basis of hope ²¹that *the creation itself will also be set free from enslavement* (*douleia*) *to corruption and have the glorious freedom* (*eleutheria*) *of the children of God*.

Those who held a heavenly hope were liberated from sin and death by being declared righteous on the basis of the ransom sacrifice. This means that sin was not reckoned against them, and they would not die as an atonement for their sin. Yet they would die, because they sacrificed their lives to attain a heavenly resurrection as

spirit beings. The freedom they experienced as God’s children—a counterpart to the freedom slaves received during the Jubilee year—did not extend to their fleshly bodies. These bodies were born imperfect, and they literally remained imperfect. However, their justification meant that God viewed them as new creations and did not hold them accountable for the sin associated with their literal bodies.

The words Paul wrote to the Romans, quoted above, show that the situation of “creation” is entirely different. The freedom that “creation”—that is, all of Adam’s descendants—will receive is a prophetic antitype to the full freedom granted to all the inhabitants of Israel during the Jubilee year. And unlike those with a heavenly hope—whose bodies remained imperfect and subject to “corruption,” even though they had been declared righteous—*the antitypical freedom of “creation” is linked to their fleshly bodies.*

We can illustrate the situation using Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 15:51–54.

⁵⁰ However, this I say, brothers, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit God’s kingdom*, neither does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Look! I tell YOU *a sacred secret*: We shall not all fall asleep [in death], but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, during the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised up incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ *For this which is corruptible must put on incorruption, and this which is mortal must put on immortality.* ⁵⁴ But when [this which is corruptible puts on incorruption and] this which is mortal puts on immortality, then the saying will take place that is written: “Death+ is swallowed up forever.”

What Paul writes is part of the sacred secret that traces back to the first prophecy in Genesis 3:15. Here, Paul speaks of the heavenly resurrection and discusses the bodies that the resurrected ones will receive. He shows that the bodies of the group of 144,000 who will experience a heavenly resurrection are perishable (they gradually decay). However, the spiritual body they will receive in the resurrection is imperishable and immortal.

Since perishability is associated with our fleshly body, it is—in contrast to those who hold the heavenly hope—our fleshly body that “will be set free from enslavement to corruption.” This implies that Adam’s descendants must reach a state where their bodies are liberated from imperfection and become like the perfect body Adam possessed before he sinned. This will happen during the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ and serves as the prophetic antitype to the full freedom granted to all people during the Jubilee year in Israel.

EXCURSUS

THE DIFFERENCE REGARDING “THE GLORIOUS FREEDOM OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD” FOR THOSE

WITH THE HEAVENLY HOPE AND THOSE WITH THE EARTHLY HOPE

THE DIFFERENCE LIES IN WHAT HAPPENS TO THE FLESHLY BODIES OF THE TWO GROUPS

Regarding those with a heavenly hope, I quote John 3:3-5 (above) and Romans 3:24, 25 (below):

³ In answer Jesus said to him: “Most truly I say to you, *Unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” ⁴ Nic·o·de’mus said to him: “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter into the womb of his mother a second time and be born, can he?” ⁵ Jesus answered: “Most truly I say to you, Unless anyone is born from water and spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

²³ For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and it is as a free gift that they are being *declared righteous* by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom [paid] by Christ Jesus.

To become a spiritual child of Jehovah, the following must occur:

- 1) The individual asks for Jesus’ ransom sacrifice to be applied for his or her benefit.
- 2) Based on the ransom sacrifice, Jehovah declares him or her righteous and free from sin.
- 3) He or she is baptized with holy spirit, which represents a new birth, and he or she is now a new creature, a spiritual child of Jehovah.

What happens to his or her fleshly body? Nothing happens, as we see in Romans 8:10 (above) and 1 Corinthians 15:53, 45, 48 (below):

¹⁰ But if Christ is in union with YOU, *the body indeed is dead on account of sin*, but the spirit is life on account of righteousness.

⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. *It is sown in corruption*, it is raised up in incorruption...⁴⁵ It is even so written: “The first man Adam became a living soul.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit...⁴⁸ As the one made of dust [is], so those made of dust [are] also; and as the heavenly one [is], so those who are heavenly [are] also.

What has happened is that Jehovah has taken legal action and declared this person sinless, because all sins have been forgiven. From God’s perspective, the individual is now a new creation, as we read in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

¹⁷ Consequently if anyone is in union with Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away, look! new things have come into existence.

The fact that the individual has been declared righteous and is a new creation is literally true, because Jehovah has declared it so. However, there is an important duality here, which we see by comparing Romans 7:19, 20 (above) and 8:1, 2, 12, 13 (below):

¹⁹For the good that I wish I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice. ²⁰If, now, what I do not wish is what I do, *the one working it out is no longer I*, but the sin dwelling in me.

¹ *Therefore those in union with Christ Jesus have no condemnation.* ²For the law of that spirit which gives life in union with Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death...

¹²So, then, brothers, we are under obligation, not to the flesh to live (*ζαω*) in accord with the flesh; ¹³*for if YOU live (ζαω) in accord with the flesh YOU are sure to die*; but if YOU put the practices of the body to death by the spirit, YOU will live.

In Romans chapter 7, Paul discusses inherited sin. When he states that when he sins, “the one working it out is no longer *I*,” this is the genuine reality. The pronoun “*I*” refers to Paul as a new creation—justified and free from sin. Since his body is imperfect and bears inherited sin—committing lesser sins as a result of that inheritance—it is not Paul himself who is acting, for he is a new creation without sin.

However, the contrast emerges in chapter 8. The chapter begins by stating that for “those in union with Christ Jesus have no condemnation.” They cannot be condemned, because they are new creations and are free from sin. Yet, they still bear a responsibility. I quote Romans 8:13:

¹³ if you live (*ζαω*) in accord with the flesh, you are sure to die.

The noun *sarx* literally means “flesh” and represents inclinations contrary to God’s law—the sense in which Paul uses the word in Romans chapter 7.

The verb *ζαω* means “to live, to carry out the functions of life”. (Mounce). It is in the Greek present active tense, implying an ongoing, continuous action—in other words: “If you make a practice of living in accord with the sinful inclinations you have inherited, you will certainly die.”

In Romans 7:18, Paul highlights a crucial distinction between the sins a new creation’s body might commit and the sins that cause a new creation to fall from their standing as justified humans.”

²⁰ If, now, what *I do not wish (thelo)* is what I do, *the one working it out is no longer I*, but the sin dwelling in me.

The verb *thelo* means “to carry out one’s will.” There are sins that Paul *does not want* to commit but does so because of his inherited sin—a situation where he can rightly say, “It is no longer *I* who am doing it.”

However, what he mentions in Romans 8:13 is something entirely different. The present tense of the verb *ζαω* indicates that this involves the practice of sin—sins that the person continues to commit *and wants to commit*. In this case, the individual cannot claim—as Paul could—*that they do not wish (thelo)* to do what is wrong. When a person continues to break God’s laws, it is something he or she *wants (thelo) to do*. In this situation, a person may lose his or her position as an anointed child of Jehovah.

To understand the difference between “God’s children”—who are justified from sin and are new creations—and “the creation,” we can ask why God’s children die and why “the creation” dies. The answer is that “the creation”—comprising of all of Adam’s descendants except those who have sinned against the holy spirit—dies because of inherited sin, in order to atone for that sin. But “God’s children,” who are new creations, do not die to atone for the inherited sin of their bodies; for they have no sins to atone for. Instead, they die because, like Jesus, they sacrifice their perishable bodies in order to attain a heavenly resurrection.

I now come to a matter of great importance for billions of Adam’s descendants, and I quote Romans 8:20, 21 again:

²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility (*mataiotēs*), not by its own will, but through the one who subjected it, on the basis of hope ²¹ that the creation itself *will also be set free* (*eleutheroō*) *from enslavement* (*douleia*) to corruption (*phthora*) and *have the glorious freedom* (*eleutheria*) *of the children of God*.

In the verses cited, “the creation” refers to all humans born on earth, with the exception of the group of 144,000 who hold a heavenly hope, and those who are permeated by wickedness and have sinned against the holy spirit.

The statement that “the creation” “will be set free (*eleutheroō*) from the enslavement to corruption” has profound implications for the Christian hope and for the understanding of God’s purpose. 1 Corinthians 15:53 shows that the concept of “corruption” is linked to our physical bodies. The inheritance of Adam’s descendants meant that they were “subjected to futility,” as Romans 8:20 states. This means inheriting sin and experiencing the physical decay of their bodies until death. This is the meaning of “corruption.”

However, Romans 8:21 states that in the future, “creation... will be set free from the enslavement to corruption.” This can mean only one thing: that *the bodies* of all those included in the group referred to as “the creation” will become perfect, just as Adam’s body was before he sinned.

When and how will this happen? Verse Romans 8:21 indicates that being liberated from the enslavement to corruption is synonymous with attaining the glorious freedom of the children of God. Here, we see the prophetic antitype to the freedom granted to all inhabitants of the land during the Jubilee.

As I will demonstrate below, Jesus’ thousand-year reign is the antitype to the Jewish Jubilee, and this thousand-year period is also identical with the Day of Judgment. Jesus’ words in Matthew 11:24—that it will be more bearable for the inhabitants of Sodom than for the inhabitants of Capernaum on Judgment Day—show that liberation from corruption will not take place during the earthly resurrection. People will be resurrected with the same personality and with the same corruptible body they had when they died.

We can understand what this implies by reading Revelation 20:12 and 5:

¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. But another scroll was opened; it is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds.

⁵ (The rest of the dead did not come to life (*ḡaō*) until the thousand years were ended.)

We note that those standing before the throne to be judged are not referred to as “the resurrected ones” or “the living ones,” but rather as “the dead.” As I have shown above, the body a person receives in the resurrection will be just as imperfect and perishable as the body he or she had prior to the resurrection. Therefore, it is fitting to call them “the dead” after their resurrection.

The verb in verse 5 is *ḡaō*, and it does not refer to the resurrection itself, but signifies “to live” or “to perform the functions of life.” What happens when the thousand years have ended is that everyone “has come to life”—meaning they no longer possess inherited sin or perishable bodies. All humans now stand on the same level as Adam before he sinned; they are perfect humans, free from sin.

Here we see the fulfillment of God’s plan. All things are now restored, and everyone living will be given the same opportunity as Adam: as perfect humans free from inherited sin, to decide whether to serve Jehovah or follow Satan.

And here we clearly see the meaning of Paul’s words in Romans 8:22 regarding the creation itself also being set free from enslavement to corruption and obtaining the “glorious freedom of the children of God.” We have seen that those who are resurrected are imperfect and their bodies are perishable. We have also seen that when the thousand years end, everyone will “live” and their bodies will no longer be perishable. This implies that the statement about the creation being set free from corruption means that, during the thousand-year period, all human bodies will gradually progress toward perfection; by the time the thousand years end, they are no longer enslaved to corruption.

THE CONCLUSION IS:

The followers of Jesus with the heavenly hope will have the glorious freedom of the children of God *apart from their bodies*—through “the release from our bodies by ransom” (Romans 8:23) they will sacrifice their corruptible bodies to gain a heavenly resurrection.

Adam’s descendants, “the creation,” will have the glorious freedom of the sons of God *in their bodies*—by being “set free from enslavement to corruption” (Romans 8:21) During the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ, their bodies will gradually be brought to perfection. By the end of the thousand years, everyone will possess perfect bodies, just as Adam did before he sinned.

Table 9.2 Different antitypes of the Jubilee in Ephesians and Colossians

All slaves received their freedom in the Jubilee.	<i>“to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens”</i> (Ephesians 1:10). <i>“to reconcile again to himself... the things in the heavens.”</i> (Colossians 1:20) All the 144,000 anointed followers are reconciled with God and are gathered together with a heavenly resurrection in view.
All the inhabitants of the land received their freedom in the Jubilee.	<i>“to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things on the earth”</i> (Ephesians 1:10). <i>to reconcile again to himself... the things upon the earth.”</i> (Colossians 1:20) All Adam’s descendants, except those with the heavenly hope and those who have sinned against the holy spirit, will be reconciled with God during the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. As perfect humans, they now have the opportunity to serve God and receive everlasting life.

THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

ACTS 3:19-21

The jubilee was a sabbath year. We have seen that slaves were liberated, and all the people received their freedom in the Jubilee year. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, each family received a piece of land they owned. Due to poverty, some families had to sell their land. But in the Jubilee, they received the ownership of the land they had sold without any compensation.

This means that the Jubilee was a time of restoration of all things in Israel, including slavery and debt. And the land was not cultivated and experienced a sabbath of complete rest.

The prophetic antitype of this restoration in Israel in the Jubilee is the worldwide restoration of all things that was discussed by Peter. He healed a lame man, and the people gathered around Peter and John. Peter spoke to the crowd and said, according to Acts 3:19-21 The NWT84 (above) and my translation (below):

¹⁹ “Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, so that *seasons* (*kairos*) of *refreshing* (*anapsyxis*) may come from Jehovah himself ²⁰ and he may send the Christ *appointed* for you, Jesus. ²¹ Heaven must hold this one within itself until *the times* (*khronos*) of *restoration* (*apokatastasis*) of *all things* (*pas*) of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets *of old*.

¹⁹ “Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, that *the appointed times* (*kairos*) for *the refreshing rest* (*anapsyxis*) may come from Jehovah himself. ²⁰ And he may send the *one chosen beforehand* for you, Christ Jesus. ²¹ Heaven must take hold of this one until *the (appointed) times* (*khronos*) for the *restoration* (*apokatastasis*) of *all things* (*pas*) of which God spoke through the mouth of the holy prophets *through the ages*.

The object in both cases is “*all things*,” expressed by the Greek pronoun “*pas*.” The expression “*all things*” is modified by the noun “*restoration*” in Acts 3:21 and by the verb phrase “to gather together again” in Ephesians 1:10 that I discussed above.

There is also a time element in both cases. The Greek word *kairos* means “appointed time,” often referring to consecutive time periods that can be counted. The word *khronos* refers to time generally. But in some contexts, it can also refer to appointed times. In Acts 3:21, *khronos* is in the plural, and it parallels *kairos* in verse 19. Therefore, the word *khronos* in this verse has the meaning “appointed times,” as is the case in verse 19.

The conclusion of the comparison between Acts 3:19-21 and Ephesians 1:10 is that both passages refer to the restoration of the paradise in Eden with perfect humans before Adam and Eve sinned. Both events show appointed times marking the beginning of this restoration.

THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ACTS 3:19-21 AND EPHESIANS 1:10

As we have seen in the discussion above, the concept of “restoration” can be expressed with different words. In addition, the last example I discussed and the one I will discuss also have several similar words. I will now compare Acts 3:19-21 with Ephesians 3:10:

¹⁹ “Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get YOUR sins blotted out, that seasons [appointed times] (*kairos*, plural) of refreshing may come from the person of Jehovah ²⁰ and that he may send forth the Christ appointed for YOU, Jesus, ²¹ whom heaven, indeed, must hold within itself until the (appointed) times (*khronos*) of *restoration* (*apokatastasis*) of *all things* (*pas*) of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old time.

¹⁰ for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times (*kairos*, plural), namely, to *gather all things* (*pas*) *together again* (*anakefalaioo*) in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth. [Yes,] in him.

Parallel words have the same color. The object in both cases is *all things*, expressed by the pronoun *pas* (“all, every”). The expression *all things* is modified by the noun “*restoration*” in Acts 3:21 and by the verb phrase “*gather together again*” in Ephesians 1:10.

There is also a time element in both cases. The Greek word *kairos* means “appointed time,” often referring to time periods that follow one another and can be counted. The word *khronos* refers to time generally. But in some contexts, it can also refer to appointed times. In Acts 3:21, *khronos* is in the plural, and it parallels *kairos* in verse 19. Therefore, the word *khronos* in this verse has the meaning “appointed times,” as is the case in verse 19.

The conclusion of the comparison between Acts 3:19-21 and Ephesians 1:10 is that both refer to the restoration of paradise in Eden with perfect humans before

Adam and Eve sinned. Both events show that there are appointed times that mark the beginning of this restoration. These appointed times will be analyzed later. But what follows is an analysis of the principal words in Acts 3:19-21.

Table 9.3 A comparison of Acts 3:19-21 and Ephesians 1:10

Acts 3:19-21	Ephesians 1:10
<i>all things</i>	<i>all things</i>
<i>restoration</i>	<i>gather together again</i>
<i>appointed times, (appointed) times</i>	<i>appointed times</i>

THE MEANING AND APPLICATION OF APOKATASTASIS

The keyword *apokatastasis* has the meaning, “a restitution or restoration of a thing to its former state; hence, the renovation of a new and better era.” (Mounce)

A verb describes an action or a state, and a noun describes the result of the action of the verb, or, in some cases, it describes the action itself. The verb *apokathistēmi* describes the action of restoring, and the corresponding noun *apokatastasis* describes the result of this action, namely, restoration.

The noun occurs only once, in Acts 3:21, whereas the verb occurs 8 times in The Christian Greek Scriptures and 30 times in the Septuagint. Studying the verb *apokathistēmi* will help us understand how biblical writers treated the idea of the restoration of all things. I quote one example from the Christian Greek Scriptures and four examples from the Hebrew Scriptures.

Acts 1:6:

⁶ When, now, they had assembled, they went asking him: “Lord, are you *restoring* (*apokathistēmi*) *the kingdom to Israel* at this time?”

Hosea 11:11

¹¹ And they shall be amazed like a bird from Egypt and like a dove from the land of the Assyrians, and *I will restore* (*apokathistēmi*) *them to their homes*, says the Lord.

Isaiah 23:17

¹⁷ And it shall be that after seventy years God will pay a visit to Tyre, *and she will be restored* (*apokathistēmi*) *again to her ancient condition* and will be a market center for all the kingdoms of the world.

Jeremiah 23:8

⁸ but “The Lord lives who gathered all the offspring of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries, there where he had driven them, and *restored* (*apokathistēmi*) *them to their land*.”

Ezekiel 16:55

And your sister Sodoma and her daughters shall be restored (*apokathistēmi*), *just as they were from the beginning, and Samaria and her daughters shall be restored* (*apokathistēmi*), *just as they were from the beginning,*

The verb *apokathistēmi* and the noun *apotatasis* both mean restoring something to its original state. This is particularly evident in the three instances where the verb is used in Ezekiel 16:55 in the clauses “just as they were from the beginning.”

When we consider God’s purpose in creating the earth and the humans, we observe the following scenario: God created the paradise in Eden and placed two perfect human beings within it. Adam had his unborn progeny in his loins, and God’s purpose was that his perfect descendants should fill the earth and expand the paradise to the whole earth.

This was temporarily thwarted by Satan’s rebellion. But the purpose of God is that the situation in the paradise in Eden will be restored “as it were from the beginning” — to borrow the words of Ezekiel. Peter’s words in Acts 3:19-21 mean that in the future, the whole earth will be a paradise filled with billions of perfect descendants of Adam. This means that the situation will be exactly what it would have been if the first humans had not sinned and violated God’s law: Billions of Adam’s descendants will live forever in the earthly paradise.

THE MEANING AND APPLICATION OF ANAPSYKSIS

The Greek word *anapsyxis* in Acts 3:20 is a noun, and the NWT84 translates it as “refreshing” in the expression “seasons of refreshing.” This rendering makes little sense, because we do not know what “refreshing” refers to. The Norwegian NV08 and NV18 translations use the rendering “tider med ny styrke” (“times of renewed strength”) This rendering also makes little sense, for we do not know how, in which situation, and to whom renewed strength refers.

Similarly, the words “the restoration of all things” in verse 21 would make little sense if they stood alone; after all, what would “all things” refer to? However, these words are meaningful because they are specified as “the restoration of all things of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets through the ages.” We must therefore look for a meaning of *anapsyxis* that clarifies the word, so that we know to what it refers.

THE LEXICAL MEANING OF ANAPSYKSIS

That the rendering “refreshing” in Acts 3:20 lacks meaning suggests that this rendering for the Greek word *anapsyxis* does not express the real meaning of the word in this context, and I refer to several definitions of the word in various lexicons:

a refreshing coolness after heat; met. *refreshing*, recreation, *rest*, Acts 3:20.⁴⁸

relief from distressful, burdensome circumstances; a state of cheer and encouragement after a period of having been troubled or upset.⁴⁹

48. Mounce Greek Dictionary (Gramcord).

49. Louw and Nida Greek Lexicon (Gramcord).

Breathing space, *relaxation, relief* fig., of the Messianic age *kairois anapsyksesos, times of rest* Ac 3:20.⁵⁰

The Greek word for *refreshing* admits of a twofold derivation (from *psyche* and *psykhō*), according to which it properly denotes either cooling and *relief from heat*, or the recovery of breath after exhaustion. In either case, the essential meaning is the same, although the first is the idea naturally suggested by the English word refreshing. What is here meant is *relief from toil or suffering*, not without an implication of more positive enjoyment.⁵¹

In Hellenistic Greek *anapsyksis* means *rest* or respite when not used literally of cooling.⁵²

From these comments, we see that *anapsyksis* can have the meaning “relief.” (blue text) This is not relief in the general sense, but relief from toil and suffering (green text). And such relief is connected with rest, which was the meaning of the word in Classical Greek (red text).

IN THE SEPTUAGINT IS ANAPSYKSIS IS CONNECTED WITH THE SABBATH

I quote two examples from the Septuagint, which can throw light on the meaning of the verb *anapsykhō*, which corresponds to the noun *anapsyksis*. I quote Exodus 23:12 (above) and 34:21 (below):

¹² “Six days you are to do your work; but on the seventh day you are *to desist* (*anapausis*, “rest”, in order that your bull and your ass may rest (*anapauō*) and the son of your slave girl and the alien resident may *refresh* (*anapsykhō*) *themselves*.

²¹ “Six days you are to labor, but on the seventh day you will keep the sabbath (*katapauō*). In plowing time and in harvest you will *keep sabbath* (*katapauō*). (Footnote: “You will rest.”)

When God rested according to Genesis 2:2, the Septuagint uses the verb *katapauō* with the meaning “to desist from work,” and by implication “to rest.” We see the use of *katapauō* twice in Exodus 34:21. However, when laws regarding the sabbath are mentioned, the focus is not on abstaining from work but on the positive result of resting on the sabbath. For this focus, the verb *anapauō* is used — the difference being the prefixes *ana-* and *kata-*. Please note that both verbs are used with reference to the sabbath.

The meaning of *katapauō* is, as mentioned, “to desist from work, to rest.” And the meaning of *anapauō* is “to cause to rest, soothe, refresh” (Mounce). One example from The Christian Greek Scriptures is Matthew 11:28:

²⁸ Come to me, all YOU who are toiling and loaded down, and I will *refresh* (*anapauō*) *YOU* (“I will give you rest,” NIV). ²⁹ Take my yoke upon YOU and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and *YOU will find refreshment* (*anapausis*) *for YOUR souls* (“you will find rest,” NIV).

50. *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* by F.W. Arndt, F. Gingrich.

51. J. A. Alexander: *Commentary on Ephesians* (1887, 1980).

52. *The Acts of the Apostles* Volume IV by F.J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (1979).

This verse shows that the verb *anapauō* and the noun *anapausis* both mean rest and refreshment. If we look back on the quotation from Exodus 23:12 above, we see that *anapauō* and *anapausis* are applied to the sabbath law, meaning that the focus is not on desisting from work but on the great benefits of keeping the sabbath. We note that *anapsykhō* is used as a synonym for *anapauō*. Both verbs stress the rest on the sabbath and the refreshment and benefits of keeping the sabbath.

The application of anapsykhō to the sabbath day in the Septuagint, both stressing the rest and the benefits and refreshment from the rest, and the meaning of anapsyxis in Classical Greek as “rest,” justifies my new rendering of anapsyxis as “refreshing rest”.

I will now discuss the noun *anapsyxis* and the corresponding verb *anapsyksō*. The noun has the meaning: “relief from distressful, burdensome circumstances” (Louw and Nida) and “a refreshing coolness after heat; met. refreshing, recreation, rest.” (Mounce) The corresponding verb *anapsyksō* expresses this meaning in a verbal way.

The verb *anapsyksō* occurs one time in The Christian Greek Scriptures and four times in the Septuagint, as we see below:

2 Timothy 1:16

¹⁶ May the Lord grant mercy to the household of On·e·siph'o·rus, for he often **refreshed** (*anapsyksō*) me, and he did not become ashamed of my prison chains.

Exodus 23:12

¹² “Six days you are to do your work; but on the seventh day, you are to cease from your labor, in order that your bull and your donkey **may rest** (*anapsyksō*) and the son of your slave girl and the foreign resident may refresh themselves.

Judges 15:19

¹⁹ So God split open a hollow that was in Le'hi, and water flowed from it. When he drank, his spirit returned and he **revived** (*anapsyksō*).

1 Samuel 16:23

²³ Whenever a bad spirit from God came upon Saul, David took the harp and played it, and Saul **found relief** (*anapsyksō*) and felt better, and the bad spirit would depart from him.

2 Samuel 16:14

¹⁴ At length the king and all the people with him arrived at their destination exhausted, and they **refreshed** (*anapsyksō*) themselves.

The examples show that the noun was translated as “refreshing” and “relief,” and the verb was translated as “refreshed,” “may rest,” “revived”, and “found relief.” Based on these meanings, I render Acts 3:19 in the following way:

¹⁹ “Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, that **the appointed times** (*kairos*) for **the refreshing rest** (*anapsyxis*) may come from Jehovah himself.

The rendering “*refreshing rest*” of *anapsyxis* puts the noun in the correct setting, so we can understand the use of it:

- 1) It connects *anapsyxis* with the future sabbath of which Jesus is the Lord. (Matthew 12:8)
- 2) It shows that *anapsyxis* is used as a prophetic antitype of the “a sabbath of complete rest of the land” (Leviticus 25:5) in the Jubilee.

ACTS 3:19-21 AS THE ANTITYPE OF THE LIBERATION IN THE JUBILEE

I will now present the parallels between Leviticus 25:4, 8-10 (above) and Acts 3:19-21 (below):

⁴ But in the seventh year there should occur a sabbath of *complete rest* (*shabbat shabbātōn*) for the land, a sabbath to Jehovah. Your field you must not sow with seed, and your vineyard you must not prune.

⁸ “And you must count for yourself seven sabbaths of years, seven times seven years, and the days of the seven sabbaths of years must amount to forty-nine years for you. ⁹ And you must cause the horn of loud tone to sound in the seventh month on the tenth of the month; on the day of atonement YOU people should cause the horn to sound in all YOUR land. ¹⁰ And YOU must sanctify the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty (*qāra’ derōr*) in the land to all its inhabitants. It will become a Jubilee for YOU, and YOU must return (*shūb*) each one to his possession and YOU should return each one to his family.

¹⁹ “Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, that the appointed times for *the refreshing rest* (*anapsyxis*) may come from Jehovah himself. ²⁰ And he may send the one chosen beforehand for you, Christ Jesus. ²¹ Heaven must take hold of this one until the times for the restoration (*apokatastasis*) of all things of which God spoke through the mouth of the holy prophets through the ages.

The parallels between the two scriptures are seen in Table 9.4.

Table 9:4 Linguistic and thematic parallels between Leviticus 25:10 and Acts 3:19-21

	LINGUISTIC PARALLELS	
Leviticus 25:10	Hebrew: <i>shūb</i>	Return, restore.
Acts 3:21	Greek: <i>apokatastasis</i>	Restoration.
	THEMATIC PARALLELS	
Leviticus 25:10	Hebrew: <i>qāra’ derōr</i>	Proclaim freedom, liberty.
Acts 3:19	Greek: <i>anapsyxis</i>	Relief from distressful circumstances, refreshing rest.

The linguistic parallels between Leviticus 25:10 and Acts 3:21 are the Hebrew verb *shūb* (“return, restore”) and the Greek noun *apokatastasis* (“restoration”). The

thematic parallel is the expression *qāra' derōr* ("proclaim liberty") and the Greek noun *anapsyxis* ("refreshing rest"), both expressing ideas that are close to one another.

The essence of the Jubilee is restoration: the freedom of Hebrew slaves and the return of land sold to the original owners without compensation. The essence of the thousand-year reign of Jesus is also restoration, encompassing the restoration of humans through resurrection and the restoration of human perfection through the application of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The thousand-year reign of Jesus also brings freedom for all and relief from distressful and burdensome circumstances. Therefore, we can conclude that Acts 3:19-21 is a clear expression of the antitypical Jubilee, the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ.

A SYNTHESIS OF THE THREE SCRIPTURES USED TO SHOW THE ANTITYPES OF THE JUBILEE

The synthesis is based on a comparison of the basic ideas in the three scriptures, and I quote them below:

LEVITICUS 25:10

⁴ But in the seventh year there should occur a sabbath of **complete rest** (*shabbat shabbātōn*) for the land, a sabbath to Jehovah. Your field you must not sow with seed, and your vineyard you must not prune.

¹⁰ You must sanctify the 50th year and **proclaim liberty** (*derōr*) **in the land to all its inhabitants. It will become a Jubilee for you, and each of you will return** (*shūb*) **to his property and each of you should return to his family.**

ROMANS 8:18-21

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of the present time do not amount to anything in comparison with the glory that is going to be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the creation is waiting with eager expectation for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility (*mataiotēs*), not by its own will, but through the one who subjected it, on the basis of hope ²¹ **that the creation itself will also be set free from enslavement** (*douleia*) **to corruption** (*phthora*) **and have the glorious freedom** (*eleutheria*) **of the children of God.**

EPHESIANS 1:10

¹⁰ for an administration (*oikonomia*) at the full limit (*pleroma*) of the appointed times (*kairos*), namely **to gather all things together** (*anakefalaioō*) **again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth.**

ACTS 3:19-21

¹⁹ "Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, that the appointed times for the **refreshing rest** (*anapsyxis*) may come from Jehovah himself. ²⁰ And he may send the one chosen beforehand for you, Christ Jesus. ²¹ Heaven must take hold of this

one *until the times for the restoration* (*apokatastasis*) *of all things of which God spoke through the mouth of the holy prophets through the ages.*

The Jubilee was a year of freedom for all inhabitants in the land and a restoration of all things. The antitypical Jubilee, which is the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ, is a period of freedom from sin and death for Adam's descendants and the restoration of all things to the situation that was in the paradise of Eden before Adam and Eve sinned.

There is a clear parallel between the Jubilee year and the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. And the three passages above express this parallel.

THE APPOINTED TIMES THAT END AT THE BEGINNING OF THE JUBILEE

What was important for the people of Israel in connection with the Jubilee was that all the people received freedom, that property was returned to the previous owners, and that everything was restored. But the time element was also important. For example, an Israelite who became poor and had to sell his land would eagerly count the years to the Jubilee when he would receive his land back. And a man who had become a slave would eagerly count the years to the Jubilee as well.

When we gather the threads, we have discussed, we will see that the temporal cycle of the Jubilee also has an antitypical meaning. Let us look at these threads:

There is a future sabbath over which Jesus is the Lord. (Matthew 12:8)

There is a great sabbath on which Jehovah God is resting. (Hebrews 4:4, 5)

There is a future sabbath resting for the people of God. (Hebrews 4:9)

There will be a time in the future when all humans will receive the glorious freedom of the children of God. (Romans 8:20)

All things will be gathered together again in Christ at the full limit of the appointed times. (Ephesians 1:10)

There will be appointed times in the future, after which all things the prophets spoke about will be fully restored. (Acts 3:20)

Can we associate any of these threads with an antitypical Jubilee time cycle? Yes, we can! There is a time element in each of the threads: The sabbath is the seventh day of a week, and the freedom of the children of God and the restoration of all things relate to a specific time (*kairos*) in the future. And we can connect the threads with the Jubilee cycle by focusing on the specific time in the future. In this connection, I quote Revelation 20:4 (above), 21:1-4 (middle), and 22:1-3 (below):

⁴ And I saw thrones, and there were those who sat down on them, and power of judging was given them. Yes, I saw the souls of those executed with the ax for the witness they bore to Jesus and for speaking about God, and those who had worshiped neither the wild beast nor its image and who had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand. *And they came to life and ruled as kings with the Christ for a thousand years.*

¹ And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea is no more. ² I saw also the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ With that I heard a loud voice from the throne say: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. ⁴ *And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.* The former things have passed away."

¹ And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb² down the middle of its broad way. And on this side of the river and on that side [there were] trees of life producing twelve crops of fruit, yielding their fruits each month. *And the leaves of the trees [were] for the curing of the nations.* ³ *And no more will there be any curse.* But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in [the city], and his slaves will render him sacred service;⁴ and they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ Also, night will be no more, and they have no need of lamplight nor [do they have] sunlight, because Jehovah God will shed light upon them, and they will rule as kings forever and ever.

The quoted verses describe the fulfillment of the prophecy about the freedom of all humans and the restoration of all things. And Revelation 20:4 shows that this will occur during a period of a thousand years.

Here we have a specific time period, and the question is if this time period can be connected with the Jubilee cycle. There is one link, and that is Jehovah's great sabbath.

Jehovah's day of rest started when he had created Eve, and Hebrews 4:6-7 shows that this day of rest, held in the first century CE, and that it would continue. There is a relation between Jehovah's day of rest and the thousand-year kingdom of Jesus Christ that I will explore.

I have already shown that the presence of Jesus and the time of the end started in 1914, and that the great tribulation and the start of the thousand-year reign will come within one generation. How many years have Jehovah's day of rest lasted when the thousand-year reign comes? Interestingly, Jehovah has laid down threads in the books of the Bible so we can know the answer.

Luke 3:23-39 provides a complete genealogy of Jesus's ancestors, tracing them back to Adam. The ages of the oldest ancestors are found in Genesis chapter 5, and chronological information is found in the historical books of the Bible, for example, that it was in the 480th year after Israel left Egypt that Solomon began to build the temple. (1 Kings 6:1)

The belief in the full inspiration of the Bible requires that we believe that all passages in the Bible are included with a particular purpose and meaning. This means that the chronological information is included so we can calculate times, including prophetic times.

When we calculate the time from the creation of Adam, we reach 6,000 years in 1975. Jesus showed that the great tribulation will come during the generation that includes 1914, and the thousand-year reign of Jesus

will start immediately after the great tribulation, Based on the threads we find in the Bible, we see that Jehovah's day of rest is 7,000 years long.

Can we now start to see a connection and an interaction? Because Jehovah's day of rest is 7,000 years long, and Jesus is the Lord of the "sabbath," we understand that "the sabbath" is the seventh thousand years of Jehovah's day of rest of 7,000 years. That the "sabbath" is the same as the thousand-year reign of Jesus also fits Jesus' saying in Matthew 12:8 that he is the Lord of the sabbath. I also mention that the context of Hebrews chapter 4 suggests that the future sabbath resting mentioned in verse 9 refers to the thousand-year reign of Jesus.⁵³

Now we have two sabbaths, the 7,000-year sabbath of Jehovah and the 1,000-year reign of Jesus. Both the concept "sabbath" and the number "7" may have some relation to the temporal cycle of 7 x 7 years and the 50th year of the Jubilee. I will elucidate this.

In his discussion of Jehovah's sabbath in Hebrews chapter 4, the writer of Hebrews refers to the creation account in Genesis chapter 1. Why is the setting of Jehovah's creation a week of seven days? There is no logical reason for this, for Jehovah is above time and does not count days or time periods. And there were no humans present at the creation who could count days.

The fourth of the ten commandments may give an answer, and I quote Exodus: 20:8-11

⁸ "Remembering the sabbath day to hold it sacred, ⁹ you are to render service and you must do all your work six days. ¹⁰ But the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah your God. You must not do any work, you nor your son nor your daughter, your slave man nor your slave girl nor your domestic animal nor your alien resident who is inside your gates. ¹¹ For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything that is in them, and he proceeded to rest on the seventh day. That is why Jehovah blessed the sabbath day and proceeded to make it sacred.

The text gives the pattern for the law about the sabbath after six days of work, namely that Jehovah used six days to make the earth habitable and create life on it. If we count the real length of the days of creation, we find that the creation week is 49,000 years long, and this is a pattern for the jubilee cycle of 49 years, followed by the Jubilee.

This means that the jubilee cycle was made after the pattern of the real length of the creation days of 7 times 7,000 years, totaling 49,000 years. Thus, the laws of Jubilee were given as prophetic types of Jehovah's creation week of 7 times 7,000 years, totaling 49,000 years. The Jubilee

53. See the article, "So there remains a sabbath resting for the people of God". (Hebrews 4:9) <https://mybelovedreligion.no/2025/09/24/so-there-remains-a-sabbath-resting-for-the-people-of-god-hebrews-49/>

would then be a prophetic type of the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ.⁵⁴

Applying the Jubilee chronology to human history implies that Jehovah's day of rest began sometime after 4026 BCE, when Adam was created. According to the Jubilee chronology, Jehovah's day of rest consists of seven days, each 1,000 years long, with the sixth day ending sometime after 1975 CE. This is followed by the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ, which constitutes the Jubilee.

However, a potential problem arises here. According to the prophetic pattern, the 49th year was a sabbath year, and the 50th year was the Jubilee. Yet, within the actual 49,000-year span of Jehovah's creative week, Jesus' thousand-year reign corresponds the 49th thousand years and not to the 50th thousand years.

A solution to this problem can be found in the light of Leviticus 25:4:

⁴ But in the seventh year there should occur a sabbath of **complete rest** (*shabbat shabbātōn*) for the land, a sabbath to Jehovah. Your field you must not sow with seed, and your vineyard you must not prune.

The expression "complete rest" is translated from *shabbat shabbātōn*, an emphatic form of the word *shabbat*. This verse applied to the 49th year, which was a sabbath year. This "complete rest" began in the 49th year and continued throughout the 50th year. In other words, regarding the rest for the inhabitants and the land, the 49th and 50th years formed a single unit.

Acts 3:19–21, which has already been thoroughly analyzed, mentions the restoration of all things God has spoken of through the prophets. According to Revelation 20:4, 21:1–4, and 22:1–3 (cited above), the restoration of all things will take place during the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. Parallel to the words regarding the "restoration of all things," Peter spoke of "a refreshing rest," which will also occur during the thousand years. This "refreshing rest" is referred to in Leviticus 25:4 as "a complete rest," and it began in the 49th year and continued into the 50th year. Therefore, we can view both the 49th and 50th years of the Jubilee cycle as a prophetic type of the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ.

54. Does the calculation above mean that the creation of all living creatures as described in Genesis chapter 1, occurred during a period of 49,000 solar years? In my discussion, I use the word "conceptual" in connection with the length of 7,000 years of each day. This means that because we know Jehovah's day of rest is 7,000 years, it is implied in the creation account that the other days as 7,000 as well. All days in a week are equal in length.

Geologists claim that life evolved over a period of around 500 million years, and this contradicts my calculation. I refer to my book *"Can We Trust the Bible? With Focus on the Creation Account, the Worldwide Flood, and the Prophecies"*. I show that the crystals in sedimentary rocks may be millions of years. But that does not prove that fossils are millions of years. The conclusion in the book is that there are no data from rocks and fossils which definitely proves that plants and animals are more than a few thousand years old. This means that there is no scientific reason to exclude the possibility that plants and animals are less than 49,000 years old. But neither is there any scientific reason to believe that they are just a few thousand years old.

THE APPOINTED TIMES ENDING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ANTITYPICAL JUBILEE

In chapters 2 and 3, I showed that appointed times, expressed by the Greek word *kairos* (“appointed time”), pointed to the dates of the first and second comings of Jesus Christ.

There were 69 weeks of years from the time when the word to restore and build Jerusalem went out until the Messiah came, from 455 BCE to 29 CE.

There were 2,520 years from the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II until the second coming of Jesus and his presence, from 607 BCE to 1914 CE.

*In this section, I will show that there are appointed times, expressed by the word **kairos**, that end at the great tribulation and the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ.*

There are three texts that will be discussed, and I quote them below:

EPHESIANS 1:10

¹⁰ for an administration *at the full limit of the appointed times* (*kairos*) namely to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth.

1 TIMOTHY 6:13-15

¹³ In the sight of God, who preserves all things alive, and of Christ Jesus, who as a witness made the fine public declaration before Pontius Pilate, I give you orders ¹⁴ that you observe the commandment in a spotless and irreprehensible way until *the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ*. ¹⁵ This [manifestation] the happy and only Potentate will show in *its own appointed times*, (*kairos*) [he] the King of those who rule as kings and Lord of those who rule as lords.

ACTS 3:19-21

¹⁹ “Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, that *the appointed times* (*kairos*) *for the refreshing rest* may come from Jehovah himself. ²⁰ And he may send the one chosen beforehand for you, Christ Jesus. ²¹ Heaven must take hold of this one until *the (appointed) times* (*kairos*) *for the restoration of all things* of which God spoke through the mouth of the holy prophets through the ages.

The Greek word *kairos* occurs three times in these texts, and *kairos* once. All three passages have an endpoint for the appointed times: “the full limit of,” “the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ,” “the refreshing rest,” and “the restoration of all things.”

I will first show the endpoints of each of the appointed times, and then what we can know about their lengths.

THE FULL LIMIT OF THE APPOINTED TIMES

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul presents different aspects of the sacred secret, pointing to Jesus Christ and his kingdom. I quote Ephesians 1:8-10:

⁸This undeserved kindness he caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and understanding ⁹by making known to us the sacred secret of his will. It is according to his good pleasure that he himself purposed ¹⁰for an administration (*oikonomia*) at *the full limit* (*pleroma*) of *the appointed times* (*kairos*), namely to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth.

What would come when the number of the appointed times was full? Paul uses the noun *oikonomia* with the meaning “the management of a household; a stewardship.” The word *oikonomia* does not refer to something concrete, such as a government, but to something abstract, to the management of something. And what is this “something”? It is “to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth.”

In the Garden of Eden, there was unity between heaven and earth before Adam and Eve’s rebellion. This unity would be restored at the full limit of the appointed times.

Ephesians 1:10 shows there are appointed times (kairos) that end at the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Jesus, when all things will be gathered together again.

THE MANIFESTATION OF JESUS CHRIST AT THE END OF THE APPOINTED TIMES

Paul speaks directly and indirectly about the coming of Jesus as the judge in the great tribulation. One example is 1 Timothy 6:13-15:

¹³ I give you orders ¹⁴to observe the commandment in a spotless and irreprehensible way until the manifestation (*epifaneia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which (*hos*) the happy and only Potentate will show (*deiknymi*) in *its own* (*idios*) *appointed times* (*kairos*). He is the King of those who rule as kings and Lord of those who rule as lords.

The word *epifaneia* means “appearance, manifestation, glorious display.” (UBS Lexicon) The happy and only Potentate, which is Jesus, will make his manifestation known “in its own appointed times.” The adjective *idios* means “one’s own, due, proper, specially assigned.” (Mounce) Because *kairos* is plural, the reference must be to the time periods that elapse until Jesus makes his manifestation known — his manifestation is seen.

When will his manifestation be? We read in 2 Timothy 4:1:

¹ I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his manifestation (*epifaneia*) and his Kingdom.

Because the manifestation of Jesus is connected with his judging of the living and the dead, his manifestation must be the same as his revelation in the great tribulation,

when he will destroy people who are like those who persecuted the Thessalonians, and when he after that will judge the living and the dead. We read in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9:

⁷ But you who suffer tribulation will be given relief along with us at *the revelation* (*apokalypsis*) *of the Lord Jesus* from heaven with his powerful angels ⁸ in a flaming fire, as he brings vengeance on those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus. ⁹ *These very ones will undergo the judicial punishment of everlasting destruction from before the Lord and from the glory of his strength.*

I will also quote a scripture that has been discussed in detail above, which in one important detail parallels the last scripture, namely, Romans 8:19-21:

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of the present time do not amount to anything in comparison with the glory that is going to be revealed in us.¹⁹ For the creation is waiting with eager expectation for *the revealing* (*apokalypō*), *of the sons of God*.²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility not by its own will, but through the one who subjected it, on the basis of hope ²¹ that the creation itself will also be set free from enslavement to corruption and *have the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

The verb corresponding to the noun *apokalypsis* (“revelation”) is *apokalypō* (“to reveal”). Revelation 17:14 shows that the sons of God, who have received the heavenly resurrection will be together with Jesus Christ when he comes as the judge in the great tribulation. Therefore, the revelation of the sons of God is the same as the revelation of the Lord Jesus. His revelation is connected with the punishment of the wicked ones, and the revelation of the sons of God is connected with the glorious freedom “the creation” will receive. The appointed times that are mentioned in 1 Timothy 6:15 must therefore end when the great tribulation starts.

1 Timothy 6:15 shows there are appointed times (kairos) that end at the manifestation of Jesus when the great tribulation starts, immediately before the thousand-year reign of Jesus.

THE APPOINTED TIMES FOR THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

Peter healed a lame man, and the people gathered around Peter and John. Peter spoke to the crowd. Peter’s words are particularly important because they point to the restoration of all things and show that specific appointed times are connected with this restoration. Below is my translation of Acts 3:19-21:

¹⁹ “Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, *that the appointed times* (*kairos*) for *the refreshing rest* (*anapsyxis*) may come from Jehovah himself. ²⁰ And he may send the one chosen beforehand for you, Christ Jesus. ²¹ Heaven must take hold of this one *until/during* (*akhrī*) the *times* (*khronos*) for *the restoration* (*apokatastasis*) *of all things* of which God spoke through the mouth of the holy prophets through the ages.

In the context of the Jubilee Chronology, there are two important points in these verses. The expressions “the refreshing rest” and “the restoration of all things” refer

to the antitypical Jubilee — the thousand-year reign of Jesus. And it is pointed out that there are “appointed times” (*kairos*) and times (*khronos*, with the meaning “appointed times”) connected with the refreshing rest and the restoration of all things.

The Greek word *khronos* means “time,” generally speaking. But it can also mean “appointed time” when the context implies it. In 3:21, *khronos* is plural, which suggests the meaning “appointed times.” This is supported by the fact that the clauses with *kairos* and *khronos* are parallelisms, and the two nouns are parallel as well.

In order to understand the nuances of the verses, I will ask whether “appointed times” (*kairos*) and “appointed times” (*khronos*) refer to the beginning of “the refreshing rest,” “the restoration of all things.” There is a genitive relation between “appointed times” (*kairos*) and “the refreshing rest” (*anapsyxis*), and between “appointed times” (*khronos*) and “restoration” (*apokatastasis*).

But in both cases, one noun is masculine and the other feminine. So, the case is not that one noun is modifying the other, like “the refreshing rest’s appointed times” or “the restoration’s appointed times.” But the better renderings are “appointed times to (or “for”) the refreshing rest” and “appointed times to (or “for”) restoration.”

The alternatives for the reference of “the appointed times (*kairos*)” and “the appointed times (*khronos*)” are 1) the times before the beginning of the restoration, 2) the point when the restoration begins, and 3) the durative time for the restoration. Because both *kairos* and *khronos* are plural, point 2) can be excluded; appointed times in the plural cannot refer to a point of time.

The preposition *akbri* has different meanings. If the meaning is “until,” the appointed times refer to the restoration. But because the restoration refers to the thousand-year reign of Jesus, which is one time unit, the Jubilee, this application is unlikely. If the preposition *akbri* means “during,” the appointed times refer to time units before the beginning of the restoration, which is the most likely conclusion.

But both if the appointed times refer to the restoration itself or to time units ending with the beginning of the restoration, the meaning of the noun *kairos* (*appointed* time”) shows that this beginning is temporally decided by God.

Acts 3:19-21 shows that, just as the appointed times (*kairos*) of the nations mentioned in Luke 21:24 are God-ordained, there are also other God-ordained appointed times that will end at the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Jesus.

Table 9.5 The appointed times ending at the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Jesus

Acts 3:20	Appointed times (<i>kairos</i> , plural) ending at the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ.
1 Timothy 6:15	Appointed times (<i>kairos</i> , plural) ending at the great tribulation.

Because the thousand-year reign of Jesus begins immediately after the great tribulation, we may assume that the appointed times that are said to end with the great tribulation and those that are said to refer to the beginning of the millennium refer to the same appointed times.

CALCULATING THE APPOINTED TIMES ENDING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE THOUSAND-YEAR REIGN OF JESUS CHRIST

In different chapters, I have shown that there are three different appointed times (*kairos*) that are mentioned in The Holy Scriptures:

- 1) The 69 weeks of 483 years to the coming of Jesus to the earth, from 455 BCE to 29 CE.
- 2) The appointed times of the nations of 2,520 years to the second coming of Jesus, from 607 BCE to 1914 CE.
- 3) The appointed times — the 6,000 years — from the beginning of the 7,000 year-long day of Jehovah's rest until the beginning of the sabbath over which Jesus is Lord—the antitype of the Jubilee.

Our interest at this point, is the application of the Jubilee Chronology to the beginning of the antitypical Jubilee —the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ..

Exodus 20:9-11 shows that the law in Israel about the six days of work followed by the sabbath, was based on the pattern of the creation week in Genesis chapter 1: God created life and made the earth habitable during six days, and he rested on the seventh day.

We have seen that, according to Hebrews chapter 4, Jehovah's day of rest had lasted 4,000 years in the first century CE, that his rest continued, and that there was a promise of a future sabbath resting for the people of God. (Hebrews 4:9) The appointed times of the nations ended in 1914 when the presence of Jesus and the time of the end began. Jesus said, according to Matthew 24:33-36, that he would come as the judge in the great tribulation within a generation from 1914. But the exact day and hour only God knows. After the great tribulation, the thousand-year reign of Jesus will begin.

This chronology shows that Jehovah's day of rest is 7,000 years long, and the six other days of the creation week must be 7,000 years as well. So, the creation week described in Genesis chapter 1 is, conceptually speaking, 49,000 years long. Just as the days of the creation week, by ascribing the normal length of days to them, is the pattern for the law of Moses about working six days followed by the sabbath, the

real length of the creation week of 49,000 years is the pattern for the Jubilee cycle of 49 years followed by the Jubilee.

Our interest is in Jehovah's day of rest of 7,000 years, where the last thousand years can be viewed as a sabbath. This is the thousand-year reign of Jesus, the sabbath over which he is the Lord, and the sabbath resting mentioned in Hebrews 4:9.

In order to know when the 1000-year sabbath begins, we need to know when Jehovah's day of rest began and count 6,000 years from this point in time. To understand this, it is important to examine what the chronology of the creation week shows and what it does not show. I quote Genesis 2:18-24:

¹⁸ And Jehovah God went on to say: "It is not good for the man to continue by himself. I am going to make a helper for him, as a complement of him." ¹⁹ Now Jehovah God *was forming* from the ground every wild beast of the field and every flying creature of the heavens, and he began bringing them to the man to see what he would call each one; and whatever the man would call it, each living soul, that was its name. ²⁰ So the man was calling the names of all the domestic animals and of the flying creatures of the heavens and of every wild beast of the field, but for man there was found no helper as a complement of him.

²¹ Hence Jehovah God had a deep sleep fall upon the man and, while he was sleeping, he took one of his ribs and then closed up the flesh over its place. ²² *And Jehovah God proceeded to build the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman and to bring her to the man.* ²³ Then the man said: "This is at last bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh. This one will be called Woman, Because from man this one was taken."

This account shows that Eve was created after Adam, and that Jehovah's day of rest did not begin when Adam was created, but when Eve was created. How much time elapsed between the creation of the two is not stated. Some have claimed that the phrase "was forming" in 2:19 suggests that some animals were created after Eve. However, the verb "to form" is in the Hebrew imperfect, as are most of the verbs in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. So, there is no linguistic reason to claim that some animals were created after Eve was created.

Luke 3:23-38 presents a complete genealogy of all Jesus' ancestors back to Adam. If we study the chronological information in the Hebrew Scriptures, we find that 6,000 years from Adam's creation ends in the year 1975. These 6,000 years do not represent the 6 days of a thousand years each of Jehovah's 7,000-year-long day of rest, because Jehovah's day of rest did not start when Adam was created, but when Eve was created as God's last creation

This means that the time that elapsed between the creation of Adam and Eve must be added to the year 1975 to find the time when the antitypical Jubilee, the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ, begins. We do not know the exact number of years between the creation of Adam and Eve, and therefore, we do not know the day and hour when Jesus comes as the judge in the great tribulation.

However, there is information in Genesis that limits the number of years between Adam's creation and Eve's creation, as we see in Genesis 4:25 (above) and 5:3 (below):

25 And Adam proceeded to have intercourse again with his wife and so she gave birth to a son and called his name Seth, because, as she said: “God has appointed another seed in place of Abel, because Cain killed him.”

3 And Adam lived on for a hundred and thirty years. Then he became father to a son in his likeness, in his image, and called his name Seth.

Because Set was born when Adam was 130 years old, Eve was created less than 130 years after Adam’s creation. This means the thousand-year reign will begin less than 130 years after 1975. This can be further limited. Today marks 51 years since 1975. Because the thousand-year reign has not begun, we know that at least 51 years passed between the creation of Adam and Eve. This opens a window of 79 years (to the birth of Set) during which Eve was created.

What happened after Eve’s creation and before the birth of Set? Cain and Abel were born, and they grew up. Abel became a herder of sheep, while Cain became a cultivator of the ground. Then Cain killed Abel. The time for this to happen must be subtracted from the 79 years mentioned to determine when Eve was created.

The conclusion is that the year 1975 is the last certain point we know of in the stream of time — 6,000 years after Adam’s creation. Because of this, we know that the great tribulation and the Jubilee, which is the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ, will begin much less than 79 years from now. And this means that the generation “that by no means will pass away” before the great tribulation comes and the beginning of the Jubilee begins also ends in much less than 79 years from the present.

Jehovah’s day of rest is 7,000 years long.

The last 1,000 years of Jehovah’s day of rest is the Jubilee.

We know that 6,000 years from Adam’s creation ended in 1975.

The time between Adam and Eve’s creation must be added to 1975 to find the start of the Jubilee.

Eve must have been created less than 130 years after Adam, because of the birth of Set.

The present moment is 51 years from 1975. So, the time limit for the start of the Jubilee is 79 years from this moment.

These 79 years can be further reduced, because Cain and Abel were born before Set, they grew up, and Cain killed Abel.

THE ANTITYPICAL JUBILEE WILL BEGIN AT A TIME MUCH LESS THAN 79 YEARS FROM THE PRESENT MOMENT.

PROPHETIC TIME PERIODS IDENTIFY THE PEOPLE OF GOD

SUMMARY

This book has discussed several prophecies and prophetic time periods found in the Bible. It is not presumptuous to discuss their fulfillment, because the books of Daniel and Revelation show that these time periods were meant to be calculated and understood.

Jesus demonstrated that every detail and nuance of the original biblical text is important, implying that a thorough study of the text is essential.

When we believe that the entire Bible is inspired by God and that every account is included for a specific purpose and has a specific meaning, we realize that the time periods of 1,260, 1,290, and 1,335 days—found in Daniel and Revelation and said to be linked to God's people—serve to identify that people.

Only the people who fulfill these time periods will be able to present historical evidence showing that the periods were fulfilled on them. The only group I know of that has presented such evidence is Jehovah's Witnesses.

In this chapter, I will present this evidence, and readers must decide how well it aligns with the information the biblical text provides regarding each time period.

In his conversation with Pilate, Jesus said: "Everyone that is on the side of the truth listens to my voice." Pilate said to him. "What is truth?" But instead of waiting

for Jesus' answer to his question, he turned his back on Jesus and went out to speak to the Jews. (John 18:37, 38)

Many people today are interested in knowing the truth about God and his Son Jesus Christ. But most follow Pilate's example by turning their backs on the Bible and refusing to study it thoroughly to find the truth.

In this chapter, I will focus on those who "listen to my voice," as Jesus said. And my question is: Who are they? Who are they who listen to the voice of Jesus? In his prophecy about events that will occur in the time of the end, Daniel spoke about "the holy people." (Daniel 12:7) The members of "the holy people" must be those Jesus had in mind when he spoke about those who are "on the side of the truth" and "who listen to my voice."

The holy people can be identified as those who accept the Christian doctrines found in the Bible and who strive hard to follow the laws and principles of God. In this study. I will identify "the holy people" with Jehovah's Witnesses based on the prophetic time periods that have been fulfilled in them.

The following time periods are mentioned: 3 1/2 times (1,260 days, 42 months), 1,290 days, and 1,335 days:

THE DASHING TO PIECES THE POWER OF THE HOLY PEOPLE AFTER 1 260 DAYS

The period of 1 260 days must be particularly important because it is mentioned four different places:

Daniel 7:25:

²⁵ And *he* will speak even words against the Most High, and *he* will harass continually the holy ones themselves of the Supreme One. And he will intend to change times and law, and they will be given into his hand for *a time, and times and half a time*.

Daniel 12:7:

⁷ And I began to hear the man clothed with the linen, who was up above the waters of the stream, as he proceeded to raise his right [hand] and his left [hand] to the heavens and to swear by the One who is alive for time indefinite: "It will be for *an appointed time, appointed times and a half*. And as soon as there will have been a finishing of the dashing of the power of the holy people to pieces, all these things will come to their finish."

Revelation 11:2, 3, 7:

² But as for the courtyard that is outside the temple [sanctuary], cast it clear out and do not measure it, because it has been given to the nations, and they will trample the holy city underfoot for *forty-two months*. ³ And I will cause my two witnesses to prophesy *a thousand two hundred and sixty days* dressed in sackcloth."

⁷ And when they have finished their witnessing, *the wild beast that ascends out of the abyss will make war with them and conquer them and kill them*.

Revelation 13:5

⁵ And a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies was given *it*, and authority to act *forty-two months* was given it.

The context of these four passages shows that they refer to the same period of time, and at the end of this period, there will be a catastrophic event for the people of God. Daniel 7:25 refers to the one who will cause the disaster as “he.”

Four beasts representing four world powers will arise, and from the fourth beast, a horn will arise. The pronoun “he” in verse 25 refers back to this horn (kingdom) in verse 24. The holy ones will “be given into his hand,” and according to 12:7, this means that the power of the holy people will be dashed to pieces at the end of 3 1/2 times.

There is one who will cause disaster for the two witnesses (the people of God) after 42 months, according to Revelation 11: 2, 3, 7, and 13:5.

SOME DETAILS ABOUT THE TIME PERIODS

Daniel 9:24-27 has a time prophecy of 70 weeks of years that “have been determined upon your people and upon your holy city.” After 69 weeks of years, the Messiah would come. In this prophecy, each day represents one year, and 69 weeks of years, starting in 455 BCE, totaling 483 years, which ended in 29 CE, when Jesus Christ began preaching about the kingdom of God. In a similar way, the seven appointed times in Daniel 4:15-17 have been calculated as 2,520 years (7 x 360 days = 2,520 days of years) from 607 BCE to 1914 CE.

In view of the pattern of one day representing one year in these two calculations, how can we know that the 1,260 days in Revelation 11:3 and the 1,290 days and 1,335 days in Daniel 12:11, 12, represent literal days and not that each day represents one year?

The first reason: The events mentioned from 11:40 to 12:13 happen during the time of the end, and this includes the 3 1/2 times, 1,290 days, and 1,335 days. So, these prophecies must be fulfilled after the year 1914, when the time of the end started, and therefore, they must refer to literal days.

The second reason: The prophecies of Revelation will be fulfilled after the year 98, when the book was written (Revelation 1:1), and the visions John saw would be fulfilled on “the Lord’s day,” which can be equated with the time of the end. (Revelation 1:10)

The third reason: Revelation 1:1 indicates that God’s people would understand the prophecies of Revelation — the book was written “*to show the things that must shortly take place.*” When the time periods will be fulfilled during the time of the end, they must be about literal days. The time period of 1,260 days is mentioned in four passages, including Revelation 11:2,3, 7; 13:5.

What would happen at the end of these days is mentioned — the power of the holy people would be dashed to pieces. But none of the four passages tells what would mark the beginning of the 1,260 days.

If Jesus, who gave the prophecies to John, *would show* — give understanding to his slaves of what would happen, the only starting point of the 1,260 days that the people of God could know was the end of the appointed times of the nations in 1914.

Regarding the calculation of the prophetic time periods, the Watchtower Society has used the Jewish calendar, in which I agree.

THE TWO WITNESSES THAT WERE KILLED

Several details in the prophecy of the two witnesses need clarification. I quote Revelation 11:1-11

¹ And a reed like a rod was given me as he said: “Get up and measure the temple [sanctuary] of God and the altar and those worshiping in it. ² But as for the courtyard that is outside the temple [sanctuary], cast it clear out and do not measure it, because it has been given to the nations, and they will trample the holy city underfoot for *forty-two months*. ³ And I will cause my *two witnesses* to prophesy *a thousand two hundred and sixty days* dressed in sackcloth.” ⁴ These are [symbolized by] the two olive trees and the two lampstands and are standing before the Lord of the earth.

⁵ And if anyone wants to harm them, fire issues forth from their mouths and devours their enemies; and if anyone should want to harm them, in this manner he must be killed. ⁶ These have the authority to shut up heaven that no rain should fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every sort of plague as often as they wish.

⁷ *And when they have finished their witnessing, the wild beast that ascends out of the abyss will make war with them and conquer them and kill them.*

⁸ And their corpses will be on the broad way of the great city which is in a spiritual sense called Sod’om and Egypt, where their Lord was also impaled. ⁹ And those of the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their corpses for three and a half days, and they do not let their corpses be laid in a tomb. ¹⁰ And those dwelling on the earth rejoice over them and enjoy themselves, and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those dwelling on the earth.

¹¹ *And after the three and a half days spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet,* and great fear fell upon those beholding them. ¹² And they heard a loud voice out of heaven say to them: “Come on up here.” And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them.

The two witnesses can be identified by their actions because their actions show that the two witnesses fulfilled the same role as four persons who are mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures, namely, the high priest Joshua, the governor Zerubbabel, Moses, and Elijah.

JOSHUA AND ZERUBBABEL

Verse 4 says that the two witnesses are antitypes of the two olive trees and the two lampstands mentioned by the prophet Zechariah. I quote Zechariah 4:2-3, 11, 14 (above), and Haggai 2:4 (below):

² So I said: “I have seen, and, look! there is a lampstand, all of it of gold, with a bowl on top of it. And its seven lamps are upon it, even seven; and the lamps that are at the top of it have seven pipes. ³ And there are two olive trees alongside it, one on the right side of the bowl and one on its left side.”

¹¹ And I proceeded to answer and say to him: “What do these two olive trees on the right side of the lampstand and on its left side mean?” ¹⁴ Accordingly he said: “These are the two anointed ones who are standing alongside the Lord of the whole earth.”

⁴ “‘But now be strong, O Ze·rub’ba·bel,’ is the utterance of Jehovah, ‘and be strong, O Joshua the son of Je·hoz’a·dak the high priest.’ “‘And be strong, all YOU people of the land,’ is the utterance of Jehovah, ‘and work.’

Zerubbabel was the governor, and Jehoshua was the high priest of the Jews after they returned from Babylon and settled in their own land. They represented the people of God after the Babylonian captivity. That they are prophetic types of the two witnesses indicates that the setting of the two witnesses is that God’s people in modern times are released from the antitypical Babylon. (Revelation 14:8: 18:4)

THE PROPHET ELIJAH

The two witnesses had “to shut up heaven that no rain should fall” (verse 6), and this shows that the prophet Elijah was a prophetic type of the two witnesses, as we read in James 5:17:

¹⁷ E·li’jah was a man with feelings like ours, and yet in prayer he prayed for it not to rain; and it did not rain upon the land for three years and six months.

That the prophet Elijah was a prophetic type of the two witnesses shows that the two witnesses should have the same function and do the same work as he did. To what did that refer? We get an answer in Malachi 4:5, 6:

⁵ “Look! I am sending to YOU people E·li’jah the prophet before the coming of the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah. ⁶ And he must turn the heart of fathers back toward sons, and the heart of sons back toward fathers; in order that I may not come and actually strike the earth with a devoting [of it] to destruction.”

How would this prophecy be fulfilled? The priest Zechariah was the father of John the Baptist, and before the birth of his son, an angel spoke to him and said, according to Luke 1:14-17:

¹⁴ And you will have joy and great gladness, and many will rejoice over his birth; ¹⁵ for he will be great before Jehovah. But he must drink no wine and strong drink at all, and he will be filled with holy spirit right from his mother’s womb; ¹⁶ and many of the sons of Israel will he turn back to Jehovah their God. ¹⁷ Also, he will go before him *with E·li’jah’s spirit and power*, to turn back the hearts of fathers to children and the disobedient ones to the practical wisdom of righteous ones, *to get ready for Jehovah a prepared people.*”

Jesus confirmed that John the Baptist fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi 4:5,6, and was an antitype of Elijah, as we read in Matthew 17:10-13?

¹⁰ However, the disciples put the question to him: “Why, then, do the scribes say that E·li’jah must come first?”¹¹ In reply he said: “*E·li’jah, indeed, is coming and will restore all things.*”¹² However, I say to YOU that E·li’jah has already come and they did not recognize him but did with him the things they wanted. In this way also the Son of man is destined to suffer at their hands.”¹³ Then the disciples perceived that he spoke to them about John the Baptist.

We note that John the Baptist was not a reincarnation of Elijah. But John should do the same work as Elijah to “get ready for Jehovah a prepared people” and “restore all things.” But what can we say about the words in Malachi 4:5, 6, that Elijah would come “before the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah”? This day did not come in the first century. Some prophecies and prophetic types found a miniature fulfillment in the first century CE, but will find their greater and final fulfillment in the time of the end. This double fulfillment is confirmed in Matthew 16:28-17:10:

²⁸ Truly I say to YOU that there are some of those standing here that will not taste death at all until first they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.”

¹ Six days later Jesus took Peter and James and John his brother along and brought them up into a lofty mountain by themselves.² And he was transfigured (*metamorphōō*) before them, and his face shone as the sun, and his outer garments became brilliant as the light.³ And, look! there appeared to them Moses and E·li’jah, conversing with him.⁴ Responsively Peter said to Jesus: “Lord, it is fine for us to be here. If you wish, I will erect three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for E·li’jah.”

⁵ While he was yet speaking, look! a bright cloud overshadowed them, and, look! a voice out of the cloud, saying: “This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved; listen to him.”⁶ At hearing this the disciples fell upon their faces and became very much afraid.⁷ Then Jesus came near and, touching them, said: “Get up and have no fear.”⁸ When they raised their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus himself only.⁹ And as they were descending from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying: “Tell the vision (*horama*) to no one until the Son of man is raised up from the dead.”

We note that the situation described above was a vision (*horama*), and this is confirmed by the word *metamorphōō* with the meaning “to change one’s form.” According to Matthew 16:28, Jesus said they would “see the Son of man coming in his kingdom,” and this was fulfilled by the transfiguration. One of those who were present was Peter, and in his second letter 1:16-18, he wrote about the transfiguration:

¹⁶ No, it was not by following artfully contrived false stories that we acquainted YOU with the power and *presence* (*parousia*) of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it was by having become eyewitnesses of his magnificence.¹⁷ For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when words such as these were borne to him by the magnificent glory: “This is my son, my beloved, whom I myself have approved.”¹⁸ Yes, these words we heard borne from heaven while we were with him in the holy mountain.

Peter showed that the transfiguration was a prophetic type of the presence (*parousia*) of Jesus. Because Elijah was seen in the transfiguration, it shows that the

fulfillment of the prophecy about the coming of Elijah in Malachi 4:5 will happen during the presence of Jesus “before the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah.”

This means that the coming of the antitypical Elijah during the presence of Jesus indicated that a prepared people for Jehovah would be ready, as Luke 1:17 says.

THE PROPHET MOSES

Revelation 11:6 says about the two witnesses that “they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every sort of plague as often as they wish.” This shows that Moses was also a prophetic type of the two witnesses, because the witnesses performed the same actions Moses did.

Moses himself expressed some prophetic words, indicating that he was a prophetic type. We read in Deuteronomy 18:18, 19 (above) and Acts 3:19-23 (below):

¹⁸ A prophet I shall raise up for them from the midst of their brothers, like you; and I shall indeed put my words in his mouth, and he will certainly speak to them all that I shall command him. ¹⁹ And it must occur that the man who will not listen to my words that he will speak in my name, I shall myself require an account from him.

¹⁹ “Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get YOUR sins blotted out, that seasons of refreshing may come from the person of Jehovah ²⁰ and that he may send forth the Christ appointed for YOU, Jesus, ²¹ whom heaven, indeed, must hold within itself ²² until the times of restoration of all things of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old time. ²² In fact, Moses said, ‘Jehovah God will raise up for YOU from among YOUR brothers a prophet like me. YOU must listen to him according to all the things he speaks to YOU. ²³ Indeed, any soul that does not listen to that Prophet will be completely destroyed from among the people.’

In the speech Peter gave, according to Acts 3:19-23, he showed that Moses was a type of Jesus. Moses was the mediator of the old covenant, and Jesus was the mediator of the new covenant. The situation we are discussing in Revelation 11:2-11 occurs when the greater Moses, Jesus Christ, is present. That Moses, according to Revelation 11:6, is also a prophetic type of the two witnesses, stresses their role as spiritual Israel whose basis is the new covenant. Moses stressed the importance of listening to the words of the one of whom he was a prophetic type, suggesting that the two witnesses would preach the word of God and that it was important to listen to these words.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE TWO WITNESSES

The words of Daniel 12:7 identify the two Witnesses:

⁷ And I began to hear the man clothed with the linen, who was up above the waters of the stream, as he proceeded to raise his right [hand] and his left [hand] to the heavens and to swear by the One who is alive for time indefinite: “It will be for an appointed time, appointed times and a half. And as soon as there will have been a finishing of the dashing of the power of *the holy people* to pieces, all these things will come to their finish.”

The identification is that the holy people mentioned by Daniel experience the same things as the two witnesses at the same time. The power of the holy people will be dashed to pieces, and the two witnesses will be killed. The time period Daniel mentions is 3 1/2 times, which is the same as 42 months, or 1,260 days, that is mentioned in Revelation.

Revelation is written in signs, and the same things can be described in different ways. I quote Revelation 13:5-7:

⁵ And a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies was given it, and authority to act *forty-two months* was given it. ⁶ And it opened its mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name and his residence, even those residing in heaven. ⁷ And there was granted it to wage war with *the holy ones* and conquer them, and authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.

The verses say that the wild beast mentioned in verse 1, will “wage war with the holy ones and conquer them,” and the period of 42 months is mentioned. Because the same time period and the same destiny are mentioned in connection with the two witnesses in chapter 11 and the holy ones in chapter 13, they must be identical.

A different description is found in Revelation 12:17:

¹⁷ And the dragon grew wrathful at the woman, and went off to wage war with *the remaining ones of her seed*, who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness to Jesus.

Three different identifications are used in Revelation for those who will be persecuted and conquered: “the two witnesses,” “the holy ones,” and “the remaining ones of her [the woman’s] seed.” These expressions align well with the expression “the holy people” in Daniel 12:7.

Jesus said that his followers should understand his great prophecy, including the appointed times of the nations, and that they should understand Revelation. And Daniel wrote that his prophecies should be sealed until the time of the end. But at that time, the prophecies should be understood

The important question is which group was conquered and killed after a time period of 1,260 days? As far as I know, no other religious group has claimed this except Jehovah’s Witnesses. Is this claim sound? And will it identify Jehovah’s Witnesses as “the holy people,” the people of God?

THE APPLICATION OF THE 1,260 DAYS

It is clear that 3 1/2 times in Daniel 7:25 and 12:7, as well as 42 months in Revelation 11:2 and 13:5, and 1,260 days in Revelation 11:3 refer to the same time period. None of the contexts of these time periods tells us what would mark the beginning of the period.

But 3 1/2 times in Daniel 12:7 ends with the dashing to pieces the power of the holy people, Revelation 11:7 ends with the killing of the two witnesses, and 13:5-7 ends with the conquering of “the holy ones” by the wild beast. These three events

must refer to the same situation. The time of the end is mentioned in Daniel 11:40 and 12:9, so the 3 1/2 times occur in the context of events in the time of the end.

Revelation 1:1 says that the signs in the book will be fulfilled in the future, which is after the year 98, when the book was probably written. Daniel 12:9 says the prophecies of the book will first be understood in the time of the end, which chapter 3 shows began in 1914 CE. Revelation 1:10 shows that the spirit moved John to “the day of the lord.”

Given the background mentioned, it is logical that the day of the Lord is the same as the time of the end. This suggests that what happened to the two witnesses occurred on the day of the Lord, which is probably the same as the time of the end.

The only group today preaching to all the nations that the kingdom of God has been established, and that this kingdom, in the near future, will remove this wicked system of things and create a paradise on the earth, is Jehovah’s Witnesses. This group began in the 1870s as “The Bible Students.”

Can we find one event in the history of this group when their power was dashed to pieces, and the two witnesses were killed? There is only one such situation, and that is what happened on **June 21, 1918**. On this day, the president of the Watchtower Society, J. F. Rutherford, Secretary-Treasurer W. E. Van Amburgh, Clayton J. Woodworth and George H. Fisher (the two compilers of *The Finished Mystery*), F. H. Robison (a member of the *Watch Tower* editorial committee), A. H. Macmillan, R. J. Martin, and Giovanni DeCecca were sentenced to 80 years in prison.

Revelation 11:7 says: “And when they have finished their witnessing, **the wild beast that ascends out of the abyss** (*abyssos*) will make war with them and conquer them and kill them.” Revelation 13:1 speaks about “a wild beast ascending out of **the sea** (*thalassa*). Is this the same wild beast that is mentioned in 11:7? Deuteronomy 30:13 (The Septuagint) uses the Greek word *thalassa* (“sea”), and the reference to this passage in Romans 10:7 uses the Greek word *abyssos* (“abyss”). Therefore, “the wild beast that ascends out of the abyss (Revelation 11:7) is a reference to the wild beast that ascends out of the sea (*thalassa*). (Revelation 13:1)

The mentioned persons were the leaders of “the holy people/the holy ones,” and they were taken to jail. As a result, the entire organization broke down, and the religious work of this group came to a halt. If we count back 1,260 days from **June 21, 1918**, we arrive at **December 1914**. The event marking the beginning of the 1,260 days is not mentioned. But because the appointed times of the nations ended in 1914, and December is the last month of that year, it is logical to start the calculation of the 1,260 days in this month. The Watchtower of November 1, 1993, page 10, says:

¹³ Hence, from December 1914, this small band of witnesses ‘preached in sackcloth,’ humbly enduring as they announced Jehovah’s judgments. A shock to many was, in 1916, the death of C. T. Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. As war fever took hold, they encountered mounting opposition. Some were imprisoned. Individuals, such as Frank Platt in England and Robert Clegg in Canada, were tortured by sadistic authorities. Finally, on **June 21, 1918**, J. F. Rutherford, the new president, together with the directors of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, was sentenced on false

charges to a long term in prison. Thus, at the end of the prophetic period, the “little horn” killed the organized public preaching work.—Daniel 7:8, *King James Version*.

I find the Watchtower’s explanation of the fulfillment of 1,260 days to be convincing. I am not aware of any other religious group that has claimed the fulfillment of the 1,260 days in their history.

One important lesson to learn from the discussion above is the importance of the year 1914 as the end of the appointed times of the nations and the start of the time of the end.

As a matter of fact, the understanding of the prophecies of the Bible hinges upon the year 1914. If this year is rejected, the prophecies cannot be understood!

THE REVIVAL OF THE TWO WITNESSES

The people of God, symbolized by the two witnesses, died on June 21, 1918, when the leaders were jailed. Regarding this situation. Revelation 11:8-12:

⁸ And their corpses will be on the broad way of the great city which is in a spiritual sense called Sod’om and Egypt, where their Lord was also impaled. ⁹ And those of the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their corpses for three and a half days, and they do not let their corpses be laid in a tomb. ¹⁰ And those dwelling on the earth rejoice over them and enjoy themselves, and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those dwelling on the earth.

¹¹ *And after the three and a half days spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet*, and great fear fell upon those beholding them. ¹² And they heard a loud voice out of heaven say to them: “Come on up here.” And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them.

The prophecy says that after a short period symbolized as three and a half days, the two witnesses were revived. They had been in jail for 9 months, but on March 25, 1919, they were released. Those who had been jailed received much support, and the religious work that had stopped on June 21, 1918, was continued. The headquarters in Pittsburgh were renovated, and Rutherford was back on the job by July 1919. A convention was held in Cedar Point, Ohio on September 1-8, 1919, and the talks stressed the need for all Christians to proclaim the kingdom of God. This convention clearly stirred the Bible students to action, indicating that the two witnesses had been revived.

The 1 260 days began in December 1914, and ended on June 21, 1918.

THE PERIOD OF 1,290 DAYS

The period of 3 1/2 times (1,260 days) is mentioned in Daniel 12:7. That the prophecies of Daniel should not be understood before the time of the end, is mentioned in verses 8-10, and in verse 11 we read:

¹¹ “And from the time that the constant [feature] has been removed and there has been a placing of the disgusting thing that is causing desolation, there will be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Because the setting of Daniel chapter 9 is the time of the end, the 1,290 days must also be fulfilled in the time of the end. In this situation, we also have an event in the history of the world, that connects the 1 290 days with the time of the end. This is the placing of the disgusting thing that causes desolation.

THE BEGINNING OF THE 1,290 DAYS

In connection with the beginning of the 1,290 days, “the constant [feature]” is mentioned. The Hebrew word *tāmīd* (“constant, continually”) refers to a sacrifice that was constantly placed on the altar in the temple. This sacrifice was a prophetic type, and the question is: What is the antitype in the time of the end? We get an answer in Hebrews 13:15:

¹⁵ Through him let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name.

When were the sacrifices of praise removed? This happened on June 21, 1918, when the leaders of the congregations of the Bible Students were sent to jail. Because of this, the preaching of the good news of the kingdom, the fruit of lips, stopped.

Another later event that would mark the beginning of the 1 290 days was “a placing of the disgusting thing that is causing desolation.” The expression “a placing” is translated from the infinitive construct of the verb *nātan*, with the meaning “give, put, set, set up.” Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 speak about the disgusting thing that causes desolation, and in both places the Greek verb *histēmi*, with the meaning “put, place, set up” is used. The verb *histēmi* is perfect participle, indicating that the action has been completed, literally: “having been placed.”

In the first century, Jesus showed that the disgusting thing would be placed in a holy place. When this happened, the followers of Jesus should see it and react. The Hebrew infinitive is time-indifferent, which means that we cannot know the time of the verb *nātan*. Therefore, the rendering “a placing” of NWT84 is fine.

As I demonstrated in chapter 6, the disgusting thing that causes desolation refers to the League of Nations, and later to the United Nations. When was there “a placing” of the League of Nations, and who did this placing? There are three dates that must be considered:

The peace conference in Paris started on January 18, 1919.

The Versailles Treaty was signed on June 28, 1919.

The League of Nations was established on October 13, 1919.

The writers of The Watchtower have chosen *January 18, 1919*, as the beginning of the 1,290 days, and I agree with this choice. The reason for this is given in The Watchtower of October 1, 1959, pages 597, 598:

Before World War I ended on November 11, 1918, American President Wilson proposed a League of Nations. Before the Paris Peace Conference opened in 1919 the executive committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America adopted a Declaration stating that *the proposed League was “the political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth.”* The executive committee also appointed a Special Commission to present officially the Declaration to the Peace Conference then soon to convene at Paris.

³² Did this Special Commission present the Declaration to the Paris Peace Conference after it opened on January 18, 1919? In the annual report of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America for the calendar year of 1919 there appeared on page 11 this sentence:

At the Peace Conference in Paris a representative committee of the Federal Council was received by officials of the government and presented the actions of the executive committee which they were instructed to convey to the Peace Conference.

³³ More action than the above was taken. The Peace Treaty was signed on June 28, 1919. The Federal Council Bulletin as of June, 1919, on page 94, said the following in an article entitled “Resolutions Adopted by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in Special Session at Cleveland, Ohio, May 6-8, 1919”:

1. Social Justice . . .
2. National and International Affairs

RESOLVED: That we express our gratitude for the establishment of the League of Nations as agreed upon by the Paris Peace Conference and pledge our support in securing its ratification by the Senate of the United States and our devotion to make it a success.

On the basis of the quotation above, we can say that Church leaders in the USA did the “placing” of the disgusting thing by claiming that the League of Nations was “the political expression of the kingdom of God on earth.” They did this before and during the peace conference.

The Bible students under the leadership of J.F. Rutherford had a different view of the League of Nations than Church leaders in the USA and Great Britain, as we see in the following quotation from The Watchtower of November 15, 1970, pages 688, 689:

¹⁶ Did this disgusted God make protest to the nations that undertook the League of Nations? Yes, through his “holy people” on earth. In the spring of 1919 he brought to an end the condition in which his “holy people” had their power scattered or dashed to pieces. After the Versailles Peace Treaty was signed on June 28, 1919, but before the League of Nations went into effect on October 13, 1919, God’s liberated, reunited “holy people” celebrated their first international convention at Cedar Point, Ohio, September 1-8, 1919. There in the public lecture of “Hope for Distressed Humanity” it was boldly

declared that the League of Nations, despite having the blessing of the clergy of Christendom, would never have Jehovah's blessing and would therefore fail. Shortly afterward the League was identified in the *Watch Tower* issue as of January 1, 1921, as being the "image of the wild beast" foretold in Revelation 13:14, 15, set up for worldwide worship. Furthermore, in 1926, in the public lecture in Royal Albert Hall of London, England, it was proclaimed that the League of Nations was the Eighth World Power foretold in Revelation 17:11.

It is clear that J.F. Rutherford and the Bible Students, even before the League of Nations started to function, understood and expressed that it had God's disapproval.

THE END OF THE 1,290 DAYS

The book *Our Incoming World Government — God's Kingdom* (1977), page 138, has the following calculation:

³⁶ If, now, we measure 1,290 days from that marked date, January 18, 1919, when the eight representatives of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society were still under restraint in the Atlanta federal penitentiary, where do we end up? According to the Bible, those 1,290 days are the equivalent of three lunar years and seven lunar months. According to the lunar calendar, *January 18, 1919*, fell on Shebat 17, 1919. Three lunar years from then would lead up to Shebat 17, 1922, or February 15, 1922. Seven lunar months counted from that would end with Elul 16, 1922, or at sundown, *September 9, 1922*. So did the 1,290 days or three lunar years and seven months end at a significant time? The historical facts answer Yes!

This is a sound calculation, and it shows that the 1,290 days started on *January 18, 1919*, and ended on *September 9, 1922*, during the epoque-making convention in Cedar Point in Ohio, September 5-13, 1922. To show that the mentioned convention was a milestone in the history of the Bible Students, I make a long quotation from the book *Our Incoming World Government — God's Kingdom*, pages 138, 139:

³⁷ The following day [the day after the end of the 1 290 days], September 10, 1922, a Sunday, proved to be the sixth day of a nine-day international convention of the International Bible Students Association at Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A. It was entitled on the program as "Activity Day." The feature of the day was the public address to an audience of 18,000, by the president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. At the close of his oral argument, the speaker submitted to his audience a resolution called "A Proclamation," which set forth a challenge to all the world rulers. This Proclamation was meant, not for just those conventioners, but for all the world, and subsequent to the Cedar Point convention it was published in tract form and distributed by the tens of millions of copies in many languages.

³⁸ The preceding day, Saturday, September 9, was entitled "Consecration Day" and was marked by the mass baptism of 361 men and women in symbol of their dedication to God through Christ. However, Friday, September 8, was entitled "The Day," which featured the address of the Society's president on the theme found in Matthew 4:17: "The Kingdom of Heaven Is at Hand." (AV) Leading up to the climax of his address, the speaker said:

"Why, then, deliver the message to those who do not understand? Will any one hear? The Prophet of the Lord answers: 'Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled:

who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.—Isaiah 43:8-12.

“Thus we see that those of the temple class are clearly designated as the Lord’s witnesses at this time, to bring a message of consolation to the people, that the kingdom of heaven is here, . . .”

So, with all due fitness, the Society’s president could close his rousing speech with this exhortation: “Advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his kingdom.”

³⁹ Immediate opportunity to advertise was offered on the day after the public talk and the challenging resolution adopted by all the conventioners. That Monday, September 11, 1922, was entitled “Service Day,” and the conventioners sallied forth into the field service, more keenly aware than ever that they were advance publicity agents of God’s glorious kingdom.

⁴⁰ Later on, it was discerned that the public message and the resolution adopted in connection with that public message was the start of the fulfillment of what was foretold in Revelation, chapters eight through sixteen. What was that? The sounding of the seven trumpets and the pouring out of the seven last plagues of Jehovah’s wrath upon this doomed system of things.

⁴¹ *Calculating the 1,290 days of Daniel 12:11 in this here-given way, do we find that they terminated at a very significant time? We have every reason to believe so. There can be little question that the 1,290 days thus calculated mark an epoch for Jehovah’s “holy people” in this time of the end. The supreme issue before the whole universe was then coming to the fore, namely, Jehovah’s Universal Sovereignty.*

We note that there are two events linked to the beginning of the 1,290 days:

- 1) The constant feature has been removed.
- 2) The disgusting thing that is causing desolation has been set up.

The first point links the 1,290 days to the 1,260 days, which ran from December 1914 to June 21, 1918. The end of the 1,260 days was marked by the shattering of “the power of the holy people,” which occurred when seven of the leaders were imprisoned, and the activity of the Bible Students came to a halt. That activity consisted of preaching the good news of the Kingdom. When this preaching stopped, the “constant feature”—the daily sacrifices, which foreshadowed the preaching of God’s Kingdom—also ceased. This was the first event that had to take place in connection with the 1,290 days.

However, another event also occurred at the beginning of the 1,290 days: the setting up of “the disgusting thing that causes desolation.” This occurred on January 18, 1919, and marked the beginning of the 1,290 days.

The 1,290 days started on January 18, 1919, and ended on September 9, 1922.

THE PERIOD OF 1,335 DAYS

I start this discussion by quoting Daniel 12:11, 12:

¹¹ “And from the time that the constant [feature] has been removed and there has been a placing of the disgusting thing that is causing desolation, there will be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. ¹² “Happy is the one who is keeping in expectation (*hākā*) and who arrives (*nāgā*) at the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days!

The Hebrew word *hākā* in the piel stem has the meaning “to lie in wait (ambush); hope for, long for.” (Kohlenberger and Mounce) The word *nāgā* in the hifil stem has the meaning “cause to touch; reach, approach, arrive.” (BDB) The first verb is imperfect, and the second is a participle, which suggests that the actions of the verse are in progress and are continuing. So, the meaning is that those who continue to hope and long for something and who continue with this until they arrive at the end of the 1,335 days are happy.

Daniel does not point to any event that would mark the beginning of the 1,335 days. But if they should have any chronological meaning, they had to start at the end of the 1,290 days. While the 1,335 days do not refer to events marking the beginning or the end, they evidently describe a time with some problems, and those who continue to serve Jehovah during this time are happy

The book *Our Incoming World Government — God’s Kingdom* (1977), page 140, makes the following calculation:

⁴³ The second Cedar Point convention ended on September 13, 1922. If, now, we count from the next day, *September 14, or, Elul 21, 1922*, Bible calendar time, when would the 1,335 days end? As the 1,290 days amounted to three lunar years and seven months, so the 1,335 days would amount to three lunar years, eight months and fifteen days. Counting now *from* Elul 21 (or, September 14), 1922, we find that three lunar years from that date would end on Elul 20 (or, September 9), 1925. To this we add eight lunar months and fifteen days and arrive at the date *Sivan 6 (or, May 19), 1926*. That day was the 1,893rd anniversary of the happy day of Pentecost of 33 C.E., when the holy spirit was poured out upon Jesus’ disciples at Jerusalem.

⁴⁴ Just prior to this, on May 13-16, 1926, a general assembly had taken place in Magdeburg, Germany, at which the president of the Watch Tower Society had addressed a public audience of 25,000 on the subject “Comfort for the People.” *Now, on May 19, preparations moved ahead for the holding of the outstanding international convention of 1926, that at Alexandra Palace, London, England, May 25-31*. Many happy delegates came from distant lands.

⁴⁵ This London assembly made a tremendous contribution to the happiness of the prophet Daniel’s people, the remnant of spiritual Israelites. At that time, not too many people were really happy about the taking over of Italy by the Fascists. Fears were excited by the progress of the Nazi (National Socialist German Workers’ Party) movement in Germany.

But the six-year-old League of Nations was going strong and was about to admit postwar Germany to its membership—on September 8, 1926. In spite of this the International Bible Students Association (I.B.S.A.) continued to expose the League as a man-made political substitute for God’s kingdom that had come to power in the heavens since the end of the Gentile Times in 1914. These Christian Bible Students had responded to the question, “Who will honor Jehovah?” that the *Watch Tower* issue of January 1, 1926, had raised before its readers, and had chosen to honor Jehovah and his kingdom.

Why it was important to “keeping in expectation and arriving” at the end of the 1,335 days is described in *The Watchtower* of November 1, 1993, pages 11, 12:

¹⁷ Daniel 12:12 says: “Happy is the one who is keeping in expectation and who arrives at the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days!” These 1,335 days, or three years, eight and a half months, evidently began at the end of the previous period. Counting from September 1922, this brings us to the late spring (Northern Hemisphere) of 1926. What happened during those 1,335 days?

¹⁸ Despite the landmark nature of events in 1922, evidently some still looked longingly to the past. The *Studies in the Scriptures*, authored by C. T. Russell, were still basic study material. *Further, the widely circulated booklet Millions Now Living Will Never Die presented the view that in 1925, God’s purposes regarding the restoring of the earth to Paradise and the resurrecting of the faithful ones of old would begin to be fulfilled.* The endurance of the anointed seemed to be nearly completed. Nevertheless, some associated with the Bible Students did not feel impelled to share the good news with others.

¹⁹ As the 1,335 days progressed, all of this changed. To strengthen the brothers, regular group studies of *The Watch Tower* were organized. Field service was stressed. Beginning in May 1923, everyone was invited to share in field service on the first Tuesday of every month, and time was set aside during the midweek congregation meeting to encourage them in this work. In August 1923, at an assembly in Los Angeles, California, U.S.A., it was shown that Jesus’ parable of the sheep and the goats would be fulfilled before the Millennial Reign. (Matthew 25:31-40) The year 1924 saw the inauguration of radio station WBBR, which was used to broadcast the good news over the airwaves. The article “Birth of the Nation” in the March 1, 1925, issue of *The Watch Tower* gave an adjusted understanding of Revelation chapter 12. Finally, faithful Christians could properly understand the tumultuous events of 1914-19.

²⁰ The year 1925 came to its conclusion, but the end was not yet! Ever since the 1870’s, Bible Students had been serving with a date in mind—first 1914, then 1925. Now, they realized that they must serve for as long as Jehovah wishes. The January 1, 1926, issue of *The Watch Tower* carried the landmark article “Who Will Honor Jehovah?” highlighting as never before the importance of God’s name. And finally, in May 1926 at the London, England, convention, a resolution was adopted entitled “A Testimony to the Rulers of the World.” This forthrightly proclaimed the truth about God’s Kingdom and the coming destruction of Satan’s world. At the same convention, the hard-hitting book *Deliverance* was released, becoming the first of a series to replace *Studies in the Scriptures*. God’s people were now looking forward, not backward. The 1,335 days were concluded.

²¹ Some were unwilling to adjust to these developments, but those who endured were truly happy. Moreover, as we look back on the fulfillment of these prophetic time periods, we too are happy because our confidence is strengthened that the small body of anointed Christians who lived through those times really is the faithful and discreet slave. In the

years since then, Jehovah’s organization has expanded enormously, but the faithful and discreet slave is still at its center, guiding it. How thrilling, then, to know that for the anointed and the other sheep, still more happiness is in store! This will be seen as we consider another of Daniel’s prophecies.

The different events mentioned in the quotation showed the importance of continuing to serve Jehovah during the 1,335 days. The most important event that would need perseverance could have been the expectation that the faithful servants of God from of old would get a resurrection in the year 1925, and that did not happen.

The 1,335 days started on September 14, 1922, and ended May 19, 1926.

Table 10.1 Prophetic time periods

1,260 days	January 1914 — June 21 1918
1,290 days	January 18, 1919 — September 9, 1922
1,335 days	September 14, 1922 — May 19, 1926

In my view, that data presented in the Watchtower literature about the fulfillment of the 1 260, 1290 and 1335 days gives a strong impression. Particularly, the anchoring point of the beginning of the 1,290 days of “the placing of the disgusting thing that causes desolation” is important. This connects all three time periods with the beginning of the time of the end. My conclusion is that the Watchtower literature has presented solid evidence for the fulfillment of the three time prophecies.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the preaching the good news of the Kingdom—indirectly referred to in connection with the 1,290 days—is not to separate all people into two groups: Those who will receive eternal life and those who will face eternal death. Rather, the purpose is to gather two groups of people whom Jehovah God intends to use in a special way.

In Jesus' day, the gathering of the group of 144,000 took place; these were anointed with God's spirit and are destined to rule in heaven alongside Jesus Christ. In the time of the end following 1914, the number of 144,000 was not yet complete; consequently, the gathering of individuals to fill this number was the first event to occur during the time of the end.

This was followed by the gathering of those who would constitute the “great crowd” mentioned in Revelation 7:9–14. God's purpose in gathering them is for them to survive the great tribulation, after which he will use them in the work of preparing the earth for the resurrection of the dead.

What, then, becomes of all the others living during the time of the end, as well as those who have lived throughout history? When Jesus died, he purchased all these, all of Adam's descendants. This means that all of Adam's descendants—provided they are not permeated by wickedness and have not sinned against the holy spirit, and do not belong to the 144,000 or to the great crowd—will be resurrected during the thousand-year Judgment Day. There, they will have the opportunity to serve Jehovah and gain eternal life. The resurrection will also include the vast majority of the more than 8 billion people who will die during the great tribulation.

Can we now see the significance of “the holy people” (Daniel 12:7), whose power would be shattered after “a time, times, and half a time”? Those referred to as “the holy people” do not constitute an elite group that is alone in being saved and gaining eternal life. Rather, “the holy people” includes the remainder of the 144,000 who will rule with Jesus, as well as the great crowd, whom Jehovah God will use to perform specific tasks. Because many specific events—both negative and positive—are to befall “the holy people,” they must be a united group that stands together and remains distinct from all other groups.

One way to identify “the holy people” is to look at the fulfillment of the prophetic time periods discussed in this chapter. We can first use the negative method of identification: Any religious group or community that cannot demonstrate that the 1,260, 1,290, and 1,335 days have been fulfilled in its history cannot be “the holy people.” The positive method of identification: The three mentioned time

prophecies have been fulfilled in the history of Jehovah's Witnesses, proving that they are "the holy people."

The fact that Jehovah's Witnesses are referred to as "the holy people" does not disparage other people or condemn those of other faiths. Jehovah God loves all people (John 3:16), and Jesus has purchased all of Adam's descendants. The difference is that Jehovah's Witnesses consist of people who have studied the Bible and learned of Jehovah's purpose for the earth. They have aligned their way of life with the Bible, and they are all proclaimers of the good news of the Kingdom. They have received an opportunity today—one they have embraced. They will survive the great tribulation and be used by Jehovah to prepare the earth for the resurrection.

All other people who have lived and died—or who are still alive—and who are not permeated by wickedness and have not sinned against the holy spirit, will receive their opportunity after being resurrected from the dead in the new system of things. Over the course of a thousand years, they will gradually be brought to perfection. By the end of the thousand years, they will be perfect and free from inherited sin.

Here we can see how wonderful God's plan for mankind has been: None of us descendants of Adam asked to inherit Adam's sin. Yet now, after the thousand years, all who are alive will be perfect and without sin. And now, everyone will receive the same opportunity that Adam had when he was a perfect man. They will have the chance to choose whether to serve Jehovah or follow Satan the Devil.

This means that most of those who today have not desired—or have not had the opportunity—to become part of "the holy people" will have the chance to join "the holy people" during the thousand-year Judgment Day, the antitypical Jubilee.

POSTSCRIPT

When we read the letters to the congregation in Corinth, we understand that there was a lack of unity in the congregation, and that some elders who are called the “superfine apostles” had exalted themselves and had introduced some false teachings.

When we read chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation about the letters to the seven congregations in Asia, we see that violations of God’s laws were accepted in some congregations, and false doctrines were also introduced. But in spite of all these problems in the mentioned congregations, these congregations were parts of “the holy people” who had God’s approval.

In the 21st century, the members of the Governing Body have elevated themselves to a government for Jehovah’s Witnesses and have given themselves all power. They have also introduced procedures that violate some of God’s laws and have embraced some false doctrines. In spite of this, Jehovah’s Witnesses are still “the holy people” and most of their doctrines and practices accord with the Bible’s principles.

I started this chapter by referring to the conversation between Pilate and Jesus. Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?” But instead of waiting for Jesus’ answer, he turned his back on Jesus and went out to speak to the Jews. (John 18:37, 38) In light of the situation among Jehovah’s Witnesses in the 21st century, we should ask the same question Pilate did: “What is truth?” But we should wait for the answer by following the example of those in Beroea who “received the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things were so.”

