

## \* Addenda

### (Ai) Lexicon (Abridged)

NB: Fifty-five verses of the eighty-seven we have considered above have direct references to a coming, appearance, revelation or approach of our Lord. This addendum supplies the reader with the Greek word used on each occasion with its reference number (#) from Strong's Concordance. Refer also Addendum (Bii).

(3) Matthew 10:23, "... till the Son of Man be come [#2064]". .. (verse) ..

(5) Matthew 16:27 & 28, " .. (verse 27) .. the Son of Man shall come [#2064] in the glory of His Father .. (verse 28) .. the Son of Man coming [#2064] in His kingdom".

(6) Matthew 24:3-35, " .. (verse 3) .. "What shall be the sign of thy coming [#3952] .. (verse 14) .. shall the end come [#2240] .. (verse 27) .. lightning comes [#1831] ... so also shall the coming [#3952] of the Son of Man be .. (verse 30) .. then shall appear [#5316] the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven ... and they shall see Son of Man coming [#2064] in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory".

(7) Matthew 24:36-44, " .. (verse 37) .. as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming [#3952] of the Son of Man be .. (verse 39) .. the Flood came [#2064] ... so also the coming [#3952] of the Son of Man .. (verse 42) .. what hour your Lord doth come [#2064] .. (verse 43) .. The thief would come [#2064] .. (verse 44) .. be ready for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh [#2064] ".

(8) Matthew 25:31-46, " .. (verse 31) .. when the Son of Man shall come [#2064] in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him .. (verse 34) .. concerning the sheep Gentiles at the end of the Apocalypse) come [#1205], ye blessed of my Father .. (verse 41) .. concerning the goat Gentiles at the end of the Apocalypse, "depart [#4198] from me, ye cursed".

(9) Matthew 26:64, "Thou hast said: ... Ye (i.e., Caiaphas) shall see the Son of Man, sitting on the right hand of power, and coming [#2064] in the clouds of Heaven"

or

Mark 14:62, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right of power, and coming [#2064] in the clouds of Heaven".

(10) Mark 8:38: Interlinear and NASB, "when He (The Son of Man) comes [#2064] in the glory of His Father, along with the Holy Angels"; or in KJV and ASV, "cometh"; or in the Passion Translation, "when he makes His appearance";

Luke 9:26: Interlinear and NASB, "when He comes" [#2064]; or in KJV, "when He shall come", or in ASV, "cometh"; or in the Passion Translation, "will one day return"; and

Matthew 16:27: Interlinear, "about to come in the glory of His Father, with His angels" (or in the KJV and ASV, "shall come"; or in the Passion Translation, "will one day return with my messengers", and in NASB; "is going to come [#2064]".

(11) Mark 13:3-31, " .. (verse 26) .. the Son of Man coming [#2064] in the clouds".

(12) Mark 13:32-37, " .. (verse 36) .. watch, lest coming [#2064] suddenly He find you

sleeping".

(15) Luke 12:40, "Be .. ready .. the Son of Man cometh [#2064] at an hour which ye think not".

(17) Luke 17:23-37, " .. (verse 24) .. as lightening ... so shall also the Son of Man be in His day .. (verse 26) .. as it was in the Days of Noe (Noah), so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man .. (verse 27) .. and the Flood came [#2064] .. (verse 28) .. the Days of Lot .. (verse 29) .. the day Lot went out of Sodom .. (verse 30) .. the Day when the Son of Man is revealed [#601]".

(20) Luke 18:8, "when the Son of Man cometh [#2064], shall he find faith on the Earth?"

(21) Luke 21:5-28, " .. (verse 27) .. the Son of Man coming [#2064] in a cloud with power and great glory" .. (verse 28) .. And when these things begin to come [#1096] to pass

(22) Luke 21:29-36, " .. (verse 31) .. When you see these things come [#1096] to pass .. (verse 34) .. lest at any time .... that day come upon you unawares [#160, Interlinear] or [#2186, Strong] .. (verse 35) .. for as a snare it shall come [#1904] on them that dwell on the face of the whole earth ... (verse 36) .. watch ... to be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come [#1096] to pass". Or, in the Interlinear verse 36, "being about (expected) to occur". In verses 29 to 36, the Interlinear interchanges between 'happen', 'occur' (#1096) and 'come' (#160 and #1904).

(24) John 14:3, " .. I will come [#2064] again and receive you unto myself ..".

(26) John 21:20-23, " .. (verse 22) .. If I will that he tarry till I come [#2064]"; repeated in verse 23.

(27) Acts 1:11 and 2:17-20, " .. (verse 1:11) .. This same Jesus .. shall come [#2064] in like manner .. (verse 2:20) .. before that great and notable Day of the Lord come [#2064]".

(30) I Corinthians 1:7-8, " .. (verse 7) .. waiting for the coming [#602] of our Lord Jesus *the* Christ .. (verse 8) .. blameless in the Day of our Lord Jesus *the* Christ"; or in the Interlinear, "(verse 7) awaiting the revelation [#602] of our Lord ..".

(32) I Corinthians 4:5, " .. until the Lord come [#2064]".

(33) I Corinthians 5:5, " .. in the day of the Lord Jesus ..".

(34) I Corinthians 11:26, " .. proclaim the Lord's death till he come [#2064]".

(35) I Corinthians 15:23-8, " .. (verse 23) .. they that are Christ's at His Coming [#3952] .. (verse 24) .. then cometh [#3952, inferred] the end (Greek, '*telos*')".

(36) I Corinthians 15:52b, " .. at the Last Trump ... we shall be changed ..".

(39) II Corinthians 1:14, " .. the day of the Lord Jesus ..".

(42) Philippians 1:6 & 10, "(verse 6) until the Day of Jesus *the* Christ ...(verse 10) till the Day of Christ".

(43) Philippians 2:15-16, " .. (verse 16) .. rejoice in the Day of Christ".

(46) Colossians 3:2-4, " .. (verse 4) .. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear [#5319], then shall ye also appear [#5319] with Him in glory "; or in the Interlinear, "Whenever Christ our life is revealed [#5319], then also you will be revealed [#5319] in glory with Him".

(47) I Thessalonians 1:10, "and to wait [#362] for His Son from Heaven".

(48) I Thessalonians 2:19, "in the presence of the Lord Jesus *the* Christ at His coming [#3952]".

(51) I Thessalonians 3:13, "at the coming [#3952] of our Lord Jesus *the* Christ with all His saints"; or in the Interlinear 'presence' on the line "located directly under each Greek word" whereas the Interlinear uses 'coming' in the "*Literal Translation of the Bible* in the narrow column on the side" described as "a straightforward translation that makes it easy to see the proper word order in English". The Passion Translation, by Dr Brian Simmons translates, "at the coming of the Lord of us, Jesus the Christ, with all the **holy myriads of Himself**".

(52) I Thessalonians 4:13-17, " .. (verse 15) .. we *who* are alive *and* remain unto the coming [#3952] of the Lord .. (verse 16) .. for the Lord Himself shall descend [#2597] from Heaven .. (verse 17) .. then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up [#726] .. to meet [#529] the Lord in the air".

(55) I Thessalonians 5:23, "be preserved blameless unto the coming [#3952] of our Lord Jesus *the* Christ".

(56) II Thessalonians 1:5-12, " .. (verse 7) .. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed [#602] from Heaven with His mighty angels .. (verse 10) .. When He shall come [#2064] to be glorified in His saints".

(57) II Thessalonians 2:1-2 and 13-17, " .. (verse 1) .. Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming [#3952] of our Lord Jesus *the* Christ, and by our gathering together [#1997] unto Him".

(58) II Thessalonians 2:3-7 and 9-12, " .. (verse 3) .. except there come [#2064] a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed [#601], the son of perdition .. (verse 9) .. whose coming [#3952] is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders".

(59) II Thessalonians 2:8, "And then that Wicked **One** (or in the Interlinear, "Lawless **One**") be revealed [#601], whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming [#3952]"; Note, the "coming" of Satan's son in verse 9 also is the Greek '*Parousia*' [#3952] and is the same word used here for the "coming in verse 8 of Jesus who destroys Satan's son, "The son of perdition".

(61) II Thessalonians 3:5, " ... the patient waiting [#5281] for Christ".

(63) I Timothy 6:14-15, " .. (verse 14) .. until the appearing [#2015] of the Lord Jesus the Christ".

(64) II Timothy 4:1, "Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing [#2015] and His kingdom"

- (65) II Timothy 4:8, "them also who love His Appearing [#2015]".
- (66) Titus 2:13, "Looking for [#4327] (or in the Interlinear, "expecting") that Blessed [#3107] Hope [#1680] (Rapture?), and The Glorious Appearing (Second Coming?) [#2015]".
- (67) Hebrews 9:28 , "unto them that look for Him shall He appear [#3700] the second time".
- (68) Hebrews 10:25, " .. As ye see the day approaching [#1448]".
- (69) Hebrews 10:37, "He that will come [#2064] shall come [#2240]"; or in the Interlinear in its 'Literal Translation of the Bible in the narrow column on the side' "the 'One coming' but on the line 'located directly under each Greek word' the "coming One [#2064] will come [#2240]". For background on the Interlinear translations refer the note in this section under (51) I Thessalonians 3:13.
- (70) James 5:7-10, " .. (verse 7) .. Be patient .. unto the coming [#3952] of the Lord .. (verse 8) .. the coming [#3952] of the Lord draweth nigh".
- (71) I Peter 1:3-13, " .. (verse 5) .. To be revealed [#601] in the Last Time [#2540 and #2078] .. (verse 7) .. trial of your faith .. more precious ...at the appearing [#602] of Jesus *the* Christ .. (verse 13) .. the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation [#602] of Jesus *the* Christ".
- (73) I Peter 5:4, "And when The Chief Shepherd shall appear [#5319]".
- (74) II Peter 3:1-4, " .. (verse 3) .. Knowing this first, that there shall come [#2064] in the Last Days scoffers, .. (verse 4) .. Saying, where is the promise of His coming [#3952] .. All things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation".
- (75) II Peter 3:5-13, " .. (Verse 10) .. But the Day of the Lord will come [#2240] as a thief in the night .. (verse 12) .. Looking for and hasting unto the coming [#3952] of the Day of God ..".
- (76) I John 2:28, "Abide in Him; that, when He shall appear [#5319] .. not be ashamed ... at His coming [#3952]".
- (77) I John 3:2, "It doth not yet appear [#5319] what we shall be ... but when He shall appear [#5319], we shall be like Him".
- (78) Jude 14, "Enoch .. prophesied .. the Lord cometh [#2064] with ten thousands of His saints"; or in the Interlinear "the Lord came with ...".
- (79) Revelation 1:7-8, " .. (verse 7) .. Behold, He cometh [#2064] with clouds .. Every eye shall see Him .. All kindreds of the Earth shall wail .. (verse 8) .. I am the *Alpha* and *Omega* .. And which is to come [#2064]", the Almighty.
- (81) Revelation 3:11-12, "Behold I will come [#2064] quickly"; or in the Interlinear "I am coming".
- (85) Revelation 16:15, "Behold, I come [#2064] as a thief .."
- Not included: II Timothy 1:10, " .. now made manifest by the appearing [#2015] of our Saviour Jesus *the* Christ" which is clearly about the First Advent in 7 BC.

In the seven 'Revelation' churches there are some references to Christ coming for one reason or another. In the Ephesian church, Jesus will "come quickly" [2064] to "remove" its candlestick. In Revelation 2:16, the Pergamos church is warned to behave or else Jesus will come [2064] to put the wayward members to the sword which can hardly be either the Rapture or the Second Coming. In Revelation 3:3, there is the warning "I will come [2240] on thee as a thief" and "thou shalt not know what hour I will come [2240] ..". Overall, these sections of Scripture say little if anything about the Rapture.

### **(Aii) Days of Noah, Lot and Apocalypse**

The 'era' of the "Days of Noah" or "of Lot" would seem to be characteristic of one particular day 'approaching', i.e., The Rapture. They may even conclude on the day of the Rapture. World conditions two decades into the new millennium look like turning into the Days of Noah and Lot. It seems they have come to pass at least on the eve of the Apocalypse as we come closer to the MMK of our Lord. Previous generations of the Church Age, for example the 'Reformers' in the early 17th Century in Europe, often incorrectly thought such days applied to their era. Still, the Rapture will be sudden and for many completely unexpected or unsuspected.

Perhaps of most immediate interest we are now fully aware that the ice caps formed over a period of about ten months during Noah's Flood in 2500 BC. Once the Earth's environment had stabilised, the ice caps began melting and will disappear. Physics determines they must. At about 15 degrees, the Earth's ambient temperature simply means all ice formed in that catastrophic event must eventually melt. Just how quickly the ice caps are melting now is hard to measure or predict. Temperatures above freezing point are now being recorded at the South Pole although only for brief periods. So the ice caps could be melting even more quickly than most experts think. Regarding Antarctica in that context, it may have to be preserved to supply the world with rain in the Messianic Kingdom which implies we really are on the cusp of the end of the age of fallen man. The Creator easily can over-ride such constraints. However, the idea is interesting and provides another basis for talking about the urgency to prepare everyone for the Rapture.

The melting ice caps are yet another clue that the season of The Rapture is at hand but the day always remains God's 'secret'. C.S. Lewis' picture of Narnia encased in snow and ice until the coming of Aslan has interesting implications or applications to our era. One wonders how much of an inkling the university academics in Lewis' time had that a warming globe will continue indefinitely. All this exposes inconsistencies in modern scientists' claim about what we can do to stop this warming process. Myths about Global Warming and what science can do to save mankind are deceiving people into ignoring the Bible's prophecies. One feels they must deep down in their psyche suspect all is not well here on Earth.

On other fronts or matters supporting our belief we are in the 'End Times'; and specifically that we are now within the "Days of Noah and Lot"; God re-established Israel as a fully-fledged nation in 1947-8. From Day One, Israel faced a fight for its survival against opposing Arab armies. Moreover, and almost unbelievably or incredibly, two decades later, Israel won a stunning war against an even wider array of enemies. That war lasted exactly six days in 1967. This observer avidly followed news reports of the conflict at the time. The 'Six Day War' ran from the first day of the week (Sunday) and concluded on the Sabbath Eve (a Friday) reflecting God's rest on the Seventh Day and pointing to, or even confirming, the validity and viability of the Genesis Creation account. It may even be

another clue to help us realise the end is coming for the 6000 years (or 6 days, II Peter 3:8, Psalm 90:4) mankind must suffer the physical consequences of Adam's Fall. Many believers began seriously studying Biblical Eschatology after the Six Day War. Those events pointed to God's preparation for Israel to come to acceptance of Jesus as the nation's Messiah and Saviour. Again, one could consider a null hypothesis to all that by suggesting the modern Jewish state is some sort of 'crusader' conspiracy as many Muslims genuinely believe. The scientist must have a null hypothesis. Even Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15:14 had one when he wrote that if Jesus is not resurrected from the dead then our faith is in vain. Nevertheless, there is plenty of reason to suggest we are indeed in the "Days of Noah and Lot" now.

To help clarify the specific nature of the Days of Noah, one distinguishes between three categories of apocalyptic disasters that have prevailed through History. Firstly, as a general point, the world suffers from the sin nature in humans. Everyone inherits this as the result of Adam's fall. Sickness, lust, hatred, divisiveness, drunkenness and all sorts of other things, the list is almost endless, are simply the curse of sin. That is a general situation pervading Man's history here on Earth. Even in the Millennium, sin will still be evident in the sin nature of carnal individuals born during that Age (Kingdom). The Lord ruling from Jerusalem through the world's governments in that era will ensure that evil has no effect on the world. Those who do not repent in the century of life given to them, will die at a hundred years of age (Isaiah 65:20).

Secondly, the Lord referred to the Days of Noah and the Days of Lot. These involved what we term "catastrophes" some of which were generated by rogue bodies in outer space causing chaos in our solar system and consequently affecting earth. God used these forces and the Bible explains why because it gives us an account of the more specific sets of evil and wickedness of those times and how God used the solar system chaos to rain destruction on that sort of behaviour. We get quite a lot of detail of the evils of Sodom and Gomorrah in *Genesis* and from archaeology where excavations in Pompeii have also been very *revealing*. However, we know very little about conditions prevailing in this world before Noah entered the ark and exactly what sort of catastrophe set up the Flood conditions. We contend we can learn about Noah's world from research into the History of Economics and Science, and into the philosophical paradigms within those studies. **Possibly**, the world has now entered a level of knowledge once seen before; i.e., some 1500 years after the Fall. That meets the requirement of Daniel 12:4 & 9 which in turn explains why we now can learn a lot more about the world before the Flood and its link with the Tower of Babel.

Thus, five centuries or so into Adam's life, he, along with Enoch, realised that by the time Enoch's son Methuselah would reach the end of his life, the world would be in serious trouble from knowledge. The two men realised that Adam's descendants having learned about the computer (*tree of knowledge*) that their father had touched with his finger and had looked at with his eyes to feed his mind in Eden, would be taking the world much further down the road to disaster [refer Addendum (G) Coming Full Circle]. So Enoch named his son "When he dies, He will come"; the meaning of "*Methuselah*". The 'He' who would come to save the world and mankind from that computerised disaster would be the Saviour of Genesis 3:15. That was their hope and why they believed in it. They were not quite right. When Methuselah died 1500 years after Adam's fall, Noah saved the human and some animal races in his ark and the disaster was a flood that destroyed all man's progress (regress). Jesus did not arrive until 4000 years after Adam's fall. Israel rejected Jesus' offer of His Kingdom of no suffering in AD 30. So the Lord only saved men from

sin on the Cross and would no longer be able to institute the Kingdom of God in AD 30. It would have to await a later generation of Israel to accept the offer as will happen soon. And that will involve the events of the Seventieth Week of Daniel 9:27 when the third set of disasters we refer to comes via the agency of God's angels delivering the vials etc., of wrath upon the Earth to drive man to repent. That ends when Israel repents as do some sheep Gentiles and the MMK begins.

The angel who spoke to Daniel (in Daniel 12:4 & 9) fully knew about the state of the world in Noah's lifetime. He told the prophet what to write down for a future generation a prophecy for the '*End Times*' (KJV, "time of the end", Daniel 12:4). Knowing what one suspects was the high level of knowledge attained by the time of the Great Flood, we also realise we are effectively receiving information via the angel about the state of the world on the eve of the Flood, therefore its parallels to our time. The Bible tells us that the issue that precipitated the Flood was when the fallen angels were attracted to the women and mated with them. That was designed to pollute the seed of women so that any chance Jesus could be born of a woman would be destroyed. According to I Peter 3:19-21 and II Peter 2:4, Jesus then told those angels that plan failed when He went down to Hell to release the captive saints. II Peter 2:5-8 also gives us more information about both the Days of Noah and the Days of Lot. So we can infer that once again the Last Days of the Prophecies would be characterised by much knowledge and travel so important for disseminating knowhow as we (*professionals*) know from our economic studies. Thus, we also can now work out a lot more detail about the world in the days before Noah's ark. The flood destroyed most of the evidence of those times although the ark itself was an impressive feat of engineering which told us a lot in the *Genesis* account about the technology they had in those days. With careful analysis we are beginning to describe more of that pre-Flood era and flesh out more detail. But that's a complex task as is discussed elsewhere in our papers.

Thus, the Apocalypse and its angelic plagues is an entirely different affair to the previous two categories of what we might term 'Disaster Times' (general sin, solar system induced catastrophes). What we currently experience are the difficulties caused by combinations of the first two categories. Firstly sin extends its control over circumstances. Secondly, the days of Noah and Lot will be an accumulation of difficulties incurred not only from sin, such as human abuse of knowledge (Days of Noah) and of human reproduction (Days of Lot) but also from the after effects of catastrophes like the world-wide flood. Dr Velikovsky's research into earlier disasters recorded in the Bible, indicates the Earth has also been subject to chaos inflicted on us by external conditions in the Solar System and indeed from far out in the Universe (gravity waves). Nevertheless, and even assuming some of those forces may once again play a part in future disasters, the Apocalypse has two sources of "wrath". One is from God's angels. The other wrath comes from the Antichrist-666 who expresses it on anyone who does not obey him. For the first half of the Apocalypse, the Antichrist deceives Israel by apparently supporting Israel's right to her land and temple. Although the whole world suffers from God's wrath. Most readers of the Bible fail to properly differentiate between these categories in which the world experiences all suffering. At the moment we are not suffering from either God's wrath or Antichrist's. In the first half of the Apocalypse, Israel only suffers from God's wrath whereas the world suffers both Antichrist's and God's. Those preparing the way for the Antichrist may be causing trouble in the world now but that is mere prelude of what is to come. The Rapture is the only escape route.

### (Aiii) Discipleship and the Transfiguration

Matthew 10:32-33, 11:6 and 16:27; Mark 8:38 and Luke 7:23, 9:22-27 and 12:8-9; are verses which allude to the costs of discipleship until the Lord 'returns'. They seem to surround the Transfiguration which in the context seems to have been some sort of special and miraculous glimpse into the future hope that would make all the costs of discipleship worth it. Instead of just being a matter of weeks or months away if all Israel repented, the Lord knew within Himself that could not be the situation. Hence this special apparition for this close, inner group of trusted disciples so that they could train the early church to prepare for a rough ride for two millennia. But it is difficult trying to determine this timing from the text. When He made these statements, it is not clear at this stage in the gospels whether Israel had firmly rejected Jesus or whether there was still a chance Israel's leaders would accept Jesus' Messiahship. For example, the crucial Beelzebub incident is recorded in Matthew 12:22-45 which indicates Jesus' reference in this passage to people being rewarded according to their works (and the Transfiguration) apparently occurred **after** Israel's leaders had rejected Jesus. Whereas Jesus' first statement in Luke 9:26 about His coming in Glory (and the Transfiguration) **preceded** the Beelzebub incident in Luke 11:14-36. All of these events occur near the middle of Mark's gospel but he had already referred to the rejection of Jesus via the Beelzebub incident very early on near the beginning of his gospel account (Mark 3:22-30). In summary, it is hard to place these passages into a strict chronological sequence which is always important for context. Thus, apart from Jesus' words to Peter that He "will build *His* ('my') Church" in Matthew 16:18, it is technically difficult trying to analyze the timing of these incidents in relation to the timing of the leaders' final decision to reject Jesus and in relation to the Transfiguration.

As already noted, the 'return' or 'coming' of Jesus contextually could refer on any particular occasion to three different situations. Firstly, some of these verses refer to the work Jesus gave to His disciples before catching up with them in His own movements throughout Israel. This was during His Ministry in AD 27-30. At this stage the disciples had gone out ahead of Jesus to carry on the work of John the Baptist and announce Jesus' Good News (Gospel) of Israel's Saviour and Messiah being here on Earth and ready to offer Israel the long awaited and long-promised 'Kingdom of God which *Revelation* informs us will last a millennium (*The Millennium*'). Secondly, the "coming" appears to be a sudden event sometime in the more distant future, when one least expects it, on a day only God appears to know the timing of, and whereby believers are somehow rescued from something awful or be taken into a blessed state of some sort and all that on a day that is apparently otherwise quite normal with business as usual. Thirdly, under circumstances that are anything but normal and when the main business of the day seems to be Antichrist's crusade to destroy Israel, this "coming" appears to be in full glory, with God's angels, perhaps resurrected saints, other non-angelic heavenly beings; or even "myriads" as one translator suggests; accompanying the Lord presumably to take control of the world and to introduce the MMK.

In Mark 8:38, Luke 9:26 and Matthew 16:27, in Section (10), we focussed on the point that Jesus then put his 'coming' into the context of the Transfiguration to occur six days later (Matthew 17:1). Peter, James and John were privileged to catch a glimpse of a Feast of Tabernacles, presumably taking place in Jerusalem in the future, after Jesus will have established His MMK. Moreover, by that time, Jesus was preparing them for the difficult times to come (AD 30-70) as they would have to set about their Christ-appointed task to establish "His church" and the new way of life in Christ now made possible because He had paid the blood-price for Adam's sin. This way of life had not previously been available



and it came abundantly to make life fulfilling. They of course were still thinking in terms of the traditional and mostly accurate concepts of what would happen when Messiah did arrive. The Transfiguration would certainly have a long-term effect on them. In II Peter 1:16 the Apostle wrote, “we have not followed cunningly devised fables ... but were eyewitnesses to His Majesty”. In his epistle, Peter was either referring to Jesus’ Baptism (Matthew 3:16-17, Mark 1:10-12, Luke 3:21-22 and John 1:32) or more likely to that scene at the Transfiguration. Later, of course, on many occasions they were to see the resurrected Jesus. Finally they saw the Ascension. But as they inquired then (Acts 1:6), Jesus had previously re-assured them the Kingdom (MMK) definitely would come some time or other. At “The Transfiguration”, Peter, James and John literally saw a scene in the MMK. Clearly, as a group, the disciples who saw Jesus return to Heaven had no doubt the MMK would come one day. But that would be at the Second Coming not at the preceding Rapture and not in their lifetimes.

One perhaps very important aspect about the Transfiguration is that it came after Peter’s great statement in Matthew 16:13-19 about Jesus’ true identity. Peter’s faith earned him the right to receive “the Keys of the kingdom of Heaven (God)” and it is the only passage that tells us that. Peter’s responsibility would come when Jesus began building His church (or congregation, Matthew 16:18). There is the matter of the gentle rebuke of Peter and implied scolding of Satan in Matthew 16:22-23 and Mark 8:33 but Luke does not record that in his account. Jesus then talked about people having the choice either to deny themselves and follow Him (verse 24) or gain the whole world but lose their life (verses 25-6). Then in Matthew 16:27 Jesus said that either way, “then He (the Son of Man) shall reward every man according to his works”. Psalm 62:12, Proverbs 24:12 and Job 34:11 also refer to rendering works suggesting here Jesus was talking about the final judgement which comes in three stages, or is a process in that sense [c.f., Addendum (P) on Rewards and Judgement]. The Church’s judgement is really an evaluation. It takes place in Heaven during the Apocalypse and provides yet another justification for an event we label “The Rapture”.

Just as the AD 27-70 generation of Israel appeared to be confused, so Jesus’ followers ever since could not easily comprehend these variations in ‘*arrival times*’, to coin a term for this discussion and all that in the context of the Transfiguration. Sadly, most modern readers of the Bible are none the wiser either. Two millennia ago, it was almost impossible for people to work these things out. They cannot be criticized for that. Today, believers filled with God’s Holy Spirit cannot be so easily excused for failing to understand Scripture especially on eschatological matters and especially in these days of Noah, Lot and Daniel 12:4 & 9. **(Aiv) The Work of the Disciples**

Matthew 10:5-23, Luke 9:1-5 and 10:1-24 show Jesus despatching His disciples on the first main mission they had. The second mission after the failure of the first would be to train the early Church (an us) for the Church Age. Matthew 10:24-42 provides additional material about the role of discipleship. There are principles therein of use to modern disciples but the message in these texts is primarily aimed at the AD 30 group.

There appear to have been two groups. They were the Seventy (Luke 10:1) and the Twelve. The ‘Twelve’ also will have to rule over the twelve tribes of Israel in the Messianic Kingdom. That will still happen. However, as it transpired via Exodus 4:8 that was no longer going to occur back then. The Seventy, which may suggest the Church’s future mission to the seventy nations of the world (a Jewish tradition) also seems to have included some of John the Baptist’s disciples (Luke 7:18ff, John 1:37-40 re Andrew). They

of course wanted to continue John's work although he was by then, or soon to be, imprisoned and eventually executed. When John died they presumably continued as Jesus' disciples. As Dr Fruchtenbaum points out, as it was with John so too it would be with Jesus. Nevertheless, the work had to be done and in His Humanity Jesus chose seventy men to go all through Israel's cities and countryside and prepare the nation to receive Him, accept His mission, repent from their sins etc., so that he could introduce the Kingdom. Hence the message, "The Kingdom is come nigh" (Luke 10:9, 11).

In the 'Work programme', Jesus would arrive in the various towns and cities and meet people along the way to present Himself for the people to accept Him. Thus, 'Until I come' has to be read in that context certainly in the early parts of each of the gospels. Then there is the work the disciples would be prepared for after the Ascension and in the early days of the church which would then become from Pentecost AD 30 the vehicle through which God's ongoing Kingdom Programme would continue via the mystery System or Age of the Parable of the Sower and related passages.

This is another reason why we have to review the Scriptures from the Exodus 4:8 paradigm that recognizes Israel would have to face the most important question of the nation's existence when Jesus came. Would Israel's political, economic, diplomatic, theological and social systems receive the 'Promised Deliverer' when he eventually arrived? That was the 'Big Question'. Exodus 4:8 left open the completely transparent possibility that decision could go either way when the First Sign (Lazarus) would be delivered. However, at the Second or Last Sign Israel would absolutely accept Him. The various scattered segments of Scripture in the New Testament have to be pooled together to realise that Jesus was struggling to get Israel to accept Him. The Gospels outline the circumstances the nation found itself in by AD 30 and why that spelled out 'rejection'. It is the same now with Christendom and; for one very good example; its apathetic attitude to the entire subject of the Antichrist. As Israel went, so too Christendom appears to be following. Nevertheless, at the time, many were saved in that generation and many will be saved in ours.

Discipleship is likened to someone losing his life to save another. It may not mean that but it is costly. People who confess Jesus, i.e., side **with** Him rather than **against** Him, will find that one day Jesus will side with them when they appear before God. Luke 12:8 suggests this will be in the presence of good angels. In the Gospels we read of plenty of people being harassed by evil angels or demons. Discipleship is a lot more costly to the believer than simple faith and belief. That is probably because the believer is likely to come to the attention of unbelievers or demons and a lot more trouble in active discipleship. Hence the rewards for disciples will be many and to some extent, perhaps, in a proportion commensurate to the level of persecution endured.

### **(Av) The Seventy-five Day Interval**

"A time, and tomes and the dividing of times" in Daniel 7:25 usually is interpreted as 3.5 years of 360 days each or 1260 in total. In *Footsteps of the Messiah*, Dr Fruchtenbaum compares this with Daniel 12:11-12. In the latter passage, we read of two other figures of 1290 and 1335 days. By deducting the 1260 from the 1335, one arrives at a 75-day gap or interval. It is during that period that Dr Fruchtenbaum and others believe some other events need to occur before the first day of the MMK. They are preparatory and include measures to deal with the defeated Satan, Antichrist and the False Prophet, judgement of Gentiles surviving the Apocalypse and the completion of the First

Resurrection which is of believers between Adam and Christ's Church. At the end of the Millennium, disbelievers or unbelievers of all time are resurrected for despatch to the eternal abode of darkness, weeping and teeth gnashing, or even worse. Details are to be found in Dr Fruchtenbaum's *Footsteps of the Messiah*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, pages 361-72.

Daniel 12:12 encourages the reader then to wait or persevere toward that last day and count down the days for his salvation. That would apply to his physical salvation because the very act of counting the days indicates that person has come to saving grace and has accepted Christ's sacrifice for his sin. The Tribulation saint has missed out on The Rapture in this verse but that is only understood *ex post*. The reader of this Biblical text prior to Jesus' Advent knows nothing about the Israel's implicit missed opportunity based on Exodus 4:8 as we can now read and interpret it '*ex post*'.

### **(Avi) Nation against Nation**

Matthew 24:7, Mark 13:8, Luke 21:10 all record Jesus saying, "... but the end is not yet, for nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom ..". Dr Fruchtenbaum suggests the phrase comes from a Hebrew metaphor referring to division within a society or even family and in-fighting as a result. According to Dr Fruchtenbaum, that metaphor is referred to in the commentaries "*Bereshit Rabbah*" and "*Zohar Chadash*" on Isaiah 19:2 and II Chronicles 20:23. This author would add as further illustrations of the point verses such as Judges 7:22 and II Chronicles 15:6, the latter concerning past events where God previously had protected ancient Israel from her enemies perhaps presaging the future. Genesis 16:12 (re Ishmael) and 27:40 (Esau) are prophecies describing how a similar phenomenon would continually beset the Arabian and Edomite nations as we see so vividly today in conflicts on the Arabian Peninsula and further afield.

However, and perhaps most significantly, one more place where we see this phenomenon is in Ezekiel 38:21; "every man's sword shall be against his brother". One suggests this could have been what Jesus was referring to in Matthew 24:7, Mark 13:8 and Luke 21:10. Dr Fruchtenbaum suggested World Wars I and II fulfilled the metaphor. Whatever, this verse clearly is about an event that definitely has not happened yet but which might soon be on the horizon. In these verses, God describes the destruction that ensues from the First Gog-Magog invasion of Israel. The Bible says God finishes them off with, "an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone" (verse 22). Moreover, as our method of analysis attests, the great destruction then is followed by a seven-year period where in Ezekiel 39:9 people have to clean up all the mess. All through this time the Church could still be active in world affairs before the Rapture takes us out. The Rapture may take us away sometime during that massive clean-up operation.

This paper takes the unique perspective that suggests this seven-year period in *Ezekiel* is related to the Seven-year Apocalypse in that it seamlessly and immediately precedes the Apocalypse, finishing on the eve of the Apocalypse. Thus both seven-year periods form one fourteen-year period (unless there is a little bit of overlap). In turn, that reflects the fourteen years Jacob had to serve Laban to gain his two wives and the fourteen years when Joseph used the first seven years of 'plenty' to guide Egypt and the world through seven years of subsequent 'famine'. The point here is that the two ancient incidents are a pointer to the timing of the two other seven-year periods placed in two separate books in the Bible (*Ezekiel* and *Daniel*). The two earlier seven-year pairs (or fourteen years) clearly ran one immediately after the other according to the text. For this third pair from *Ezekiel* and *Daniel* there is no direct evidence they form a third fourteen-year period.

However, the enigmatic question posed in Exodus 4:8 over Israel's response to "the voice of the First Sign" raised doubts as to what Israel would do when the Messiah first arrived. God deliberately obfuscated this enigma in the Scriptural account in order that Israel could have a real choice in AD 30 over Jesus' offer to bring in the kingdom then. Otherwise, Jesus' offer would have been disingenuous. If the perspective taken here is correct, this 'Last' or third fourteen-year period has thus been deliberately and enigmatically obscured from understanding until the very "Last Days" or "Days of Noah and Lot".

Thus, Jesus' words in Matthew 24:7, Mark 13:8, Luke 21:10 could indicate that when we see (Rapture-willing) the First Gog-Magog invasion of Israel begin one then can count seven years to when the Apocalypse begins. Once the Apocalypse begins, as noted, people in it can count down the days therein to the Second Coming. But no one can do any 'counting', for either event, beforehand. Jesus' 'Beginning of the End' which is when Israel's invaders in Ezekiel begin to fight each other, one suggests, is the event that triggers what Jesus went on to say in Matthew 24:8-35, Mark 13:9-31 and Luke 21:11-36 concerning the Apocalypse and not the two world wars even though the second resulted in Israel coming back into the Table of Nations very much as a result of the Holocaust (c.f., Ezekiel 20:34-37, 22:18-20 and Isaiah 48:10). Luke 21:36 is also instructive because there Jesus concluded by saying, "pray *that you are* worthy to escape all these things" suggesting the best way to do that is to be in the Body or Church of *the* Christ so that one is taken away in the Rapture beforehand. Nor does this exhortation in Luke 21:36 appear in either Matthew's or Mark's parallel Olivet passages.

One cannot predict in advance the beginning and timing of either the First Gog-Magog invasion or the Apocalypse but once the Gog-Magog invasion does begin we could well be able to predict when Antichrist signs or confirms the Seven-year Covenant "of Death" as Isaiah described it. As of AD 2023 and considering the shenanigans going on in Africa, Iran, Afghanistan, the Caucasus nations, Ukraine, Turkey and Russia, along with the massive refugee camps all through those regions, for the first time in world history there is an ongoing situation that very likely could set off that invasion. "Gog", who- or whatever he or it is, initially conceives an "evil thought" (Ezekiel 38:10) to go up against Israel. However, God says He will intervene and even "put hooks into their jaws" (Ezekiel 38:4) to force those nations to invade Israel in order to demonstrate His Glory and prophetic powers and Omniscience (Ezekiel 38:17).

Dr Fruchtenbaum also quite validly thinks the world chaos following the massive destruction of the invasion force, be it 'armies' or 'refugee hordes' (as this observer suspects) now gathering around Israel, requires a complete restructuring of world governance leading to the Ten Nation confederacy which Antichrist then takes over (Daniel 2:41-44 and 7:7-8, Revelation 12:3, 13:1 and 17:12ff). However, anytime before either event the Rapture might take place for it is a day that "only the Father knows".

### **(Avii) The Calm Before the Storm**

Regarding I Thessalonians 5:3 in section (53), one takes the view, especially in considering current world events from AD 2020 that as Satan prepares the way for Antichrist, he creates a lot of havoc. His principle agents in this are people this writer describes as "S.H.E.M-ites". They are Secular Humanist Evolutionist Materialists. The Acronym 'SHEM' is also a play on the name for the Son of Noah named "Shem" which basically means 'Name' in Hebrew (שם). One could extend the play on words to say "One is an anti-Shemite but one **certainly is not antisemite!** For example, Satan's acolytes

preach nonsense about carbon causing climate change and spread the nonsense about where viruses came from, how they evolved into the environment with such proliferation to explain what they are doing in the Covid-19 mania. One is bombarded with propaganda about how those things affect world conditions: its politics; economics; science; and technology etc. And of course under fire from the bombing these things do indeed suffer. One has been composing a list for one's *Key Events* reports (reproduced at the end of this essay). Even without Satan's help, as the list below shows, Man is causing chaos quite well for Satan anyway. But the devil has more in store for man before God lets his angels loose and there is even more trouble the like of which will never have been seen before as far as we know. Although our forbears more than 2500 years ago recorded some terrifying destruction during the catastrophes post-Flood and before *circa* 700 BC.

This observer's prediction is that there are inherent factors within the entire spectrum of knowledge pursuit that develop long-term or long-run consequences that can take centuries to materialise in ways completely unexpected to the vast majority. Evolutionism is one such dilemma that is only now becoming an apparent problem to some thinkers about 200 years after Lyell, Lamarck and Darwin began influencing Western thinking with a theory that Aristotle appears to have been the first main promulgator of in the history of science in Europe. A few Christians steeped in their understanding of the Bible have of course spoken out about various fears where evolutionism would lead. However, we have been drowned or stuck down deep into a miry well. In addition, human greed and lust fuels the fires inherent in the 'knowledge pursuit'. However, and overall, chaos should slide into such great depths that when the world accepts Satan's son, i.e., the Antichrist, Satan's dogs of war will be tied up once more. Indeed, Satan through Antichrist will bring into being regimens that will follow very strict and exhaustive measures typical of any totalitarian regime. In this observer's view, that's the sort of situation that will lead people to say "peace and safety at last". In this observer's view, that should occur before the Seven-year Covenant with Israel is signed. Indeed, Antichrist's cynical activities in bringing that false peace to the rest of the world's fighting, debates and arguments is the one and only factor that could put him in a position to get the chance to bring about a peace treaty with Israel where so many others had failed.

**But there will not be anything of the sort** except probably in the very short-term. It is a fake peace for a facebook generation even if it may even last not just a little beforehand but for a short time as well into the Seven-year Apocalyptic stage (Israel's last 'seven' of the 490 of Daniel 9:25-27). Once the Apocalypse fully begins to run its course there will be no place for people to say "peace and safety". Israel might still think it is at peace with and safe from antichrist for the first three and a half years of the Covenant. One factor in bringing out that 'peace' comes when Satan tactically puts his dogs of war on a temporary leash as Antichrist signs or confirms earlier plans which will constitute the prophesied 'Seven-year Treaty with Israel. Satan, through man's own sin, ego, greed etc., has long been fomenting strife and wars to 'stir the pot' as we sometimes say. In a critical phase, Satan the sorcerer will in effect deceptively stage-manage a quasi- or fake-solution to the world's strife and problems along with preparing a peace arrangement with Israel. It is usually overlooked but the 'seven-year' term shows it is obviously just a temporary arrangement from the outset. Even today, the world anyway stage-manages many conflict resolution strategies. Now, after more recent so-called 'peace treaties' or armistices, the world is quite used to saying "**Peace and Safety**" (verse 3) when it isn't safe at all. Perhaps a recent example of that came after 1990 when Russia seemed to have joined the family of nations in peaceful development. That has all come crumbling down since Russia's bombardments of Chechnya, Georgia, Syria and now Ukraine.

However as we do slide ever more quickly into the global warming and virus crises; and other things creating problems in the list from *Key Events* below; the understanding we now have of the globe's temperature and its ice stocks etc; in these days of Daniel 12: 4 & 9; tells us that we are now entering the days' of Noah. The ice is melting, the winds, hurricanes, tempests, tornados and storms are gathering intensity as the ice melts. The world gets warmer, the convection currents in the sea and in the atmosphere significantly change or vary; and as Lewis wrote, "Aslan is coming". Of course it is the Lord who is coming but firstly to snatch or rapture us out of here like an eagle then to return with us and kill off all the vultures surrounding Israel on the last day of the Apocalypse.

One major event we are awaiting on the world political scene, and probably concerning the '*theological*' scene too; before the Apocalypse; comes the first Gog-Magog invasion of Israel (Ezekiel 38:1 to 39:16). This amazing description of a conflict the world obviously has not yet seen as we can confirm from real world ***His Story*** at long last seems imminent [refer Addendum (Avi)]. When Gog-Magog is defeated and self-destructs, we may get a good feel for what the demand for 'peace and safety' could look like. It may lead to a new will and push to resolve the world's problems in our list below.

However, the term 'peace and safety' may only be a feeling from Israel's perspective because of its peace treaty with Antichrist. That could well be the simplest and most satisfactory explanation for that sentiment recorded in the Bible being expressed and it only comes from Israel. After all, the nation has just been delivered from the terrifying Gog-Magog invasion from the North, East and South. However, assuming a broader perspective to the sentiment because one can discern an inherent or latent demand for a world dictator, one has elsewhere (*Key Events*) published this list of world-wide issues that need an international governance regime of some sort to properly deal with these problems. What might emerge is the Ten Nation Confederacy that the dreams in Daniel suggest feature in one of the penultimate stage of world government (*the ten toes*). Unfortunately, at present, governments are merely achieving piece-meal solutions, or even none at all to:

- Money laundering;
- International banking, (world) currency and trade issues;
- Tax rules for large international conglomerates;
- A living wage as work is robotised;
- Copyright theft and Property Right breaches;
- Nuclear technology issues;
- Monitoring the "looming antibiotic apocalypse;"
- International Terrorism;
- Bringing war- and genocide-criminals to international justice;
- Repatriation of criminals to their 'home' country;
- Planning for or adapting to Global Warming Impacts;
- Pandemics in an over-sophisticated world of hi-tech;

- Poaching and trafficking of rare animals and their by-products;
- Trafficking of E-waste hazardous substances
- Monitoring International fish stocks;
- Trafficking of illicit halucogenic drugs and Drug Cheats in Sport;
- Internet becoming its own mind by AD 2030:
- Controlling Internet hackers and cyber-crime;
- Inter-governmental cyber warfare issues;
- Weaponized social media and Internet;
- Governments too small or weak to cope with technology advances;
- Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) evading porn-site firewall-blocks
- Science unethical and untheological; Theology unscientific;
- Plastics (and other rubbish) in the oceans & food chain therein;
- Cross border conflicts and human rights breaches;
- Protecting name-suppression orders; and
- Illegal migration.

### **(Bi) A Note on the Parousia**

Strong's Concordance notes the following for the Greek '*Parousia*' (# 3952): "being near, i.e., advent, often 'return', specifically of Christ to punish Jerusalem, or finally the wicked. By implication, the physical aspect, coming or presence". Strong # 3952 comes from the present participle of 3918, '*pareimi*'; "to be near, at hand, (*for*, emphasis added) time being, come, be here, present"; and from 3844, '*para*', "near, from beside, the vicinity of, to the proximity with, above, nigh unto".

In section (35) discussing I Corinthians 15:23-4, we noted, "The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Tenth Edition) says "The Rapture refers to the transporting of believers to heaven at the second coming of Christ". As an introductory note it says, "North American" and "according to some millenarian teaching". Neither definition from Strong nor the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* is particularly satisfying. In fact, as one discovered through concentrated analysis of every use in the New Testament of the words to come, appear etc., in both the Greek and the English used to translate it, both 'dictionaries' conclusions are misleading. As such, they illustrate how Christendom's theology has a number of problems especially with its fusion of the Church with Israel therefore between the Rapture specifically for the Church and the Second Coming specifically for Israel, and indeed for the poor beleaguered new converts amongst the Gentiles (post-Rapture). That theology fails to keep the two as distinct bodies which are or will be fulfilling different parts of God's Plan (Will) over two different eras.

In this New Testament survey of Rapture and associated texts, '*Parousia*' (Strong # 3952) occurs as follows:

(1) Matthew 24:3; Matthew records the disciples' question at Olivet about Jesus "sign of His **Coming**". What was in their mind, in their thoughts presumably expressed in Hebrew, when they asked that question? They surely could not have been thinking in terms of a 'Second Coming' let alone a 'Rapture' of the Church. Yet Matthew uses 'parousia' whereas Mark and Luke almost exclusively use '*erchomai*' in the same parallel situations. Even John only has Jesus' comings in the Greek '*erchomai*'. What the disciples were thinking about was Israel's physical salvation from Rome, the coming of the *Sar Shalom* etc., to rule Israel. Only later would they, or at least Paul, have a better theological understanding of the issues and of the time when their expectations would be fulfilled. Even then it is not that clear they could have fully understood Jesus words in these passages because as Daniel 12:4 & 9 suggests only the last generation of Church believers contemporaneous with the last pre-MMK generation of Israel that would or could understand beforehand the actual event when finally very little doubt can remain;

(2) Matthew 24:27; "The **coming** of the Son of Man" but in the pre-Rapture section referring to Jesus' rescuing Israel from Antichrist;

(3) Matthew 24:37; "Days of Noah .. also the **coming** of the Son of man be";

(4) Matthew 24:39; "the Flood .. also the **coming** of the Son of man be";

Note; Matthew's frequent use of parousia (x4) is not matched by his fellow synoptic gospel recorders who do not use parousia at all. The disciples' question in Matthew 24:3 using *parousia* parallels their same point in Acts 1:11 but there Luke uses *erchomai*. This suggests an interchangeability of *parousia* and *erchomai* depending on the subtle distinction between someone appearing then either going to join someone else or the other person coming to him. To 'appear' and to 'come' are two stages of a process where two parties meet one another. There may only be seconds between the two or there could be an interval of perhaps a whole day, for example, when a ship appears on the horizon and its crew come onshore to have a meal with someone. Most commentators see items 1-4 as being part of the same overall (*second*) advent. We see (1) and (2) as relating to the Second Coming but (3) and (4) to the Rapture;

(5) I Corinthians 15:23; "Christ's at His **coming**";

(6) I Corinthians 15:24, inferred; "Then **cometh** the End". However, "The End" is conjoined by the word 'when' to then show 'The End' actually encompasses a long period over which Jesus has to "put down all rule and all authority and power" (verse 24); "For He must reign (*for some time implied*), till He hath put all enemies under His feet", in verse 25. But that cannot happen until the end of the Millennium when He defeats the Last Gog-Magog invasion. Only then can Jesus destroy death presumably after he resurrects all the damned of all time and has sent them to eternal judgement (verse 26). The process is only fully completed when in verse 28 when "The Son shall also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be **all in all**";

(7) I Corinthians 16:17; "I am glad of the **coming** of Stephanos and Fortunatus and Achicus";

(8) II Corinthians 7:6; "God .. comforted us by the **coming** ("arrival", *Passion Translation*) of Titus .. ";

(9) II Corinthians 7:7; " .. And not by his **coming** only (or "to see him", i.e., Titus, *Passion*



*Translation*) ..". The ASV suggests in a footnote that 'presence' could be used here. These two examples of *parousia* in II Corinthians are variously translated the 'coming', 'arrival' or 'sighting' of Titus in the KJV and the *Passion Translation*. The KJV and ASV both use 'coming'. We can posit that they saw him, he came and finally arrived. We cannot tell what were the precise circumstances that existed here. Thus we can see how dangerous it is to rely on the Greek word '*parousia*' to set down one's theology on either the Rapture or the Second Coming. Both *erchomai* or *parousia* or even other words could equally be used for both events. Otherwise, an over-reliance on the Greek lexicon effectively forces one to conclude the Rapture and the Second Coming are the same event or occur at the same time. Certainly that seems to be the interpretation both Strong and the Oxford Dictionary arrived at;

(10) II Corinthians 10:10; Paul writing to the Corinthians, tells them that his critics say he has a "weak bodily **presence**";

(11) Philippians 1:26; "That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus *the* Christ for me by my **coming** to you again";

(12) Philippians 2:12; " .. ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence (*parousia*) only, but now much more in my absence (*apousia*, Strong 666), work out your own salvation (*sanctification* with fear and trembling". As the saying goes, 'absence of evidence is not evidence of absence' but it draws attention by reference to the negative of *parousia* that absence or presence can refer to anything ranging from being very close and nearby to not even being in existence at all let alone having the possibility of turning up, coming to mind or coming into view. It is the overall framework that one uses to interpret the entire Biblical text that ultimately determines what anything in the text actually means. One particular Greek word; quite possibly intended to represent, however imperfectly, a Hebrew word because these scribes were Jews; cannot and should not determine one's system of theology;

(13) I Thessalonians 2:19; "the presence of our Lord Jesus *the* at His **coming**"; concerning a "crown of rejoicing" which will be awarded to some saints at Christ's judgement seat in Heaven i.e., after the Rapture;

(14) I Thessalonians 3:13; "At the **coming** of our Lord Jesus *the* Christ with all His myriads" (or perhaps "myriads of Himself meaning some holy beings that presumably dwell with Him while He sits at God's right hand. The more often used 'saint' for the Greek *hagios* here is a possible reading but it makes little sense in the overall; eschatological scheme presented here);

(15) I Thessalonians 4:15; "we which are alive and remain unto the **coming** of our Lord"; concerning the Rapture of verse 17;

(16) I Thessalonians 5:23; "I *pray* God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the **coming** of our Lord Jesus *the* Christ";

(17) II Thessalonians 2:1; "by the **coming** of our Lord Jesus *the* Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto Him"; presumably referring to the Rapture of item (9);

(18) II Thessalonians 2:8; "The brightness of His **coming**", to slay Antichrist-666 with "the spirit of His mouth";

(19) II Thessalonians 2:9, "whose **coming** is after the working of Satan"; i.e., referring to

the Antichrist. This is the first time we find *parousia* being used of someone other than Jesus 'coming' but there are others too (see below);

(20) James 5:7; "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the **coming** of the Lord";

(21) James 5:8; "the **coming** of the Lord draweth nigh";

(22) II Peter 1:16; "we made known unto you the power and **coming** of our Lord Jesus *the* Christ"; but this refers to the First Advent and Peter made the point that the information about that which he had passed on to his readers was not just silly fairy tales and myth. When the Apostle says "we were not following cunningly devised fables" when they had earlier preached about the coming of Jesus in power, he either used '*parousia*' to refer to the transfiguration or he was using it of the First Advent. In verses 17-18, Peter does refer to events in Jesus' ministry such as the Transfiguration, Jesus at John's baptismal service or on another occasion when they heard a voice coming out of heaven attesting to Jesus' claims. Then Peter says that Prophecy is an even surer word of confirmation ("the more sure word"). Since these statements anyway refer to the First Coming and Jesus' Ministry, these texts are not especially germane to the main thesis;

(23) II Peter 3:4; " .. *people ask* .. where is the promise of His **coming**?";

(24) II Peter 3:12; "Looking for and hasting unto the **coming** of the Day of God"; i.e., not about a person or something tangible but a day or period of some sort. A reference to the coming of the 'Day of God' when elements and skies melt etc. There Peter is talking about terrible judgements in the Apocalypse although others think that somehow refers to the end of the Universe which would be at the end of the MMK as far as the analysis in this paper is concerned;

(25) I John 2:28; "and now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear (*phaneroo*), we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His **coming**";

"*Parousia*" is used for both the coming of Jesus and Satan in II Thessalonians 2:8 & 9 in the '*Last Days*'. That may explain Strong's and the Oxford Dictionary's conclusion (also heavily influenced by Replacement Theology) that the Rapture is where Jesus comes "to punish Jerusalem". Those two authorities presumably think Jesus comes to slay antichrist ruling in Jerusalem. In reality, He arrives for the Second Coming at Bozrah when and only when Israel repents. Then He slays Antichrist's forces. Then He marches up to liberate Jerusalem. Then He announces the installation of His Kingdom having overthrown Satan's son Antichrist-666 and Israel is at last re-instated to enjoy the full and remaining unfulfilled aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Discussion here raises the broader problem of the Hebrew behind the Greek texts handed down to us. John used '*logos*' for 'word' at the start of his gospel but we know the Hebrew was '*devar*' (דבר) and we can, at great length, describe the vast range of difference between the two as well as the areas they have quite similar meanings. Paul did not even bother to use a Greek word for 'earnest' in II Corinthians 1:22, 5:5 and Ephesians 1:14. Instead, he used and transliterated the Hebrew '*erevon*' (עֲרֹבָן) from Genesis 38 into Greek letters. We can say more about such words as: *Skeinei* (for Shecinah); *Petros* and *Petra* for *Bozrah*; the Hebrew "גה" or *chag* that gives rise to the Greek *hagios*. Again, we have to conclude, in respect to working with the Greek copies handed down to us, the etymology does not really permit us to conclude '*parousia*' has any particular or special meaning in the Eschatology of the New Testament. Instead, this word has to be read

alongside other Greek verbs which probably are an attempt to emphasise various ways of appearing, or coming or being revealed. Furthermore, those words were used to describe some extremely unusual circumstances in the 'Last Days' to which some of these verses apply (obviously not, for example, I Corinthians 16:17, II Corinthians 7:6 & 7). The apostolic scribes presented us with their writings explaining as best as they could whatever the Spirit was saying to them and then transmitting that in a foreign language to many generations of the Church and for one in particular - the last.

### Commentary on Theological Background

The Academy's paradigms and philosophies have always been dominated by an absence of Hebrew perspective or an over-reliance on certain passages at the expense of a broader comparison with others. So-called 'Church Fathers' replaced Hebrew study with ideas or methods of interpretation drawn from Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas and many other neo-classical thinkers. For example, we see from the outset christendomite thinking on the return of Christ de-emphasised a resurrected body and stressed Jesus' ascendance from the grave as a sort of spirit, ghost or apparition. They ignore the fact that Mary Magdalene went to "touch" Jesus (John 20:17, "*haptomai*", Strong #680, meaning to "attach oneself or touch" and from Strong #681, *hapto*, meaning "to fasten to"). Thus, depending on the accuracy of translation, Mary may even have held Jesus back when He had to return to Heaven. Even modern theologians believe no one could touch Jesus until He had completed all the functions and rituals of a High Priest thus ruling out any possibility Mary was either touching Jesus or more literally clinging to Jesus' resurrected Body. But Jesus was operating under the priesthood of Melchizedec; **thus pre-Mosaic**. We have no information from that more ancient system of priesthood that requires us to reject the possibility Mary was in fact briefly delaying Jesus from departing perhaps by holding Him in an embrace. Regarding the entire concept of resurrection, theologians usually ignore God's promise to Abraham that he would walk all over the land of Israel with his descendants. That will be possible when generations of God-fearing pre-Cross Jews will one day live again and walk through the Land of Israel in the Millennium with their famous ancestor. The same applies to God-fearing Gentiles from Abraham to Cornelius, to the Conscience Era saints between Adam and Abraham, and finally to resurrected Tribulation saints.

The Greek '*parousia*' can render an 'apparition appearing' in the English language. It may even be the origin of 'peruse' which means to take a quick brief look at, for example, a document or photograph but without any serious study or analysis which later may take place if the item turns out to be of significance. The etymology of '*parousia*' in European languages suggests to us that the original Greek also de-emphasises a physical body. One's 'appearance', as Paul pointed out in II Corinthians 10:10 and Philippians 2:12, can also refer to that metaphysical situation where we judge people by their appearance for example in how they look, handsome or otherwise, etc. Ironically in Philippians, Paul's appearance (*parousia*) is contrasted with his absence (Strong **666**, *appousia*). However, the Biblical texts concerning Jesus' 'presence' always seem to refer to a real bodily presence, resurrected or otherwise. In the case of His resurrected body there are some differences in 'appearance'.

The etymology or philology of Classical Greek is of rather limited use for us today and as the works of Martin Bernal and Immanuel Velikovsky show us the falsified history behind much of the development of the modern understanding of the etymology of Greek also undermines our reliance on it. Where Greek's roots are Hebrew, or even Hebrew simply

transliterated into Greek letters (c.f., Erevon-Arrabown or יוברע - αραβων) we can reference the Masoretic-Hebrew *Tanaakh* (Old Testament). Using those etymological tools together with contexts from across the Scripture is our most trustworthy methodology in discerning between Rapture and Second Coming passages.

In the words, “*return* of Christ to punish Jerusalem, or finally the wicked”, Strong seems to overlook the concept of The Rapture intervening at any time before either the Apocalypse or the Second Coming on its last day. Perhaps Strong thought the Rapture would occur only at the very end of the Messianic Kingdom. Then God destroys the entire universe and creates the new one so that Jerusalem on this world is obliterated not just “punished”. It is unclear what sort of theology lay behind Strong’s thinking unless the words one has quoted here are something later editors have written in a similar way later editors of Josephus Flavius re-interpreted his comments on the “Queen of Egypt and Ethiopia” who visited Solomon as Jesus’ “Queen of the South”. Like most of his contemporaries, Strong may have been a post-millennial who believed the Messianic Kingdom is already in place (via the ‘Church’) and is awaiting its conclusion (classic post-millennial Covenant Theology). His definition may also be reflecting traditional christendomite beliefs that God has abandoned Israel by suggesting Jesus only returns to punish Israel which is the standard view held by Muslims. His definition of ‘*parousia*’ may thus also reflect the perspective that God is fully and permanently displacing Israel with the Church in His Plan for the World. The Bible suggests God vested that Plan in the Promises to Abraham and to him and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob alone (proselytes included). While *Strong* may or may not be reflecting all or some of those attitudes, the Concise Oxford Dictionary does seem to be very close to such anti-Semitic interpretations.

Most of Christendom believes God has now vested His Great Plan with the Church and permanently removed the promises therein to Israel and, or, handed them to the Church. Within that framework, Jews who believe in Jesus are simply transferred out of Israel and into the new Church, and presumably out of the now defunct ‘Israel’. They are treated as though they are no longer Jewish at all. It is correct to say ‘the role of witnessing for God’ in the current stage of the Plan of God belongs to the Church of God’s ‘Only Begotten Son’ i.e., ‘of the Christ. Nevertheless, Christ is also the ‘Messiah of Israel’. He is also ‘Saviour of the World’ including Israel. The latter’s dominance and centrality in world politics also says something of the resilience of today’s nation of Israel. The Church of *the* Christ conducts its ministry of witness with all its members being part of the ‘priesthood of all believers’ (Revelation 1:6, 5:10, 20:6). Together with Islamic opinion on the matter, the standard ‘christendomite’ view of Israel’s permanent displacement is based on the belief that Israel had two chances given her with two temples approved by God, but lost those opportunities forever by AD 30-70.

Thus, according to such opinions, after Israel’s rejection of Jesus in AD 30 and the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70, God’s plan was to be forever re-directed through the churches or at least not through Israel. ‘Christendom’ very quickly and mostly became a Gentile body. The Jews’ proportion of membership (including proselytes) declined from 100% at the very start to a tiny fraction by *circa* AD 200. Consequently, the Church soon lost touch with its Jewish roots and the reminder that its role was only temporary until the Rapture. Then God will re-commence His Plan with Abraham’s descendants beginning with the Apocalypse and the work of the 144 000 Jewish witnesses. God also returns Elijah to Earth from the cosmologists’ *space-time continuum*. All that for Israel to re-commence its lead role post-Rapture.

By AD 700 with the corruption in the Orthodox and Roman Churches reaching new lows, the Muslims, initially coming out of Arabia, believed the banner had passed back to the Arabian descendants of Abraham now committed to "Islam" and its prophet, Mohammad. He had an 'Arabic' perspective on the Biblical texts concerning the transfer of the Blessings to Abraham, firstly to Isaac instead of Ishmael and then in the next generation from Isaac to Jacob instead of to Esau. Believing the Arabs had been robbed and swindled 2700 years earlier by Isaac and Jacob, the Arabs of the Arabian peninsula were reinvigorated into believing they should have all along been, albeit belatedly, the true recipients of all God's promises to Abraham. However, there is also a major internal dispute over the question of Ishmael's Arabs or Esau's Arabs being the primary recipient of the Abrahamic promises - a point never discussed by Muslims or the *interlligent-CIA*. With the corruption of both Israel (586 BC and AD 70) and the Churches, the latter between AD 330-700, it is not hard to see why Mohammad's movement gained much traction. Indeed, at a 7<sup>th</sup> century synagogue in Israel (at *Beit Alpha*), archaeologists unearthed a mosaic on a floor depicting the signs of the Zodiac. Post-Temple rabbinic Judaism also seems to have descended to new lows of spiritual corruption.

Thus the stage was set in *circa* AD 700 for a fundamental review of the theology of the Bible. Nobody bothered to consult the true Christians at the time so the world became ripe for new rounds of chaos as a new set of false paradigms replaced an older set or *ancien regime*. Arab Muslims believed Ishmael was denied his proper right as the eldest son of Abraham. The Edomites, neighbours to the Ishmaelites, were domiciled along the Red Sea coast of the Arabian Peninsula. They believed their ancestor Esau, grandson of Abraham and nephew of Ishmael, was tricked out of his birthright by Jacob and the twins' mother (Rebecca, Rebekah or *Rivka*). This is a fundamental dichotomy that Islam has never been able to resolve because it cannot.

Muslims believe the Churches had their opportunity to prove their beliefs between AD 30-700. The Jews had two opportunities to please God. Now it was Islam's turn, as the narrative seems to have been. However, the Arab Muslims are still struggling with each other (e.g., Yemen versus the Saudis, Oman and Qatar versus the Emirates) over the rights of Ishmael versus Esau and in which set of descendants the Abrahamic Blessings truly reside. They certainly are united in rejecting Jesus who died on the Cross.

The Biblical reality is that God's main plan for the world is still mainly vested in the literal promises made to Adam after his fall and to Abraham concerning the promise of the Saviour. God personally confirmed further promises to Abraham with Isaac then Jacob, thus with Israel, i.e., with today's Jews. This reality means Israel is only temporarily under discipline, and temporarily divorced from God [Jeremiah 3:8, Hosea 2:2, 7, 16 (re *Baali* and *Ishi*), 19, 20, 5:15 - 6:3], and suffering the consequences as Moses (and Ezekiel) had warned them. Soon, after the Rapture of the Church, one last seven-year period is now determined upon Israel (Daniel 9:27). This is via the Seven-year Covenant with Antichrist wherein God delivers judgement on the world in the Apocalypse because Israel's secular leaders sign that heinous agreement. Israel's witnesses mentioned above will then begin their ministry if they have not already been commissioned to do so immediately after the Rapture. At the last moment before destruction at Antichrist's hands, Israel repents and Jesus comes to institute His Kingdom. Neither *Strong* nor the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* seem to be aware of that. The two Lexicographers are not to blame. The Theologians and Historians very much are to blame.

Thus we vehemently conclude Jesus is not coming to destroy Jerusalem "at the *Parousia*".

By implication, the Jews there are not going to be destroyed by Jesus, either, as the Muslims believe. Instead, Jesus will come and rescue newly repentant Israel, although not initially at Jerusalem but at Bozrah and then any siege of Jerusalem is broken when Jesus goes up to liberate the city. After defeating the armies of Antichrist at Bozrah then dispensing with those armies and supply lines all the way up the Valley of Jehoshaphat, Jesus will march up to the summit of the Mount of Olives, look over Jerusalem and announce He is taking control. Reiterating, that is something He could have done in AD 30 as the disciples were asking Him in Matthew 24:3 about His *parousia*. It will be the physically resurrected Christ, albeit with the additional attributes of Divinity, sharing the same type of body the resurrected saints have. We share with Him a body that fulfills the Genesis' statement "Let us make Man in our Image".

Thus, Strong's definition goes awry because it fails to keep the Church of The Christ distinct from Israel which then leads to confusion by inappropriately mixing the histories and prophecies of the two entities. There are two bodies concerned in the last stages of the Last Days. One, the Church, is already soteriologically **saved** and in need only of physical salvation from "this evil world" especially from Satan's son the Antichrist. The other body is unrepentant Israel, soteriologically and physically **unsaved** and like the Church still (at the time of writing) physically present in this evil world. The Church (Body of Christ) has temporarily received Israel's role as a priesthood to all unbelievers but in the temples of our bodies and via our work instead of rituals inside a specially consecrated building, tent or tabernacle. Also, the Church received a clear promise in the New Testament that once its current task on Earth becomes impossible to fulfill; for whatever reason such as opposition from Antichrist or by The Rapture itself; it will be **physically** removed from the looming crises. But whether this is Strong's "physical aspect" in his definition is not at all clear.

The Church has no need to repent like Israel does. Already, or at any time, all of its true members; individually in receiving and positively responding to the Holy Spirit's invitation or power of conviction; have come to repentance and thereby form or make up the 'Body' we call the **Church of the Christ**. By continuing to reject that; certain Jewish individuals excepted because they do believe now; Israel therefore must remain to suffer during the Apocalypse along with unbelieving Gentiles in order to come to repentance and belief, that being an important purpose for the Apocalypse to drive Israel (and everyone else) towards doing that. Had Israel believed in AD 30 it would have escaped a lot of trouble through the next two millennia which would have meant that the disciples' question in Matthew 24:3 about Jesus' *parousia* would have been answered within a week or so. Instead a 'week' of seven years would have to be concluded before Jesus' return to save Israel and give it the Kingdom of God (the MMK). However, at least two millennia would then have to pass by before that.

There is no need to use the Apocalypse to get the Church to repent. The Church already has repented. One cannot be in the *Universal Church* if one has not repented though anyone can attend local congregations. Meanwhile, many non-Jews still on Earth after the Rapture also come to belief and indeed realise they must help the Jews survive Antichrist. When Gentiles come to belief during the Apocalypse their new-found belief in Jesus also opens them to being responsive to the Scriptures and an understanding of them. We can only *sow the seed* right now. Many will not *germinate* until after the Rapture so our work now may simply be to *propel* such people toward their ministry of witness to the world and protection of Jews from Antichrist's wrath. That's how the non-Jews who are subsequently saved after the Rapture become what are known as "Sheep

Gentiles". They also are rewarded with life in the Millennium but they will not share in the gifts and rewards Jesus will give (or "award") to many Church Saints at the Judgement Seat of Christ.

Israel and the Church of *the* Christ are two different bodies, saved on the same basis but physically saved by two different methods. One is the Rapture which takes dead church saints and living believers into Heaven to wait out Daniel's Seventieth Week (Apocalypse), receive rewards at the Judgement seat of Christ, be clothed in righteousness, participate in the Marriage of the Lamb then, as the Bride of Christ, return to Earth for the wedding reception-breakfast. Perhaps with God the Father looking on too (c.f., discussion in Titus 2:13b) the resurrected church saints will be watching Jesus destroy Antichrist and physically rescuing Israel from destruction. Then for Israel, Jesus will establish the Messianic Kingdom of God beginning with the Wedding Breakfast for the Church saints returned to Earth after their brief sojourn in Heaven and with Israel and other Old Testament saints attending as 'Friends of the Bride' or as guests at the Wedding breakfast. Far from being "punished", Jerusalem will be renovated, renewed and even *physically uplifted*.

### **(Bii) Greek Verbs to Come or Appear**

Strong 160, *aiphnidios*, non-apparent, unexpected, suddenly, unawares: Luke 21:34.

Strong 362, *anemeno*, await, wait for (perhaps like the sea creature suddenly sucking in its prey): I Thessalonians 1:10.

Strong 529, *apantesis*, friendly encounter, meet: I Thessalonians 4:17.

Strong 601, *apokalupto*, to take off the cover, i.e., disclose, reveal: Luke 17:30, II Thessalonians 2:3, II Thessalonians 2:8, I Peter 1:5.

Strong 602, *apokalupsis*, a disclosure, appearing, manifestation, coming, be revealed or revelation: I Corinthians 1:7, II Thessalonians 1:7, I Peter 1:7 and 13.

Strong 726, *harpazo*, seize, catch (away, up), pluck, pull, take by force: I Thessalonians 4:17.

Strong 1096, *ginomai*, cause to be, become, come into being, brought or come to pass, "used with great latitude", arise, be assembled, ended, finished, fulfilled, and more ... etc: Luke 21:28, 31 and 36.

Strong 1205, *dente*, to come hither, come or follow: Matthew 25:34.

Strong 1448, *eggizo*, to make near, approach, be at hand, come (draw) near, be (come, draw) nigh: Hebrews 10:25.

Strong 1680, *elpis*, expectation with pleasure or confidence, faith, hope: Titus 2:13.

Strong 1831, *exerchomai*, to issue, come, depart, escape, get out: Matthew 24:27.

Strong 1904, *eperchomai*, supervene, arrive, occur, impend, attack, influence, come in or come upon: Luke 21:35.

Strong 1997, *episunagogue*, a complete collection, meeting (for worship) assembling (gathering) together: II Thessalonians 2:1.

Strong 2015, *epiphaneia*, conspicuous, memorable or notable (implied) manifestation, advent, appearance, brightness of the Christ (past or future): I Timothy 6:14, II Timothy 4:1, 8, Titus 2:13; but II Timothy 1:10 re first advent.

Strong 2064, *erchomai* (but present and imperfect tenses only), *eleuthomai*, *eltho*, accompany, appear, bring, come, enter, go: Matthew 10:23, 16:27 & 28; 24:30, 39, 42, 43, 44; 25:31, 26:64; Mark 8:38, 13:26, 36, 14:62; Luke 9:26, 12:40, 17:27, 18:8, 21:27; John 14:3, 21:22; Acts 1:11 and 2:20; I Corinthians 4:5, 11:26; II Thessalonians 1:10; II Thessalonians 2:3; Hebrews 10:37; II Peter 3:3; Jude 14; Revelation 1:7, 8, 3:11, 16:15.

Strong 2186, *ephistemi*, to stand upon, be present, come upon, be at hand: Luke 21:34.

Strong 2240, *heko*, to arrive, be present, come: Matthew 24:14, Hebrews 10:37 and II Peter 3:10 where "The Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night".

Strong 2597, *katabaino*, descend, come down or fall down: I Thessalonians 4:16.

Strong, 3700, *optanomai*, *optomai*, observe, gaze (with wide-open eyes as at something remarkable signifies an earnest but more continued *inspection*): Hebrews 9:28.

Strong 3952, *parousia*, refer note in Addendum (Bi): Matthew 24:3, 27, 37, 39; I Corinthians 15:23 and 24 (inferred), I Thessalonians 2:19, 3:13, 4:15, 5:23, II Thessalonians 2:1, 8 (re Jesus coming to destroy Antichrist) and verse 9 (re coming of Antichrist after the "working of Satan"), James 5:7, 8; II Peter 3:4, 12 (re "coming of The Day of God"), I John 2:28.

Strong 4198, *porenomai*, traverse, depart, travel: Matthew 25:4, concerning unsaved, unrepentant goat Gentiles at aftermath of Armageddon and the judgement of the sheep from the goats.

Strong 4327, *prosdechomai*, to await with confidence or patience, look (wait) for: Titus 2:13, concerning looking for the Rapture.

Strong 5281, *hupomone*, enduring, patience, patient continuance (waiting): II Thessalonians 3:5.

Strong 5316, *phaino*, lighten, show, shine, appear, seem: Matthew 24:30.

Strong 5318, *phaneros*, apparent, appear, manifestly declare, (make) manifest (forth), show (self) or as an adverb, manifestly, openly or outwardly: Matthew 24:30.

Strong 5319, *phaneroo*, to render apparent, appear, manifest etc: Colossians 3:4 (x2), I Peter 5:4, I John 2:28, 3:2.

Re "Time or season":

Strong 2540, *kairos*, "of uncertain affinity" but Strong suggests #5550 "*chronos*" also of "uncertain derivation"; meaning (from both 2540 and 5550) occasion, time, season, opportunity, 'a while'; (Strong 5550) a space of time rather than a fixed or special occasion as in *kronos*; a particular period or interval.

Strong 2078, *eschatos*, ends of, last, latter end, farthest or final of place or time.

**(Biii) "Tribulation" and "Persecution" in the New Testament**



In this paper, it seems reasonable to this observer to use the English word 'Apocalypse' for all the terrible stuff taking place in Israel's last seven-year period of the 490 described in Daniel 9:24-7 (c.f., Deuteronomy 4:30, 32:35, Isaiah 34:8, 35:4, 61:2, Joel 2:2, Hosea 6:2, Amos 5:18, 20, Obadiah verses 12-14 and Zechariah 12:8 12:9 12:11). Actually, 'Apocalypse' is the Greek title for the *Book of Revelation* which from chapter four onwards describes a truly awful situation that makes anything we suffer today look like an irritating mosquito bite in comparison. Thus it is sensible to consider how words like 'persecution', 'tribulation', 'trouble' etc., are translated from the Greek manuscripts into English. Since one is using *Strong's Concordance*, these words will be considered in the context of the King James Version (KJV).

### (1) Tribulation

The KJV translates "*thlipsis*" (Strong #2347) into "tribulation" nineteen times in the singular and thrice in the plural. On another twenty-one other occasions "*thlipsis*" appears, the KJV uses the English 'afflict' as the verb or 'affliction' as the noun. In their context, these occasions refer to general persecution and troubles every believer experiences c.f., Romans 5:3 and Ephesians 3:13. In II Thessalonians 1:4, "tribulations" is paired with 'persecutions' (*diogmos* from *dioko*, Strong #1375/7). In Matthew 13:21, soon after the Jewish leadership confirmed its opposition to Jesus, 'tribulation' and 'persecution' again appear together. Hence, the first reason why one suggests 'tribulation' in the New Testament can be seen as basically synonymous or interchangeable with 'persecution', 'trouble', 'trials' or 'worry' etc. This is partly why this observer prefers to use 'persecution' for the sort of run-of-the-mill rubbish we get thrown at us and to use 'tribulation' for much more pernicious stuff. "Tribulation saints" are therefore better regarded as only those who have to endure the Apocalypse because they suffer much more than the 'persecution' we normally get.

However, in Matthew 24:21 & 29 "tribulation" definitely is used in the context of the Apocalyptic conditions where God is pouring out His wrath on the World and Antichrist his on anyone opposing him or not supporting his plans. This probably is the main reason why many people thus describe what we call "The Apocalypse" the 'Tribulation'. Furthermore, Matthew 24:21 refers to the "Great (*megas*, Strong #3173) Tribulation" then in verse 29 declares that immediately "after the Tribulation of those days" that Jesus returns or "appears" (verse 30). This leads some people to suggest the first three and half years of Daniel's last 'seven' (Daniel 9:24-7) took place as Jesus' Ministry between AD 27-30 and the second half being the time of "Jacob's Trouble" or what we refer to as the Seven-year Apocalypse. Others use these verses to divide the seven-year Apocalypse into a period of lesser followed by greater tribulation. Certainly, as one suggests, from Israel's perspective; when it believes Antichrist is supportive of its existence and control over its ancient homeland; Israel will suffer only God's wrath though presumably not knowing why, pretending to be ignorant of, or turning a blind eye to the real reasons for the Apocalypse. The Interlinear translation uses the English words 'great affliction' in Matthew 24:29. Again, this suggests that everything is deteriorating. Or the deterioration is accelerating so much that no flesh would survive unless the Apocalypse comes to an end. Many people like to place the Rapture on the eve of this supposed second half of 'great' or 'greater' "Tribulation". But that would contravene the Doctrine of the Imminence of the Rapture.

Mark 13:24, dealing with the same situation as Matthew 24:21-29, again uses the word 'tribulation' in the KJV to signify those stages of the Apocalypse that conclude with the

Second Coming (c.f., Matthew 24:29). In his version of the Olivet Discourse, Luke 21:8-28, the author uses in the KJV translation words like “fearful sights”, “great (*megas*, Strong #3173) earthquakes” and “great signs” in verse 11; martyrdom in verse 16; “days of vengeance” in verse 22; “great distress in verse 23; or “perplexity” in verse 25 but nothing in the Greek manuscripts that the KJV translates into ‘tribulation’ or ‘apocalypse’.

From John 16:33, through several more verses in the New Testament (Acts 14:22, Romans 2:9, 5:3, 8:35, 12:12, II Corinthians 1:4, 7:4, I Thessalonians 3:4, II and Thessalonians 1:6, the KJV’s use of ‘tribulation’ (*thlipsis*, Strong #2347) is clearly related to situations where Jesus’ followers and disciples will be persecuted (e.g., Acts 14:22) or to suffering for wrongdoing (Romans 2:9). The words, “we must through much tribulation enter the Kingdom of God” are used by some to show that the Church will endure the entire Apocalypse like everyone else. We clearly reject that context. At that early stage in the Church’s life, composed then mostly by Jews being persecuted by their brethren, that passage cannot be talking about the ‘Last Seven of years’ for Israel, i.e., The Apocalypse, but to what life will be like throughout Church history. “Seeking first the Kingdom of God” as Jesus exhorted will bring us into conflict with the rest of the world trying to use knowledge, technology etc., to help man overcome the world’s problems and even bring eternal life through medical science. Romans 5:3 says we will “glory in tribulations” because “tribulation works patience”. That can hardly refer to the Apocalypse when Paul is writing to Roman Christians to explain that the troubles they face because they believe Jesus not only come with the package but they are even good for us.

Like Matthew 13:21 and II Thessalonians 1:4, in Romans 8:35 both ‘persecution’ and ‘tribulation’ appear together, along with ‘distress’, ‘famine’ and ‘peril’ in the context that none of those things are going to separate us from Jesus. If that is to be applied to the Apocalypse, a strained assumption, then clearly we will not have to face the Apocalypse which means we escape from it via the Rapture unless death intervenes. In Romans 12:12, per the KJV, we should be “rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer”. From Romans 12:1, after a three chapter interlude on the future for Israel during the Church Age and into the Apocalypse, Paul gave instruction for Christian living through the forthcoming age. As one suggests elsewhere, this Church Age (the “Last Days” of Hebrews 1:1) came after “Conscience” from the Fall of Adam to Abraham, the Age of Israel from Abraham to Christ and now this age until the Rapture. The ordinances, obligations or rules for life differ from age to age. Romans 12:12 comes in that context. In II Corinthians 1:4 and 7:4, Paul refers to his own tribulation or to that which his company also endured. In I Thessalonians 3:4, he tells that audience they too will join him and every other believer in “tribulation” but in II Thessalonians 1:6, Paul tells them God is going to “recompense tribulation to them that trouble you”. He avenges us, we do not take our revenge out on them. Everyone indeed will experience ‘tribulation’ one way or another but not necessarily in the Apocalypse. Saints of all time are persecuted except probably Millennial saints. The souls of deceased unbelievers are already in a type of ‘tribulation’. Unbelievers and those who become believers during the Apocalypse obviously experience ‘tribulation’. However, Church saints alive at the time of, on the eve of or before anything gets really awful in the Apocalypse, will not be put through it!

The above instances show that “tribulation” cannot easily be translated the “Apocalypse” in spite of the KJV’s limitations in translation. However, one can understand why some people might well read the use of “tribulation” in the KJV of Matthew 24:21 & 29 in combination with the word “tribulation” used five times in the *Book of Revelation* or of “*The Apocalypse*” as the book’s title appears in Greek. The first four occasions are in the

first two chapters that clearly deal with the Church Age (Revelation 1:9 and 2:9, 10 & 22). Firstly, John refers to his trials as an exile in rugged Patmos. In Revelation 2:9 & 10, through John's epistle, Jesus is encouraging the Church at Smyrna to struggle through its troubles and the "tribulation" Satan delivers their way in verse 10. In Revelation 2:22, writing to the church in Thyatira, Jesus warns that church to ignore the false prophecies of Jezebel-like characters, or else Jesus will deliver "tribulation" to that church **unless it repents**. In this verse, "tribulation" is therefore conditional and given in the subjunctive. The Apocalypse will be delivered anyway. The "Apocalypse" has to be unconditional. It will not be cancelled because of repentance. Indeed, it has to be the very vehicle by which God brings Israel to her knees in repentance.

Finally, in this section on "tribulation", Revelation 7:14 probably refers to Gentiles who have repented following the witness of the 144 000 Jews, the Two Witnesses or even perhaps Elijah if he is not one of the 'Two' that Antichrist kills in Revelation 11:7. Since they are martyred, this verse reveals they, or their souls, are comforted in Heaven and will receive their resurrected bodies when Messiah does that in the Seventy-five day interval [Addendum (Av)]. They will have gone through some very nasty difficulties, afflictions, persecution etc., probably much worse than most of us experience as saints. Hence the expression, "they which came out of great tribulation" not out of "The Great Tribulation" but out of "The Apocalypse". Thus none of the five occasions where the KJV uses 'tribulation' in the Book of Revelation can be used to imply the Church endures the Apocalypse like all the unbelievers. Apart from, that is, the unbelievers who become believers during the Apocalypse, perhaps because of the Apocalypse, or who come to belief through those who are witnessing throughout the Apocalypse.

## (2) Persecution

As already noted, 'persecution' in the Greek is "*diogmos*" from "*dioko*" (Strong #1375/7). In Acts 11:14, in the KJV, the "persecution" taking place when the anti-Jesus fanatics stoned Stephen, is also the Greek *thlipsis*. That's inconsistent with the prevailing use of 'tribulation' or 'tribulations' in the KJV for that word. Also, In Luke 11:49 and 1 Thessalonians 2:15 "*ekdioko*" (Strong 1559, "to persecute implacably", "pursue" or "expel") is also translated "persecute". However, overall, in the KJV, 'persecute' (*diogmos* or *dioko*) is used forty-five times of which thirty are verbs and fifteen are nouns.

Matthew 5:11 & 44 have Jesus speaking to a "multitude" from a "mountain". This is popularly known as the 'Sermon on the Mount'. As Dr Fruchtenbaum reminded us, this address was to help people understand the purpose of the Mosaic Law. It had a minimum standard for people to meet but its highest or optimum standard was one God Himself set and Jesus too of course. So we receive a blessing because of the "evil", "persecution" and false witness directed at us "for my sake", said Jesus. But in verse 44 we are to forgive those people even so. That is God's Way. He will forgive anyone who confesses and repents and accepts that Jesus paid the price for all sin in His shed blood. However, this just supports the general point we are making that persecution, tribulation, affliction or whichever term one uses are the way life is for believers. The Bible nevertheless talks about one particular period when apocalyptic conditions leading to an attempt to destroy Israel in the Campaign of Armageddon will span one last seven-year period in Israel's pre-millennial History.

In John 5:16, Jesus having healed a man on the Sabbath in violation of the rabbis' unbiblical rules led to our Lord being persecuted by the Jewish leaders presumably

instead of just being ignored. In John 15:20 is Jesus' classic line, "if they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (Greek *dioko*, also in John 5:16). This verse raises the implicit point that if the believer is not facing persecution either he is not actually in Christ or he is not really working and witnessing for Christ even though he is saved which is a status only the Lord knows anyway. More than anything John 15:20 sums up this discussion. Persecutions, afflictions, troubles, are the norm for believers. The Apocalypse will be a very different, unique '*norm*' for unbelievers until some do begin repenting then but they too will have to continue persevering.

A lot of opinions about the very existence of the Rapture or anything about Jesus returning to save us physically from the Apocalypse and persecution in general get confused with unclear definitions of words like 'tribulation', 'persecution', 'apocalypse' etc. That's because people think I Thessalonians 3:4 refers to the Church going through or experiencing The Apocalypse as if it were 'The Tribulation'. The context here shows that Paul was referring to something he had said earlier on ("we told you before"). From the beginning, *ex ante*, Paul had promised, as Jesus likewise did, what this paper prefers to define or call 'persecution' always would come to believers - "**afflictions**" .... "we are appointed thereunto" (KJV, I Thessalonians 3:3, Strong 2347, *thlipsis*). One suggests 'persecution' is a better English word to use because the Greek "*thlibo*" (θλιβω) is possibly the source for the English 'tribulation'. The KJV here uses 'tribulation' for '*thlibo*' (or '*tribo*') because of the ancient practice of interchanging 'r' for 'l' in alphabetic systems. Thus from an Etymological standpoint, 'tribulation' is a quite reasonable word in English to use but as the history of theology has shown it has become misleading. Many people consequently use "tribulation" for the term "Apocalypse" per the *Book of Revelation* and others distinguish between 'Tribulation' and the 'The Great Tribulation'. As noted in the *Introduction*, the word 'Apocalypse' is derived from the name given in Greek for the Book of Revelation. In this observer's opinion, that is why "The Apocalypse" is the best word to use for this forthcoming particular period in world history alternatively referred here to as the 'Last Seven' of the 490 for Israel from Daniel 9:24-27 ('Daniel's Seventieth-week'). After three chapters giving an History-Prophecy of the Church Age, *Revelation* describes and sequences the many desolations the Old Testament Prophets foresaw for the world in the *Last Days*. That period of "desolation" in *Revelation* after chapter 3 is introduced in chapter 4 with the words "**After this ...**".

In the meantime, putting aside the various definitions people use, we are continuously persecuted and ostracized because we follow Jesus. We are "appointed" to all that but only because we follow Jesus. Every other genuine believer in God since Adam has been persecuted or ostracized by unbelievers. Persecution has been the norm for believers in God and for those who have put their faith in God throughout the history of man. So Paul's use of "*thlibo*" in this verse refers to the ongoing situation any believer of any era undergoes. The KJV's possibly misleading use of "tribulation" does not mean we are to go through the Apocalypse or "The Tribulation" or even "The Great Tribulation". The ASV and the Interlinear Bible use "affliction" in both verses and Strong adds that to "trouble" as alternatives for "*thlibo*". It's a fact of daily life that persecution or ostracism, bullying and other troubles are simply to be the expected norm for the believer in, disciple of, or ambassador for Christ. It was true for the Church in Paul's day and in our's.

**(C) Relevant passages re "The Wrath to come":** Matthew 3:7, Luke 3:7, 21:23, Romans 2:5, 5:8-9, Colossians 3:6, I Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9, Revelation 6:16 & 17, 11:18, 15:1, 16:1, 19:15. The two early passages in Matthew and Luke are quotes from John the Baptist. The time of wrath he referred to is probably the same as that stated by Luke

21:23. However, it is in Romans 5:8 that it is clear we are justified in Christ so there is no longer any fear of condemnation. Furthermore, in verse 9 we "**shall** be saved from wrath through Him". Romans 2:5 tells us unbelievers are "treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God".

The "wrath" of God from the rest of Scripture is clearly aimed at unsaved people from now on which means Israel and non-Church Gentiles. Even then, the wrath in the form of the Apocalypse is primarily aimed at Israel in terms like "Time of Jacob's Trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7) or "The Day of Israel's Calamity" (Deuteronomy 32:35, Obadiah 12-14). Those events have nothing to do with the Church but of course those who come to belief in Jesus after the Rapture of the Church ('Tribulation saints') likewise will have to negotiate the rigours of the Apocalypse (Daniel's Seventieth-week). Equally the many allusions to the Rapture in the New Testament have nothing to do with Israel and never were even hinted at until Israel rejected Jesus whom the Church accepts.

#### **(D) Preamble to Luke 17:22.**

Luke's Gospel is tightly structured in respect to sequence and chronology of events. If we go back to Luke 11:14 we find the people were accusing Jesus of conspiring with Beelzebub, a princely demon, when Jesus expelled another demon from a man who had been deaf and dumb. Jewish thinking at the time believed that was an impossible miracle for anyone other than God Himself to perform. Hence the rather stupid accusation when suddenly faced with that reality. From Luke 11:17 to 36 Jesus castigated those opposing Him. Luke 11:29:32 is where after they sought another sign from Jesus, He further castigated them for already having rejected many signs. He cited the remarkable faithfulness of The Queen of the South (11:31) and the men of Ninevah (11:30 & 32) when they positively responded to just the "one sign". In Luke 11:37, a pharisee invited Jesus to his house. But Jesus slammed them for their hypocrisy in majoring on comparatively unimportant things like washing before a meal but inwardly being "ravenous and wicked" (11:39). The tirade against the pharisees continues to 11:50-51 where Jesus held them responsible for the slaying of prophets sent by God (and they will have Jesus slain). Luke 11:52-54 ropes in the scribes and lawyers as well and the chapter concludes with the plans to kill Jesus.

By this point in Luke's Gospel it is clear the leaders wanted to eliminate Jesus. Therefore He began preparing the disciples to lay the foundations for church life in the kingdom phase about to occur from Pentecost (Dr Fruchtenbaum's '*Mystery Kingdom*' stage). Jesus began to teach in parables so that the people received little understanding of what He was talking about. Therefore, Jesus privately explained the parables to His trusted disciples or to anyone believing Him and intent on hearing what He had to say. In Luke 15:11-32 is the lengthy account of the Prodigal Son which appears to be a description of how formerly renegade Gentiles come back to the father in forgiveness while the elder brother representing the Jews gets jealous of all this. We do not hear what happens as a result of the older brother's negative response. The account seems to finish at a sort of dead-end. That makes us wonder if the ending is to be found in Israel's eventual realization ('The National Confession') Jesus of Nazareth was its Messiah after all. In so doing it will find true faith as *Revelation* and other passages confirm. Israel will do that on the last three days of the Apocalypse although individual Jews do so now; and will be in the Rapture. Others will continue to come to belief in Jesus (*Yeshua*) after the Rapture right up until the National Confession.

Luke 16:1-13 is the parable of the rich man whose steward had not served him well and got the sack. Before he finished his employment he gave credits to his master's debtors so they would be kind to him once he was out on the street. Jesus used this to say in Luke 16:11 those who are not faithful in "unrighteous mammon" will not receive "the true riches". "Riches" are implied but it seems equally reasonable to interpret the statement as meaning he will not receive "truth" or The Truth. In Luke 16:12 Jesus introduced the element of "faithfulness" in the context of the parable then in 16:13 He explained you cannot serve two masters - "God and Mammon". In Luke 16:14 the pharisees perceived Jesus was getting at them and their "covetousness" so they "derided" Jesus. In Luke 16:15-18 Jesus condemned their self-justification. He delivered them the account of the poor man Lazarus and the rich man who both die but the poor man is comfortably resting with Abraham while the rich man is languishing in hell. This also appears to be a veiled reference to what will soon happen regarding Simon the Pharisee who became Simon the Leper then "Lazarus", or his name in John's Gospel. However, it seems Simon the Pharisee had come to belief after Jesus had shown He could read Simon's private thoughts. Simon thus became the vehicle by which Jesus would perform the First Sign "to Israel" of Exodus 4:8.

In Luke 17:1, Jesus turned to the disciples. We note here the sudden change in audience. There is some teaching on persecutions and people offending the disciples but they are always to forgive. They ask the Lord to "increase our faith" in Luke 17:5. With a seemingly obscure example in Luke 17:6-10, the Lord effectively points out that happens as we just get on with the Lord's work not expecting any special commendation etc. We are just to get on with it. When or as we see how our Lord is working and answering our prayers our faith naturally increases and grows (refer Fruchtenbaum, *Yeshua*, Volume 3, page 150). By this time, *Yeshua* is getting on with the task of "building His Church" (Matthew 16:18). As we get on with His work; which is the Father's work in the Plan God has for everything (Romans 12:1-2); our faith grows.

So with the issue of faith and its growth now addressed, we can understand more about Luke 18:8 in the light of the Rapture especially within the contrast between it and the Second Coming. The contrast lies in much faith springing up on Earth if only in a very short time of a few years in the Apocalypse. In fact, as Scripture seems to say, All Israel and many Gentiles will have come to faith by the time of the Second Coming. That is how and why 'carnal' Israel and many 'carnal' Gentiles will enter the Messianic Kingdom (the latter as sheep in contradistinction to goats, Matthew 25:34). In Luke 18:8, Scripture also seems to suggest Jesus will not find faith 'when He comes' or at least very little faith. This paper takes the view there may be very little true faith on Earth at the 'coming' that happens to be the Rapture which is an earlier event than the Second Coming, the debate being about the length of time between the two 'comings'.

Going back to Luke 17:11-19, there is then the incident of the ten lepers who are healed through "their faith". That additional demonstration of one of the Three Miracles of the Messiah heaped yet another offence on the pharisees so they cynically tested the Lord again about the coming of the kingdom which they clearly did not really believe in anyway (apart from Simon the Pharisee, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea). Jesus dismissed their scepticism with the response to "The Pharisees" in Luke 17:20-21. That's when Jesus then, in our view now, privately turned to the disciples to begin His veiled references to the Rapture.

Having addressed the Pharisees in Luke 17:20-21, it is very important to note the change in audience in Luke 17:22 as Jesus switched His words to the disciples. He was also

changing the subject. An important point to note here is that we are now entering a break in Jesus' words to unbelievers as He turns to believers even though that group did not understand a lot of what Jesus was talking about. That is the immediate background to a soliloquy on the Rapture outlined for the first time in Luke 17:23-37. The Rapture passage ends at Luke 17:37 and chapter 18 begins. The Lord introduced a parable in Luke 18:2-5 which introduced a lesson to disciples in effect explaining how difficult life will become for believers in an increasingly unjust world. We will be avenged (18:7); by the Lord of course, not on our own account. However, implicitly "The Rapture" is a way of protecting believers from the worst trials via Antichrist. That rescue looks likely to come at a critical moment when we are no longer able to do any of the work we should or could be doing for Him. God's angels will take up the slack in the apocalyptic judgements and Israel's 144 000 male virgins will recommence the ministry Israel once had before the Church Age. But in Luke 18:8 is that sole verse raising the possibility that when the "Son of Man" does come to take away believers He may not find many with Faith at the time.

After the enigmatic statement in Luke 18:8, in verse nine Jesus returned to His tirades against the Pharisees with the words "unto those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others". So we see the extensive passage from Luke 17:5 where the disciples first asked Jesus to "increase our faith" that Jesus then gave the most extensive treatment of the Rapture in Luke 17:22-37. But He concludes in Luke 18:8 with a question about there being any faith at all "when the Son of Man comes" presumably at the Rapture. Jesus was speaking in the subjunctive which like the first miracle in Exodus 4:8 leaves open at least two options. While there is much faith at the Second Coming even if it has only just sprung up within a brief seven year period of intense suffering a possibility is left open that faith will be scarce at the Rapture. Everything points to The Rapture coming on a quite normal day, all things considered, so many people may well be unprepared indicating a lack of real faith. The Second Coming is on a very abnormal day and comes after even people who had long denied the existence of God openly refer to the Wrath of the Lamb" in Revelation 6:16-17 but when it is too late to repent.

### **(Ei) The Rapture Soliloquy**

A soliloquy is "an act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when alone or regardless of hearers, especially by a character in a play". That's the definition in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, Tenth Edition, Oxford University Press 1999. We are in *The Divine Comedy* in many ways and God in Psalms 2:4, 37:12-13, 59:8 and Proverbs 1:20 & 25-6 reinforces the point. So when the Lord moved to deliver this soliloquy He was clearly in one sense **alone** having just turned His Holy Back on those intellectual minnows and legal rascals oppressing Him and mocking Him over the coming of the Messianic Kingdom. Then He turned to the disciples almost as though they were not there in one sense but conveniently present in another. Firstly, He told them they will long for or yearn for "**One** of the Days of the **Son of Man**" but that they "would not see it". In the 'soliloquy. In the soliloquy, if we can call it that Jesus presented us with some details. If the current audience were not to "see it" Jesus appeared to be addressing people either not yet born or to those who would outlive the disciples because they were very young, or perhaps He was addressing believers throughout the next two millennia. Thus, Jesus began with a warning to future generations of believers (verse 23). He referred to His rejection by AD 30 Israel (verse 25). He gave a couple of commentaries about the forthcoming 'Days of Noah and Lot' with a description of what people on that special '**Day**' on Earth at the very instant of the Rapture presumably will see when it occurs.

The new perspective in this paper is to suggest that Jesus wove three 'proverbs' or metaphors into the later Olivet Discourse and into this soliloquy; but He also 'spun' them into two quite distinctly different applications for two different *raisons d'être*. The metaphors involved lightening (verse 24), housetops (verse 31) and, somewhat crudely for emphasis, 'birds and bodies' (verse 37). A fourth metaphor or simile in these eschatological studies [refer Addendum (Eiii), a Thief in the Night] uses the concept of someone or something coming suddenly and out of the blue but it is **not** found in this soliloquy. Matthew's summary of the Soliloquy, or his record of Jesus' own summarized reiteration of the Soliloquy in Matthew 24:36-44, does use a mini-parable about a certain 'goodman' not knowing at what hour a thief would come (Matthew 24:43). Mark 13:32-37 in his summary of the *peri de* segment of the Olivet Discourse just emphasizes the need to be always watching and vigilant. People in the Apocalypse, if they are reading their Bibles, will be able to plan and prepare for the Second Coming (Daniel 12:11-12).

It was the comparatively sparse treatment that both Alfred Edersheim (19<sup>th</sup> Century) and Dr Fruchtenbaum (20<sup>th</sup> Century) and many other commentators gave to Luke 17:22-37 in their eschatological studies that struck the author personally as a little strange. That led one to investigate what one had learned from Hebrew language and composition studies and specifically for this passage about Hebraic metaphor. In turn, that led to a review of the three metaphors under discussion. It seems as though, or it could be argued, these three metaphors are delicately spun in two different ways; one way each for the Rapture then the Second Coming. They appear in Matthew's and Mark's Olivet discourse records concerning the Second Coming only. Matthew 24:17 (housetop), 27 (lightening) & 28 (carcase-eagle) used all three but Mark only used the housetop metaphor in his Olivet-Second Coming segment (Mark 13:15). The account in Luke 21:5-36 of the Olivet Discourse concerning the Second Coming did not refer to any of them. The metaphors do **not** appear in Matthew's and Mark's *per de* sections which refer to the Rapture even though Jesus did actually use all three in what this paper assumes to be the Luke 17:22-37 Soliloquy all about the Rapture. That might be why most other observers thus tend to lump the Luke 17 soliloquy and its metaphors with events pointing to the Second Coming.

To reiterate, one can see these three metaphors as each being spun in two different ways. Using an analogy from the game of cricket, it's a bit like a leg spin bowler who shapes his body to deliver the regular leg-spinner's ball but actually delivers the Googly out of the back of his (or her) hand so that it turns in the direction opposite to what the batsman expects. The batsman has to keep an eagle eye on that hand; or the bowler's posture, or on any variations the 'bowler' may exhibit ball after ball, as he sends down each delivery from his end of the pitch. Furthermore, and making things even more complicated for the batsman, he may also need to guess or estimate (or *guesstimate*) which way the ball is going to 'bounce' on the ground. The physical state of the 'pitch' is yet another factor determining which way the ball might then spin - Left or Right. Sometimes, the ball simply travels straight ahead after bouncing or landing because it has no spin on it or because the grass and soil in the pitch nullified any movement but gave the ball extra 'bounce' instead.

Thus, one concluded each proverb or metaphor in theory could spin one way for the Rapture; or have a materially different aspect to it and apply to the Second Coming instead. In keeping with an Hebraic tradition and custom, Jesus 'tweaked' each metaphor for someone to see or understand the point with the indwelling Holy Spirit guiding him but to confuse others or impede their understanding. Quite independent of the 'Spirit', this paper suggests the 'Time for Understanding' would be in the "Last Days" of Daniel 12:4 & 9 and other 'last-day' Scriptures. Readers, guided by God's Spirit; in most ways the Bible's true



author (Inspiration); would have to 'pick it' (i.e., the spin or bounce).

To reiterate, Matthew 24:17 (housetop), verse 27 (lightening) and verse 28 (vultures and carcasses); Mark 13:15 (housetops) are the only times those two Gospel narrators quoted Jesus' use of this trio of metaphors - but in their 'Second Coming' sections. The parallel account in Luke 21:5-36 does not record them at all. One sees that as being very significant and suggests that through the Holy Spirit, Luke, and perhaps Paul too advising him, structured, formatted and composed his gospel account as it covered these eschatological issues. Somewhere down the road from Jerusalem, perhaps near Jericho or its environs, quite soon before that last Passover, Jesus used the three metaphors in a very distinct and succinct way to speak about a rather vague special day in His *career*. He coined that day as one belonging to "The Son of Man" of Psalm 8:4 (in this author's analysis). However, most commentators seem to believe Luke 17:22-37 must therefore be a secondary but earlier rendition of the main Olivet Discourse. It must be stressed that the soliloquy of Luke 17:22-37 came out of the blue whereas the Olivet Discourse as recorded in Matthew 24:3-35, Mark 13:3-31 and Luke 21:5-28 was a set of answers to three specific questions from the disciples in response to a stinging criticism of Herod's building projects for the 'Second' Jewish Temple. Thus Luke 17:22-37, whichever way one considers it, came into Luke's narrative so far out of context with anything that one might expect to be relevant that readers really should be giving the passage far more serious consideration than hitherto seems to have been the case in modern theology.

The lightening in Matthew's passage is in one set of directions. In the Rapture account in Luke 17:22-37 the lightening is of a different nature and operates through a different set of directions across the sky. In view of the way the gospels are structured, and Luke's in particular, and in view of the materially different way in which we are interpreting that structure, a detail such as the difference in directions of the lightening must be more closely examined. The lightening in Matthew's account may well occur during a period of world-wide darkness and would therefore have a quite different type of appearance. In Luke's Rapture soliloquy, the lightening would seem to be during broad daylight; at least on one side of the globe; giving it quite a different manifestation. In a clear blue sky by day or at night in a cloudless sky, the direction lightening is travelling normally is obvious. That's not the case when darkness and thick clouds are everywhere as will be the case at the end of the Apocalypse and Campaign of Armageddon in the final 'darkness' or "blackout" of Matthew 24:29 and Joel 3:15 (*Footsteps of the Messiah*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, A. Fruchtenbaum, pages 356-7).

As far as the housetop metaphor is concerned, it could apply to someone as the Rapture occurs to simply allow oneself to be lifted up. The point being made is to drop everything at that instant; i.e., **just leave**. When Antichrist, or Titus or Vespasian in AD 66-70, are (or were) about to surround Jerusalem, the warning is (or was) to simply run across the housetops in Jerusalem until one comes to the city walls, jump down and get out of the city. Anyone who has struggled through the Old City of Jerusalem's streets and bazaars will know the worst way to escape the city in an urgent manner is to negotiate those crowds, narrow passageways and twists and turns through a chaotic patch-work of buildings built over thousands of years of History. As Antichrist's forces come up against Jerusalem and the smart thing to do is to get away, the rooftops again, or still the case in these days, offer a far more expedient route for escape.

However, it is the 'birds-bodies' metaphor that intrigues the most. Not least because the translators appear to be utterly lost when working out how to translate the Greek and

Aramaic translations delivered down to our times. As far as is known there are no Hebrew originals available or extant to assist us. Bearing in mind, of course, that God's Spirit has ensured the messages we need get through the fog of inadequate human error in translation or transliteration to our times in the Days of Noah and Lot or in the 'Last Days'. We are not stuck with inaccurate derivatives (*translations*). The lack of a Hebrew original for now means we may not be able to exactly or precisely analyze what Jesus was trying to say with this metaphor in Luke 17:37 for the Rapture and Matthew 24:28 for the Second Coming. Unless Job 39:27-30 gives us the necessary clues as suggested in the Background of this paper. The translators the world over and across a vast array of languages, paraphrases and versions of the Bible are never sure whether Jesus referred to vultures or eagles or to carcasses or 'bodies'; the latter being a *double entendre* in English, and probably in Hebrew as well. One discusses these points in greater detail in the main paper [e.g., section (19)].

Jesus used the quintessentially Hebrew metaphor for the Rapture in Luke 17 to describe a living body of soteriologically saved and spirit-filled believers who will need rescue from terrible physical circumstances imminently bringing an intensity of suffering they do not deserve, or need, and a death that normally they would undergo. Instead, it seems the last church generation is excused on that day receiving '*translation*' instead. This is a moment in the Rapture when physically and spiritually alive believers' carnal body is instantly translated into our glorified and resurrected body as we travel through the 'Ether' and arrive in Heaven. Call that death if one wishes but it is a different death to the norm. For Israel, at the Second Coming, the congregation is physically alive but still unsaved soteriologically (until those last three days of the Apocalypse; Isaiah 53:1-12, Hosea 5:15 - 6:2). From a Biblical perspective, Israel is a still spiritually dead body or nation. Ezekiel 37:8 confirms that. In the next verse, God asked the prophet to "prophecy unto the wind" (Ezekiel 37:9a) and breath entered Israel as it came from "the four winds" (Ezekiel 37:9b) so "that they may live" (Ezekiel 37:9c). In those last *three* (Hosea 6:2) days of the Apocalypse Israel is holed-up in Bozrah and surrounded by Antichrist's armies ready to destroy the Jews there. The only option at that point for Israel will be to call upon Jesus as so many people (including Messianic Jews) have been imploring them to do for so long. They will do so when 'breath' from the four winds enters them just like the Spirit of God enters each one of us who believes now (or has done in the past). "The four winds" represent the directions or compass points Jews and Israelis presumably came from in those chaotic times;

So much for the bodies but once we have grasped these points then it is obvious vultures gather around something about to be killed even though they may not be the first to eat the flesh. In contrast, eagles capture their prey from above. They swoop down and in their talons grab the poor little defenceless body feeding on the grass, perhaps under the *Tanaah* (Fig) tree (or feeding its soul from its Bible-Tanaakh). The eagles take their prey, perhaps even from their prayer, in their talons then fly up into the higher echelons of the air and take the body to the eagles' lairs. Normally the little lamb or whatever an eagle grabs will bleed to death or go unconscious with hypothermia as it is carried away. But the prey begins its departure still fully alive. Obviously in the eagle's lair it does not awake or revive from its blood loss, asphyxiation or hypothermia but when Jesus' talons (angels, myriads?) swoop us up into His Heaven, one will for an instant go sub-conscious perhaps but arrive in Heaven fully awake. If the scriptural interpretation is accurate, believers will be fully awake all through that amazing and spectacular journey.

By very carefully separating, dividing, analyzing these metaphors one gets a bit of a preview into the extent to which the Scripture is encoded. This is why so much but not all

Scripture seems enigmatic. Once decoded, and especially with Daniel 12:4 & 9 in mind, it is clear these passages were never intended to be understood until the Days of Noah and Lot. For example, it has only been over the last century or so that ornithologists have separated eagles and vultures into distinct categories or even 'species'. Anyway, they only ever could be discerned with the Holy Spirit guiding one's study. It would appear we are now in a position to understand these enigmatic Scriptures that earlier generations of believers even with God's Spirit could not understand because of the Daniel 12:4 & 9 restriction. For two and a half millennia they have been deliberately "sealed". Furthermore, again with the Spirit's guidance, previous generations should have accepted such a restriction. By way of contrast, we have little concept of the state of the world prior to the Flood but Noah's family did.

Nevertheless, as the computer in the Garden of Eden suggests [refer Addendum (G) Coming Full Circle], we are now learning things about those pre-Flood times or what happened on the Plains of Shinar *circa* 2000 BC. Many parts of Scripture are easy for anyone to understand, especially the path or "way" to salvation. That is the way it should be and that is God's intention in making sure we have them for instruction which anyone can receive. It should never be assumed every generation has the same revelation as every other one over many other parts of Scripture.

### **(Eii) Luke 21:29-36 (The Fig Tree)**

In order to fully understand the significance of the 'Fig Tree' in the Bible, refer to Genesis 3:7, Job 8:12, Proverbs 27:18, (Song of Solomon 2:13 and Revelation 6:13 giving specific references to the 'early figs'), I Kings 4:25, Isaiah 34:1-4, Jeremiah 24:1-10, Hosea 9:10, Joel 1:7, 12 and 2:22, Micah 4:4, Zechariah 3:10, Matthew 24:32; Mark 13:28; Luke 21:29 then in a non-eschatological sense but relevant in connection with the bankruptcy of academia and teaching, leadership, governance etc refer Matthew 21:19-21, Mark 11:13-14, 20-21 and Luke Also a clever play on words between Jesus and Nathaniel about the "Tanaah-" of "fig-Tree", the "Tanaakh" or Jewish Bible and Nathan-iel of 'Nathan of God' or 'Than-na of God'

Firstly, we note this section comes within a parable Jesus gave us about "The Fig Tree" and "All the trees". But what does this parable apply to, to which era, to whom, and why did Jesus use a parable anyway? Earlier during His ministry, when Jesus cursed the fig tree (Matthew 21:19-21, 24:32, Mark 11:13-14, 20-21, 13:28; Luke 13:6-9, 21:29) He used it to mock the nakedness and fruitlessness in the teaching of the religious establishment (like today's) and the corruption in governance of Israel. We can see parallels here with the world situation today and in the state of 21st century Christendom.

Opinions vary as to whether this section applies to the Rapture alone, the Second Coming alone or to the events of AD 66-70 alone. To the extent the parable allows, these warnings apply to things affecting the whole world, not just Israel. Not that the unbelieving world (all the other trees?) really cares anyway. As Apostle Paul noted in I Corinthians 2:8, the slaying of Christ could have been stopped by the wider world-leadership. Before, during and after the time of Christ, Rome's relations with Israel were never especially good. They were steadily deteriorating from even before Jesus' time (7 BC to AD 30) through to AD 66. The Persians, Germanic and British tribes along with Jewish Zealots were hacking away at Rome's power on the fringes of its Empire. In 55 BC, Julius Caesar invaded Britain to prevent Tyre-Carthage re-establishing a base in South-West Britain to launch campaigns against Rome in the battle then for Western Hemisphere or World supremacy.

Set against Satan's Plan that has been operating in the world since Adam's Fall in 4000 BC, Rome's invasion of Israel in AD 66-70 was almost, or in some ways, predictable after Israel rejected Jesus. Satan, from that point on realised that the Six Days or Six Millennia given to the world in God's Plan would now go on for two more from Christ's Ascension, Israel having rejected the Messiah when He first came four millennia after the Fall. Exodus 4:8, *ex post*, tells us Israel would possibly reject Jesus in AD 30. So History would now have to make way for two millennia of the Church Age. Against that historical backdrop, only Jesus could have prophesied what happened to the temple though. But we too need to have a good grasp of real History (**His Story**) and it is now available to us whereas it has (or had) not been for all previous generations of believers.

The Bible's warnings here can be a relevant statement for many events both historical (AD 66-70) and prophetic (nowadays). In the AD 66-70 era both Rome and Israel realised they were on a collision course. The 'First *Quisling*', *Josephus Flavius*, saw the writing on the wall. He went over to the Romans. The Jews who believed Jesus' prophecies about the Temple's great Herodian masonry got well away and took refuge in modern Jordan. This is effectively where the Biblical record of History finishes. All that is left is for some of its remaining prophecies, unfulfilled because Israel rejected Jesus, now to be fulfilled around the End of the Church Age at the Rapture then and into the period between the Rapture and the last days of Armageddon and then into the Seventy-five Day interval. After that, unfulfilled prophecies concerning the Millennium stored in the Old Testament record also remain with us to be fulfilled. At the end of the Millennium, all prophecy apart from some relating to the new Universe will become History. Prophecy ends or ceases and History remains.

Thus, overall, the "snare" (verse 35) encompassing the "whole earth" is much more likely to apply to events in the Apocalypse era when Antichrist's powers of deception prevail. At the beginning of the Seven-Year Covenant (and the Apocalypse), which the Antichrist confirms and signs with Israel, Satan's evil goal or objective, via his son, seems specifically designed to lure Israel into a snare or trap. Antichrist is certainly a very deceptive person and setting snares or traps is his *forte*. Antichrist just uses that treaty for his evil design to fulfill Satan's plan. The treaty or "covenant with death" (Isaiah 28:18) appears to be a document, or perhaps a summation of earlier *memoranda*, effectively drafted over many years of discussion, debate, politicking, trade-offs etc.. By the time it is "confirmed" (Daniel 9:27) it will have been through several stages of development, re-design or amendment negotiated by various administrations in the decades prior to Antichrist's rise to prominence (e.g., The Oslo Process). Antichrist just uses all that which has gone before to set a snare or trap for Israel.

For the reader's assistance, the author had many years of experience working in and around governance and international diplomacy, working for two governments and with others in that career. These latter points, on their own, probably seal the claim we make these verses are primarily warnings for Israel in the Apocalypse era. That means they are not directly relevant for the Rapture for that appears to occur at a time when life around the world is not so far removed from some sort of normality - whatever "normal" means! Nevertheless, the parable in Luke 21:28-36 is good, sound, healthy general-advice all the same. In the last phrase "to stand before the Son of Man" (verse 36), as Dr Fruchtenbaum says in *Footsteps of the Messiah*, page 150-1, it "is a standing that must happen at a place **off** the Earth" and that definitely implies in Heaven as a result of the Rapture taking us away from all this wrath (Antichrist's and God's). This section from Luke could not apply to events between AD 66-70. Instead, the parable makes plenty of sense either for

believers in the very last days of Hebrews 1:2 and Daniel 12:4 & 9 on the eve of the Apocalypse or to those who come to belief after the Rapture so that they are equipped to persevere through to the Last Day of the Apocalypse.

Luke's parabolic warning to Israel here comes at the conclusion of his report of what Jesus said to his disciples, about the "Last Days", on the Mount of Olives just before the crucifixion. However, it also seems to replace the *peri de* sections Matthew and Mark wrote in their gospels. That may be why many are led to conclude Luke 21:28-36 refers to both the Rapture and to the Second Coming and then use that as another argument to conclude both events are the same thing.

In a general sense, of course we should be at the ready-mode as every previous generation of the Church was called on to do (refer Blessings I & II 26/8/20). We note God had warned the pre-Flood generation via the naming of Methuselah ("when He dies He will come"). When Enoch who himself appears to have been 'taken up' like Elijah (who certainly was) named Methuselah, he realised with Adam that computers and hi-tech would get so terrible by the time Methuselah reached his last day that God's Saviour would be impelled, obliged or even *forced* to come and rescue man from his wickedness. Instead, Noah and his ark saved man (and some of the knowledge he had accumulated). God's 'salvation sub-plan' had six millennia to run if Israel were to reject Jesus at His First Advent which God foreknew to be the case anyway. Noah and seven other souls, with an enormous zoo on board too, were uplifted in the safety of the Ark as we will be by the Rapture. God also warned Daniel's generation with the prophecy the Messiah would arrive as the seventy-sevens of years were fulfilled, i.e., circa 7 BC to AD 30, so that Israel could expect Messiah to come (at long last). Many people in Israel approximately five centuries (490 years) after Daniel's prophecy indeed were basing their hopes on the Messiah's advent (Luke 2:32, 36 and 38).

The tenor of Luke 21:34-36 could be a warning to people living in Israel in its first three and a half years of the Apocalypse and more generally also to the Gentiles at the time who will also come to belief but after The Rapture. Moreover, for the near future (on the balance of probabilities) when Antichrist hears his city of Babylon is threatened by some enemies at a late stage in the Apocalypse he is so determined to destroy Jerusalem and Israel that he is even prepared to sacrifice his precious capital to its destroyers in order to get on with his father's much more important objective of eliminating Israel. As Jesus did in His priority to His Father's Will, Antichrist is come to do his father's will. Partly to escape its imminent destruction but also to warn their "Brethren", Jews then flee Babylon and probably travel to Israel. Once there, they tell their countrymen in Israel, in 'The Land'; who may not at that stage of proceedings have become aware of it; that Antichrist is going to renege on his peace treaty with Israel (Jeremiah 50:28, 42-43, 45-46, 51:4-10, 39-42, 45-50, Revelation 18:2-24). Depending on the timing of the intelligence the 'Babylonian' Jews receive about Babylon's imminent destruction, this may be just before Antichrist suddenly and treacherously turns on the people of Israel. That's probably the situation for which Luke's statement in verses 34-36 is most relevant but, as noted, there is more general applicability to it for even us now and it is far better to be "standing before Jesus" in Heaven anyway! These verses can refer to The Rapture saints as well as all the rest of the world. Exactly which is the primarily targeted audience for this parable is a moot point. However, at the moment, it seems rather more likely it is the wrath of Antichrist and his sudden change in attitude (secretly planned all along) that is the unexpected surprise or turn of events that also acts like a snare or trap. And, of course, Antichrist's treachery toward Israel will upset Israel's supporters in other parts of the world who were unrealistically

hoping the world would become a much calmer place politically speaking.

Rapture saints are not the only ones who need to be ever on the alert. But they most likely are the few that will be alert to events and seasons concerning both The Rapture and the Last Day's for this 'world', age or era. The Bible's prophecies, now only read and studied by serious disciples of Christ, give us many signs at the end of the Last Era. We get this from our understanding of proper world history which can only be discerned by reading the history books through the prism of the Bible and not through the evolutionists' prisms. We learn about the sequence of events leading up to the chaos and climax of the Apocalypse. All that then informs us of the season for all this to happen but not the day, week, month or year. Possibly, even during the Apocalypse, especially through the first three and a half years, primarily people in Jerusalem, but perhaps others too, are still being tempted to think all their problems are going to disappear.

Whatever, it seems they will have to be prepared to escape within minutes. They must flee by running across city roof-tops to avoid the crowds milling in the narrow streets of the city. Any delay could mean death. On the other hand, Rapture saints will be in a bed or on a farm etc., and are snapped upwards by Jesus' power. They hear the Last Trump. They get up perhaps. Or, they are out at work in the fields or on the street and look upwards and off they go. A very different situation to Luke 21:6-27 where most of the passage concerns the general situation in the Apocalypse and Second Coming. Equally, for Israel's believers, preparedness would also have been important in the AD 66-70 Roman campaign against Judea and Jerusalem. Preparedness for AD 66-70 or the days of the Antichrist is quite different to the state of preparedness in prayer, faith, clean living, blamelessness, etc., that Rapture saints are exhorted to be in.

### **(Eiii) A Thief in the Night**

In Addendum (Ei) we looked at the three metaphors Jesus used apparently to spin meaning or application one way for the Rapture and another way almost in a different direction for the Second Coming. In addendum (Eii) we looked at the Fig Tree motif. In Matthew 24:43 (Rapture), Luke 12:39 (Rapture and linking with 12:40), I Thessalonians 5:2, 4 (re the Apocalypse), II Peter 3:10 (Apocalypse) and Revelation 3:3 (Rapture) and 16:15 (Second Coming to end the wrath of the Apocalypse), the Lord spoke of His Coming or about certain events that would come like "a thief" or "a thief in the night". Eight other verses in the New Testament refer metaphorically to a 'thief' but not in an eschatological sense. An example of a non-eschatological context was when Jesus spoke to Judas and the gang coming to arrest Him.

As we have already noted, this metaphor could be applied to several events coming like a thief in the night; i.e., The Rapture, The Apocalypse and things associated with it such as Antichrist's treaty with Israel, or The Second Coming. Furthermore, the identification or revelation of the Antichrist-666, his treaty with Israel, his breach of that treaty mid-way through the Apocalypse, the Shecinah Glory piercing the gloom of the clouds covering the Earth on the last day of the Apocalypse; could all be events likened to the sudden arrival of a thief - day or night. Those might be reasons why most people think the Rapture and the Second Coming are the same event. All in all, metaphors can be tricky things to deal with especially when one has to translate them from other languages into one's own.

Acts of theft are quick and sudden in any language or culture. Some forms of theft such as embezzlement or other financial fraud may be ongoing processes done in secret or these days via electron flows in computer systems. In the more conventional sense, the

thief does not usually hang around to be easily apprehended. Thieves strike like an unexpected turn of events which come up against us and break the trend or defy the obvious. For example, in the middle of the night one does not expect sudden daylight ahead of its due arrival perhaps 4-5 hours before even dawn flickers or breaks. Equally, one does not expect sudden darkness to come over the Earth in the afternoon many hours before sundown or sunset. Everything did go dark, and for three hours, on the afternoon Jesus was on the Cross. After Jesus died, the daylight returned; or light returned to the Universe; so Nicodemus and Joseph of Aramathia and still had two or three hours to put Jesus into Joseph of Arimathea's tomb before Jewish daily and religious life had to shut-down for the Sabbath eve ("*erev shabbat*").

Thus when Jesus applied to the 'thief in the night' metaphor to the Rapture in Matthew 24:43, Luke 12:39-40 and Revelation 3:3, He realised it would be quite sudden but arrive in comparatively normal times albeit when they were similar to the times of Noah and Lot in Sodom [c.f., Addendum (Aii)]. Bad as these days are compared with other epochs in History they are nowhere near as bad as in the Apocalypse. Jesus alluded to the 'thief in the night' metaphor to the Second Coming, probably in Revelation 16:15. That is when seducing satanic spirits are deceiving everyone into joining Antichrist's army to try and destroy Israel. There the warning is to the Tribulation saints. They are to hold fast and keep out of that army. They should hold on tight for the Light of Jesus' Glory suddenly puncturing the darkness surrounding or enveloping the world at the end of the Apocalypse and Armageddon Campaign ["The Day of Darkness" or "Gloominess", "Clouds" and "Thick Darkness" (Joel 2:2 and Amos 5:18, 20), "The Day of Clouds", "Distress" or "Desolation" (Zephaniah 1:15)]. So these are quite different events and starkly contrast with the Rapture.

Jesus' Rapture comments clearly indicated some believers would disappear in the day and others at night. But thieves can rob people during the day as the Good Samaritan discovered when he helped a victim of robbery. At the Rapture, some will be at work and others asleep as if nothing particularly abnormal was going on. These situations are vastly different to the Apocalypse, to Antichrist's about-turn and treachery against Israel etc. Thus the 'thief in the night' metaphor can easily be tweaked to suit two completely different situations. Addendum (Ei) demonstrates the principle with the three metaphors cited firstly concerning the Second Coming in Matthew 24:17 (housetop), verse 27 (lightening) and verse 28 (vultures and carcass); Mark 13:15 (housetops) then to the Rapture in Luke 17:24 (lightening), 17:31 (housetop) and 17:37 (eagles and body) where all three metaphors are collected together.

Obviously, most people who read those texts would initially or immediately assume they describe the same event. Unless, of course, with the judicious use of metaphor, the Lord had effectively disguised two different events to make them look like the one and same event. At the spiritual level, God's Spirit giving us understanding of the way he has inspired these texts provides a crucial key to understanding. Peter had the job of unlocking the Kingdom of Heaven (God) using the "keys" Jesus gave him (Matthew 16:19). By way of contrast, Luke recorded Jesus criticizing the lawyers of Israel for taking away the "key of knowledge" needed to read the Scripture. One needs to be "circumcised on the heart" (Psalm 37:31, 40:8) to understand God's Law, Wisdom etc. The Spirit of God, as passages like Revelation 19:10 indicate, is one necessary ingredient when reading the Scriptures. Timing, as per Daniel 12:4 & 9, is probably another crucial factor because only one particular generation would be able to understand what has been written.

To understand how any metaphor is being applied, one has to be aware of many other circumstances or sources of information from other parts of Scripture. For example, as noted above it might be that Job 39:27-30 helps us to understand the 'eagle-vulture' metaphor because the text there indicates some birds like eagles, but actually they are vultures, just hang around looking for deceased carcasses to feed on. However, classically the eagle swoops down from great height to remove a living prey and take it back to the nest. Probably, we need to use many other passages to find out how these metaphors were used by Jesus. Otherwise, one tends to enforce sameness or similarity of the metaphors to decide or conclude the Rapture, the Second Coming are therefore the same event but just spoken of in different ways. Likewise for other events. Some Scriptures, in particular the two *peri de* segments in Matthew's and Mark's Olivet accounts, appear to support the view that The Rapture and the Second Coming are two distinctly different and separate events occurring at two significantly different times even if the gap between the two is only a matter of seven years or so. That also means they both could occur within very similar background conditions but not necessarily exactly the same background situation.

This is a fundamental point derived from the discovery that "Pithom and Rameses" were not two capital ("treasure") cities in two different parts of ancient Egypt in the same era as is nearly always and conventionally assumed. Instead, they were two capital cities of ancient Egypt on the same site (Memphis-Cairo) but in two different eras [1500 BC (Moses) and 600 BC (Jeremiah)].

Summarising this addendum: (a) the Rapture; (b) an unlikely but one-off sudden revelation of the antichrist; (c) the beginning of the Apocalypse perhaps immediately the covenant of death between Israel and Antichrist is signed; (d) the sudden about-turn by Antichrist against his treaty with Israel midway through the Apocalypse; and (e) the Second Coming itself; could all (a-e) be events suddenly occurring "like a thief in the night". Perhaps there even more one could identify. The Rapture can come as a 'thief in the night' every bit as truly as destruction can come to the world also like a 'thief in the night' on the day, or thereabouts, when Satan's son the Antichrist negotiates some sort of evil deal (covenant of death) with Israel. At the time of the Rapture, it seems, Men will either be adamantly opposed to Jesus, even pro-Antichrist, or completely on Jesus' side. It will be a very binary situation with little or no ground whatsoever in between.

After the Rapture, the 144 000 Jewish male virgin witnesses, the two 'Olive-Branch' witnesses until they are executed then resurrected and perhaps Elijah; if he is not one of the 'Two' with Enoch; are all specially protected for most of the time. Otherwise, Antichrist will often successfully oppose Tribulation saints, executing many, as they all go through the fires and plagues of the Apocalypse. People witnessing for the true Christ under those circumstances will have become deeply committed to their new missions in life, not seeking the Kingdom of God as much as waiting for it and counting down the days to its coming. Rapture saints are not counting down the days because we have no idea on which day the Rapture occurs. At best, we live minute by minute, hour by hour or day by day. The Tribulation saints will know the day of the Second Coming as long as they are consulting their Scriptures and perhaps even documents like this one possibly circulating at the time. Otherwise, the Lord's Second Coming to rescue Israel from Antichrist will indeed seem like "a thief coming in the night" (Revelation 16:15).

## **(F) Days of the Son of Man**



In Luke 17 22-34, the words 'day' (or night in verse 34) and 'days' are used in several different contexts [refer list in section (18)]. The distinctions are easy to overlook as one searches the verses. Thus, one needs to take special care when considering those contexts. The issue extends to many other texts where the words 'day' or 'days' are used. In the plural, the word 'days' presumably denotes some sort of age, period or era going beyond two days. When the Lord referred to "One of the Days of the Son of Man" which they "would not see", one assumes the other 'days' are also singular. However, if one of these days is Jesus at His Judgement Seat evaluating our work here on Earth, one might legitimately ask if that is not something that goes on for many days. Alternatively, since that takes place in Heaven the concept of a 'day' is barely relevant.

The concept of a day in Heaven might also be illustrated by Apostle John's words in Revelation 1:10. Dr Fruchtenbaum in *Footsteps of the Messiah*, Second Edition, page 16, suggests the Greek should be translated "a Lordy Day" and suggests "it was a day in which John fell under the control of the Holy Spirit" in order to "receive divine revelation". Thus, John may have used the word 'day' to specify something longer than twenty-four hours. The word 'day' (singular) denotes one particular special event taking place on just the one day. In Luke 17:22, Jesus refers to several days (i.e., "of the Son of Man") which are not an era or longer period of time. Each one, however many there are, must be a unique and discrete event. Therefore, both the Rapture and the Second Coming would seem to be one specific or discrete day and presumably two different particular days. Both of them could be special days for "The Son of Man". However, the latter is also the "Day of the Lord" or perhaps "Day of Jehovah". For *Yeshua* in His humanity the Second Coming may be a day He personally counts as one of the "Days of the Son of Man" but from the perspective of the Divine Triunity the last day of the Apocalypse is a Day of the Lord, a term that from many Old Testament prophecies might also indicate a period of many days if not years.

However, there may be other special days of the 'Son of Man' that Jesus had in mind in the last clause of Luke 17:22. Some of them, if they include the Resurrection, Ascension, the First day of the Church of *the Christ* at *Shavuot-Pentecost* AD 30 certainly are events that occurred in just one day. The Rapture is obviously within a single day. Apart from the Rapture the disciples certainly saw those three putative 'Days of the Son of Man'.

In regard to the Resurrection of Jesus, perhaps the most significant aspect of His various appearances in those early hours and days of it, came when Mary Magdalene was the first to see Him physically resurrected and receive from Jesus the commission He gave her and her fellow Syro-Phoenicians and Gentiles. From Jesus' perspective, this is a day He must surely have looked forward to as He effectively reversed the judgement that had to be given to Adam in Eden. Jesus is the only Man to have attended both events 4000 years apart. That's because with the Cross behind Him Jesus had won the right to restore (Psalm 8:4) all mankind to the sovereignty over the Earth that Adam lost for us handing it over to Satan. We think Peter and then John suddenly realised what had happened when they got to Jesus' grave then left Mary on her own and ran off to meet the other disciples. We don't often think about 'The Resurrection of Jesus' as a special Day of the Son of Man. In retrospect considering the possible significance of Luke 17:22, perhaps we should recognise Jesus' Resurrection as being one of them also recognising ***The Resurrection*** is a process to be played out in stages with Jesus being the 'First Fruits' thereof. In that sense, The Resurrection is a process for which 'Days' may be a better term to describe it.

Furthermore, the day (or days) of the distribution of rewards at Christ's evaluation-

judgement seat for Church saints could be another of these apparently special “Days of the Son of Man”. The concept of a day, days or periods of measurable time might be rather irrelevant in that Heavenly Abode. For now, here on *Terra Firma*, we can consider that occasion to be a ‘Day of the Son of Man’. Being practical, we have to speculate to some extent here if we are going to literally read that last clause of Luke 17:22. The Marriage of the Lamb, almost certainly has to be another Day of the Son of Man even though that might be a ceremony that goes beyond the concept of a ‘day’ *per se*. The Marriage of the Lamb is perhaps the one most special to the Lord Himself the Resurrection Day apart. A man’s wedding is indeed a special day despite what the comedians try to make out.

In summary, no one seems to know which ‘days’ the Lord was talking about in the last clause of Luke 17:22. However, very importantly, and in particular, “one of them” the AD 30 disciples “would not *be seeing*”. The rest they will see. That much we do know. That is why one must assume it has to be The Rapture. It is a special day in its own right thus quite a different day to the Second or Last Coming. Concerning the significance of Jesus’ wedding day or the ‘marriage of the Lamb’, refer to comments on this in Section (56) II Thessalonians 1:5-12.

### **(G) Coming Full Circle**

In one’s Introduction, Genesis 49:1, Deuteronomy 4:30, Jeremiah 30:24, Daniel 2:28, 10:14, I Peter 1:5, 20 were cited as evidence the Bible urges us to hold on to the wisdom or knowledge of ancient generations. That exhortation is not confined to the Bible. It is commonly held in the cultures of other nations. For example the ‘Day that the Sun and Moon stood still’ is the theme of the marae and sculptures in the main Maori Room at New Zealand’s National Museum in Wellington. The late Sir Cliff Whiting designed the room’s layout with some opposition from his three colleagues on the Museum Design Committee. However, Daniel 12:9 with its reference to the time when “knowledge shall be increased” is also a clear allusion to events prior to the Flood, the naming of Methuselah, and the Tower of Babel. All that has been of very significant interest to this observer who has written economic papers for several governments on the Innovation Process.

The ancestors of the Maori tribes in New Zealand warned their future generations never to forget the day the Sun and Moon stood still (*circa* 1445 BC from the Biblical chronology). The angel also told Daniel there would be much travel or people moving about in those days. The specialist in economics and innovation studies the important relationships between developing knowledge and transferring that around the world to further develop and advance the frontiers of knowledge, manage scarce resources and ideally optimize welfare for all. The world has been in an accelerating mode in these respects since WWII or, perhaps significantly, just as Israel returned to the Table of Nations in 1947-8. It is interesting Israel today is a world leader in the advancement of the knowledge frontier.

Unfortunately from one’s prayers for Israel, for modern Israel science and technology are its god. That’s the case for the world in general but sad from the perspective of the Bible’s plan for Israel. Nevertheless, increased knowledge about the Bible’s texts is a spin-off benefit for us. With the power of the Holy Spirit we are therefore able to understand much more of the Bible than any other generation has ever been able to. Furthermore, it may now only be due to the fact that we are in the Last Days that the Spirit finally, but in God’s good timing, is allowing or enabling us to understand some new things. But that is only in order assist the important goal of bringing in more people to reject the world’s systems Satan offers via his son and instead to seek God’s kingdom (the MMK) through His Only

Begotten Son, Jesus of Nazareth. The best advice we can give is to get off the Gravy Train and get aboard the Rapture Train.

So what does it mean to “Come Full Circle”? This paper now takes the view that an important signal to us about the timing of the ‘Last Days’, “Days of Noah” etc., would be an understanding that mysterious “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil” in fact was a touch-tronic computer perhaps embedded in some sort of ‘tree’. The Tree of Life was the other mysterious ‘tree’ in Eden. Clearly the word ‘tree’ for these two things had something of a metaphorical aspect to explain what those two ‘objects’ were. Adam obviously would have had considerable difficulty describing what that computer looked like and how he actually used it. He had to explain these things to his offspring while he lived with them for nearly a millennium. He had to tell everyone what he had done to incur God’s wrath that was obviously causing his descendants much discomfort and tell everyone why God had thus required Man to offer animal sacrifices at the gate of the Garden of Eden. The text, written and passed on to us by Adam, tells us two angels arched over the Garden’s entrance so that the human family could no longer enter Eden. Initially, mankind struggled for survival outside that lush garden. Adam endured nearly a millennium of suffering as he watched everyone suffer the consequences of his sin. Whether all or any of his contemporaries were aware that God had imputed that sin to them as well is not clear from the texts. Presumably those who obediently and sincerely followed the sacrificial commandments somehow did realize that.

Nevertheless, with the Holy Spirit’s guidance, Adam, Moses or even Ezra and other ancient Biblical scribes in combination ensured over some 4100 years that Adam would succeed in delivering a crucial message to the last generation. From the Hebrew word to eat “אכל” i.e., ‘a all’ or even ‘at all’ one can derive the following symbol “@”. It shows that today’s symbol or “The At Sign” used to enter the Internet and other functions in today’s ‘Tree of Knowledge’ also indicates that we have come ‘nearly full circle’ to the choice Adam and Eve should have rejected. The tiny gap in the circle encompassing the letter ‘a’ also indicates our knowledge base is imperfect whereas God’s ‘tree’ in Eden held perfect knowledge. The problem was that without God, Adam and Eve would see knowledge be used for Good and Evil especially in the hands of disobedient or perhaps disrespectful fallen man (or ‘*enosh*’, frail man, Psalm 8:4). God’s warning turned out to be true.

Elsewhere one explains how “@” came to be a commonly used symbol in commercial documents from the ubiquity in antiquity of amphora jars for commerce, trade and storage (or em-Pharaoh in Egypt, also ‘Nebuchadnezzars’ in Babylon and ‘Jereboams’ in Israel). However, of more importance is the observation that the common label, “The ‘At’ Sign”, can be represented by the Hebrew “את את את” or the Greek “ΑΩ ΑΩ ΑΩ”. In the modified Latin alphabet used for English, somewhat irrelevantly, “את את את” would be ‘AZ AZ AZ’. The English words ‘the’ and ‘at’ simply came from their Hebrew equivalents as Englishmen struggled over four centuries to get a decent translation of the Old Testament into the new English language. Instead of simply translating or transliterating, they sometimes decided to take an easier way out and directly transliterate the Hebrew words into English. Hence the Hebrew תה or ‘e *Th*’ became both ‘the’ and ‘at’ in English. It’s possible these words survived in writing systems from the pre-Roman days of Phoenician and Chaldean (Kurds or Celts) colonization of the British Isles. Anyway, ‘English’ is now the world language that has emerged from the chaos that ensued in ancient Babylon when Hebrew was the world language in the days of the Tower of Babel. Then everyone’s ancestors were engaged in a human project that God did not like so he stopped it. He will do that again.

In Genesis 2:9, God told Adam he was not allowed to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam passed that information on to Eve. Genesis 3:6 tells us the tree was pleasing to the “eyes”. In Genesis 3:3, Eve said the tree was not even to be “touched”. As noted above, the Hebrew word to ‘eat’ is *acol* (אכל) or ‘a all’. Strong’s Concordance translates “at all”. The important point to note is that Man’s Tree of Knowledge being developed on the Internet and on its ‘Cloud’ uses ‘The At Sign’ or “@”. The significance of this symbol is that the circle surrounding the letter ‘a’ is incomplete. It also shows that we are coming back ‘full circle’ or nearly full circle to those days of Noah when man was exploring knowledge, science and technology. Details in *Genesis* giving the size and construction details of ‘Noah’s Ark’ indicate a very high level of science and technology had been reached by Noah’s time after about 1500 years of Human occupation of the earth since Adam’s fall. Archaeological research sometimes unearths ancient artefacts that indicate earlier high levels of science and technology on Earth. Most of those things we discover were developed after the Flood. Some, however, may be detritus from the pre-Flood Age from *circa* 4000 BC to 2500 BC.

Another indication that we have come back almost full circle to the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden is that nearly everyone today wanders the streets and sits at cafes surfing the Internet using the “@” sign to browse, graze or feed on the Internet simply by using one’s eyes and fingers to delicately caress the small screen of those so called smart phones. Now, authorities even want everyone to go around with one of these things to record one’s every movement and register it on their phone. Ostensibly, this is for authorities to trace us and warn others we might have passed on some disease (c.f., the Covid19 China Wuhan Corona virus pandemic). The ubiquity of smart phones plugging into the ‘platforms’ offered by Google, Facebook and Apple Computing is rendering conventional communication channels obsolete. The use of algorithms allied with the collection of massive amounts of data on every user of smart phones is assisting the ‘Platforms’ to hold users’ interest for long periods of time and to subtly control or influence them for the advertising revenue they generate. They get people addicted to following their passions for entertainment. Or worse, they lead people into extremes in theological, political or social attitudes. Users also tend to narrow all their thinking and ideas about things within tight silos of fellow adherents. This may always have been true under any communication system but smart phones in alliance with the internet are polarizing things so much that discussion, dialogue and negotiation have collapsed. Everyone adopts a ‘My Way or the Highway’ strategy. Skilled operators can enlist these groups or ‘silos’ into demonstrations, strikes or social misbehaviour. All these trends are collapsing society and Government. Many people think this is just another stage in the advance of technology. The Bible suggests this is the period of “nation against nation” or the “Days of Noah”.

Originally, the “@” sign came into use to describe arithmetic equations for an invoice of sale of goods. Typically in ancient times, goods were shipped and sold in volume using amphora jars. That is what the ‘a’ in “@” stands for. The reason for the incomplete circle surrounding the ‘a’ is that those jars could never be filled to the brim. Sometimes that was in order that a cork lid could be tightly fitted to secure the product in a tight seal. Products like wine expand as they mature requiring the vintners to leave space at the top of the amphora jar. Other agricultural products might shrink in transit for some reason. Thus, a typical invoice would record “3 jars of wine @ \$4 = \$12”. A British company won the contract to link the USA super-computers into the Internet as it eventually became known as. Earlier, they were going to call it the Ethernet and we still use ethernet cables to link our computers with the Internet via phone lines, modems etc. They decided to use this symbol [ @ ] to construct links such as email addresses to make the system work.

Then a company called Apple Computers which actually used for its logo a picture of an apple with a bite taken out of it began to lead the world into widespread adoption of smart phones. So now we have come back almost full circle to Eden where we can go and touch our own man-made tree of knowledge deposited or stored on a vast array of computers all over the world and connected by a maze of telephone wires, fibre-optic cables and satellites to inter-connect everything. Ross Geller on an Episode of the *Friends* comedy TV show in *circa* 1998 said that by AD 2030 'the Internet would become a mind of its own'.

Jesus' term "Days of Noah" presumably referred to Noah's lifetime. He lived 600 years (Genesis 7:11) before the Flood and 350 afterward (Genesis 9:28). Man's knowledge, as demonstrated by the ark itself and by Adams husbandry of all the livestock on board, steadily, if not exponentially, increased in Noah's first 600 years. Around 550 years after the fall of Adam who with Eve was the only person to have seen the Tree of Knowledge in Eden, Enoch named his son Methuselah. The baby's name meant "when he dies he (or it) will come". It has been a mystery why that name was given. One explanation has been understood for a long time by those who read Hebrew. The name expresses the hope that man would be saved from his predicament after the Fall of Adam by the arrival of a promised saviour or deliverer. Methuselah's father, a good man who apparently did not face death but was translated or removed from Earth, believed Methuselah's death would see the end to all the suffering and nonsense ensuing from Adam's Fall. Enoch evidently believed the promised 'seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15) would come when this son Methuselah died. Evidently, judging by what happened at the Tower of Babel, man's knowledge and accompanying wickedness, lust and greed was growing so quickly that within a few centuries there would be no telling what that knowledge might achieve. The world community at the Tower of Babel seems to have lusted for the same objective.

In "Coming Full Circle", one is suggesting that the teleological philosophy of History is not a straight line. It is a circle coming back in on itself. However, the head does not quite meeting the tail leaving a gap which represents imperfection in Man's Knowledge and the point made here of almost coming full circle. If that circle is a race track then we are almost back at the start-line which has now become the finishing line. These last days of Daniel 12:4 & 9 and the realization that Adam 'ate' (Hebrew, *acol*, 'a-all', אכל) from a computer there in Eden is a vital clue no other previous generation could readily or easily imagine. That computer allowed Adam to access all God's knowledge just as we can access the internet for any information we want. It was a matter of touching the screen and reading or eating the fruit of knowledge with one's eyes.

What the Bible directly tells us about the knowledge they consumed is that Adam and Eve learned about their sexuality among other things. They began to use the knowledge in Eden for themselves but without telling or asking God about it. And that has been our predicament ever since. Now we have come back full circle. Now the point made in Genesis 2:17 has almost become a reality. God told Adam that by eating of it Adam would "die". Now things are so bad it may well be that we have brought ourselves back to the chaos of the end of those first six centuries of the Days of Noah. The last six centuries of world history have witnessed the greatest amassing of science and technology ever seen either since Babel or possibly since those first six centuries of Noah's life. Within 500 years of the Flood (2500 BC) the Tower of Babel project had to be destroyed (*circa* 2000 BC). The time Noah spent in the ark was when great winds took ten months to dry up the waters and deposit them as ice on the newly uplifted mountains and at the two polar regions. Now wind and rain are very much on the increase as everything starts to melt. These clues suggest we are about to see God intervene in this state of affairs for the last

time before Israel finally calls on Jesus to come back. Mankind would appear to be on the way to killing his environment but the godless think we just have to control the evolutionary process.

In Jude 14 we read about Enoch. Perhaps with advice from Adam, Enoch may well have given his son the name "Methuselah" because Adam was beginning to understand the implications of his grasping of the Tree of Knowledge. As suggested, that tree was a computer like today's ubiquitous smart phones, tablets, etc., but only Adam and Eve saw it. This is why one suggests we have now come full circle back to understanding for the first time in History the true nature of God's warning to Adam which was to leave the tree alone. Or at least desist from eating from it until God believed Adam was ready to partake.

### **(H) Rapture, Resurrection and Hope**

Hope has always been a crucial factor within Faith. The previous two ages before the Church era were Conscience (4000-2000 BC) and Abraham and Israel (2000 BC to AD 30). This Church Age could be due to finish in AD 2030 based on the lengths of time appointed to the previous two Ages. All three Ages or Eras have offered Hope to mankind. Only a tiny proportion of Church saints literally saw Jesus (John 6:40). Believers in AD 30 who had actually seen Jesus may have taken comfort from those words in John's Gospel and based their hope on a physical salvation to come even in their lifetime as we perhaps hope now. We should share that hope but not let it divert us from doing the Lord's Work which includes doing the Father's Will and working in with God's Plan for the world. No believer is ever entirely bereft of comfort. Especially for the days when human affairs reach a critical stage and life becomes exceedingly difficult and even apparently pointless for believers. This is a valid reason for believing the Rapture provides a hope better than death (in Paul's sense in II Corinthians 5:6-8) to remove us this nonsense.

Covenant Theologians tend to see all saints as being members of the Church of the Christ. All saints are saved by Jesus' sacrifice but that does not make them members of the same body and clearly there have been saints in all three Eras or Ages as we define them. Some sinners will repent in the millennium so that they too become sanctified. Old Testament saints knew about a Promised Deliverer from Genesis 3:15. All saints in the sense that they looked forward to Him could say in metaphoric terms they "saw" Him, or more literally at least foresaw Him. However, they did not know whom He would be. They did not know His name, indeed Eve said she gave birth to "Jehovah" (Genesis 4:1) but her understanding was clouded by her pain and failure to properly listen to God's prophecy in Genesis 3:15. Old Testament saints did not know the precise details of the manner in which the promised deliverer would have to lay down His life for them as Jesus did on the cross. They could not and did not know what we do know about His Sacrifice, Death, Burial and Resurrection. They were not called upon to believe those details that we know about and which all future saints still will have to acknowledge (I Corinthians 15:1ff). They had to believe God, reject all false gods, and put their trust in Jehovah and obediently offer sacrifices for their sins. That's where their hope lay.

But the Church Age is Christ's Body temporarily working as God's Witness to the World until Israel's Last Seven -Years of the '490' are scheduled to take place. Israel's 144 000 witnesses, The two Witnesses that Antichrist slays and Elijah take up that work in the

Apocalypse. The Church is "looking for that blessed Hope" of Titus 2:13. The Church saints, therefore, are taken away by or at the Rapture before the final stage of this world's fallen state runs its course. Church saints are a particular group of saints making up Jesus' *kohel* or congregation (Matthew 16:18). Also, the Church is His bride-wife just as Israel is the wife [currently and temporarily in a state of divorcement that will be reversed (Jeremiah 3:8, Hosea 2:2, 7, 16)]. By wrongly avoiding any distinctions in characteristics between different groups of saints, especially of Israel and the Church, but correctly accepting that all are soteriologically saved on exactly the same basis, theologians get into various tangles. One such problem is that they render verses such as those in Jeremiah and Hosea as redundant and purely allegorical. We reject such absolutely allegorical interpretations but take the verses as being literal descriptors. Since there are these different groups, Tribulation saints are physically saved by the Second Coming and of course Israel's saints are too. Church saints are physically saved by the Rapture. Soteriologically, everyone is saved on the same basis

Essentially, there are two resurrections but four separate and identifiable parts to the First resurrection of saints. "The First Resurrection", commences with Jesus' own resurrection which is the "first fruit" and probably fulfills the First Fruits Festival ancient Israel celebrated each year. Jesus' resurrection is followed 2000 years or more later by the Rapture of church saints [living and dead (or deceased) or the dead and the "quick" in some translations]. On page 360 of the second edition of *Footsteps of the Messiah*, Dr Fruchtenbaum notes that between the Second Coming and the beginning of the Millennium at the Wedding Breakfast Feast which he labels "The Seventy-Five Day Interval", all pre-church saints whose souls have been in Heaven since the Cross receive their glorified body ("The Third Order of the First Resurrection"). Then there is the Fourth Order of the First Resurrection" which is the martyred or deceased Tribulation Saints' glorification. Apparently, according to page 525 of *Footsteps*, the text in Hebrews 12:22-24 and Revelation 21:3-4 refer to The Eternal Abode in the New Universe on a New Earth. It is reserved for all the angelic host (of obedient angels), Church saints and "spirits of just men made perfect" who are Old Testament Saints and, "not mentioned but obviously included", Tribulation Saints and Millennial Saints. The latter, apparently, never glorified but entering the Eternal Order in the body they retain from the Millennium "because there is no death for believers born in the millennium" (Fruchtenbaum, *Footsteps*, pp 370 and 383). Presumably, therefore, assuming Fruchtenbaum is correct, despite there being Millennial Saints, there is no "Fifth Order" of the First Resurrection for them. (Perhaps the Bible is simply silent on the issue and they do get one but it is not all that an important issue for concern). All 'spirits of just men made perfect', apart from Tribulation saints (i.e., post-Rapture but pre-Second Coming saints) and Millennial Saints apparently; and because they all had to taste death (Rapture saints technically exempted); are assumed to receive a glorified body in exchange for their carnal body for their eternity. However, angels presumably remain spirit beings of some sort. We do not really know. The Damned, in the 'Second Resurrection' also receive a resurrected body for the Second Death.

### **(I) A Note on Methodology**

At the beginning of this paper in the Introduction and in the following section about Key Assumptions and Critical Texts, one outlined the main aspects of the methodology in this paper. During the composition of this paper some other aspects on methodology arose. In Section (51) on I Thessalonians 3:13, we introduced the reader to Dr Simmons' methodology in his *Passion Translation* in order to illustrate or demonstrate contrasts with one's own 3-D *Aleph-Tav* Bible Study Method for studying Scripture. Dr Simmons wrote

his 'translation' after reviewing the languages used to record the Bible's texts handed down to us, as we do, because he wanted to reflect what he believes is "God's Passion". He also said, "there is no such thing as a truly literal translation of the Bible, for there is not an equivalent language that perfectly conveys the meaning of the Biblical text". However, that only reinforces the idea that a literal interpretation is possible if read in the original Hebrew. The problem is that there are passages that without the Spirit of God in one's studies, one may not even then grasp the literal truth.

I Thessalonians 3:13 afforded an opportunity to show how different methodologies or approaches to translation can affect the way one might interpret a Biblical text. In this addendum (see below) we will do this in respect to: (i) Dr Simmons' interpretation of Titus 2:13; (ii) the treatment of Revelation 8:1-13, especially verse 13, in the KJV and Interlinear in contrast with the ASV, NASB and Dr Simmons' 'Passion' versions; (iii) an application of Dr Fruchtenbaum's standard methodology as outlined in *Israelology; The Missing Link in Systematic Theology* that potentially resolves the apparent conundrum discussed in (ii); and (iv) a comment on a recent change in methodology in Dr Fruchtenbaum's latest interpretation of the "falling away" in II Thessalonians 2:3.

Concerning the original languages used to transmit the Bible to our times, in the 3-D *Aleph-Tav* method we adopt the approach that Hebrew is the language of the entire text, the New Testament included. Therefore, we really need to understand Hebrew to read the Bible rather than expect translations to fully work for us. That was a stance the Jewish rabbis and teachers took in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC when Egyptian King Ptolemy obliged seventy Jewish scholars to translate the Old Testament into the Greek Septuagint. They complied but aware of the shortcomings inherent in the process. Jews advising the *King James Bible* translation committees in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries were less reluctant to assist with translation into English for the British. Our method furthermore assumes that Hebrew is the language that also lies behind the Greek texts of the New Testament. For example, in Genesis 38:17, 18 & 20 (concerning "ערבון" or *erevon*) and in II Corinthians 1:22, 5:5, and Ephesians 1:14 (concerning "*arrabown*" or ἀρραβων, Strong 728) the 'Greek' actually is a direct transliteration by Apostle Paul of the Hebrew in Genesis. Bluntly, the *arrabown* or ἀρραβων, in the New Testament is not Greek at all. It is Hebrew, i.e., "ערבון" or *erevon*.

The 3-D *Aleph-Tav* method also filters scientific, archaeological and historical data through the Bible to use Man's knowledge spoken of by Daniel 12:4 & 9 to gain insight on matters all other previous generations could not understand. For example, the discovery about the *erevon-arrabown*, what we now know about genetics and animal species (c.f., eagles or vultures) or even what we now know about the way sub-atomic particles such as bosons behave in space, time and even across potentially multiple universes (or two anyway) etc. Regarding translation or transliteration, Dr Simmons instead thinks the translators have lacked understanding of God's "passion for communicating with us". Furthermore, the 3-D *Aleph-Tav* method recognizes that passages that previously had to be translated metaphorically can now be translated literally, despite Dr Simmons' approach, partly because of the Daniel 12:4 & 9 issue. If nothing else, by using or comparing different methodologies for studying Scripture, some very interesting results are beginning to surface. Dr Simmons' *'passionate approach'* may have a point to it. Our approach is to comb through scientific, cosmological, sub-atomic, biological, genetic, archaeological and other data, properly filtered through the Bible, to arrange that information into the white light of understanding. Then we can comprehend matters the Bible may be transmitting for this particular age, matters previous generations could not comprehend.



(li) In considering Titus 2:13, Dr Simmons translates as follows: “For we continue to look forward to the joyful fulfillment of our hope in the dawning splendor of the glory of our great God and Savior (*sic*), Jesus, the Anointed One”. The Interlinear translation is, “Looking for the blessed hope and appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”. The full KJV translation is, “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”. The KJV and Interlinear give much more sense of the imminence of the **return** of Christ to Earth rather than the Incarnation and birth of Christ. Simmons explains his views in two footnotes. Firstly, he wrote, “The Greek word is *epiphaneia* (epiphany) and is a nominalized verb that means ‘a brightness shining all around’. It was through *epiphaneia*, the beautiful appearing of Christ as a baby, that a wonderful hope was brought to the world”. Unfortunately he overlooks the possibility that “brightness shining all around” while clearly applicable to the incident involving Bethlehem’s shepherds, is just as likely - in the future - to refer to the Shecinah Glory piercing the clouds, darkness and gloom that envelops the world on the last day of the Apocalypse.

The overall sense of Paul’s letter to Titus is about how the believer should acquit himself “in this present world” (verse 12). Paul is also passing on advice for church leaders in a parallel to Jesus training the disciples to nurture the early church. Paul moves from “the present” in verse 12 to what can only be in the future in verse 13. He does not seem to be looking back or going back in time. The Gospels had all the information we need for the First Advent. Paul never felt moved to add to any of that. Paul is simply using the Greek word *epiphaneia* (epiphany) for its general meaning. Of course the word applies to the First Coming but it equally can apply to the Second (or Last). One concludes Paul is not referring to the First Advent but to the ‘present’ i.e., in those early years of church history, (verse 12) then to the next ‘Advent’ in the future (verse 13).

In Dr Simmons passion to discuss God’s Grace; which is very important and relevant; he unfortunately then overlooks the entire subject of how God is indeed going to meet or fulfill our ‘hope’. This observer assumes a “nominalized verb” is a gerund which is another way of explaining how a verb (to ‘appear’) acts as a noun (an ‘appearing’ or appearance). This is a common technique used in many languages including Hebrew, Latin and English. There is nothing complicated or especially deep about that. Definitions of nouns, verbs, gerunds, adjectives or adverbs should not distract us from considering the eschatological implications of two events concerning Christ’s return (Rapture and Second Coming).

From many other verses such as Acts 1:6, and especially from the Old Testament, Titus 2:13 demands at least some commentary on its eschatological implications. Almost certainly the Second Coming or this “glorious appearing” occurs while the world is enveloped in a deep or almost total darkness. In the examples of eschatological events in Luke 17:35-6 and Matthew 24:40-1 people on the globe’s daylight side will not be working in the fields or grinding grain amidst what clearly are catastrophic circumstances involving among other things terrible darkness. The Second Coming has Jesus Shecinah Glory piercing the clouds of darkness in a way that only God’s Glory can. Those people who much to their chagrin, dismay or regret see all this (Revelation 1:7-8) will not be asleep in bed (Luke 17:34) as some Rapture saints will be. The people getting to the last day of the Apocalypse will indeed receive an *epiphany!* Apart from those who have repented by that day which includes Israel on the ‘third day’ of her awakening (Hosea 6:2), the unbelievers will get the wake-up call of all time. At the First Advent, in addition to the glory the shepherds saw, God’s Shecinah Glory also appeared to the *Magi* somewhere in the eastern World, then again during their journey and finally he hovered over a single house in Bethlehem. None of those events, even if *epiphaneia* (epiphany) appears in the text

describing them, precludes the same word in Titus 2:13 from applying to a future advent.

The “glorious appearing” in Titus 2:13 is obviously, in context with many other verses discussed here, a very different affair to what happened *circa* 7 BC. The sudden appearance of a great light piercing very dark clouds of doom (not at all the situation at the First Advent) is partly why the ‘appearing’ or epiphany to come in Titus 2:13 includes both “our Great God and Savior, Jesus, the Anointed One” (or ‘Messiah, Christ’). We think a careful analysis of both ‘God’ and the ‘Saviour’ here indicates God comes to watch Jesus slay Satan’s son for what Satan did at the Cross. Only Jesus approaches Earth to take up the Church saints waiting in true Faith (Luke 18:8) and Hope (Titus 2:13) at the Rapture. As we noted before, at the Rapture God stays at home while His Son goes away from Heaven to fetch His bride and bring her to God’s, or the Fathers’, House or Home (Heaven). Again, we are obliged to see two different events on two different occasions in firstly The Rapture then secondly or Lastly the Second Coming.

Regarding the latter phrase of Titus 2;13, Simmons in his second note on verse 13 wrote, “Or, ‘our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ’. Note the four great truths of grace in vv. 11-13: (1) Grace is a person-‘our Great God and Savior, Jesus, the Anointed One.’ (2) Grace brings salvation for all. (3) Grace educates us on how to live pure lives. (4) Grace brings a hope of the manifestation (appearing) of Christ. This is a hope worth waiting for” [*The Passion Translation*, page 588, footnote (a)]. For four millennia the world had been looking forward to the First Advent. Every generation of believers hoped to see it. Eve mistakenly thought her first son, Cain, was *Jehovah*. Enoch even named his son Methuselah in the hope mankind would witness the coming of the Saviour about fifteen centuries after the fall (2500 BC). In Luke 2:30-1, Simeon gave thanks because his “eyes had seen” God’s “salvation” (in *Yeshua*) which God “had prepared before the face of all people”. Then Anna in Luke 2:38, clearly gave thanks for the one that everyone “had been looking for”, i.e., the one who would bring “redemption in Jerusalem” (not in Rome, Canterbury, Mecca, Lhasa or anywhere else). It is by God’s grace that the Son of God had prepared Himself for the Incarnation long before Adam sinned, in fact even from before the Creation, as Scripture (Psalm 40:6-8, Ephesians 1:4, Hebrews 10:7-10) appears to be telling us. In God’s Plan, both advents are part of that grand design; but they occur in vastly different circumstances; and *epiphaneia* (epiphany) was a perfectly valid word to apply to both.

In Acts 1:6, as the disciples gathered at the place for His Ascension, they asked Jesus if the Lord “will restore again the kingdom to Israel”. They certainly hoped they would see it soon. However, that is ignored by Dr Simmons who instead refers to an appearance of Christ, rather than a reappearance, as being a “fourth aspect of God’s Grace”. The points he makes about Grace are good and his four aspects are a neat breakdown of the concept. Again in the context of Acts 1:6 and many other verses, surely Titus 2:11-13 is about behaving ourselves in this awfully godless world **until** Jesus comes to enforce His Kingdom which Acts 1:6 and many other verses refer to. Simeon and Anna looked for that coming kingdom implied by Titus 2:13 but Israel’s rejection of that “Voice of the First Sign” of Exodus 4:8 meant that we are now looking for it and awaiting “all-Israel’s” (Romans 11:26) repentance and redemption. However, the Lord will remove the Church in the Rapture before that day occurs. That’s what we are hoping for as believers in Israel hoped for the arrival of God’s Messianic Kingdom two millennia ago but it slipped out of the hands of the Messianic Jews of that time (AD 27-30) because the majority or unbelievers slavishly followed their corrupt leaders. Mankind is not going to bring God’s Kingdom into being even if everyone does begin ‘bowing the knee to Jesus’ as many rebels will do one day before they are despatched for all time to the other place where unbelievers go for eternity.

Dr Simmons' work is typical of modern methodologies. Other aspects of systematic theology, such as God's Grace important and wonderful as it is, get read into texts or receive inappropriate weighting and effectively preclude any eschatological implication.

(lii) Revelation 8:1-13 is about the judgements delivered earthwards by seven angels. One of the seven, or perhaps a different angel, intervenes in the "midst of heaven" in verse 13. The KJV and Interlinear translations of the Bible rely on manuscripts showing a Greek word *aggelos* that always means 'angel'. However, the ASV, NASB and *Passion* Translations rely on other early manuscripts which translate the phrase "an **eagle** flying through the midst of heaven" on the basis that a different word to *aggelos* is used. In its column-note (b), the ASV cited or cross-referenced Revelation 14:6 and 19:17. Those verses refer to "another angel flying in mid-heaven" and "an angel standing in the sun" respectively. The angel in "mid-heaven" in Revelation 14:6 preaches "an everlasting gospel" to Earth's inhabitants. The angel "standing in the sun" actually speaks to "all the birds in mid-heaven" (Revelation 19:17). Apparently, with this alternative translation of Revelation 8:13 in mind, those two angels will not need to become eagles to carry out these prophesied functions. They do not turn into any other bird or creature, to either speak to men **from** "mid-heaven" or to speak to birds **in** mid-heaven.

The ASV, NASB and *Passion* Translations may have followed those alternative 'early' manuscripts because one of the first four angels, the fourth angel or yet 'another' different angel seems to venture into that part of the heavens inhabited by birds. One is tempted to ask if the angels that appeared to the shepherds presumably in the *midst of heaven* at the first Advent or Epiphany were in fact "eagles". In fact there does not seem to be any situation in the Bible where angels become birds. They may have the ability to do that but there do not seem to be any examples apart from in those apparently reliable 'early' manuscripts of the *Book of Revelation*.

As far as this observer is aware, nobody knew about manuscripts citing 'an eagle' (or 'one eagle') in Revelation 8:13 until the last century or so. To explain why some early manuscripts did insert the Greek for 'eagles' in Revelation 8:13 we could look back to medieval traditions that themselves hark back to philosophical ideas of the universe in Roman, Hellenistic Greek or ancient Egyptian ideas about 'science'. In medieval days and earlier times, scholars understood the entire system of the universe to be like a giant cone where at its widest at the top was God's heaven, His temple etc. Then in successive layers all the way down to the very centre of the earth, where the devil inhabited the *dead centre*, each level of creation remained in its own particular habitation and did not enter either level above or below. Oddly enough, men could not fly in the mid-heaven but birds could traverse both land, ocean and sky which seemed to defeat the logic somewhat. The angels circled above the planets and the Sun, the birds inhabited the lower heavens, where this angel presumably descended into for a specific mission authorized by God. As the cone narrowed downwards to humans, then insects and the dead buried below the surface it finally arrived at 'tip' so to speak. As one cynic put it, the whole system was *diablocentric* which was ironic as people debated whether the Earth revolved around the sun at the centre or everything revolved around the Earth at the centre.

Anyway, no being of any order, the Son of God excepted, was allowed to move out of his echelon (birds, and perhaps alligators and crocodiles, excused apparently). That system was nonsense but we still see how translators have simply carried forward earlier traditions all through the ages. Clearly in this modern age that's no longer sensible. There is no reason why an angel should not enter the orbit of the birds or at least pass through it in

order to fulfill God's commands and messages given to them for delivery to man. The Bible clearly shows they have done in the past. Even if *aggelos* could or should be translated as a bird rather than the normal 'angel' why was 'eagle' chosen? Why was this '*aggelos*' not a pelican or stork or even a messenger bird since one Hebrew concept of an angel held him to be a messenger. Oddly enough, one can see the etymological derivation of the English 'eagle' coming from the Greek *æggel-os*. In fact if one looks at artistic depictions of angels with their expansive wings, they do look most like an eagle! Alternatively, the Hebrew for 'angel' is similar to the word for king (c.f., Psalm 78:49, *malakhei-roim*, רעים מלאכי). Perhaps there has been a tradition that eagles are somehow the kings of the birds. However, Noah chose a raven then a dove to come back with some indication (message) showing the waters had receded but the raven seems to have flown away and only doves reported back to Noah. But if an angel is a messenger then apparently he cannot be a dove but must be an eagle. Ultimately, as we ask such questions or pose such alternatives, it seems almost ridiculous that an entire New Testament book and especially a chapter exclusively dealing with angels should suddenly pluck an eagle from a pantheon of birds and substitute it for an angel in one single verse. It seems even more ridiculous when an angel in two other verses (Revelation 14:6 and 19:17) ventures into the same sphere as the creature in Revelation 8:13. Dr Fruchtenbaum (below) puts forward yet another option.

The problem of "some early manuscripts" showing different words in places also concerns the number "616" in Revelation 13:18 instead of the much more common "666". In that case we have sufficient information to explain the conundrum. We know that Nero Caesar adds to 616 when transliterated into Hebrew. Furthermore, we know that some or many early Christians believed Nero to be the Antichrist. One solution, obviously ridiculous, was to change the Roman leader's name to "Neron Caesar" which does add or sum up to "666" in Hebrew. What this shows is that in those troublesome days for believers, emotions tended to drive out common sense, hard analysis or even lead to irrational responses which is something even we need to remember. However, many translations still include the "616" option in footnotes. Some sort of parallel situation may have prevailed at one time or another which led to some early manuscripts showing the Greek for "eagle" in Revelation 8:13. In this paper, one suggests it is unlikely, within the wider context of the chapter where only angels are otherwise referred to, that the 'fourth angel', or any other angel, suddenly turned into an eagle in order to descend, or even be enabled to descend into a lower order of 'heaven'. Nowhere else in Revelation nor in the rest of the New Testament do angels turn into eagles or animals when they are involved in delivering messages, judgements or ministering in some way.

Sadly, the problem is exacerbated by Mr Nelson Waters in a *YouTube* video who tries to explain the meaning of Jesus' "most confusing parable" in Luke 17:22 and Matthew 24:28. He says one can clarify the passages by assuming "eagles" or "vultures" mentioned in Jesus' eagle-body metaphor are in fact angels. If correct, that badly undermines the interpretation of the metaphor this paper gives. Presumably this is derived from what we would suggest is a minority interpretation of Revelation 8:13. On the basis of the highly dubious interpretation of "eagle" in Revelation 8:13, admittedly even used in the authoritative ASV, Mr Waters claims that the 'eagles' or 'vultures' (depending on one's translation of choice) in the metaphor found only in those verses in Matthew and Luke are in fact "angels" not eagles and certainly not vultures either. Jesus' metaphor in question is, "where the body is there the eagles will be". Waters says the metaphor is really talking about angels not birds. Hence we have the absurd situation where commentators are saying an angel in one passage should be translated "eagle" while 'eagles' (or vultures) in

another passage are angels. Normally, angels are found to be just that and eagles are found to be just that or possibly vultures since the ancients did not necessarily or 'ornithologically' see much difference between the two 'species'. Nevertheless these people seem to be quite happy to radically re-translate Luke 17:22, Matthew 24:28 and Revelation 8:13 and swap eagles for angels with gay abandon.

These are reasons why a different, new or perhaps more elaborate methodology is required to analyse texts and avoid problems like the two described in the previous paragraphs. In the case of the New Testament we see how different manuscripts use different words in some passages. In the example about the angel in Revelation 8:13 possibly being an eagle, we can see how medieval or classical traditions may have contributed to mistaken thinking amongst composers, scribes or copyists of some very early manuscripts that led to the reference to an eagle albeit in a chapter all about seven angels. Four of the angels are identified for particular purposes and the three other angels identified as being "yet to come" actually do so in the ensuing chapters and as "angels". We showed how in turn a narrow methodological base gave licence to another commentator to re-translate words that clearly refer to a type of bird, either a vulture or an eagle, or both, yet the commentator says the birds really are angels. That sort of analysis fails in a modern scientific world. It's another reason why most people no longer see the Bible as being relevant or reliable. This observer's view is that Daniel 12:4 & 9 clearly indicates that in the last days traditional methods of analysis, rooted as we know in custom and familiarity rather than in observation or science, must give way to more robust methodologies.

(liii) According to Dr Fruchtenbaum in *Footsteps of the Messiah*, Second Edition, page 225 concerning Revelation 8:13, "the eagle is most likely a *seraph* chosen to give this warning to the Earth". He cites Revelation 4:7 where a "throne set in Heaven" (verse 2) and before it "a sea of glass" (verse 6) "and four beasts full of eyes before and behind" (verse 6). However, "the fourth beast was like a flying eagle" (verse 7). Whether any of these "beasts" can be described as a "seraph" may be a moot point but at least it looked like an eagle and flew like one.

There are as Dr Fruchtenbaum says, many symbols in *Revelation* but they usually can be deciphered or explained by referring to other parts of Scripture where something or someone explains the meaning. He cites Joseph and his dream about the sun and moon and eleven stars bowing down before his star. In Genesis 37:10-11, Jacob observes that the sun and moon were himself and his wife, the parents of Joseph and the eleven stars were Joseph's brothers, ten half-brothers and one full sibling. This was the first full family of "Israel" which was the surname or new name God gave to Jacob. Often in Scripture Jacob is referred to Israel. The famous Merneptah Stele or "Israel" stele actually refers to the people of Israel via a representation of Jacob and Rachel. Thus in Revelation 12:1-17 which involves "a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet" and she had "a crown of twelve stars", obviously represents Israel and the twelve tribes. The man-child she gives birth to is obviously Jesus. Likewise, as Dr Fruchtenbaum points out, Jesus always provided an explanation to go with His parables.

If one of those beasts in Revelation 4:7 is a seraph it would help explain why a creature other than the seven angels traversed the "midst of heaven" as is implied in Revelation 8:13. Dr Fruchtenbaum draws upon a methodology that serves him well in many other pieces of scriptural analysis. Mere reliance on a few alternative manuscripts is a weak or even simplistic basis upon which to draw some theological conclusions especially having showed how ridiculous it was for alternative manuscripts to suggest "616" instead of "666"

was the number of the satanic beast's name. If '777' or '888' can be said to represent God or perfection as numerologists love to tell us then '666' would have to be a representation of Satan and his trinity (with son and false prophet) rather than an asymmetric number like '616'. A methodology that repeatedly delivers sensible conclusions is far superior to narrow methodologies such as looking for where God expresses His passion. The Bible is primarily doxological (about the Glory of God) but we do not let that first principle of dispensational thinking dominate at the exclusion of literal interpretations or the need to realise Israel and the Church are two very distinct organs or bodies chosen for particular jobs through two main eras. Doxological though the Bible primarily is, there is a list of other 'ologies' such as ecclesiology, hamartiology, soteriology, and even anthropology that need to be considered when drawing theological conclusions from the texts.

The view here is that the truth or main point behind the eagle/vulture-body/carcass metaphor Jesus used just twice in the Gospels (Matthew and Luke) is that Jesus spun the metaphor drawn from Job 39:27-30 to apply to the Rapture. He likens that event to an eagle snatching up his prey into its lair and safety in Luke and to vultures gathering around a spiritually dead body as Antichrist gathers forces to destroy Israel. Except that the 'vultures' suddenly see the 'carcass in waiting' revive spiritually in Matthew's account. Undermining this potentially crucial understanding is the inaccuracy of translation of Revelation 8:13 (an eagle not an angel in the "midst of heaven") allied with the Nelson Waters in a *YouTube* video on Jesus' metaphor which he labels a 'parable', which it clearly is not. From all this, the reader hopefully gains an appreciation of the importance of a disciplined methodology in Biblical study always of course in hand with God's guiding Spirit.

(liv) Dr Fruchtenbaum in his third edition of *Footsteps of the Messiah* has turned to what he describes as a "perspective from biblical theology", to interpret II Thessalonians 2:3, "rather than continuing to interpret the verse primarily through the viewpoint of systematic theology" (APPENDIX II: II Thessalonians 2:1-12, endnote 75). Arising from his thesis, later published as a book under the title, *Israelology; The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, Dr Fruchtenbaum added "Israelology" to stand alongside long established branches of study such as Ecclesiology (the Church), Christology, Soteriology (salvation), Bibliology etc. In '*Israelology*', he demonstrated time and again how theologians read into their conclusions *a priori* convictions that are unfounded or even incorrect especially when their thinking concerns Israel.

Thus, Dr Fruchtenbaum de-constructed the systems of the replacement theologians who try to combine Israel and the Church of *the* Christ into the one body of saints. That methodology ignores the status of pre-Israelite saints or non-Jewish Gentile pre-Cross saints which is one glaring oversight that points to the shortcomings of most modern theology. More significantly, Fruchtenbaum shows how the failure to distinguish between Israel and the Church led to major problems in especially in eschatology. Both congregations have a major role within God's Kingdom Plan as did pre-Israel saints of the era 4000-2000 BC. However, Israel's and the Church's different histories in salvation also confused matters. Membership of the church can only consist of saved people. Membership of the congregation of Israel came through the rite of physical circumcision on the eighth day for males only. However, that did not mean the Israelite was soteriologically saved. He or she still needed to believe and trust in God by faith in God as people like King David did. Saints of all three eras are saved on the same basis as noted elsewhere. Nevertheless, the distinction between the two bodies requires a distinction between the Rapture for the Church and the Second Coming for Israel. That is everyone needs to be circumcised on the heart as the following passages attest: Deuteronomy 4:29, 10:16, 30:6,

I Kings 2:4; Psalm 7:10, 40:8 & 10, Isaiah 51:7, Jeremiah 4:4 (especially so), 24:7, Romans 2:29, II Corinthians 3:3, Philippians 3:3 and Colossians 2:11.

For discussion on the matter of methodology in connection with understanding the 'Falling away' of II Thessalonians 2:3 and a surprising about-turn by Dr Fruchtenbaum on that matter, refer Addendum (Q)

## **(J) World History, Times of the Gentiles, Israel and the Church Age**

(i) Israel and the Church Age: Luke 21:24 records a statement of Jesus that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled". The parallel eschatological accounts in Matthew and Mark are silent on this term. The "Times of the Gentiles" need to be understood within the context of the corrected History underpinning the documents in the *Aleph-Tav* 3-D Bible Study. Dr Fruchtenbaum once privately explained to this observer that 'Covenant Theologians' object to the 'Dispensational View' about 'Israel' in the 'Church Age' because, as the Covenant Theologians claim, there is nothing in the Biblical texts that observes or prophesy Israel would ever reject the Coming of its Messiah and Saviour. That's a key point this observer believes is met by Exodus 4:8. Thus, we need to re-shape the conventional view of world history. Few commentators ever point these things out. Fewer still, even consider Israel's acceptance of Jesus in AD 30 was a possibility let alone that God foreshadowed the only two possible (or binary) scenarios in Exodus 4:8.

In order to fill the gap left by the 'rejection' scenario and in order to complete the six millennia plan God had in mind when He re-formed the Earth in Six Days and rested on the Seventh Day, God in His Wisdom and Omnipotence had prepared an extension to the first two Ages of Conscience and Israel which precede the Church Age. In the event Israel would reject the Messiah in AD 30, the Church Age *had* become a necessity to be God's temporary witness. The Church Age, foreseen and foreknown by God, is temporary in this sense because Israel has yet to complete its final term of responsibility before the Millennium, that is the 'Last Seven' of Daniel's '490' or 'seventy sevens' (refer below in this section). The Church Age could not be foretold in the Old Testament because that would nullify any possibility Israel would have or could have accepted Jesus in that AD 30 generation. That is fundamental to the way we view world history and prophecy or the 'Prophecy-History Continuum' outlined in the Bible.

In the framework or model posited by this observer, Exodus 4:8, allied with the use of "אח" in Exodus 8:23, 12:13 and Zechariah 12:10 together with statements in *Revelation* about God being the *Alpha-Omega* ( "אח" ) and Jesus' "testimony" in Revelation 19:10 are keys to unlocking these conundra. God is revealing these things to His servants via a lightly codified account of an extremely unusual set of events indiscernible to non-church saints. Thus, in the wake of an Israelite rejection of Her Messiah in AD 30 or *circa* 4030 years (or *four 'days'*) after Adam's Fall would come the final 2000-year or Two-Day Age before the Millennium that as the *Seventh Day of Rest* would complete God's plan for this Earth and its universe.

The Old Testament gives hints of a seven-millennia plan but there's not a shred of information hinting at or alluding to the need for a Church Age because Israel's rejects her Messiah. Even if one could foresee Israel rejecting her Messiah, even from Exodus 4:8 before Christ came, there was nothing in the Old Testament to say what would happen next. The Old Testament closes by the reader assuming Messiah will put all to right when he arrives. That's partly why modern Israel does not accept *Yeshua* or Jesus as "Messiah".

Also, it means it is our job to explain that all the world's problems deriving from past sins are now coming to a 'head' as we say or to their 'final denouement' as the French would say. True Archaeology and Chronology now warn us the six thousand years of 'Adam's Folly' are coming to an end; give or take half-a-dozen years; and possibly with a thirty-seven year hiatus added to account for a sort of time-stop while God Himself walked this Earth in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth.

(ii) Church Age: Had Israel accepted Jesus in AD 30 there could have been no need for a Church Age. We know Satan failed or rebelled in his 'Eden'. Likewise Adam in his 'Eden'. Now we can see the Laodicean churches of 'Christendom' silencing any discussion about the Antichrist, the Rapture and the Second Coming are guides or precedents. Thus, it is of no surprise Israel failed in AD 30. Hence, from God's perspective, six thousand years or six days of human folly and chaos were inevitable with Israel's stumbling over Jesus in AD 30. Hence, God's Wisdom foresaw six thousand years for Adam's Folly to continue. This is a demonstration of God's Glory above all but mankind only looks at these things from its ant-like perspective. Thus, the Church Age or Stage in Adam's Folly had to be kept a 'secret' or 'mystery' during the four millennia (four days) before Jesus' Advent in 7 BC (i.e., during Old Testament days). There was a real chance of Israel accepting the genuine offer to introduce God's Kingdom which Jesus put to AD 27-30 Israel. Indeed it seems He almost succeeded. God is not disingenuous. Israel genuinely could have accepted Jesus then but did not in the final analysis. Thus the Church Age had to intervene. Dr Fruchtenbaum calls it the "Mystery Stage" of the full 'Kingdom of God' programme. It is one of several stages of God's overall Kingdom Plan (our term) that Dr Fruchtenbaum outlines in his writing. It is a 'mystery stage' because no one could have foreseen its arrival. At the Rapture, the Church of the Christ will finish its pre-millennial work.

(iii) The Two Plans: During the Ages of Israel and the Church, and with the pre-Israel Conscience Age, some of Paul's points become a lot clearer, e.g., "the mystery of iniquity" (II Thessalonians 2:7) has been taking place since *circa* 4000 BC. There are two 'Plans' in operation: God's Plan **for** this Universe and the World; and Satan's, since the Fall, currently operating **in** the world. The "he" (II Thessalonians 2:7) who restrains evil and who is "taken away", as Dr Fruchtenbaum points out, could either refer to "Government" (or governance in general) or refer to the three kings of the Ten who try to oppose Antichrist but are defeated and removed. However, as we also learn from the Bible, under God's covenant with Noah there had to be government in world affairs after the Flood primarily to restrain murder and to provide a system whereby murderers could be tried, judged and finally executed if found guilty. Throughout History Satan has used various agents or empires to cause trouble either for governments or sometimes via the actions of governments. Or he has tried to undermine 'Government' for example by influencing people to abolish death penalties for murder and to encourage as much abortion as possible. Now the role of Government is greatly expanded to what one might now summarize as effective management of Earth's resources (Political-Economy).

As a rule, Man craves governance, justice and stability however there are anarchists and others that do not or agree with this and seek to live by their own rules. Adam's sin meant that in effect Man had ceded power to Satan and become a slave to his world-view or plan. Psalm 8:4-6 explains Satan's hold is temporary until Messiah returns to wrest back control of the Earth for Man. Currently, there are many trends in the world that point to a rapid undermining of the governance systems we have been living under for several centuries. However, as historians, we have been able to discern how science, knowledge and technology inevitably would lead to the type of world we have now. It is polluted (or



“defiled”, Isaiah 24:5, KJV). Governments have responded to diseases caused by viruses by restricting people’s liberties. The economic system is being turned upside down by the false premise that carbon causes global warming. The world is warming as an after-effect of the Great Flood. That was a judgement on the Earth because of both Satan’s (re the ‘Nephilim’) and mankind’s sin. Viruses are also the result of environmental decline post the Fall and possibly because of sexual perversion. All this coincidentally comes six millennia after the Fall as we assess chronology via the Biblical account. Governments, currently about 200 around the world, are showing themselves every day to be less and less effective in coordinating or acting to solve environmental problems let alone bring order, safety, justice etc., to mankind. Satan has his plan to destroy mankind by taking advantage of these problems. God’s plan is to intervene lest no flesh should survive (Matthew 24:22, Mark 13:20).

(iv) Distinctions between saints and blessings: Before our next sub-topic here, it is useful to note the distinctions between the blessings or otherwise of various groups over all three dispensations. In general, theologians of the main schools of systematic theology fail to keep distinct the blessings the saved received in the era from Adam to Abraham compared with blessings saints received within the Israel Era (or Dispensation). Consequently, theologians who say the Church and Israel are the same thing fall into all sorts of additional difficulties understanding distinctions in blessings between the Church; or the Third Era, and Israel (the Second Era). Although they seem to agree that salvation for all saints of all time is on the same basis for all, they seem unable to explain the faith-content concerning the promised Deliverer for the Old Testament saint compared with Paul’s additional content of information available to all post First Advent saints. Since AD 30 there was a necessary addition to the content of the Promised Deliverer’s (Genesis 3:15) means by which He secured our soteriological salvation as it occurred on the cross. Essentially, that content is stated in I Corinthians 15:1-8.

In one sense, the saved and unsaved are blessed by God even if the latter never thank nor acknowledge God. However, we are more interested in distinctions where saints over all three eras were or are blessed. Until the Cross, no saint could hope to experience the spiritual blessings church saints receive. But what did pre-church saints experience? For that matter, what will post-Church saints experience in regard to blessings? In considering this topic for saints during the Israel Era, theologians also fail to explain distinctions in regard to blessings received between the saved and unsaved among Israel and among the Gentiles which had believers who were not part of Israel in contradistinction to those Gentiles who from time to time did bring themselves (in the Israel Era), as “proselytes”, under the Mosaic Covenant in order to share in its particular set of spiritual blessings. Of course, indirectly, proselytes, especially if they domiciled in Israel, would also share in the physical blessings of sustained wealth and comfort as God **doubly** protected Israel’s agricultural economy from pests and diseases. Proselytes too would enjoy the Land kept safe from invasions and benefit from the dividends Israel received from trade between the continents of Africa and Eurasia a very big prize indeed! Mind you, proselytes would also share in the doubling of curses when Israel fell away from God.

(v) Cosmology’s impact: God created the universe for the angels (Job 38:7). Later, many rebelled against God under the leadership of Satan (Isaiah 14:12, Ezekiel 28:15, Luke 10:18). The after-effects of God’s judgement can be seen in the vast universe (Black Holes), in our solar system and even here on Earth. The generally accepted age of the Universe is about 15 billion years. If radio-metric dating systems can be relied upon, one suggests the Fall of Satan was around 4.5 billion years ago. Those measurements may

be indicators of the length of time the Earth, Universe and mineral elements therein have fallen into decay That suggests angels inhabited the Universe for 11 billion years before their rebellion. The era of man on this Earth has been about six millennia or an infinitesimally tiny period compared to the angelic realm's enjoyment of the Universe.

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There has long been great interest in the Cosmos. More specifically, with the solar system. Five planets, Mercury, Mars, Venus, Jupiter and Saturn, became objects of worship and subjects to many narratives about them as 'gods'. Kings and others took titles or names from the planets. For example: Nebo-Mercury (Nebuchadnezzar); Marduk-Mars (Mordecai); Ishtar-Venus (Esther); Bel-Jupiter (Belshazzar). The planets came into prominence because between 2500 BC and *circa* 700 BC, mankind suffered many disasters caused by extra-territorial agents such as errant, rogue or colliding planets, planetoids, comets and asteroids etc. Some of the resulting catastrophes that affected the Earth; and the solar system itself (c.f., the Asteroid Belt); are recorded in the Bible. They are also narrated in the historical records of other nations on the globe at the time (e.g., Polynesia, India and Israel regarding the Day the Sun and Moon stood still). Only the Bible provides a reliable chronological sequence for these catastrophes. However, the Western Scientific paradigm has it that all physical and environmental changes we have seen on Earth are the result of only slow gradual uniform changes ('evolution') caused by natural erosion, rainfall, storms, earthquakes or 'fault line' movements etc., over long eons of time. Those ructions partly explain why Aristotle, Plato, Ptolemy, Augustine, Aquinas, Copernicus, Tycho de Brahe, Kepler, Descartes and even Newton and Einstein were unable to fully explain why the current solar system appears before us in its current arrangement. Modern astronomers looking at planetary systems around other stars believe they see more regular formations of planets encircling stars. Our local system or arrangement looks haphazard or irregular in comparison. There are too many anomalies in planet sizes, movements, relationships between planets and satellites that defy science's attempts at coming up with what has become an 'evolutionary' model to explain what is currently observed in the solar system or indeed in the wider universe.

Things are changing. The *London Economist* 21 December 2019 to 3 January 2020 acknowledged the instability of the solar system is now *becoming* accepted scientific fact. But it was Dr Immanuel Velikovsky who in the 1940's along with assistance from Einstein who was the first modern scientist or academic to systematically explain what ancient records, both geological and human, were telling us about the solar systems's instability. And those records tell us what was in fact responsible for so much (but not all) physical carnage inflicted on Earth since 2500 BC. The uniformitarian mafia controlling the halls of science and academy have consistently suppressed any research along Velikovskian lines. Along with that *London Economist* report on the instability of the solar system we now also have (September 2019) evidence from Auckland University effectively showing through dendrochronology that the Flood of Noah did occur in 2500 BC. They have established, after many years collecting samples, a kauri tree ring sequence extending back to 2488 BC. This substantiates the Polynesian claim the North Island surfaced as a 'new sea land' from the ocean floor perhaps 12 years previously to 2488 BC. The following decade or so allowed time for some flotsam containing the first Kauri seedlings from the pre-Flood land mass to germinate on the virgin soils of that previously submerged 'new sea land' (Dutch, 'New Zealand'). Polynesians have long claimed this and now we have a very interesting item of evidence that supports a plausible date for the flood at 2500 BC or *circa* 2500-2450 BC from the Bible's chronology.

Thus, what we read of happening in the Bible, occurred against that catastrophic back drop. However, it was all God's doing. Through it all, God (*Jehovah*) protected those who conformed with His Plan, e.g., Israel even though Abraham's descendants did not always honour the unique relationship the nation had in God's Plan. In spite of Israel's failure which reflects the sin nature of everyone, God will drive through His plans for Israel and the World no matter what. Moreover, the Laodicean churches today are likewise not living up to the unique relationship they should have with the Son of God. In particular, they are not warning the world about all the prophecies inherent in Genesis 3:15. One is the coming of The Christ which they still acknowledge but God also said there would be an Antichrist child too which they ignore at their peril. God also prophesied that the woman would seek to usurp the man which has not happened until modern times as we see how the rise of the 'feminist' movement along with things like abortion on demand are facilitating a demand to achieve female domination everywhere in the name of "equality".

(vi) Times of the Gentiles: From *circa* 700-600 BC God temporarily and deliberately returned stability to the Solar System so that the 'Times of the Gentiles' (Luke 21:24) could begin, firstly with the four empires of the dreams of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:31-45, 7:1-28). These empires would be vehicles for fulfilling many Old Testament prophecies. Secondly, the stability would enable man to finally pursue his dream of getting back to a substitute for the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden, i.e., the touch-tronic computer interconnected with the Internet storing all man's knowledge and technology. In effect, that has taken us 2700 years to do. Previously, the Flood (2500 BC), the Tower of Babel incident in 2000 BC, the Plagues of Egypt (1500 BC), the Days the Sun and Moon stood still (1450 BC), and the sun dial shifts in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah of Judah (*circa* 750-700 BC) severely interrupted all previous attempts to drive science and technology forward. India, China, the civilizations of the Americas and Africa all tried to push things along at various times before the Europeans finally took over most of the process after the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia ending the *Thirty Years War*.

But for approximately 2100 years between 500 BC and AD 1600, as Arthur Koestler puts it, the World was "*Sleepwalking*", and there was little or no advance in learning and quite a bit was lost certainly in some parts of the world. However, as at various other times, there also have been other 'human' factors that impeded this so-called *advance*. As he put it near the end of *The Sleepwalkers*, (Penguin Edition, 2004, page 483), "If progress had been continuous and organic, all that we know, for instance, about the theory of numbers, or analytical geometry, should have been discovered within a few generations after Euclid". For example, there seems to have been a collective opposition to pursuing technological advance in China from some time after AD 1000. In Europe, the ideas of Plato and Aristotle, or more precisely of their students and followers such as Ptolemy and Augustine, dragged science (and theology) into mysticism and got nowhere. Others at the time, though, believed the Bible held warnings against advancing science and technology to achieve the ends some people claim are possible. It may be that people in both China and the West were concerned that too much knowledge could be disastrous for the world. After all, did not God warn Adam not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil when knowledge without God becomes evil?

(vii) Reformation and Renaissance in Europe: After the Renaissance and Reformation ran their courses in Europe then that part of the world's descent into the *Thirty Years War*, forces or institutions shackling the advance of knowledge fell away. Some people felt liberated to discover new things without suffering opprobrium or sanctions from governments either governed from Rome (or Canterbury) or heavily influenced by such

*bishoprics.* Many believed the Bible was warning us not to pursue knowledge but the Kingdom of God instead (e.g., Matthew 6:31-33, Luke 12:29-31). Of course that was and still is true but the advance of knowledge has a momentum of its own so it cannot be impeded forever. Thus the inevitable, again as the Bible warns, has happened to bring us to the brink prophesied in the Bible. Thus, liberated from its shackles, Europe, and its US colonies, emerged by the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century as massively more powerful than the nations of the rest of the world. Also, Europe's emerging systems of governance, as well as the fruits of Europe's technologies, became very attractive to many others around the world. Disrespect in modern times for the Bible's History and Prophecy has obscured in most people's minds the prophecy given to Japeth (Genesis 9:27) that "God would enlarge Japeth". The Phoenician flight westward was an early stage in that prophetic process. His descendants would take that expansion well beyond the East Atlantic lands (Portugal, Spain, France, British Isles, Netherlands etc) mainly from the middle of the sixth millennium. Many indigenous peoples of the lands the Europeans were exploring, decided for the most part to **join in** with this 'progress'. Some of their descendants today are not so happy with those decisions. One's message to indigenous groups complaining about "colonialism" is that these things are prophesied in the Bible and that the best option is to turn to Jesus by acknowledging they too need salvation in Christ. Unfortunately, they are slipping back into their old religions of paganism and pantheism.

Europe also offered efficient governance and administration, ironically in obedience to the law of Noah in the Bible. All this purportedly was for the benefit for everyone on this planet. Thus the knowledge explosion of Daniel 12:4 at long last has begun to take shape world-wide. Significantly, all this has come very close to 6000 years after the Fall of Adam. So are we now in the last times before the seventh millennium of Christ comes? Do we await Antichrist's attempt to introduce Satan's counterfeit millennium? Has that begun with the "millennial goals" set by the UN? Was God's hand somehow behind all these delays in the advance of knowledge? Did God control matters so that it would take us 6000 years to finally develop our own Tree of Knowledge that made information available at the **touch** of a computer screen so that with our eyes we could learn for ourselves?

(viii) Enlightenment (or Endarkenment?): Ironically, it was the confusion in Science and Theology or strange ideas about Faith and Reason that gripped Greece and Europe after the heady days when the Ionian-Jews and Dorian-Tyrians then Socrates brought the civilization of Israel and the Levantine (*Phoenicians*) to the semi-barbaric or archaic 'Achaean-Greeks' circa 700-500 BC. Those developments also fulfilled the prophecy to Japeth But from Plato then Aristotle downwards through Ptolemy, Augustine and Aquinas in particular, decline set in as these later 'philosophers' corrupted '*Biblical*' wisdom to medieval depths. They reinterpreted the Bible to fit their devolved science. As early as AD 1200, the Renaissance and Reformation began to unravel the nonsense by reviewing the established knowledge paradigms.

It is within that perspective of History that we now better understand the role Christendom was to play in these developments. In God's overall Plan, six millennia had to pass for Man's folly to be fully played out. But that meant interrupting Man's ability to quickly, or too quickly, pursue the hunt for knowledge and even immortality through medical science. This in order that everything would come to its final crisis-climax from *circa* AD 2001 or about 6000 years after the Fall of Adam. For this reason God also permitted the permanent indwelling Spirit of God in the life of the believer to be a witness to the world in this last two-millennia Age or Era of the Church or Congregation of the Christ (Jesus of Nazareth). The Holy spirit will continue to convict men to believe God as has always been the case but

after the Rapture the indwelling or permanency may differ even though the blood price has been paid. One suggests that is because the reason for granting this blessing to Church Saints has been to equip them for the Church Age alone but not for the Apocalypse or Millennium presumably. Although in the latter this blessing for the Church probably will not be necessary anyway. There really is a very significant distinction between Church Saints and all other Saints. The one common feature of course is the basis for salvation through Grace, Mercy and Faith in the One True God (Jehovah) but the Spirit of God permanently indwelling and filling the believer is an uncommon feature and in fact a unique feature for Church of Christ saints.

This effectively means the Rapture is a necessity in order to end or complete the Church Age in world affairs until the Millennium begins. But all that is a regime or regimen for the future. This is not unlike the situation when the Conscience Era (i.e., conscience alone governing Man's treatment of his fellow man or woman) firstly was modified with the Law given to Noah (2500 BC) then closed. As individuals, each one's conscience still "pricks". However, the first 2000-year age proved that was insufficient even though it should have been sufficient! Thus, God chose Abraham and His descendants to begin the next Era of Israel (2000 BC) and its 'law' even though Israel had to wait for Moses before the Law for Israel from God came to be written in full. Israel's era came to a temporary halt in AD 30. There is one last batch of a seven-year period for Israel to recommence and complete its era of witness. That is the one 'seven' of years for the Apocalypse (Daniel 9:27) wherein Israel's Jews once again take up the lead in witness for God. Unless God were to grant death to every living believer, in order to finish the Church Age, it is just as effective to take out, by translation via the Rapture, living believers when there is no longer any role for the church here on Earth. The Days of Noah and Lot were significant in that no one was prepared to heed God's warnings from believers then. That's why Jesus chose those *literal*-metaphors describing the world as it literally was in Noah's day and in Sodom and Gomorrah in Abraham and Lot's day to describe the **season** of the Rapture. The **day** is known only to God the Father. One cannot get a proper discussion of the Bible even in churches now let alone in the wider world. These are reasons why this paper needs to be written to show that if ever there was a **season** for the Rapture it is now.

### **(K) Eschatology in Context**

In one's paper on the *Components of Systematic Theology*, one explains that each branch of the system must be considered with all the others. In addition to the Standard System augmented with Dr Fruchtenbaum's *Israelology*, the 3-D *Aleph-Tav* System includes: Archaeology (the history of the Biblical World); Etymology (the study of a single word); Analogy (comparing the meanings of two or more words); and History. However, it further sub-categorizes History into Political, Cosmological, Geographical, Biological, Geological and some other divisions. The list is not exhaustive for one could even add Genetics. From the perspective of the '*Mind of God*, the list can be completed. But frail man (as in "מה-אנוש", *ma enosh*, Psalm 8:4, Hebrews 2:6 ) is obviously incapacitated to some extent in this. Only Satan ever met the 'full sum' ("seal up the sum", KJV translation, Ezekiel 28:12) and then only "fully" in "wisdom" and "perfection" in "Beauty. However, even "frail man", as long as the individual is saved b Christ and maturing in his spiritual life, should be encouraged to try and understand God's mysteries and prophecies. Churchmen anxious to avoid upsetting governments seek to restrict such studies. One has extracted an example of that going back to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries from C.A. Patrides' *Milton and the Christian Tradition*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1966, page 28:

“... The act of Creation was a matter of faith, not open to discourse, as Donne [in his *Essays*] put it, but, ‘at once swallowed and devour’d by faith, without mastication, or digestion’.” Then the following from Patrides: “The opposition, we can be certain, were hardly impressed; indeed they were merely irritated by the irrelevant reply to their query concerning God’s activities before the Creation: ‘He made Hell, wherein hee might tormente perpetually suche curious fellowes, as doe demaunde such questions’. It has never been easy to argue with determined christians”.

Such “determined christians” are ‘churchmen’ in this writer’s parlance but they still hold far too much sway over believers with that sort of ‘*conservatism*’ or suppression. Unfortunately, of course, many silly things that should have been left unstated were postulated by believers in those times. But that’s life. On the assumption believers now, and perhaps since only *circa* 1990, not only have the ability to explore issues previous generations would or could not do; **we have a duty and responsibility to do that**. Hence we need to consider the Rapture, albeit very briefly, within the context of what we know about Genetics because certain questions arise in connection with the ongoing biological status of un-resurrected individuals who live eternally. It is easy enough to explain how resurrected saints can exist eternally in such a body. It may be that Genetics helps us out of a dilemma many believers in previous generations have struggled with which is to analyze the sequence of End-time events but in particular who is or is not resurrected, and when or where.

The Bible describes two resurrections. Our interest is with the first of course. Dr Fruchtenbaum analyzes the First Resurrection into four orders and five stages [Addendum (L)]. However that analysis leaves us with an issue concerning the state of Sheep Gentiles who enter the Kingdom in their existing ‘carnal’ bodies along with “All Israel” of Romans 11:26. These people, Jews and Gentiles, then procreate throughout the Millennium. Some Gentile descendants will fail to repent in the Millennium and will die after they live for a century (Isaiah 65:20). But everyone else stays alive. That is the Sheep Gentiles and Israelites (Jews) surviving the Apocalypse who all will be ‘1000+’ years old by the end of the Millennium and those who become saints during the Millennium who will all range in age from ‘1 year’ of age to ‘1000 years’ of age.

But how do these bodies thrive under all this? An eighty-year old who survives the Apocalypse, either a Jew or a Sheep Gentile, will be 1080 by the time the new Universe comes into being. We know from modern genetics that there is an aging process which seems to be irreversible. However, parts of our body do regenerate for example a cut or a wound usually heals and disappears leaving a scar sometimes but even then not always. Apparently the cells of certain organs do likewise. Other parts of the body, however, degenerate over time and the accumulation of that decay eventually forces the whole body to succumb to death. Nevertheless, modern medical science thinks it can feasibly in the not too distant future extend life to two hundred years. Some geneticists even think human bodies have a theoretical capacity to live for a millennium. However, the 200-year target is their more immediate objective.

Most human DNA is apparently unused. Sometimes it is described as “Junk DNA”. Formerly, it was supposed to be a remnant in our body’s database of genetic information going back to our ‘evolutionary’ past when we were amoeba or monkeys etc. We know from the Bible that people in the first couple of generations had the capacity to survive for 930 (Adam), 950 (Noah) or 969 years (Methuselah). Later, people such as Abraham got close to 200 then by the times of Jacob, Joseph and Joshua, 110-120 years seems to be

the oldest anyone reached. The impact of the Fall denied man access to the Tree of Life obviously affecting his life-span. Those effects accumulated and in some societies life expectancy even fell to thirty years of age. However, that was more often because of poor hygiene or because of inadequate nutrition and in-breeding in isolated societies. It seems that after access to the Tree of Life was denied, genes no longer regenerated across the entire spectrum. Is that because the Junk DNA was somehow switched off?

“RNA” is often described as being like a ‘switch’. Viruses which are rogue strands of RNA. They attach themselves to the DNA of animals, humans or even plants. They often create havoc with the normal genetic processes therein. Sometimes they seem to be quite neutral and some experiments even claim to have shown that sometimes a virus may in fact contribute something positive to the organism’s welfare. On balance, overall, we mostly see destruction and illness emanating from viruses. But RNA in the womb normally does good things, negative mutations being rare there but still significant.

What all this shows regarding resurrection is that saints who have died must get a resurrected body. However, since death only occurs for the unsaved in the Millennium presumably God somehow switches Junk DNA back on to enable the human and even animals perhaps to live and never die. A baby born in the millennium will experience the normal growth process towards becoming a full mature adult. During the Millennium, he or she will also be able to procreate new life. Resurrected people will not procreate. What happens to Millennial saints regarding their ability to procreate after the Millennium is not stated either. However, as with the aging process which appears to be reversible by the power of God, the need and desire to procreate may also be switched off at the end of the Millennium. From Genetics, we are learning many things no other generation could possibly appreciate. Again, we cannot at present learn everything. But that does not in turn mean we cannot know many things hitherto unlearned. We certainly are not where Mr Patrides’ ‘Reformer’ above stood. He could not know what we do now. We certainly are not going to end up in Hell for learning more. Certainly when Adam chose to eat from the tree of knowledge without permission, he chose death. But the Last Adam countered that. Daniel 12:4 & 9 clearly shows there will be a time of great learning just before the Last Day or as the Last Days finally come to hand. It would be foolish to ignore all that new information when it helps defend the claims of the Bible. Nevertheless, we first come to faith and believe. We don’t get scientific proof then believe. Belief first was the experience of the author. However, for our generation, coming to belief may well be the start of a period of great learning in order to counter the propaganda of the Satanic and academic authorities attempting to suppress discussion about the Bible’s messages and who are trying to muddy the waters by brainwashing people to disbelieving the Bible and even getting them to ignore it altogether.

### **(L) Fruchtenbaum’s Analysis of the First Resurrection**

The following is an analysis of the data, tables and information produced in Dr Fruchtenbaum’s *Footsteps of the Messiah*. This paper uses “The Apocalypse” whereas Dr Fruchtenbaum, as per *Footsteps* on page 173, uses the term “The Great Tribulation”. As noted above, others use that term just for the second half of “The Tribulation” after the “Abomination of Desolation”. Since one is quoting Fruchtenbaum below that point needs clarification.

Page 2, In Chart 1, *Chronology of Eschatology*, the Resurrection of the Messiah is “the

Firstfruits (rather than 'First Order') of the First Resurrection"; the "Resurrection and Rapture of Church Saints is the Second Order of the First Resurrection; the "Resurrection of Old Testament saints and Tribulation saints i.e., the "souls" (\*) of "those beheaded" by Antichrist per Revelation 20:4 but not, presumably, the Sheep Gentiles and Israel that enter the Millennial Kingdom, are the "Third and Fourth Orders of the First Resurrection".

Page 360, in Chart 8 there is a diagram entitled *The Seventy-five Day Interval* showing the resurrection of Old Testament saints i.e., the "Third Order of the First Resurrection. Also, it shows the resurrection of Tribulation Saints is the "Fourth Order of the First Resurrection" and these apparently are in Revelation 20:4, as the "souls" of "those beheaded" by Antichrist. Thus John saw their "**souls**" in Heaven but the only living and newly resurrected 'bodies' (c.f., Revelation 19:10) were of Church saints in Heaven for their evaluations ("judgements"), rewards, then participation in the Marriage of the Lamb as the Bride of Christ.

Page 368, commenting on Revelation 20:4, this verse refers to 'rewarded' Rapture saints "to whom judgement (evaluation) has been given" and the "souls" of "those beheaded for not worshiping the Antichrist" and who were "unwilling to accept the mark of the beast". So they get resurrected but as the "Fourth Order" after the OT saints who are clearly the Third Order" and both orders occur in the Seventy-five Day Interval as the Heading here indicates: *G, The Resurrection of Tribulation Saints* under which Fruchtenbaum makes the two following points:

(1) "Not only will there be a resurrection of Old Testament saints, but also a resurrection of those saints who will be killed in the course of the Great Tribulation", presumably by the Beast judging by the context; and

(2) "In this verse, John sees two groups of saints co-reigning with Messiah". However in the broader context of other passages, they are only two out of a number of groups which in effect will be "co-reigning with Christ" such as Church saints and of course Israel's saints who survive to the end of the Apocalypse.

So this special group of beheaded Tribulation saints is resurrected in the Seventy-five Day Interval and **not** in the Rapture. Thus Fruchtenbaum on this page concludes the "souls of those beheaded in the Apocalypse are resurrected **"at this time"** i.e., in the Seventy-five day interval when the Old Testament saints are resurrected. They are **not** resurrected while their souls are in Heaven along with the souls of all pre-Church saints presumably. Nevertheless, apparently, they are looking on at things going on then in Heaven in particular one supposes the Marriage of the Lamb. Whether Old Testament saints also can see what is going on as the Church is judged, rewarded and married after the Rapture may be another moot point and perhaps it is just as sensible to assume they can or do as well.

Page 369-70, is where Fruchtenbaum comments under the heading *H, The First Resurrection* on verses in Revelation 20:5-6 and I Corinthians 15:20-23. He notes the First Resurrection is firstly composed as "each in his own order" but this is likened to a Roman military organization; or indeed the organization of any army one would think; where an "order" has several divisions. So here Fruchtenbaum says "the First Resurrection has five stages" (1-5):

(1) Jesus firstfruits (I Cor 15:23);



(2) Church saints, deceased and living the latter by translation, at Rapture (I Thess 4:16) pre 'Great Tribulation';

(3) Two Witnesses in mid-tribulation Rev 11:11-12;

OT saints Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:2 during seventy-five day interval;

(5) Deceased Tribulation saints of Revelation 20:4 whose "souls", not bodies, John saw in Heaven while amongst the Raptured Church saints getting ready for the Marriage of the Lamb by receiving their evaluations at Christ's judgement seat prior to the wedding in Heaven

Thus analyzing the above, there are **four** orders of the First Resurrection. But there are **five** stages. In effect, in Fruchtenbaum's analysis, in order to accommodate the resurrection of the Two Witnesses in Revelation 11:11-12 he either has to make a fifth Order or do as he does and in parallel refer to five 'segments' for want of another word, which he labels "stages". The effect of this is to push the 'third' and 'fourth' orders of the First resurrection into stages '4' and '5' respectively of the "First Resurrection".

Therefore, in conclusion to this last addendum, Dr Fruchtenbaum's 'Firstfruits', Orders' and Stages of the First Resurrection merge as follows:

(1) Jesus firstfruits (I Cor 15:23); or Order unstated but implicitly the 'First Order' and implicitly 'Stage 1' (*Footsteps* page 369)

(2) Church saints, living and dead (or deceased), the former by translation, at the Rapture (I Thessalonians 4:16) and before the Seven-year 'Great Tribulation'; or Order 2 and Stage 2 (*Footsteps* page 369)

(3) The Two Witnesses in mid-Tribulation, Revelation 11:11-12; Order not stated but Stage 3 (*Footsteps* page 369)

Old Testament saints, Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:2, during the Seventy-five day interval; or Order 3 and Stage 4 (*Footsteps* page 369)

(5) The beheaded therefore deceased Tribulation saints of Revelation 20:4 whose "souls", not bodies, John saw in Heaven while he was amongst the Raptured Church saints who were (then in our future) getting ready for the Marriage of the Lamb by receiving their evaluations at Christ's judgement seat prior to the wedding in Heaven; or Order 4 and Stage 5 (*Footsteps* page 369)

(\*) Evidently, John never saw the souls of the pre-Church or Old Testament saints that were transferred from Abraham's bosom in Hell to Heaven when Jesus visited the dead at His crucifixion. As suggested above, perhaps it is sensible or logical to assume he did and that they could see or be aware of what was happening, but how we have no idea.

### **(M) Acts 1:1-11**

In section (27) concerning Acts 2:17-20, there was of course an earlier passage in Acts which really is one of the most vital perspectives from which to consider the rest of the New Testament in regard to the Second Coming and the Rapture. Yet it is one of the most ignored passages there. Acts 1:1-11 properly belongs to a discussion on the Second Coming because of its connection with the MMK. However, in this passage, Jesus firstly promised the disciples the arrival of the Holy Spirit to bring about the beginning of the

Church Age. That first 'Pentecost-Shavuot' in AD 30 defines and initiates the Church of *the* Christ; although initially only open to Jews and Proselytes; and thereby, in effect, the Rapture too, since that is what completes the Church Age - from Pentecost to Rapture.

The promise in Acts 1:5 came with the permanently indwelling Spirit of God in the life of the believer. He is the Comforter, announced earlier by Jesus (John 14:26), however, He is also a 'guarantor' [Greek, "*erevon*" (*arrabown* or ἀρραβων) from the Hebrew, *Erevon*, ערבוך]. He assures the believer that God's full plan as outlined in the Bible will indeed be brought to a complete execution or fulfillment. That includes Jesus' promise to "Israel" to still bring in the MMK even though it was by then going to be delayed for some time, indeed until after the Church Age. But for how long would God minister to the World through the Church? The Holy Spirit's role as 'Guarantor' is assured through the fact that if the reprobate Judah (at that stage of his career) abided by his guarantee to the 'prostitute' (Genesis 38:17, 18, 20), who was of course Tamar his daughter in law, then how much more will God abide by His promises and through His Spirit? Paul's use of '*erevon*' in Corinthians 1:22, 5:5, and Ephesians 1:14 ("*arrabown*" transliterated into Classical Greek) is perhaps the most intrinsic element in this promise. It can be likened to giving the new believer his or her engagement ring promising marriage to the "Lamb of God". This special gift first came with the events of Pentecost-Shavuot AD 30.

However, the disciples' much more immediate or even much deeper interest was in the great era when Jesus would command all governance in the world via His Messianic Kingdom (I Corinthians 15:25 within the context of the surrounding verses). The Lord later revealed to John the Messianic Kingdom would last for exactly one millennium (Revelation 20:2-6) although some Jewish traditions had already anticipate as much (the seventh day of rest coming after six of *hard* labour). Certainly that 'Millennium' would not last something like 1990 years so far or the time the Mystery Kingdom stage of God's Plan has worked out so far. Obviously, there was much expectation amongst the early church members that Jesus would be back before long. Even after the disciples had died, others might have said, "well they are dead but Luke 17:22 opens up the possibility we might see Him come back". Each generation has been able to continue with that hope. Clearly, this observer believes, the Holy Spirit has never attempted to douse such expectations and for good reason as one has outlined above. For no other reason, it at least keeps everyone on their toes. Apart from knowing that there would be a day of the Son of Man they "would not see", it seems none of Jesus' immediate disciples had any understanding about The Rapture let alone any of the details. That was given to Paul in what he openly described was a "Mystery" (I Corinthians 15:51).

The Rapture is not in focus in these conversations in Acts 1:1-11. The MMK is, hence the Second Coming. From a literal perspective, it is impossible to conjoin those two perspectives. One has believers leaving Earth where people are swept upwards towards the heavens like eagles swooping down on a prey. The other has Jesus returning, as verse 11 says, "... This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in **like manner** as ye have seen Him go into Heaven". Almost universally, it is then assumed Jesus lands at the Mount of Olives on His return. But He lands elsewhere of course (Isaiah 34:6, 63:1, Jeremiah 49:13, 22, Micah 2:12 and Habakkuk 3:3). Nevertheless, although one can have many debates about where Jesus lands on *terra firma*, His landing on this planet is assured in contradistinction to us going away to meet Him "in the air" and definitely 'not on land' nor 'at sea'. And, in both the Rapture and the Second Coming He appears in the same resurrected body He left Earth with because He will need it to live here for a millennium like us. It's the inverse of the issue we face in that we also need a

translated or 'glorified' body to spend time in Heaven at the Lord's Judgement Seat and in order to attend as members of the 'Bride' in the Marriage of the Lamb. We cannot be there in our present carnal bodies. Carnally, we could not cope with the uplift!

Acts 1:2 clearly states Jesus was "taken up". In Acts 1:11, two "men in white apparel" (angels most likely) said to the disciples, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like **manner** as ye have seen Him go into Heaven". This removes any possibility that eventual reunion with the Lord will be merely in some 'spiritual' state. The main issue for discussion is where or when the Church's reunion with Christ occurs. Is that on Earth, in Heaven or somehow in both locations. Our response is that it is firstly or initially we are re-united with Him in the 'upper atmosphere' (near to or a little bit below where Man's space station resides); secondly, we arrive in God's Heaven (Paul's "Third Heaven"); then thirdly, we return back to Earth for the Millennium. After that, a millennium later, we are all together on the New Earth in the next 'Universe'.

Luke, writing his second "treatise" to "Theophilus", in verse 3, describes Jesus' many appearances to the disciples post-Resurrection and pre-Ascension; over 40 days in all; as "proofs" as the King James versions translate the Greek texts we have today. In a book about 'faith', the use of the word 'proof', in English, seems like an oxymoron. However, in many quarters, especially in the Protestant and Nonconformist branches of Christendom, Jesus' Resurrection and ensuing activities in His resurrected body are considered the mainstay of Christian belief, even ahead of His death and burial which of course were vital aspects of the prophecies Jesus had to fulfill.

In verse 7, we should not overlook the critical distinction Jesus places between 'times' and 'seasons'. Again, those who take allegorical perspectives more readily than literal analysis are apt to overlook the importance of the distinction. "Time" can be generic as in "time will heal the wounds". Normally, "time" is quite specific as in "What time is it?" and response, "three p.m." A season is less well defined. Some parts of the world have more clearly apparent seasonal differences than others. In temperate zones, we are able to give quite specific boundaries between the 'four seasons'. Sometimes, in some places, one can experience as many as four seasons in a day. Nevertheless, even so, officially, each season is exactly three months long. A specific day or time is usually a far more measurable moment than a whole season of three months. So Jesus' comments about both 'seasons' and 'times' might suggest there is a significant distinction between the Second Coming which is one specific therefore 'known' day at the very end of a seven-year period; and the Rapture which is something coming at any moment albeit within a season or period that can be distinguished from others, e.g., winter instead of summer, autumn or spring. The "Days of Noah" and the "Days of Lot" give us clues about these 'seasons' but no more than that. In view of the massive impact global warming is having on storms, floods, tornados and hurricanes, along with some very violent volcanic activity, in these 'Last Days of Daniel 12:4 & 9', it appears only that (or this) "Last" generation would have the wherewithal to figure out when the Days of Noah and Lot had arrived. In Jesus' day they were clearly in the future

No matter how one defines or distinguishes times and seasons, Jesus told His disciples that they were not to "know" them. However, that does not necessarily mean another generation of disciples is to be as unknowledgeable concerning them. Texts such as Daniel 12:4 & 9 support the claim in this paper that there will be a generation that is to realise it is the one to understand things that previous generations could not know.

## **(N) The Antichrist**

T'F from Introduction

There is a particular reason, but not the only one, why this observer believes one has the responsibility to part company with other writers on these matters. There is a high probability we already know who Antichrist is. If so, and without being absolutist or dogmatic, it becomes valid to proceed with caution on the following basis. The "revelation" of the Antichrist is not a one-off event or perhaps two or three discrete events but a process. An ever widening group of people, both supporters of Satan and supporters of Jesus of Nazareth ("believers") is gradually becoming aware of his identity. As Dr Fruchtenbaum says, at the minimum that would have to be by identifying the man through the "number of His Name" (Revelation 13:18). That can only be achieved by transliterating the Roman name into Hebrew which is the only Biblical language with a numbering system to do that. This is not an easy task but not an especially complicated one either. The author believes he can identify just such a person with exactly that methodology. This man's first-name and surname actually together mean, "Majesty, King of Kings". This name does add to "666" when transliterated into Hebrew from its Latin alphabet (A-Z). That does not mean, however, we absolutely know whom this man is. Thus it would be inappropriate to publicly name this person for that will be done officially in various ways or possibly at a single or discrete event as the Bible also suggests. Anyway, world circumstances are so dire, they also suggest he already is around and that many 'issues' today are being manipulated to bring about his ascendancy.

We know that first century Christians tried to identify the Antichrist in the name "Caesar Nero". But that only equaled with 616 when transliterated into Hebrew. Some tried to amend the Book of Revelation to read "616" to suit that idea. [For a parallel attempt at manipulating Scripture to meet a particular philosophical tenet, refer discussion concerning "one eagle" in Revelation 8:13 debated in Addendum (I) on Methodology]. Others adjusted the name of Rome's king circa AD 60-70 to "Neron Caesar" which does equal '666' because 'n' (נ) in Hebrew counts for 'fifty'. But those ridiculous approaches failed too. The 17th century reformers likewise attempted such things though more notably by suggesting the "Mvndi Conflagratio" ('The world going on fire') represented the year 1657 (MDCLVII) and the End of the World. They also identified a succession of popes as the Antichrist. All these attempts at identifying the Antichrist in circa AD 70, the Reformation and 1657 in particular were very silly. They were so stupid that Christendom has moved to subsequently suppress even discussion of the issue. However, the fact remains, as Dr Fruchtenbaum attests, people will be able to identify the Antichrist once he is born and is given a name by his mother and presumably a surname from his step-father just like the case with Jesus of Nazareth.

Thus, readers will see that the way this observer interprets certain passages is motivated, encouraged or influenced by that information about the Antichrist. At the moment, or until one finds information proving this person is not the Antichrist after all, this is an assumption based on an hypothesis. At present this observer is working hard to find evidence to prove the null hypothesis that the current candidate is not the Antichrist. That is a rigorous approach demanded by the methodology of science (Refer Addendum (I)). One might suggest other observers are not being so vigilant in their writing. For other hypotheses employed in this paper, refer Key Assumptions and Critical Texts below.

In I John 2:18, 22, 4:3 and II John 7, "antichrist" is mentioned in some context. Usually it

is in the more general sense of 'antichrist' activities or anti-Christ type people. In the first case, I John 2:18, the Apostle directly contrasts the one specific "Antichrist who is the child coming from the seed of Satan first prophesied in Genesis 3:15 with many other people who are vile and wicked or evil. But they are not 'The Antichrist' who is the one with the name that numbers "666" (Revelation 13:18). John also refers to the "Wicked" or "Evil One" in I John 2:13, 14, 5:18) and implies that in his Gospel (John 17:15).

In general these days, churches tend to focus on John's proper point that there is much general evil around the world and that many people are involved in antichrist types of activities. They tend also to move on and overlook the very existence of the one antichrist who eventually becomes the world leader or the "Beast" as many outside the churches like to name this figure they get from the Bible although they really do not believe what the Bible really says about this person. It's quite possible, especially later in life, John, perhaps like Peter and Paul, began to realize that just as God had allowed 2000 years for the Administration of Conscience to reign over Man's affairs, He also appointed two millennia to Israel and would by *circa* AD 70 allow two millennia for the church Age. That meant in turn that the one that Jesus would slay by stomping on the head of the seed of the serpent as in Genesis 3:15 could not possibly occur for another two millennia when John wrote these things. John is therefore instructing future generations to focus on antichrist type activities and make sure such people do not affect or poison the church.

Even in the Reformation there was much discussion about the identity of the Antichrist. They tended to take a half-way house position and declare the Pope was the antichrist. Since popes came and went, usually by dying in office, there was no specific person in mind even to the reformers. At least they were imbued with the task of keeping eyes open for the antichrist's identity to be revealed. Now, though, even that half-way house position is ignored in the laodicean Church. This observer-commentator, however, can identify a young man born in September 2001, born of a Roman woman, given by her a name meaning majesty in the latin language and receiving a few years later a surname from a step-father with a name meaning "king of Kings". Those two names, transliterated into Hebrew, do indeed add to 666. This is an intriguing and interesting improbability. One uses the term from statistics because the chances one could come up with facts like that are extremely small. One is more likely to win a major lottery with a single lowest denominator cost ticket than come up with such a possibility. Nevertheless, the facts given may be mere coincidence.

Another way to identify the Antichrist is to consider a Black Hole in outer Space. Reportedly one was recently photographed with a new satellite-telescope. However, one does not really see the hole itself but certain tell-tale circumstances like gamma rays, X-rays and various other things stirred up in the environs of the Black Hole. The 'hole' itself is the absence of any light whatsoever. Thus with the Antichrist, a lot of nonsense in this world relating to the Carbon causes climate change issue as well as the death rates and other data related to the Covid19 pandemic is turning the world upside down and ripe for the antichrist's takeover. Data supposedly illustrating the seriousness of Covid19 is manipulated to ignore details that show most people dying from this are either very, very old; very, very ill; very, very stressed for many reasons and therefore not eating and sleeping well; or they are drunkards and drug users; or they are even top athletes stressing their bodies to extreme limits to become 'champions'.

This observer's interpretation of Luke 17:22 where Jesus told the disciples there was one day of the "Son of Man" (not the "Day of the Lord") that they would not see. At the time,

the statement must have been quite an enigma to the disciples and in their early days as apostles. John's comments about the "spirit of antichrist" and the many antichrists (lower-case 'a') that would come and go would have been directed to the generations of the church until the "latter Days" of Daniel 12:4 & 9 and other verses we can cite which show that over many generations believers were encouraged to hold onto certain bits of information that would one day be understood. The implication from Luke 17:22 therefore is that the day of the Son of Man they would not see would be seen by a later group of disciples. That later group would be the one to realise who the Antichrist actually is. The Reformers though they had reached this point in *His Strou* (History) by 1657, the year of the *Mvndi Conflagratio* which would see the end of the world as it goes up in flames. London did nine years later (1666) but we are all still here past AD 2020.

### **(O) Dr Fruchtenbaum on the Revelation of Antichrist**

On page 127 of *Footsteps of the Messiah*, second edition, Dr Fruchtenbaum discussing in section (G) "*The Rise of the Antichrist*" in his chapter on "*The Sequence of Pre-tribulational Events*", writes the following, "Exactly how the Antichrist will be identified is not stated. Perhaps it will be determined by the numerical value of his name ... [as **may** be the situation this observer has discovered he is in] ... or by some other means. But he will be known. Then he says, "Since the Apocalypse begins with the signing of the seven-year covenant between Israel and the Antichrist, it is necessary for the Antichrist to be in sufficient political power to sign such a covenant". [That too, based on historical precedence, will be a process many people will notice, talk about and debate. The broader global environment and topical issues at the time will also probably contribute to a rising awakening to or awareness of a new world leader rising to power].

In a separate Appendix (II), entitled "*II Thessalonians 2:1-12*", on pages 566-8, he writes the following, "Paul stated that the Apocalypse could not have come yet (when he was writing this second epistle to the Thessalonians) because two events, both of which must precede the Apocalypse, had not yet occurred (verse 3). The *first* is the apostasy of the church, and the *second* is the revelation of the man of sin, the son of perdition. There is to be a revelation of the identity of the Antichrist that precedes the Apocalypse, and that it is for the believers **living at that time** (emphasis added). The Rapture may or may not have occurred by then, since the Scriptures do not state just how long before the Apocalypse the Rapture will occur. Therefore the revelation to the believers before the Apocalypse may be to the Church if the Rapture has not occurred, or it may be to a new generation of believers who will have accepted the gospel after the Rapture of the Church. Whoever the believers may be at that time, they will receive a revelation as to the identity of the Antichrist and it will occur at some before the Apocalypse. The text does not reveal exactly how this revelation will come, but other Scriptures indicate that this revelation may come because of two things. *First*; it is clear from Daniel 9:27 that the Apocalypse will begin with the signing of a seven-year covenant between Israel and the Antichrist. When this forthcoming covenant is announced, believers may become aware of the identity of the Antichrist. *Second*; it is possible that believers will deduce who he is by the numerical value of the Antichrist's name, which will be 666".

["deducing 666" is possible to do now because the statistical probability of arriving at such a value and in a name that means "majesty-king of kings"; as one believes he can do right now; is very remote and nigh on impossible. However, another factor here is how one precisely transfers or transliterates the Antichrist's presumably Roman or Gentile name into Hebrew. Even before he gets to 'confirm' the seven-year treaty he may have achieved

other great accomplishments and even others might begin declaring him to be 'Wonder Man'. All that equally could become a difficult subject of debate amongst people discussing such things].

On page 567, Fruchtenbaum proceeds to verse 7 about the "Mystery of Iniquity" and what currently restrains that, "... the last restrainer of the antichrist will be the last of the three kings (of the Ten Kingdom phase after World Government) and the government which he represents. Then Paul reminds his readers that the mystery of lawlessness is already working and is even now being restrained (v.7). The Holy Spirit is never described as restraining. The task of restraining evil was given to human government under the Noahic Covenant in Genesis 9:1-17, and this basic doctrinal truth was reiterated by Paul in Romans 13:1-7. On the one hand, human government is even now restraining lawlessness. On the other hand, the government of the last of the three kings will restrain the Antichrist, the lawless one, until the middle of the Apocalypse.

After the parenthetical reminder of verses 5-7, in verses 8-12, Paul returns to where he left off at verse four. According to verse eight, the Abomination of Desolation of verse four will serve as the second revelation of the Antichrist. While the first revelation will be to the believers before the Apocalypse, the second revelation in the middle of the Apocalypse will be to Israel".

[A revelation of the Antichrist to the last generation of the Church and another to Israel neatly fits our 'First-Last' methodology in the 3-D *Aleph-Tav* Bible Study. However, politics and economics suggests a parallel process by which Jesus gradually came to be widely known is a better model to examine how Antichrist is revealed than the explanation given here by Dr Fruchtenbaum. As things stand, and because one may already be aware who this Antichrist is, when he was born, who his mother is, who the step-father is etc., it is more likely there is a more dynamic and ongoing situation regarding Antichrist's revelation than the somewhat static two-stage two-event analysis Dr Fruchtenbaum gives. Nevertheless, it seems entirely reasonable that the Church will at some stage know who the Antichrist is then Israel will understand and that both bodies receive their respective revelations in two different ways].

### **(P) Judgement & Vengeance**

T/F [ [ [ [ [ Mark 8:38 and Luke 9:26 because they are the other passages that record Jesus' first statement about his "Coming" in Glory" with "angels" included in that 'glory. So this is Jesus' 'coming' in an eschatological sense though whether the Rapture or the Second Coming are in view here remains for the purposes of this paper an open question. Also, all three of these 'synoptic' passages immediately follow Peter's great statement of faith in Jesus with the record of the Transfiguration. But only Matthew 16:13-23 refers to the promise to Peter to be given the "Keys of the Kingdom". The parallel verses in Mark and Luke are silent on the Keys of the Kingdom. For this passage in Matthew, despite the parallels with the other two syoptic gospels, we are focusing on Jesus coming in His Glory to "reward every man according to his works". ] ] ] ] ]

T/F [ [ [ [para v] So, what did it actually mean here in Matthew's gospel, at that particular stage of Jesus' ministry, to "reward every man according to his works"? We now know that both the Father and Son knew Israel would reject the Voice of the First Sign foreshadowed in Exodus 4:8. However, while that outcome (decision) was still uncertain or undecided; because we cannot precisely determine that from the chronology of the three parallel passages; it was generally understood that when the Saviour of Genesis 3:15, i.e., *The*

*Promised Deliverer*, or the Messiah of the prophets etc., did finally arrive, everyone who had ever lived as well as those alive at the time would face God's judgement. All the dead would be resurrected (Isaiah 26:19, Daniel 12:2). Some would go to everlasting damnation while others would be in God's eternal kingdom. Meanwhile, the souls of everyone who had died resided in one of the two sections of Hell (Sheol). The conclusion to this is that if Israel would accept Jesus then at the Resurrection Jesus would have instituted the MMK and everyone would indeed be judged then. However, now that it is established Israel did reject Jesus in AD 30, the intervention of the Church Age meant that although the basic statement remained relevant or correct as a simple summary, the sequence of 'Coming', judgements, rewards etc., would become more complicated. Briefly, there will be the Rapture and judgement-evaluation of Church saints, a bit later the Second Coming and judgements of the sheep and goats but finally at the end of the MMK the Great White Throne judgements [refer Addendum (P)] ]]]

### (1) Judgement

In sections Matthew 10:31-42, and (5) Matthew 16:27-8, there is some discussion about Judgement when Christ returns. The situation is a rather complex matter because as noted in section (8) Matthew 25:31-46, "this is an important passage alerting us to the clear distinction between different judgements (or evaluations) of different groups on different occasions. Firstly, Church saints are evaluated in Heaven. Refer for examples in Romans 14:10, I Corinthians 3:11-15, I Corinthians 5:5, II Corinthians 5:10 and I Thessalonians 2:19.

In II Timothy 4:1, the words "The quick and the dead" point out a very important observation that only the Rapture involves dead and living ("quick") saints. Also, II Timothy 4:1, reveals a quite important point arising from these three judgements found in the New Testament. It is the first and only judgement that involves, at the same time, living and dead saints (Christ's seat of Evaluation after The Rapture). The second involves only the living (dividing the sheep Gentiles from the goats after the Second Coming) and the third involves just unbelievers who will all be deceased by the time of the "Great White Throne" (Revelation 20:11-15) on the assumption the rebels in the Last Gog-Magog invasion at the end of the MMK are slaughtered then. Everyone who appears before the Great White Throne obviously has to be resurrected to be present.

Actually, while the Church is being evaluated in Heaven, people on Earth are getting a *hell* of a metaphorical *judgement* in the Apocalypse. The suffering will be real. In Heaven, Church Saints receive rankings (*crowns*) signifying status and role in the MMK alone. If a saint has nothing of value from his walk on Earth as a believer, he gets no reward but does spend Eternity in God's Kingdom. He just does not get any role of significance in the MMK. Lastly, unbelievers of all time are judged at the end of the MMK at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11). They are despatched to the place of eternal darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 22:13, 25:30 and Luke 13:28). In that place there may be various levels of suffering based on an evaluation of the extent of their evil during whatever lifetime they had.

However, in between the 'First and Last' judgements where an actual 'seat' is mentioned, as we are styling them here, we read in Matthew 25:31-32ff of this 'Sheep-Goat' situation. It is a third evaluation-judgement occasion but chronologically comes second in this sequence of three. It takes place during the 'Seventy-five day' interval between the last day of the Apocalypse (which ends on the last day of the 'Armageddon Campaign') and the



first day of the MMK into which the sheep (i.e., believing survivors of the Apocalypse) are invited to join and thrive in. The goats are despatched to oblivion and to be later judged, at *'The Last'*, with all the other unbelievers who have lived, or will have lived (in the MMK) throughout time. This is also the 'Interval' wherein Old Testament and Tribulation Saints are resurrected to join the sheep-Gentile segment of the 'Tribulation saints' and the Church in the feast to open the MMK here on Earth.

Thus, we assume the Rapture is the first of these 'evaluations' (or "judgements") but it is only of church saints or already saved people. The Judgement seat of Christ believers attend after the Rapture is not the same evaluation or judgement we read about in the passage about the sheep and the goats who respect or disrespect Jesus' Brethren (Jews in the Apocalypse). As one has been explaining, nevertheless most people in Christendom do confuse this evaluation with the Seat of Christ in Heaven or even with the "Great White Throne". The sheep and goats are judged here on Earth, not in Heaven. The evaluation-judgement in Matthew 25:31-32ff is unusual in that it is the one occasion where Jesus deals with both the saved (saints) and unsaved (*damned*) in one and the same process. After the Rapture while up in Heaven, only Church saints are evaluated. In the Third or Last Judgement, at "The Great Whit Throne" only unbelievers are evaluated. However, in Matthew 25:31-32ff, Jesus separates the goat-unbelievers (unsaved or disbelievers) from the sheep-believers (*Tribulation* saints).

This 'second evaluation' is done on the basis of the sheep-believers' assistance to Jews in those last terrifying apocalyptic times. After The Rapture, and especially during the Apocalypse, believing Gentiles will once again assist persecuted Jews. This time, Jews will be hounded to death by Antichrist who is hell-bent on finishing what his followers will self-righteously believe Hitler began. The un- or dis-believing Gentiles ('The Goats') will be identified by their unwillingness to assist Jews fleeing Antichrist **after The Rapture**. This does not mean people assisting Jews are 'saved' on the basis of 'works'. What it does mean is that having become believers in Jesus' Work on the Cross, even if somewhat belatedly, their works demonstrate that they are indeed saved (James 2:17-26). They are not saved by **their** works but by **Jesus' Work** on the Cross and their faith or trust in that not by what they do. This is an important distinction rarely understood these days. At the moment, persecution of Jews is not yet world-wide and on the scale of the second half of the Apocalypse. Many communities around the world even celebrate their Jewish communities and want them to flourish so that we too can enjoy their commemorations.

In summary, there are three evaluation judgements although only two with a specific 'seat' mentioned. For the purposes of this paper, one describes them as the *Aleph* (א) (or A), the *Vav* (ו) and the *Tav* (ת) (or Ω). One does this to fit with one's 3-D *Aleph-Tav* Bible Study and method of Biblical criticism (or 'model') deployed to review the Scriptures (refer Appendices, *Components of Systematic Theology*). This methodology to interpret Scripture helps to further clarify these things as any alternative model will do. It is an important academic technique to use one model to help explain, contrast or compare other models. Too many people these days adhere themselves to one model alone (e.g., systematic theology in contrast with biblical theology). Often but not always this happens because people only talk to fellow *Fakebook* acolytes who likewise put their faith in that one same model. Anyway, it does seem clear that The First Judgement is for a group of believers **only** (i.e., the Church Saints both deceased and non-deceased). The Second concerns non-deceased unbelievers **and** believers i.e., the living alone on that last day of the Apocalypse. The third is for all deceased unbelievers **alone**. One should also point out that Old Testament saints have no need for further judgement or evaluation. That has

already been done for them at the Cross. Anyway, they have been unable to do anything since they are dead anyway and simply await their resurrection to Glory.

[[T/F]] Our judgement seat is not the seat on Earth where Jesus separates Sheep from Goats in the Seventy-five Day interval between the slaughter of Antichrist's armies and the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom inaugurated with the Wedding Feast. The Church's departure from an 'Earth' about to go into Apocalypse for seven years, thus escaping it, seems to be the subject of passages such as Matthew 24:36-41 (especially 40-41); Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:40-41, 17:22-37 [especially 17:28-29 (only recorded in Luke's version of the Rapture) and 34-36], Luke 18:8 (the only verse like this apart from Exodus 4:8); then I Corinthians 15:52, I Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18, probably Titus 2:13, Revelation 3:10; all in the "days of Noah" Matthew 24:37 [(or "Noe" in KJV, c.f., Isaiah 54:9-10 and Luke 17:26-7 (re Lot)]. [[T/F]]

## (2) Vengeance

As far back as Deuteronomy 32:35, God says, "To me belongs vengeance". However, God's 'vengeance' nearly always seems to be in the distant future (e.g., Jeremiah 5:29, Luke 21:22). To some extent, 'vengeance' occurs immediately the unbeliever who persecutes us dies. No one can trouble us after death. If not even well before they die, unbelievers are aware of their coming judgement while their souls, once they die, come to a state of even deeper unrest in hell. The materialist, of course, does not believe in the soul (Hebrew *nephesh*, נֶפֶשׁ) so probably does not care about that. We know from Scripture that hell is a place of discomfort for the souls of unbelievers and was a place of tranquility for believers who have since been transferred into Heaven following the 'Cross' and the Resurrection of Jesus. In that sense, the unbelievers who have troubled saints throughout time are now suffering God's vengeance. However, for unbelievers, and even more especially for those who did trouble us (because some may simply have been agnostic toward us) there is much more trouble to come for eternity.

## (Q) *Apostasia*

Thus it was surprising to see Dr Fruchtenbaum apparently back-tracking from his methodology in his thesis (*Israelology*). Here we discuss his revision of comments on II Thessalonians 2:3 in his third edition of *Footsteps of the Messiah* where he takes a different stance on the meaning of the *Apostasia*. In the first and second editions he assesses it to be the falling way of the churches from good doctrine or even basic belief (c.f., I Timothy 4:1-3). But he changed his mind in the third edition to say that 'falling away' or "departure", actually is the Rapture where Jesus takes away His church. In the chapter, from verse 1, Paul wrote about "the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, and our gathering together unto Him". This is about the Rapture judging by the phrase "our gathering together unto Him" especially after Paul had written in I Thessalonians 4:17 about believers still alive at the Rapture being taken up into the heavens from Earth just like the people disappearing in Luke 17:34-36 and Matthew 24:40-41. As Fruchtenbaum notes, in verse 3 Paul says this 'gathering together unto Him' could not have taken place in their days "because two events, both of which must precede the Tribulation, had not yet occurred (verse 3)". Next. On page 566 of the Second Edition, Fruchtenbaum wrote, "The *first* is the apostasy of the church". However, in the Third Edition that sentence reads "The First is the *apostasia*, or the departure of the church". In the Third Edition "departure" is accompanied by footnote #75. In this long footnote he begins, "In previous editions of this work (i.e., First and Second), I presented a different viewpoint". He goes on to say that "the

church will depart from the faith” which is “clearly taught in other passages”. “But is that true also of II Thessalonians 2:3”, he asks in the Third Edition? The next two paragraphs describe why he moved from “the perspective of systematic theology” (his great work in *Israelology*) to a “perspective of biblical theology”. The latter, he continues, “focuses more on a specific biblical writer and/or book”. In this commentator’s opinion, the ‘latter’ is far narrower than the ‘former’; in fact too narrow!

In fact this point highlights the growing opinion of this commentator that we have to see the Bible as a string of text from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 rather than a series of books with an unknown number of scribes or authors. It is the written Word of God and there is little sense breaking down its constituent parts in the fashion, say, of a geneticist splitting our DNA into sections. All our DNA makes us what we are, not just certain sections. Although we do know there is Junk DNA that seems to be switched off. Even so we know that junk section has a role or would have had a role had Adam not sinned. In that sense, to carry this allegory a little further, some scripture has also been switched off until the last days and the Daniel 12:4&9 scenario. Even though there are two epistles to the Thessalonians. They are a small portion of Scripture. They need *Genesis* as much as *Revelation* for function and understanding just like any section of DNA needs the other bits to operate. *Thessalonians* are hardly likely to stand alone as two books like *Genesis* or the two sets of Old Testament books covering the acts of the kings of Israel ( I & II Kings and I & II Chronicles).

A “biblical theology” approach could be applied to some extent for *Genesis* which this commentator views as being a mini Bible in its own right. That’s because it effectively takes us from *Genesis* to the last stage of the Apocalypse where the dragon tries to swallow the woman who with the moon, sun and twelve stars is a reference to Joseph’s second dream which caused ruction and umbrage within the first family of Israel (Genesis 37:10-11, Revelation 12:1-17). In the New Testament, each of the four gospels can be analyzed using this “biblical theology” approach considering the individual authors and their life stories as well as the book itself. In practise, most people find themselves having to flick between the three synoptic gospels at the very least to get a full picture of a parable, miracle or wider context behind one incident or another. However, a couple of short epistles in the New Testament really need to be considered within the full context of the New Testament at least and preferably within the Old Testament too.

The “apostasia” of II Thessalonians 2:3 surely can be considered alongside I Timothy 4:1-3, II Peter 2:1, 3:3 and Jude 18. Even in the last days of Israel and Judah on the eve of the Times of the Gentiles (*circa* 722-586 BC) the majority of Israelites had ceased being faithful to the One True God. But that sort of analysis had been Fruchtenbaum’s approach in his first two editions of *Footsteps of the Messiah*. To some extent his change in approach borders on absurdity because in effect one presumably has to read the first three verses as follows, “... touching the Rapture ... let no man beguile you .. it will not be, except that the Rapture comes first” which is a tautology. However, Paul did insert the point about the “Day of the Lord” (ASV) or the “Day of Christ”(KJV) which most people now see as being the same as the Rapture; but which Fruchtenbaum and this observer agree refers to the Apocalypse or ‘Tribulation’. Thus, the “apostasia”, whether it is the falling away from doctrine (Second Edition point) or the Departure-Rapture (Third Edition point) has to precede the Apocalypse-Tribulation. That’s reasonable for the falling away from doctrine but not the Rapture since very technically one can never say the Rapture precedes or follows any event since it is a day only God knows.

Luke 21:23, Romans 2:5, I Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9, Revelation 6:17, 11:18, 15:1, 16:1 and 19:15 refer to God's wrath in the Apocalypse. However, it is also clear the Church will not have to suffer them. After all God: intervened to help Noah to escape the Flood; sent angels to help Lot flee Sodom; and parted the Red Sea for Israel to escape Pharaoh. In that sense the Scripture tells us the Rapture precedes therefore saves us from the Apocalypse, a seven-year period and there is no reason in this observer's opinion why the Church may still be around even in early days of that seven-year apocalyptic time because initially things may not be much worse than the Days of Noah. However, there is no sense here of a timing of the Rapture. It is always imminent because only God the Father knows the day God the Son will fetch the bride and may even occur in early days or weeks of the seven-year apocalyptic time of judgement of Earth's unbelievers and Israel. Once the last seven-year period for Israel from Daniel 9:27 is activated by the Treaty with Antichrist it will be possible to count the days to the Second Coming, not the Rapture, although in practical terms it appears to be the abomination of desolation half-way through the Apocalypse that it really becomes possible to countdown the days (Daniel 12:11-12).

At this point, one might have persuaded Dr Fruchtenbaum to stick to his Second Edition position. However, in the second main part of footnote 75, what "finally helped convince him to change" was some Greek grammar. Fruchtenbaum says he considered the views of Dr Andy Woods in his "booklet", *The Falling Away: Spiritual Departure or Physical Departure?* The view taken there is that the Greek form of *Apostasia* used in II Thessalonians 2:3 is used 75% of the time as a physical departure and only 25% of the time for a spiritual departure or movement. Thus Fruchtenbaum and Woods are holding to the view the *Apostasia* is actually the Rapture because it is a "physical departure". They are differentiating between a physical and a moral or spiritual departure just as we (including Fruchtenbaum) differentiate between physical and soteriological salvation.

As intimated above in this paper, one is not especially impressed by modern theories used to understand ancient Greek. Paul was a Jew and he would think in Hebrew and of course only consider Hebrew scrolls in his thinking and writing. Furthermore, as one shows with the ערבון or ἀκαβωα of II Corinthians 1:22, 5:5, and Ephesians 1:14, Paul did not even attempt to use a Greek word to describe how we received the Holy Spirit as a sort of guarantee, pledge or "earnest" that the things we believe about God and His Kingdom are true and that we need not doubt them in any way. Instead, Paul simply transliterated the word Judah and Tamar used in their interchange in Genesis 38:17, 18 and 20. Above in this addendum we showed how dangerous it can be to consider basing one's interpretation of a text on supposedly 'early manuscripts' *vis-a-vis* '616' or '666' for the number of Antichrist's name; or the 'creature', weather angel, eagle or seraph in Revelation 8:13. One showed how an alternative word found in some manuscripts, perhaps a minority, could be used to undermine a very important observation concerning the metaphor Jesus used to describe both the Rapture and the Second Coming as they pertained to the location of the two bodies Jesus will rescue one day, i.e., the Church at the Rapture then Israel at the Second Coming. One hopes the *Aleph-Tav* 3-D Bible Study System is sufficiently broadly based that it avoids the traps narrower systems or methods of analysis fall into.

T/F from Section (10): Are we now far into the prophesied Apostasy of the Church (c.f., II Thessalonians 2:3 or I Timothy 4:1-3)? Mark and Luke also quote Jesus referring to anyone being ashamed of Jesus "**and His words**" which certainly applied to many Jewish folk at the time. Even those who did believe Jesus' words often did so without fully understanding them or even misinterpreting them until corrected. The timing of Matthew's account of this could suggest Jesus had begun by then to speak with the distant future in

mind as well. Anyway, those warnings equally could be relevant to our generation as we await the Rapture or as those who become future but post-Rapture saints await the Second Coming. If one takes "Jesus Words" as including all Scripture, then we certainly do find many people in churches if not in nearly every church congregation nowadays being timid, unwilling hence *ashamed* to quote Jesus. Worse, they may even have become rather dubious of much Scripture partly because they have not been able to agree on what many passages are all about. It is quite a dilemma in churches today. Significantly, Mark added the words "this adulterous and sinful generation"; an accusation obviously directed at Jesus' contemporary generation of Israel. But does it also refer to this post-AD 2001 generation of "millennials" as many self-style themselves?

So these sayings primarily and most directly concerned His disciples and the people of Israel in *circa* AD 30 then to some extent to His followers up to AD 70. Indirectly, they referred to the ultimate fate for unbelievers, Jewish or otherwise, at the end of time or in the 'Latter Days'. This is where people have to assess all Scripture in order to perceive exactly to what Jesus' Words pertain or any other words mean. Today, and throughout the Church Age, now nearly 2000 years old, these words should still resonate with unprepared Laodicean 'adherents' in the time of the Rapture. Today, one might ask, are there people around now, attending churches, of whom Jesus might have said would be "ashamed" of Him by not being prepared to expound on all the words of Scripture? Together with those who "deny" Him, might they be people who may soon be '*left behind*' when the Last Trump calls us up for the Rapture? Once again one might ask if there is not some sort of *Double Entendre* implied here for people today. Whatever, the tenor of the comments in these passages initially more directly applied to people in AD 27-30.

### **An Historical perspective to "*Falling Away*"**

In the course of composing this paper a new situation has arisen regarding a change in stance of some mainstream Dispensational teachers on this matter of the "Falling Away" of the churches or the believing body. It now appears a new view is arising that says the 'Falling Away' is the Rapture itself. But the discussion usually centres on the meaning of the word *apostasia*. In the words of the KJV, we would have to read verse 3 in the context of verses 1-2 so that the "coming of Jesus" and "our gathering together unto him" in verse 1, two distinct facets of one basic event, will not "come" until "there come a falling away first" (verse 3). However if the words of verse 1 are the Rapture and the words of verse 3 are also, in effect, "The Rapture" we have a tautology in that 'The Rapture' cannot come until the 'Rapture comes first'.

One presumably might argue that the words of verse 1 are a generalization about being with Jesus whenever He comes or returns in the flesh. Thus verse 3 might therefore be an elaboration and refer to the Rapture. Or one might argue that verses 1-2 refer to a general statement about Jesus coming back one day (verse 1, first clause) and a reference to the occasions when we gather together at the communion service to remember His death, burial and resurrection (verse 1, second clause). Of course we should close the communion service with the words from I Corinthians 11:26, that we thereby "show forth the Lord's Death until He come". If one considers models of analysis where one interprets a passage within the context of the particular author writing the document and the particular group he is addressing the 'gathering' might refer to Communion but there is nothing in Thessalonians about the Communion Service.

Therefore, 'being with Jesus' obviously will be at the Rapture which is a subject canvassed

in *Thessalonians*. We are with Jesus at the Second Coming but then He is 'bringing' us with Himself not 'gathering us up' to Himself.. If one is in the school that denies the Rapture anyway and thinks there is only a 'Second Coming' it's a moot point. In this paper, we suggest verse 1 refers to the Rapture and the "falling away" of verse 3 is apostasy in the churches and other negative things like apathy toward Scripture etc, even false teachers taking control. Certainly these are things we are observing now. Thus we interpret verses 1-3 point out that when the churches become clearly "fallen" in doctrine, teaching, behaviour etc., that is when the Rapture occurs and that compares favourably with Luke 18:8.

Instead, wearing one's History Cap, this paper takes a much broader approach to the issue by canvassing everything else the Bible says about apostasy in various episodes in Biblical History. It will also cover the points about man turning from God and reliance on Him in favour of pursuing the goal of scientific and technological independence, a path Adam took us on when he ate from that Tree of Knowledge in Eden. An approach covering just Bibliology and etymology is insufficient and could even be misleading. There are many occasions in the Bible where we read of the community of believers having periods of active and vibrant spiritual worship of God, e.g., Israel, for example during the reigns of kings David and Solomon then Judea under kings like Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah. With most of these kings, their tenure (reign) started off with a zeal and a desire to return to fundamentals of the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants. But later decline again tended to set in c.f., Hezekiah and Manasseh his successor. The Book of Judges tells of a litany of successive men and one woman who spurred the people back into belief and compliance with Moses' Laws but that again declined after the judge died.

We can also identify some longer periods of four or five centuries where one can comment on special or even unique eras of decline and *apostasy*. The first came in the five centuries following the death of Adam. As the name Methuselah prophetically implies, when he died, five or six centuries after Adam's death, the belief or understanding seemed to be that the world would arrive at such a desperate state of apostasy or falling away into wickedness that God would have to bring forth His redeemer of Genesis 3:15. Much of the pre-Flood wickedness now appears to have lain in man's abuse of the knowledge (science and technology) that he had accumulated from that which Adam had learned from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Noah was able to expedite a massive engineering feat. However, sexual deviancy had mushroomed and even fallen angels had joined in the orgy. Instead, God almost completely destroyed the human civilization of that time with the Great Flood. The righteous Noah and his family survived.

However, within five centuries of the Flood, God had to intervene in another way at the Tower of Babel. Man's evil and scientific and technological progress seemed almost more worrying to God or damaging for the creation than the pre-Flood circumstances. Thus God halted the entire project at Babel by confusing language and communication which is something ironically happening now in many parts of the world once again though probably due to different factors. Or, as Dr Velikovsky suggested, the confusion in communication occurred because some catastrophe had interrupted progress (or regress) and Mankind began drifting across the globe to live in small or sparse communities eking out a more primitive lifestyle and losing contact with the mainstream. It would take a long time (four millennia) to return to a level of sophisticated society that could or would approach, equal or even surpass the pre-Flood or pre-Babel situations.

Soon after the Tower of Babel (2000 BC), God called Abraham. He responded positively.

From Abraham, his son Isaac and his son Jacob, came the clan of Israel, the infant nation, the 'smallest nation' (Deuteronomy 7:7) that God began raising up for His Great Plan. They survived a damaging world famine with a brief sojourn in Egypt (*circa* 1900 BC). The brothers of Joseph had sinned against him but with the great repentance by Jacob's son Judah, on behalf of his brothers they spiritually rejuvenated. Unfortunately, even while Joseph lived everyone in the emerging nation-clan or family remained in Egypt. The next few generations also preferred to remain in Egypt. They ended up spending four centuries there and initially prospered for at least three centuries helping Egyptians and Africans generally to build up a sophisticated society up and down the Nile. However, as Israel in Egypt grew more and more influential and well off they drifted well away from God's intentions for them and eventually also raised the ire or jealousy of the Egyptians. That led to persecution but by then Israel had also drifted far away from God. Only then did they repent again and seek God's 'face'. In summary, we can identify three 4-5 century periods when advance of society, science, engineering, technology etc., drew both Israel and mankind generally into apathy toward God and apostasy from His teaching and commandments. We are back on a similar path.

Regarding apostasy in the Church whose members and adherents are scattered across the entire globe, it is hard to identify a strict parallel with Israel (for most of the time apostate) and Judea (sometimes faithful) because those entities were clearly defined communities with precise borders and one social-religious system (the Mosaic covenant). Apart from some archaeological data such as ancient altars found in various places, we do not have much information about waves or movements in faith toward God, or conversely towards apostasy, by the believing Gentiles outside Israel and living elsewhere on Earth between 2000 BC and the time of Christ. As far as the world before 2000 BC is concerned we are also mostly ignorant. It is impossible to measure in this regard what is or has been the spiritual state in the body of believers all around the globe for the last two millennia. So how does one make that comparison for the purposes of describing the "falling away" of the Church in verse 3?

Before the Treaty of Westphalia which ended the Era of Christendom in most of Europe and even before the Reformation, people 'joined' the Church simply to get an education or make a career for themselves in it which meant becoming a bureaucrat. Christendom had become an organization encompassing believers, adherents and state servants, teachers, hospital workers and even university academics because the Church in Christendom was the main provider of such services. However, it was a system based on false theologies and the sciences were full of mysticism from the philosophers Aristotle, Plato *et al.* Yet all that was to unbundle soon after the Reformation as many people realised the Bibles written in Latin and Greek had lost understanding after their translations out of Hebrew. Academics began jettisoning Aristotle and Plato from science so that scientific enquiry began to generate new data sets and re-look at the way things are in the natural world in physics, biology, chemistry etc.

Moreover, since Westphalia, there has been another 4-5 century period of a knowledge explosion akin to the development of knowledge before the Flood and then again in the five centuries between the Flood of Noah and the Tower of Babel. If we study that history with our own records of it within the context of the brief 'church **His Story**' John received from the Lord Himself in the first three chapters of *Revelation*, we may be discerning some important clues from History going back as far as Adam's era to help us discern the true nature of the world's condition now. For example the transition in the churches in Revelation 3:7-22 from 'Philadelphia' to 'Laodicea'. However, this observer also puts that

within the context of the potentially six millennia Plan God has for the eras covering the age of Fallen Man from Adam to the Second Coming (Conscience, Israel and the Church until the Rapture near the very end).

As with the 'revelations' or 'exposures' that unveil Antichrist and of course Jesus before him (7 BC to AD 30), these things nearly always are processes involving primarily complex immaterial rather than merely physical factors. Anyway, this observer can attest to a steady and quite severe decline in belief in the fundamentals of Scripture, and standards in general, in one's own experience of church life since the 1950's. And that 'experience', necessarily subjective of course, has been across several parts of the world (England, New Zealand, Australia, USA and Israel). Television and communications generally in one's lifetime since 1953, also have allowed for an unusually unique tool to scope or measure this issue. This long-run five-century slide into apostasy is paralleled by a concomitant knowledge explosion. The Apostasy or "Falling Away" of II Thessalonians 2:3 must be considered in that context and not remain in the exclusive domain of supposed experts in 'Classical Greek' or archaic or variant forms of it.

With a broad sweep of many prophecies, what we see happening in churches now significantly differs from any other era in that Israel's Jews are inconceivably returning to their ancient homeland after nineteen centuries of expulsion and Diaspora. For the first time that we know about in world history there are developments in science and technology that can enable us to destroy nearly everything on Earth. Some of us may know now who the Antichrist-666 is. We now know how and why the ice caps were formed and how long that 'freeze' has taken thaw thanks to the data we are receiving from scientific investigation. In these pages, one reviews the data by processing it through the lenses of the Bible and Dr Velikovsky's prodigious output. We can now accurately measure the rate and extent of decline in the world's ice cover. Thus in regard to 'global warming', earthquakes and even volcanos, no other generation could thereby discern that they lived in the "Days of Noah" as we seem able to do. This does not guarantee we are correct about all this. After all, there must be a degree, seed or measure of faith in Jesus in all this. If we were to be certain of all this there would indeed be no faith on Earth but there needs to be some (Luke 18:8).

And that is another critical point one can make. Only in Luke 18:8 do we get this record, presumably from the contacts he interviewed, of Jesus on what seems to be the Lord's only question if He might find faith on Earth when He 'returns'. As we note, that can only apply if there is a Rapture first then a Second Coming where everyone in Israel and many sheep Gentiles in the Apocalypse do express faith in Jesus. It is Israel's faithful repentance which itself is a three-day process that results in the return of Jesus anyway. The loss of faith before the Apocalypse has to apply to another situation or event. Then, in terms of 'falling away' of the church, to what extent is it physical, for example by people no longer attending churches? Even then, why are people no longer attending? Is that because of a gradual decline in their individual spiritual lives? That brings us to ask what is the difference between falling away spiritually and physically? Almost always these things take time and are a mix of both factors. They are processes not one-off acts and are always to some extent inter-locked or inter-related. It is not easy to dualistically separate them from each other. Furthermore, we have to ask if people who are seen to have 'fallen away' were in fact believers anyway or in the first place? Only the Lord knows the answer.

The following looks at the ways "*apostasia*", a noun for falling away; and "*aphistemi*", a



verb to describe such an action; appear in the New Testament texts. Without doing an exhaustive survey, one can identify at least sixteen situations those words are used. There are other words with similar roots that are used for various other types of falling or moving away, departing or leaving something. Most of the sixteen cases we are looking at here are hard to distinguish concerning the boundary between what is physical or material and what is spiritual or immaterial. The boundary is even less distinct when one compares other Greek words applied to relevant situations scattered across the New Testament. When words are all taken into the context with each other over many similar circumstances, we see that the linguistics, grammar and etymology alone really do not help us in the long-run. We also need to use History, context not just within one particular audience, epistle or even Testament but within the entire Biblical text. That is why the brief history in the paragraphs above has been included here. The methodology used in one's 3-D *Aleph-Tav* Bible Study goes well beyond a mere 'systematic' approach to 'theology (*Systematic Theology*)' but to the wide range of disciplines outlined in one's paper on "Components of Systematic Theology".

In Acts 22:29, Luke used "*aphistemi*" to explain how the Roman "Captain's" attitude toward Paul suddenly changed from being prepared to whip Paul for causing trouble into one of protecting Paul from his Sanhedrin enemies in Jerusalem when the captain learned Paul was a free-born Roman citizen. In Acts when John Mark suddenly walked out on the ministry of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:13, Luke used "*apochoreo*" but when the matter of re-engaging Mark came up in Acts 15:37 Luke reported that Paul saw that as Mark "withdrawing" in the sense of the Greek "*aphistemi*". Paul actually switched to working with Silas instead and Barnabas worked with Mark. There was a break-up in a ministry partnership. All the parties later reconciled. Obviously these men went their different ways going to different locations to work for the Lord. However, the use of "*aphistemi*" in Acts 15:37 strongly suggests there was some sort of discomfort that might have bordered on spiritual matters even if there was just a difference in style and strategy concerning the conduct of the ministry.

When Jesus was still a tiny baby, barely a month old, Anna, a prophetess out of the supposedly lost tribe of Asher, blessed the baby realising who Jesus was (Luke 2:26-8). Presumably she believed she was being rewarded for her 84 years of fasting and prayer each day in the temple, a practice from which she never departed ("*aphistemi*"). She never fell away from believing Jesus would come. Perhaps she realised the 490 years prophesied in Daniel 9:27 were due to be fulfilled. Her practice of walking each day to the temple, fasting etc., was obviously of a physical nature but her deep faith and spirituality were the main drivers here.

However, all the other examples one has listed in the Lexicon below [refer the table in Section (2) of Addendum (Ai)] refer to situations whether divorces or church matters where over time a negative situation has arisen. In the "bills of divorce ('*apostasia*')" referred to in Matthew 5:31, 19:7 and Mark 10:4 or indeed the "*apostasia*" of II Thessalonians 2:3, such things are processes albeit negative, developing over time. A divorce in the scriptural sense should only be allowed when all other attempts at reconciliation or resolution are exhausted. A divorce is primarily a spiritual and theological matter but physically the couple lives apart which is physical. The Apostasy of II Thessalonians 2:3 must surely refer to some sort of gradual deterioration in the spiritual relationship of the churches, people physically avoiding them and not to a sudden removal of a whole lot of people off Earth and into Heaven. In Matthew 19:27 & 29 and in Luke 14:33, discipleship in the context of people leaving their livelihoods and families; a physical thing for sure; also involves faith

and spiritual motives as well. The Gospels suggest that some of the disciples simply walked away from their fishing nets and boats. However, James and John in particular, and probably Andrew and Peter as well, presumably were reasonably well acquainted with Jesus well before the final act of 'walking away'. James and John were first cousins and must have known Jesus and who He actually was well before they left their employment as fishermen.

Acts 5:37 could well be the best passage to explain what II Thessalonians 2:3 refers to. The verse quotes the words of the very famous Gamaliel, no less than a "doctor of the law", an opponent or at least an independent critic of the work of the Apostles in their preaching. Gamaliel mentioned both "Theudas" and "Judas of Galilee" who had attempted to seduce people into believing they were the Messiah before Jesus' and the Apostles' time. No doubt they too were aware that Daniel's 490 years had expired and used that to justify their claims. However, of Judas, Gamaliel is reported to have described his 'teaching' as a "drawing away" (*aphistemi*) of the people. There the Greek emphasizes the action (verb) of drawing something away into something else. But both Theudas' and Judas' movements could be expressed as events in the past in the form of a noun (*apostasia*). In any case, from an historical perspective, their movements involved whipping up a spiritual and theological impetus to their claims for messiahship. A false spirituality for sure, even some correct theological assumptions, but their movements were an apostasy as far as Gamaliel was concerned and he suggested that if the Apostles were wrong, their movement would meet a similar fate to those of Theudas and Judas of Galilee.

In summary, the four to five hundred year history of the churches since the Treaty of Westphalia; which effectively ended the era of Christendom in Europe within a century of the Reformation; resembles the long periods of decline recorded in the Biblical account. We also can point to the long slow decline in Israel's faith and spirituality after the believing remnant returned to Israel from Babylon and Assyria, the centre of the world near Babel that Abraham left in 2000 BC. That decline set in around 500 BC until the birth of Jesus (7 BC). Unfortunately we have to rely on extra-Biblical sources to see the deterioration in Israel's spirituality after 400 BC. Those are the models we need to look at to understand the "*apostasia*" in II Thessalonians 2:3. Use of the Greek Lexicon on its own in isolation from other or wider considerations alone is insufficient.

### **(R) Contrasts and Comparisons- Israel and the Church**

The following were drawn up by Chafer and Feinberg. In general, this observer agrees with most of them. For example, this paper views the period from Abraham to Jesus as the 'Israel' Era or 'Dispensation'. Before that was the 'Conscience alone' dispensation and after Israel from AD 30 the Church Era. Neither Israel nor the Church was in the first Dispensation and both will be in the fourth which is the MMK in our analysis. Thus, where Chafer and Feinberg say, "Israel present in every dispensation since Abraham; The Church only in the present", this observer disagrees. But that is an issue of definition. Broadly speaking, one agrees with the following:

Israel composes 80% Scripture; the Church 20%.

Israel is Earthly; The Church Heavenly (not exclusively true).

Israel earthly seed; The Church Heavenly (not exclusively true); thus

Physical Israel by national generation; heavenly seed by regeneration.

Israelites come by physical birth; Christians begotten by God  
Abraham is head of Israel; For Christians, God is Father and Spirit joining us to Christ.  
Israel has the earthly covenants to be experienced under the New; however  
Christians already experience spiritual blessings under the New.  
Israel is one nation in the world system; The Church composed from all nations.  
God deals with Israel primarily as a nation; In the Church He deals with individuals.  
Israel present in every dispensation since Abraham; The Church only in the present.  
Israel to be influence over nations; Church has an evangelical role [c.f., (\*) below].  
Israel; "His blood be upon us"; The Church blessed by offering of the Lamb (of God).  
Israel knows God by titles; The Church calls Him *Abba*-Father.  
Christ is Messiah, Immanuel and King; Saviour, Lord, Crown and Head.  
Spirit came and went; Spirit indwelling believer.  
Law of Moses; Law of Christ under beseeching and direction of Grace.  
Law did not provide Divine enablement; Grace does for the Church.  
Israel's leaders denounced; Upper Room Discourse.  
Christ's return - Second Coming; For Church, The Rapture.  
Israelite believers were servants to Jehovah; Christians are family.  
In MMK, Israelites are subjects; Christians reign with the King as consorts.  
Israel had a priesthood; Church is a priesthood (not absolutely).  
Israel was wife of Jehovah; Church spends its time on Earth as betrothed.  
Israel comes into judgement (Ezekiel 20:33-44); Not the Church (John 5:24).  
Spirit of just men made perfect; Church of the first-born.  
Some things in common;  
Both have covenant relationship with God.  
Both related to God by blood redemption.  
Both are witnesses for God to the world, refer above (\*).  
Both are the Seed of Abraham; Israel (physically) Church (spiritually).  
Both are to be glorified.  
Both are called to a walk of separation.

Both have one shepherd.

Both have common doctrines.

Both called the 'Elect of God'.

Both dearly beloved of God.

Both are vitally related to God.

Both have a marriage relationship.

Both are recipients of Eternal Life.

<http://donstewartresearcher.com/book>

<http://don-stewart-research.blogspot.co.nz>;

Email: [dons@fresher.net.nz](mailto:dons@fresher.net.nz)

Mobile Phone: 0064 (0)210 2989 320

Address: 35 Vivian Street, Wellington, NZ 6011

Landline Phone: 0064 4 384 7648

Wellington, New Zealand, 15 November 2022