

## BIBLE OVERVIEW STUDY

The purpose of this study is to discover the over-all theme (the “big picture”) of the Bible and then relate the different parts of the Bible to that theme. By comparing the first chapters of the Bible with the last chapters, the theme of the Bible becomes apparent.



### Genesis 1 - 3

1:1; 2:7 “God created the heavens and the earth.”  
“God created man in His own image”

2:8-9 “the tree of life was in the midst of the garden”

2:17 “the day that you eat of it you shall surely die

3:1-6 “the serpent...said to the woman”

3:8 “Adam and his wife hid themselves from...the Lord”

3:17 “cursed is the ground for your sake”

### Revelation 21 - 22

21:1 “I saw a new heaven and a new earth”

22:1-2 “on either side of the river was the tree of life”

21:4 “there shall be no more death..”

20:10 “The devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire”

21:27 “There shall by no means enter it anything that defiles”

21:3 “God Himself will be with them and be their God.”

22:3 “there shall be no more curse.”

Every part of the Bible is related to the “*Redemption of Creation*”!

The Bible is divided into two major sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. Each has a theme as it relates to the over-all theme.

THE THEME OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ( As It Relates To The “*Redemption of Creation*”)

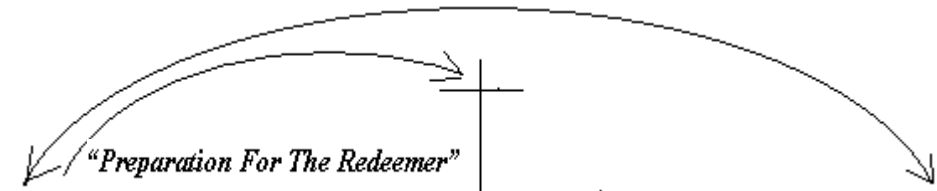
Genesis 3:15, is the most important verse in discovering the theme of the Old Testament, “And I will put enmity between you (the serpent) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel”.

The serpent is identified in Revelation 12:9 as, “that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan”. Satan spoke through the serpent to tempt Eve. The following Scriptures also refer to him: Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:12-17; 2 Corinthians 4:4, “the god of this world”; Ephesians 2:2, “the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience”; 2 Thessalonians 2:9, “whose coming (the antichrist) is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders”.

1 John 3:10, identifies the “seed of the serpent” as the “children of the devil”, and “seed of the woman” as “the children of God”. One from the woman’s seed will be the Redeemer who pays the penalty for sin. Two truths about Him are revealed: 1. Since He will crush the serpent’s head, and the devil is the highest created being (Ezekiel 28:14), He must be God. 2. Since He will be “seed of the woman”, He must be man.

The theme of the Old Testament, as it relates to the “*Redemption of Creation*”, is found by comparing Genesis 3:15 to Luke 24:25-27, 44- 46.

**THEME OF THE OLD TESTAMENT**



Genesis 3:15

“You shall bruise His heel”

Luke 24:25-27, 44-46

“Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things” (To pay the penalty)

“And beginning at Moses ..He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

“all things must be fulfilled which were written...concerning Me.”

“And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.”

“Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for Christ to suffer and rise again”

In order for creation to be redeemed, there must be a Redeemer. Every thing in the Old Testament has something to do with the “*Preparation For The Redeemer*”. The enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent will be caused by Satan’s attempts to prevent His coming.

#### CAIN AND ABEL. (Genesis 4).

Genesis 4, records the first of many battles in the warfare between the “seed of the serpent” and the “seed of the woman”.

When the time came for Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve, to present their offering to God, “Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock”. Hebrews 11:4 states, “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain”. “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). The only way Abel could have offered his animal sacrifice by faith was by having heard what God required.

When Adam and Eve sinned they lost their innocence, and possibly, a glory covering of light (Psalm 104:1-2, “O Lord...who cover Yourself with light as with a garment”). They attempted to cover their nakedness by sewing leaves together. But, “the Lord made tunics of skin and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21). Blood had to be shed in order to provide a covering for them. Evidently, when the animals were slain, God related this to the suffering “Seed” who would shed His blood to provide a covering for sinners.

Because Abel showed his faith in the promised Redeemer, “the Lord respected Abel and his offering” (Genesis 4:4), “through which (his sacrifice) he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gift” (Hebrew 11:4). How did God “testify” that He had accepted Abel’s sacrifice? Probably the same way He did when the sacrifices were offered when the Tabernacle was completed, “And fire came out from the Lord and consumed the burnt offering” (Leviticus 9:24). “And through it (Abel’s faith in bringing the right sacrifice) he being dead still speaks” (Hebrews 11:4). Abel is still speaking today that the only way to be accepted by God is through faith in the One who died for our sins!

“Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground” (Genesis 4:3). Cain had surely heard of the offering which God required. Why did he not bring it? Cain was “of the wicked one; his works were evil” (1 John 3:12). Satan used him to kill Abel in an effort to destroy the “seed of the woman” and prevent the “Seed” from being born. This explains the irrational behavior of those who are zealous for a religious system of works but reject salvation by God’s grace through faith in Christ and His death on the cross to pay the penalty for sin. The Apostle Paul, before his conversion, is an example of this behavior (“Saul, still breathing threats and murder”, Acts 9:1).

God counteracted Satan’s attack in two ways: 1. He restored the godly line, “And Adam knew his wife again and she bore a son named Seth” (Genesis 4:25). 2. He sent a revival, “And as for Seth, to him also a son was born and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the Lord” (Genesis 4:26).

Today there are still two classes of people in the world. Some realize their need for a Savior and put their faith in Him and His death on the cross. Others reject Him and go their own way. Of these, some go the way of unbelief in God (Romans 1:28). Others go the way of a moral code of ethics or a religious system in an attempt to make themselves acceptable to God (Romans 2:17).

THE FLOOD. (Genesis 6 - 9).

In Genesis 4:17-22, the line of Cain (“seed of the serpent”, “children of the devil”) is traced to Lamech and his sons. In Genesis 5, the line of Seth (“seed of the woman”, children of God”) is traced to Noah and his sons.

When God restored the line of the Redeemer by the birth of Seth, Satan changed his tactic. He would destroy the godly line by corrupting it through the inter-marriage of the two lines, “the sons of God saw the daughters of men...and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose” (6:2). The result was, “all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth” (Genesis 6:11-12). Satan later used this same tactic against God’s people at crucial times (Numbers 31:16; Ezra 9).

“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord; Noah walked with God” (6:8-9). There was only one man and his family left in the line of the Redeemer! Drastic action was necessary to preserve the godly line. God revealed to Noah the action He would take, “I Myself am sending a flood of waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life” (6:17).

Even though the people on earth had become so corrupt, God delayed His judgment for one hundred and twenty years (6:3). During this time, “Noah, being warned by God of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of His household” (Hebrews 11:7). 2 Peter 2:5, refers to Noah as a “preacher of righteousness”. Apparently, Noah preached to the people who came to see the ark being constructed. At the end of the one hundred and twenty years when Noah, his family and two of each “kind” entered the ark, “the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened” (7:11).

When the conditions on the earth before the flood are compared with conditions after the flood it becomes obvious that there was much more moisture in the earth’s atmosphere before the flood. This moisture formed a canopy surrounding the earth causing a terrarium effect which made atmospheric conditions and the earth’s temperature much more stable. “A mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground” (Genesis 2:6). Even the arctic zones were covered with lush vegetation. The moisture which formed this protective canopy fell to the earth for forty days. Combined with the underground water which was released, the earth was covered and “all flesh died that moved on the earth” (7:21).

Evidently the removal of the canopy affected plant life because after the flood God allowed meat to be eaten (Genesis 9:3; compare 1:29-30). Whether caused by the change in diet, atmospheric conditions or unknown causes, the human life span began a rapid decline (compare the life spans in Genesis 5 with those in Genesis 11:10-25).

It is important to keep in mind the purpose of the flood as it relates to the “*Preparation For The Redeemer*”. It was necessary to preserve the “seed of the woman” in order that the promise of the “Seed” could be fulfilled. Because of the flood we will be able to enjoy the “new heaven and the new earth”!

SATAN'S FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO DESTROY THE GODLY LINE . (Genesis 9:20 - 11:9).

Noah's Sin. (Genesis 9:20-25).

Soon after the ungodly line was destroyed by the flood we learn a sad lesson. Satan uses people in the godly line for his purposes. "Noah...planted a vineyard...he drank of the wine and was drunk and became uncovered in his tent...Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his younger son had done to him" (Genesis 9:20-24).

When Noah sobered up and realized what had happened, "Then he said, 'Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren" (9:25). "And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, as far as Lasha" (10:19). Genesis 19, describes the lifestyle of the Canaanites living in Sodom and Gomorrah at the time of Abraham. Leviticus 18:21-25, describes their conduct when Israel conquered their land. The curse was partially fulfilled by Joshua and later by Solomon (1 Kings 9:20-21). It is important to remember that the curse was placed upon Canaan and his descendants because they continued in the sin of Ham. His other sons and grandsons were not affected. The curse upon Canaan served as a deterrent to this type of destructive behavior. It continues to serve as a warning to a society that condones this lifestyle.

The Tower Of Babel. (Genesis 10:6-11; 11:1-9).

After the flood, "the whole earth had one language and one speech...they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there" (11:1-2). According to the genealogy of Ham (10:6-12), their leader was Ham's grandson, Nimrod. "Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord (10:8-9; compare 6:4,11). "The beginning of his kingdom was Babel...in the land of Shinar" (10:10).

The people were engaged in two projects: "Let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens" (11:4). The city was to be the political world capital. Since the top of the tower was to be in the heavens, it was for religious purposes. This was the origin of the Babylonian mystery religion. The core of this religion was the worship of the queen of heaven (Nimrod's wife, Semiramis) and her miracle born son (Tammuz). When the people were scattered, each group took this mystery religion with them. In Egypt, Semiramis became, Isis, and Tammuz became, Osiris; in India it was Isi and Crishna; in Asia it was Cybele and Deoius; in Rome it was Venus and Cupid. It was this mystery religion that later caused the downfall of Israel (Jeremiah 7:16-18; 44:15-19; Ezekiel 8:14). At the close of this age the world's religions will unite as "Mystery Babylon" (Revelation 17), and the world will shortly thereafter be controlled by a second Nimrod (2 Thessalonians 2:3; Revelation 13:7).

Once again drastic action was called for in order to preserve the line of the Redeemer. God's reaction was, "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language...so the Lord scattered them abroad" (Genesis 11:7-9). This action served two purposes in preparing for the Redeemer: 1. It prevented another Nimrod; 2. It prepared the way for God to separate the line of the Redeemer as a separate nation.

## THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM AND HIS SEED (Genesis 12-15).

In Chapter eleven the genealogy of the line of the Redeemer is recorded to Abram (exalted father). His name was later changed to Abraham (father of a multitude). He was the person chosen to be the father of the nation through which the Redeemer would come. .

God made four promises to Abraham (12:2-3).

1. "I will make of you a great **nation**". The line of the Redeemer will be a separate nation. The people of the nation would later be known by different names, "Hebrews", "Israelites" and "Jews".
2. "I will bless you and make your name great". He is mentioned three hundred times in the Bible. Fourteen chapters of Genesis are devoted to him.
3. "I will bless those who bless you and curse those you curse you". This an important key to the understanding of world history!
4. "And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed". God was revealing to him that the Redeemer will come through this nation and all nations will be blessed through Him. (Gal. 3:8).

After being in the land for some time, Abraham remained childless and the land was occupied by others. The Lord appeared to him in a vision and renewed His promises. "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land". Abraham asked, "Lord God, how shall I know that I will inherit it" (15:7)? "He said to him, 'Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove and a young pigeon'. Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other" (15:9-10). This was the method of making a covenant between two parties legally binding. Both parties would then pass together between the pieces. A similar case is recorded in Jeremiah 34:8-19.

When the preparations were complete and it was time to pass between the pieces, "a deep sleep fell upon Abram" (15:12). "And it came to pass ...that behold, a smoking oven and a burning torch passed between those pieces" (15:17). God, alone, passed between the pieces. This covenant was too important for Abraham to be responsible for any part of its fulfillment. The Redeemer will come through this nation and be born in this land!

God revealed to Abraham, "your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. Also that nation whom they serve I will judge; afterwards they will come out with great possessions...but in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete (15:13-14,16).

God not only revealed the future of Abraham's descendants for four hundred years, He also gave the borders of their land. "On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates (15:18)". The land was given to them as "an everlasting possession" (17:8).

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATION. (Genesis 12 - I Kings 4:21)

God had promised Abraham that He would make a nation of his descendants. At least three things would be necessary for the establishment of a nation:

1. People for the nation.

God had told Abraham that his descendants would dwell in a land that was not theirs for four hundred years. His great grandson, Joseph, was sold into slavery by his brothers and carried to Egypt. God enabled him to become the Prime Minister of Egypt so that when a famine came he was able to bring his family to Egypt and provide them an ideal area to live in and multiply. This was necessary because their land was occupied and a large army would be needed to conquer it. "All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy (46:27)". When the time came for them to leave Egypt they had a standing army of six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty! (Numbers 1:44-47).

2. The land for the nation.

God had already given the land to Abraham and his descendants as an everlasting possession and the iniquity of the people who occupied the land was complete (Genesis 15:16; Leviticus 18:25). The Israelites would be just in destroying them. Moses was the man chosen to deliver the people from Egypt (Exodus 3:10), and Joshua was chosen to lead the army in the conquest of the land (Joshua 11:23). Later, under Solomon, most of the land was occupied (1 Kings 4:21).

3. Laws to govern the nation.

The laws to govern the nation were given by God to Moses before they occupied the land. It is this law that has kept the Israelites separate from other people to this time. It consists of four categories:

a. Moral laws.

These are summed up in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17).

b. Civil laws.

These consist of laws and penalties concerning crimes of a civil nature (Exodus 22:1).

c. Ceremonial laws.

These laws are primarily related to the ceremonies of the Tabernacle and later the Temple (Deuteronomy 23:14-19). The sacrifices offered were continual reminders of the promised suffering Redeemer.

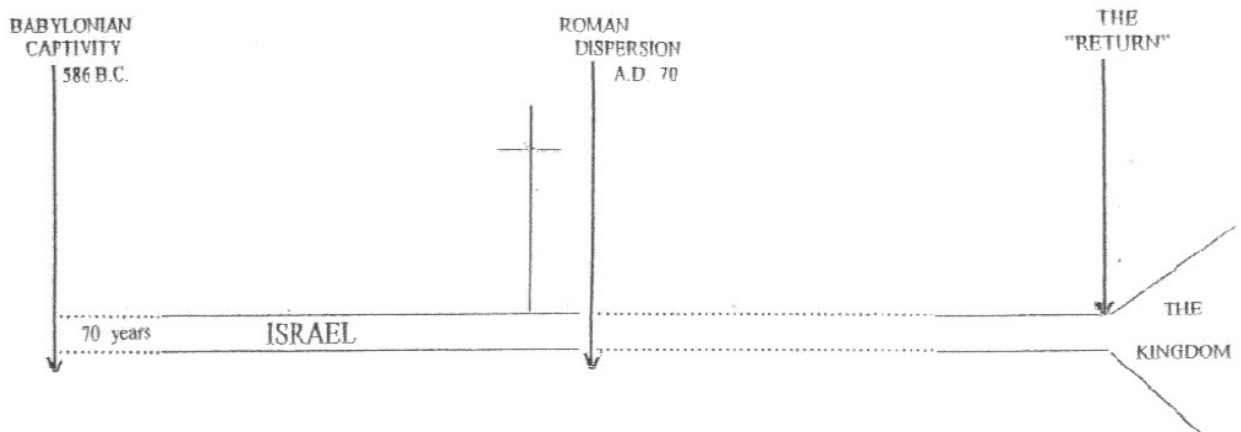
d. Health laws.

These laws are related to diet and other health concerns (Leviticus 11; 13).



## THE PROPHETS. (Isaiah - Malachi)

When the nation departed from the Lord, He raised up prophets to warn them of the curses and to remind them of the future blessing which Moses had spoken of. They were also given prophecies concerning the suffering Redeemer who had been promised in Genesis 3:15. Understanding the prophets is difficult because they do not prophecy in any order or sequence. This is why it is so important to understand the three events in Israel's future which had been revealed to Moses. When they speak concerning the future of the nation their message will relate to one of these events.



1. The first event: Deuteronomy 28:36,49. The people of the nation are taken captive by a nation.
  - a. Babylon is identified as the nation which takes them captive (Jeremiah 25:9; Micah 4:10; Habakkuk 1:6).
  - b. Their country will be desolate (Isaiah 1:7-9; Jeremiah 4:5-7; Zephaniah 1:2-4).
  - c. The captivity will last seventy years. (Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10).
2. The second event: Deuteronomy 28:64, They are scattered among all the nations.
  - a. They will be "sifted" and "sown" among all nations (Amos 9:9; Zechariah 10:9).
  - b. They will no longer have a king or a priesthood for sacrifices (Hosea 3:4).
  - c. The city and the sanctuary will be destroyed after the Messiah is cut off (Daniel 9:26).
3. The third event: Deuteronomy 30:5, They will return to the Lord and He will restore them.
  - a. A remnant will have returned to the land in unbelief (Zechariah 12:1-8; 14:1-3).
  - b. A time of great tribulation called, "The time of Jacob's trouble", which culminates with all nations gathered against Jerusalem, will cause Israel to accept Jesus as their Messiah (Jeremiah 30:1-7, Daniel 12:1; Zechariah 12:9-11, "They will look on Him whom they pierced").
  - c. The Lord will return, gather Israel to a wilderness area and "purge out the rebels from among them" (Ezekiel 20:33-44; Isaiah 11:11-12; Jeremiah 33:14-26).
  - d. Jerusalem will become the world capital (Isaiah 2:2-3 ; Amos 9:11-12; Micah 4:1-2) .
  - e. Pre-flood conditions will be restored on earth (Isaiah 65:20-23, "the child shall die one hundred years old"; Isaiah 65:25, "The lion shall eat straw like the ox").

Prophecies related to the suffering Redeemer.

1. He will be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14, "the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son").
2. He will come as your King...lowly and riding on a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).
3. He will pay the penalty for sin (Isaiah 53:6, "the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all")

## PROPHECIES OF DANIEL REGARDING THE FUTURE OF THE GENTILES AND ISRAEL.

### A. Prophecies Concerning the Gentiles (Daniel 2, 7, 9).

Daniel was taken captive to Babylon as a young man and trained to be an adviser to the king. Since the “Times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24) had now begun and Israel would be under Gentile dominion, God revealed through Daniel the future of the Gentiles. This was revealed first by Daniel’s interpretation of a recurring dream of the king, then through Daniel’s dream.

#### 1. Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream (Chapter 2)

The king’s dream consisted of a large statue of a man. The head was made of gold, the shoulders and arms of silver, the mid section of brass, the legs of iron with the feet partly of iron and partly of clay. The statue was struck on its feet by a stone which crushed it. The stone then became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

It was revealed to Daniel that the four parts of the statue represented four Gentile kingdoms which will exist successively until God destroys Gentile dominion and establishes His His kingdom. Babylon was identified as the head of gold. The Medo-Persians conquered Babylon and Greece conquered Med Persia. Rome conquered Greece and became the fourth and last world empire. The stone represents Christ at His second coming. It will occur when the revived Roman Empire is existing as a confederation of ten kingdoms (2:44).

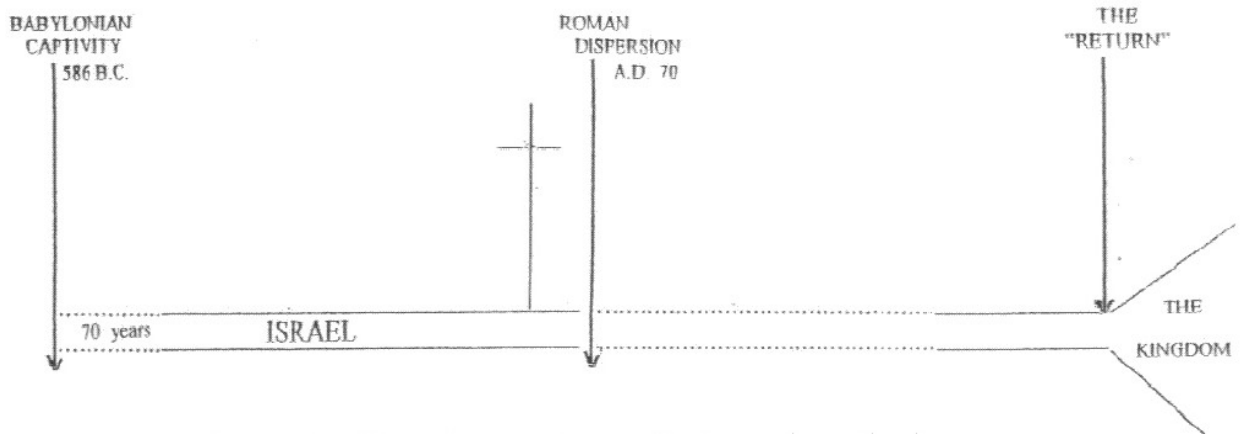
#### 2. Daniel’s Dream (Chapter 7).

In Daniel’s dream he saw four beasts come up from the sea. These beasts represent the four kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. Daniel’s dream primarily revealed more information about the fourth kingdom. The fourth beast had ten horns which correspond to the ten toes of statue of the kings dream. “The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom (Rome). And another king shall arise after them...he shall speak pompous words against the Most High and shall persecute the saints of the Most High” (7:24-25). This “little horn” will be identified in the New Testament as “the man of sin” (2 Thessalonians 2:3), and the anti-christ (1 John 2:18).

### B. Prophecies concerning Israel during the “times of the Gentiles (Daniel 9:24-27).

Jeremiah had prophesied that the captivity in Babylon would last seventy years. That period of time was now complete. Daniel was concerned about what would now happen to his people and their land (9:1-3,11,17-19). It was revealed to Daniel that “Seventy weeks (of years) are determined for your people and for your holy city” (9:24). This four hundred and ninety year period would begin when the command was given to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (9:25; Nehemiah 1:1-8). Four hundred and eighty three years from that date Messiah would appear. (This was fulfilled when Christ rode into Jerusalem on the donkey, Luke 19:28-44).

Two things are said to occur between the end of sixty ninth week (483 years) and the beginning of the seventieth: 1) “Messiah shall be cut off”; 2) the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed by the people of the prince who is to come (the second curse upon the nation). Since Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in A.D.70, this prince will be a Roman who will make a seven year treaty with Israel which will begin the seventieth week. He will be the “little horn” of Daniel’s dream and the future anti-christ. Seven years after the treaty is signed, Christ will return to reign over the earth!

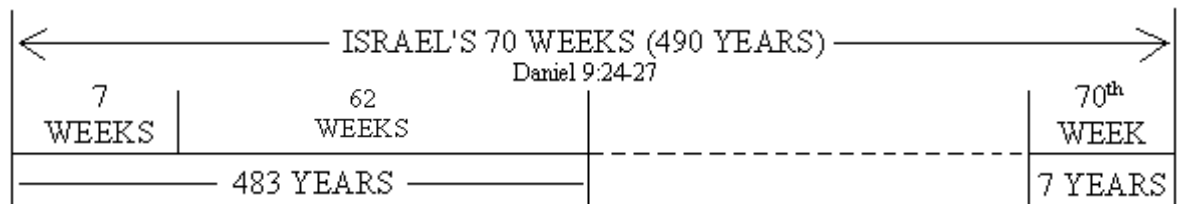


Deuteronomy 28:36-62  
 Isaiah 1:1-9  
 Jeremiah 4:3-9; 25:1-11  
 Amos 2:4-16  
 Micah 3:12; 4:9-10  
 Habakkuk 1:5-11  
 Zephaniah 1

Deuteronomy 28:63-68  
 Hosea 3:3-4  
 Amos 9:1-10  
 Daniel 9:26

Deuteronomy 30:1-10  
 Isaiah 2:1-5; 11:1-16; 65:18-25  
 Jeremiah 30:3-11  
 Ezekiel 20:33-44  
 Daniel 2:44-45  
 Hosea 3:5; 5:15  
 Joel 3  
 Amos 9:11-15  
 Micah 4:1-8  
 Zechariah 8:1-8; 12:1-12;  
 14:1-21

**TIMES OF THE GENTILES**  
 Daniel 2:31-45; 7:1-27; Luke 21:24



## PREPARATION FOR THE REDEEMER BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

The period between the Old and New Testaments has been called “The Four Hundred Silent Years”. No further scripture was given nor was there a prophetic voice. But, some very important preparations were made during this time:

1. The Temple was rebuilt by Herod and Jews from all parts of the Roman Empire came for the annual feasts. This meant that when the Redeemer came and began His ministry He would be seen and heard by a wide audience.
2. Rome brought peace (Pax Romana) to the world, which made peoples’ lives more stable. They could travel to other areas without fear that they would be caught in an uprising or other commotions.
3. Rome built fifty three thousand miles of roads throughout the empire which made travel easier. (Our Interstate system contains forty six thousand miles). The roads were built so that the Roman armies could move swiftly to put down any rebellion. Little did they realize that they were building roads for the Lord’s army to take the gospel to the world. Paul and many others traveled these roads.
4. Alexander made Koine (common) Greek the language of his empire and it continued to be the world language until around A.D. 500. The Old Testament was translated into Greek about 100 B.C. and Greek was an ideal language for the New Testament to be written in. Converts throughout the Roman Empire would be able to read both Old and New Testaments.
5. Up to one half of the people in parts of the empire were slaves when the Redeemer came. They owned no earthly goods and most had no hope of ever being free. News of a Redeemer who offered freedom from the bondage of sin and an eternal home in heaven would truly be good news to them.
6. The fact that there had been no prophetic voice for four hundred years caused the Jews to respond to John the Baptist when he appeared.

THE THEME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (As it relates to “*The Redemption Of Creation*”)

Since the theme of the Old Testament is “*The Preparation For The Redeemer*”, it is obvious that the theme of the New Testament is “*The Completion of Redemption*”. The New Testament is divided into four parts and each part is related to “*The Completion of Redemption*”.

THE GOSPELS: “*Redemption Purchased*” (Matthew - John)

The New Testament begins with the genealogy of the Redeemer. Matthew traces His lineage back to Abraham. He will fulfill the promise made to Abraham, “In you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). Luke traces His lineage back to Adam, proving that He is the “Seed of the woman” who will bruise the serpents head (Genesis 3:15; Matthew 1:21, “He shall save His people from their sins”).

He will not only be the suffering Savior but will also fulfill the promise of the future blessing made to the nation in Deuteronomy 30; Isaiah 2:1-4; Jeremiah 33:14-16. “The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father, David. And He shall reign over the house of David forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:30-33).

The condition which the nation must meet in order to receive the future blessing promised in the Old Testament is national repentance (Deuteronomy 30:2). When John the Baptist began his ministry his message was, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:1-2). When Christ began His ministry His message was the same, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). When Christ sent forth His disciples, “He commanded them, saying: ‘Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand’” (Matthew 10:5-6),

“Then He began to upbraid the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent” (Matthew 11:20). They could not deny His power to perform miracles but they said it was from the devil (Matthew 12:24). From this point on there was a change in His message. There was no more call for national repentance in order to receive the kingdom. Instead, the invitation is, “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden...and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28-30). He also began to speak of His death (Matthew 12:38-40).

Since Israel had failed to meet the condition for the promised kingdom, the kingdom would now exist in another form which was not revealed in the Old Testament. In order to reveal what the kingdom would now be like, Christ not only changed the message but also the method of teaching. “Then He spoke many things to them in parables...And the disciples came to Him and said to Him, ‘Why do you speak to them in parables?’ He answered them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given’” (Matthew 13:3,10-11). The word, “mystery”, as used in the New Testament, refers to a truth that has been kept secret but is now revealed. Each one of the parables reveals a truth about the kingdom as it will exist from the time Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah until they repent and receive Him (Zechariah 12:9-11).

Christ announced a new entity that will come into existence during the kingdom in its mystery form. “I will build My church and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). The Lord

had revealed to Abraham that He would make a nation of his descendants, He now reveals to Peter (petros, a stone) and the other apostles that He will build His church (ekklesia, an assembly of called out ones) upon this rock (petra, a boulder). Christ, Himself, is the “petra” upon which the church will be built (1 Corinthians 3:11, “For no other foundation can anyone lay...than Jesus Christ”).

Also, as the Lord had promised a future blessing to the nation, which would be His return to re-gather them to their land, He promised to return and take the church to His Father’s house (John 14:1-3).

Another important difference between the Old Testament nation and the church will be the church’s relationship to the Holy Spirit. “He will give you another Helper that He may abide with you forever.... He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17). “He will guide you into all truth...and He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13).

Luke 19:28-44, records the fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy that four hundred and eighty three years after the decree was given for Jerusalem to be rebuilt, “Messiah the Prince” would appear (Daniel 9:25) Zechariah had prophesied, “Behold, your king is coming to you... lowly, and riding on a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9). Since Israel had not repented, He wept over the city because they did not know that this was their day. The second curse which Moses prophesied would now be fulfilled. The “city and the sanctuary” would be destroyed and the people would be scattered throughout the world (Deuteronomy 28:63-65; Daniel 9:26; Luke 19:43-44).

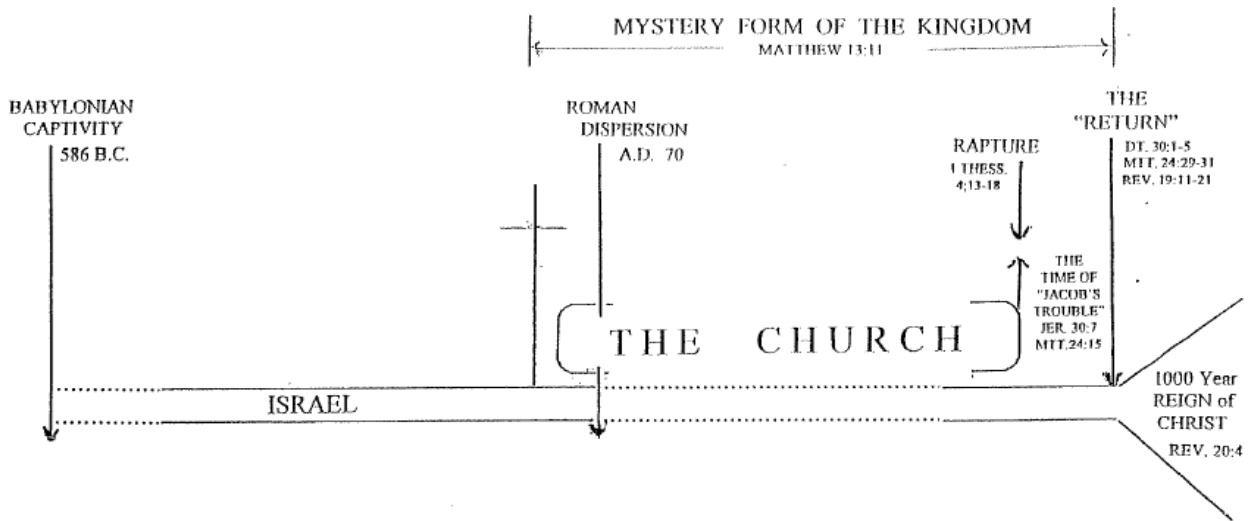
When Jesus told His disciples that the temple would be destroyed (Matthew 24:1-31), they asked Him three questions:

1. “When will these things (the destruction of the temple) be?”
2. “What will be the sign of Your coming?”
3. “What will be the sign of the end of the age?”

Matthew records His answer to the last two questions and Luke, primarily, gives His answer to the first question (the destruction of the temple, which occurred in A.D. 70.).

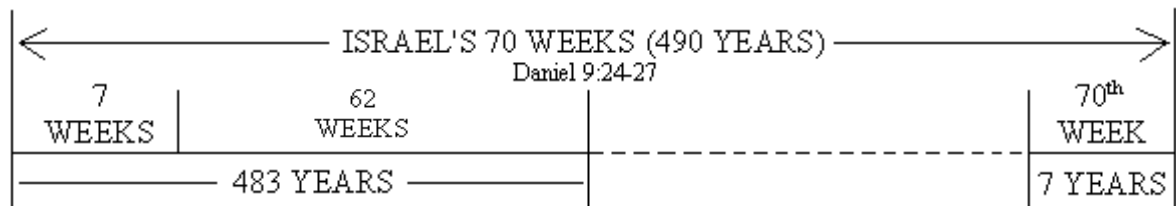
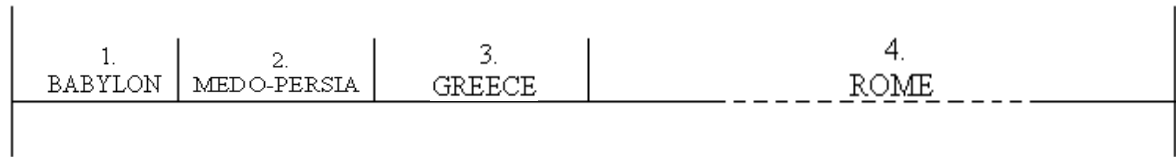
The signs of the end of the age are a description of Daniel’s seventieth week which begins when a Roman prince makes a seven year treaty with Israel (Daniel 9:27). This seven year period will be the end of the age since it will conclude with the bringing in of everlasting righteousness (Daniel 9:24). Matthew 24:4-14, describes the first half of this period and verses 15-28 describe the last half, which begins when the Roman prince breaks the treaty with Israel. “When you see (a clear sign of the end of the age) the abomination of desolation...standing in the holy place...let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains (confirming that Jews will be back in the land in unbelief and the temple will be rebuilt before His return to re-gather them).

Verses 29-31, describe the sign of His coming, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days...the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear..they will see the Son of Man coming...with power and great glory”, confirming Jeremiah’s prophecy that He would return and save Israel after the time of Jacob’s trouble ( Jeremiah 30:4-9). He also explained how Moses’ prophecy would be fulfilled, “If any of you are driven out to the farthest part under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you... the Lord your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed” (Deuteronomy 30:1-5): “He will send His angels..and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”( Matthew 24:31).



### TIMES OF THE GENTILES

Daniel 2:31-45; 7:1-27; Luke 21:24



In Matthew 25:31-46, He explained how the prophecies of the judgment of the nations will be fulfilled. (Joel 3:1-2, “When I bring back the captives of Judah...I will also gather all nations...and I will enter into judgment with them”). He explained that when He returns to sit on the throne of His glory, the nations will be gathered before Him. He will divide them, the sheep (those who will enter His kingdom) on His right, and the goats (those who will depart from Him into everlasting punishment) on His left. Another group, referred to as “My brethren” will be there. These are Jews who have been gathered, judged (Ezekiel 20:33-42) and brought with Him. The basis for the judgment of the people of the nations will be how they treated “these My brethren”. The reason for this will be further explained in Romans 11:25, and Revelation 7:1- 14.

When Christ was crucified His last words were, “It is finished” (John 19:30). The price for redemption was paid in full! His resurrection confirmed it. Now, whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved!

After His resurrection, Christ gave the keys of the kingdom to the disciples, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel” (Mark 16:15). All who believe the good news that Christ has paid the penalty for the sins of the world and receive Him as their Savior, that moment, they become a member of His church which He is building.

#### **ACTS: “Redemption Proclaimed”**

After Christ was rejected by the nation He announced a new entity, the church, which He would establish and build in the future. After His resurrection He announced the mission of the church: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel”. Acts records what happened during the change-over from the Old Testament Nation to the New Testament Church and how the first century church carried out its mission.

During the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension back to heaven, He spoke to His disciples “of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (1:3). Until the last week before His crucifixion His disciples were still concerned about who would sit on His right hand when He was seated on David’s throne (Mark 10:35-37). This was still their major concern because, “They asked Him, ‘Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel’” (1:6). Christ reminded them of the new objective for this age, “You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”. This was such a drastic change (Matthew 10:5-6) that it would have to be carried out in phases over a period of years. Jews had no dealings with Samaritans (John 4:9), and certainly had no dealings with Gentiles. Only by the power of the Holy Spirit could this task be completed. Christ had promised that signs would confirm the word they preached (Mark 16:17-20). Acts records the fulfillment of each of the signs which confirmed the word as it was preached to each group.

#### **Phase 1 (Jerusalem) Chapters 2-7.**

The promise of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled (2:1-12) which brought the church into existence and empowered the disciples for the task of proclaiming the gospel. Signs confirmed their experience and the word spoken. Three thousand Jews believed and were added to the church on its birthday! As the church grew, opposition from the Jewish leaders intensified until Stephen was arrested and stoned (Acts 7:59).

Phase 2 & 3 (Judea and Samaria) Chapters 8 & 9.

“At that time a great persecution arose against the church...and they were all scattered throughout Judea and Samaria” (8:1). “Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them”. The word was confirmed with signs and “the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles he did” (8:6). As the Samaritans were added to the church it was necessary that they have the same experience that the Jews in Jerusalem had. This would prove that God had accepted them. Otherwise, the Jewish Christians would not have accepted them. It was also necessary that they not receive the Holy Spirit without the official sanction of the church in Jerusalem. Otherwise, there would have been a Samaritan church and a Jewish church.

Phase 4 (Gentiles) Chapters 10 - 28.

Chapter 9 records the conversion of the Apostle Paul. Phase 4 will be completed under his leadership (9:15). He was chosen to be the “Apostle to the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13). In Chapter 10, the door is opened to the Gentiles by Peter, the “Apostle to the circumcision” (Galatians 2:8). This was necessary because the Jews would not have accepted un-circumcised Gentiles had it been Paul. Whereas it was necessary that Peter and John lay hands on the Samaritans before they received the Holy Spirit, “While Peter was still speaking..the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word”. This is the pattern from this time except for a group of disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:1-6). The sign miracles began to cease during the lifetime of the Apostles (1 Timothy 5:23; 2 Timothy 4:20), and Philippians 2:25-27 became the norm. One possible reason for this is found in Acts 14:8-15; 28:3-6. Pagan Gentiles attributed the miracles to the Apostles being gods.

LETTERS: “*Redemption Explained*” (Romans - Jude)

Acts records what happened at the beginning and the early days of the church. This was a drastic change and there were many questions in the minds of the early Christians, foremost of which were:

1. Will the promises regarding Israel’s future restoration and kingdom be fulfilled?
2. How does the church’s future which was promised by Christ in John 14, relate to Israel’s future?
3. Is the Mosaic law which was given to govern Israel still in force for the church?
4. If the Mosaic law is no longer in force, what is the standard for the church?
5. How is the church to be organized and governed?

The Letters were written to answer these and other questions. Most of these questions were answered by the revelation of three “mystery truths”. These truths were kept secret in the Old Testament but were revealed to the apostles.

The Mystery Concerning Israel (Romans 11:25-32).

The answer to the question regarding the promised restoration of Israel is found in verse 26, “And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion and will turn away ungodliness from Jacob’”. This confirmed that the promises made to Israel are still in effect. This promise will be fulfilled when Israel repents (Deuteronomy 30:1-2). The mystery truth, which answers the question concerning the relation of Israel’s future to that of the church is found in verse 25, “For I do not desire..that you should be ignorant of this mystery...that blindness has happened to Israel until the fulness (full number) of the Gentiles has come in”. The fact that Israel’s blindness will be removed before all Israel is saved was a truth not revealed in the Old Testament. It will occur when the full number of Gentiles (the church) has come in. The fulfillment of this mystery and its results are found in Revelation 7 (Compare Matthew 24:14).

The Mystery Concerning The Church (Ephesians 2:11 - 3:12; Colossians 1:24-28).

Paul stated the mystery concerning the church as, “That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body” (3:5-6). In the Old Testament God’s people were a separate nation. In the new entity, the church, all (both Jew and Gentile) who respond to the gospel become members of the church which is the body of Christ. “For by one Spirit were we all baptized unto one body, whether Jews or Greeks... and have all been made to drink into one Spirit ....But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased” (1 Corinthians 12:13, 18).

Before this could happen, the wall that separated Jews and Gentiles had to be “broken down”. This “wall of division” was the “law of commandments contained in ordinances” (Ephesians 2:14-15). This answers the question, “Is the church under the Mosaic law”? Paul went so far as to say in 2 Corinthians 3:7-11, that even what was “written and engraved on stones” was temporary. Christ had given the standard for the church, “Make disciples of all the nations...teaching them to observe all things that **I** have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). Nine of the ten commandments are repeated for the church, but with a much higher standard (Colossians 3:5-16). The fourth commandment, “Remember the Sabbath (seventh day) was a commandment contained in ordinances and was not repeated for the church. The church came together on the first day of the week, which came to be known as “the Lord’s day (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10).

Christ left no instructions as to how the church was to be organized. In the beginning the apostles governed the church. When the need arose for help in conducting the affairs of the church, seven men were chosen to assist the apostles (Acts 6:1-7). Later, as churches were established in other areas, men who were called to lead the congregation were given the title of “Elder” or “Overseer” (bishop). Those chosen to assist them were given the title of “Deacons” (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

The Mystery Concerning The Future Of The Church (1 Corinthians 15:51-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

There are three elements to this mystery:

1. “We shall not all sleep” (1 Corinthians 15:51). The last generation of the church will not experience death!
2. “We shall all be changed...in the twinkling of an eye”. At the last trumpet for the church all believers’ bodies will be changed into glorified bodies (Philippians 1:20-21).
3. “God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus”, to be re-united with their resurrected bodies. (1 Thessalonians 4:14; 2 Corinthians 5:1-8; Philippians 1:23-24). “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven...And the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air”, in our glorified bodies (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Only those who are “in Christ” will partake in this event. The rest will be left here on earth. Note how this mystery relates to the mystery concerning Israel. The reason the blindness must be removed from Israel when the “full number of the Gentiles is come in”, is because the church will be “caught up” at that time and there will not be a single witness for God left on the earth!

REVELATION: *“Redemption Consummated”*

Revelation is the terminal toward which all Bible prophecy has been moving. For our purposes, the Revelation is presented in four sections:

1. The revelation concerning the church ( Revelation 1 - 3).

The Revelation begins with a message “to the seven churches which are in Asia” (1:4). From our vantage point today, we can look back at church history and find the reason these particular churches were chosen. Their location on the map and in the order in which they are addressed forms a rough circle. Also, the conditions which existed in each of these churches at that time closely parallel the conditions which would later arise in seven different periods of church history. Note especially the promise given to the Philadelphia church which was next to the last to be addressed, “I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth” (3:10). That church will not only be kept from the trial, but from the **hour** of trial. It will not be on the earth. The apostate Laodicean church organization will be left here. Since God revealed the future of His Old Testament nation (Deuteronomy 28;30; Daniel 9), and the future of the Gentile nations (Daniel 2;7), it is reasonable to expect that He would also outline the future of the church age.

2. The revelation concerning the end of the age. (Revelation 4 – 18).

In chapters four and five the scene is in heaven. Those from all language groups who have been redeemed by Christ’s blood are there waiting to reign with Him on the earth (5:9-10). They are represented by twenty-four elders (4:4,10;5:8). They have been given white robes and have received their crowns (4:4,10). These can only be the church saints who have been caught up to be with Him. Preparations are being made for the beginning of Daniel’s seventieth week (5:1-7; 6:1; Daniel 9:27). It is the “Time of Jacob’ trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7) which will bring Israel to repentance. It is the “day of the Lord” when He punishes the world for its evil (Isaiah 13:9-11). It is the “hour of trial” from which the Philadelphia church will be kept (3:10).

The connected story thread for this section is three series of judgments which come upon the earth: Seven “Seal” Judgments; Seven “Trumpet” Judgments; and Seven “Bowl” Judgments. Two things cause this section to be difficult to understand: 1). John, the author, was told to describe things of the future with which he was not familiar. 2). The connected story thread (the series of judgments) is interrupted frequently in order to reveal something important which pertains to this period. An example of this is found in chapter seven when the account of the seal judgments is interrupted in order to describe the fulfillment of the mystery concerning the blindness being removed from Israel (Romans 11:25), so that there will be a witness for God during this period. This is said to occur before the earth is harmed (7:3). Other examples are found in chapter thirteen, where details about the “little horn” of Daniel 7:7-8) are revealed; and chapter seventeen, where details about the future world religious system, of which the apostate (Laodicean) church organization is a part, are revealed.

3. The revelation concerning the return of Christ (Revelation 19 - 20:6).

The promise of the return of Christ to set up His kingdom was first made in Deuteronomy 30, and repeated by the prophets. Christ reaffirmed this promise (Matthew 24:29-31), as did the Apostle Paul (Romans 11:26). Just prior to His return, the “marriage of the Lamb” takes place in heaven (19:7). His wife, the church, has been judged to determine the rewards received by her members (4:4; 5:9;19:8; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15). Apparently, the marriage supper will occur on earth since those will be blessed who are called to it (19:9).

At the return of Christ with the armies of heaven, the armies of the nations will be destroyed, and the “beast (the Antichrist) and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire (19:19-21). Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. (20:1-3).

The judgment of the nations will then occur to determine those who will enter His kingdom (20:4; Matthew 25:31- 46). When the blindness is removed from Israel, the one hundred and forty-four thousand who are sealed with God’s seal (7:4,9-14) will take the gospel to all the world. Their emphasis will be, “Prepare for the soon coming kingdom” (Matthew 24:14). Since the penalty for giving them aid and comfort will be death, the proof of those who receive their message will be how they treated the messengers. Those who suffer the penalty during the tribulation period will be raised to reign with Christ in His kingdom (20:4). Those who are saved and endure to the end of the tribulation will enter the kingdom in their natural bodies (Matthew 24:13; 25:34; Isaiah 65:20-25).

The length of Christ’s earthly kingdom is revealed to be one thousand years. At the end of this period, Satan will be released from the bottomless pit to go out and deceive those who were born during the thousand year reign and outwardly conformed to His rule but were never born again. They will gather together under Satan’s leadership to try to overthrow Christ’s reign (20:8). Fire comes down from heaven and devours them and Satan is cast into the lake of fire (20:9-10).

At the end of the thousand year reign, those who were not a part of the first resurrection will be raised to be judged at the great white throne (20:5-6,12). This will include all the unsaved from Cain to those who died in the rebellion at the end of the thousand year reign. The purpose of this judgment will be to determine the degree of punishment for each person there. They will be “judged, each one according to his works” (20:13). Christ revealed another factor in their judgment which will be the amount of light that they received (Luke 12:47-48). It can be assumed that those who are saved and alive at the end of the thousand year reign will receive glorified bodies as those do who are alive at the time of the rapture of the church.

#### 4. The revelation concerning the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21:1 – 22:6).

After the final judgment of the unsaved, John saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and first earth have passed away (21:1; 2 Peter 3:10-13). Very little is revealed about the new earth except the fact that there will be no large body of water on it; “there was no more sea”. It will be entirely different from the present earth; “I make all things new” (21:5). The New Jerusalem, the place Christ has prepared, will descend out of heaven and will be the dwelling place for the redeemed. Redemption will at last be completed!

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1. There are many today who claim to believe the Bible but do not accept the Biblical account of creation as factually true. There was no literal Adam who was created from earth and became a living, mature man. There was no literal Eve who was made from a part of Adam’s body. But Christ said, “If you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words” (John 5:46-47). Moses wrote Genesis.
  2. Because the term, “sons of God” is used of those who intermarried with the daughters of men, some assume that they were fallen angels since the term is used of angels and Peter and Jude speak of angels who because of the nature of their sins are now confined. Assuming that angels took human form and cohabited with women, they were still angels and conception would not have been possible.