Questions for Dispensationalists, Premillennialists, and other Futurists

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The following is a brief exposition challenging the Biblical legitimacy of the currently popular “end times” prophetic scenarios surrounding the “second coming” of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The topic of this writing is Biblical eschatology, the study of “last things”. Let it be said emphatically, at the very start, that anyone God has called into the flock of Jesus Christ is saved, period. Salvation is not of “sound doctrine” other than professing the name of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We are saved by the blood of the Lamb, not scholastic achievements or works of any kind. It is the belief of this writer that salvation is complete in Jesus Christ and that ALL things written by the prophets were fulfilled COMPLETELY in Jesus Christ the Messiah. The ONLY reason there is a FUTURE HOPE written of by Paul and other New Testament writers is because the, “the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing” (Heb. 9:8). The destruction of Jerusalem was yet in their near future. “He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate” (Daniel 9:27). “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Mat. 23:38). “But now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb 9:26). JESUS IS the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end.

The Bible is a complete book. It is the Word of God. It is TWO testaments (covenants) representing two ages, not three, four or more. The focal point is Jesus Christ. In Christian time there is before Christ and after Christ. God chose to bring salvation by way of Israel and the Jewish people. This is why the Bible is written by Jews and the redemption story revolves around the city of Jerusalem (which represents Israel). Today’s popular prophetic futuristic outlook is centered around Daniel’s seventieth week. Daniel’s prophecy is concerning “thy people” and “thy holy city”, not the rest of the world per se. Although the story of redemption reaches out and embraces the world, the story of the Bible centers on Jerusalem, not future raptures, tribulations, antichrist’s, and Armageddons. It is the story of COMPLETE salvation, not an ongoing prophetic saga with more to come as if our already established redemption needs “fine tuning” and further consummation.

This writing is intended for those who believe, Biblically speaking, that we yet await looking ahead to some or all of the future fulfillment of scriptural prophecies, such as: the rapture, great tribulation, return of Christ, Battle of Armageddon, resurrection, new
heavens and earth, etc…. I feel a sense of identification and camaraderie with these futurist believers. I studied and believed this, myself for a long time. Why? Probably because it’s the most highly visible, publicly pronounced widespread theological premise today. These ideas are steadily promoted by Grant Jeffrey, Jack Van Impe, Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, Jerry Falwell, John Hagee, Billy Graham, Peter & Patti Lalonde, Benny Hinn, and many others. These are the “experts”, the soothsayers, the modern day Biblical interpreters for the masses. Prophecy is exciting. It is appealing. Just look at how popular astrologists and psychics have become in this contemporary age. Most of us would admit to being fascinated with predictions of the future, the “yet to be”. It’s great stuff. Despite all of this modern day “Last Days”, “End Times”, “Millennial”, bombardment, especially in the Christian media, I have discovered through much searching of the scriptures, and the scriptural research of others, that current day future prophetic fulfillment is simply not Biblical. I do not say this lightly or quickly. I say it after many months and laborious hours of study, contemplation, and prayer. It was quite a struggle to have such a huge shift in thinking however, it was greatly preferable to keeping my head in the sand, ignoring challenging questions, and desperately holding onto old beliefs despite what “sayeth the scriptures”.

Even when I was a futurist, two things always bothered me. Why do the majority of these beliefs always seem to be a rather sporadic collection - a hodgepodge of scripture? Biblical futurism seems to be largely based on a series of very select, specifically located scriptures which are strategically placed together and crystallized into a complete “End Time” scenario. Why isn’t it more thematically pervading, consistent, and easily understandable in scripture? This leads to the other question I always had; Why is there so much speculation as to the “timing” of the rapture of the saints? All of this timing seems to revolve around “The Great Tribulation” - is it Pre, Mid, Pre-wrath, or Post, Tribulation. There appears to be little exegetical arguments concerning the rapture itself, but there is great deal of controversy over “timing”. Timing seems to be important to futurists. It certainly was important to me. I don’t want to go through the “Great Tribulation”. I certainly want to escape before that happens. Timing is so important that Dr. Marvin Rosenthal lost his position as executive director of “The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry” not because he refuted the rapture, but because his personal belief in the TIMING of the rapture was unacceptable to the organization’s corporate board. There are scores of competent others who have forced out of their worldly positions because of personal interpretive positional beliefs concerning the TIMING of Biblical events in “last days”, “end times” prophecy. It is very obvious that emotions run high when it comes to the specifics of Biblical prophecy concerning our future, and end times (eschatology).

I often wondered to myself, “Could it be that it really isn’t this difficult to understand?”. Could it be possible that all of us are missing some simple and basic foundational, but cunningly elusive, premise that is distorting our understanding and vision of the “Last Days”, “Second Coming”, the “Day of the Lord” and the return of our dear Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ? Are the Biblical scriptures really meant to be this complicated and

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1 See “Some Thoughts on Dispensational Millennialism” which appears on page 18.
indiscernible concerning eschatology? Is it possible we are “reading into” scripture things that aren’t there, and “reading past” things that are very plainly and simply there?

Once the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and I was unequivocally called into the family to be a “son of God” through His son, Jesus Christ the Messiah, the very first thought that passed my mind was, “There are a lot of churches with many varying beliefs and practices, and they ALL claim to be of CORRECT Biblical doctrine. Some even claim to be the ONLY TRUE church of Jesus Christ - in essence, a remnant church, and all the rest are “false” Christians. The other “churches” mean well, but they are simply deceived. Isn’t deception the same for me, for you, for them, for ANYONE? Deception simply means we DON’T REALLY KNOW WHEN WE ARE THINKING, ACTING AND LIVING IN THE BELIEF THAT WE DO REALLY “KNOW”! Could the ultimate deception have its most fertile soil in the belief and self-guise that we are indeceivable?

As I continued asking myself these questions about being in the “correct” church which contained the adamant, unequivocal scriptural truth, I was asked to teach a Bible class. So I took the only way I felt that I could. I started each class with a reading of IJohn 2:27, John 16:13, and ICorinthians 2. It was a nondenominational charismatic church, and it certainly was all right to endorse the belief that the Holy Spirit would be the helper to teach and lead us, individually and collectively, into all truth.

Have you ever asked yourself why it is that your church, your Biblical beliefs, creeds, and doctrine are unequivocally, absolutely, inerrently, and sovereignly, given by God, Himself (and only to your church)?

What special quality or partiality did God have in picking you, personally, and your particular church, faith, and practices, while leaving others on the outside?

What is different from the “faith” you and your church have from other churches that profess to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior? Can you give yourself ANY legitimate reason why your faith, your church, your pet doctrine is the infallible scriptural truth? Can you honestly rationalize, in any sense, why you, personally, were chosen to be in the only, or one of the few, remnant “church(es)” having correct Biblical doctrine? Most would probably admit this type of thinking is rigidly closed minded at very least, and egotistically presumptuous at very most. Every church and doctrine, even outside of your own, has it’s dedicated students, experts and scholars. In your mind, does even the remotest possibility exist, that some of your Biblical “End Times” doctrine could simply be wrong?

If there is no chance you could be off-base about your held Biblical eschatology then you may wish not to read on. There will most probably be very little interest in here for you. You apparently have all that you need at this time, and all has been answered for you. For whatever reason, you are secure and comfortable in your current theological perspective despite the many variations held by others. If your eschatology is accurate
you should have no problem clearly disputing what you will find here. However, if you are even slightly willing to admit to yourself the possibility of error or lack of the complete picture in your personal scriptural eschatology, by all means read on. You may find some very thought provoking discussion here.

BY NO MEANS does this writer claim to have all the answers. I am a seeker and believe that God’s Word contains ALL that we ever want or need practically, theologically and spiritually. We do not need more words and verses. We need deeper revelation of what is already written. I believe no matter how much we “discover” in God’s Word, there is ALWAYS MORE. My studies, contemplation’s, and prayers have brought me into, what I very honestly and sincerely believe to be, a deeper revelation of God’s Word.

Presented below is a series of questions futurists need to contend with. First I will repeat, if you have the idea that you already have the complete, unadulterated scriptural truth (or close enough to it), or if you simply will not seriously entertain any questions or information that will not readily or comfortably ‘fit’ into your general presuppositional framework, I recommend you stop reading right now. I will now present the questions.

Questions for Futurists:

How do we legitimately look out into the secular world and properly discern an event as a fulfillment of Biblical prophetic scripture? Historically many of the best intended, studied, competent, sincere, courageous followers and seekers of the scriptures have thought they lived in the Biblically prophetic “Last Days”. Martin Luther was one of them. They were all mistaken weren’t they? This is an interpretive error that has plagued virtually every generation since that of Christ since the first century. How can we properly discern this as the “End Time Generation” and rest easy that we are not, ONCE AGAIN, incorrect like every preceding generation?

How should we respond, and what are we to think, as prediction after prediction of contemporary Biblical prophecy fails? Hal Lindsey believed Christ’s return would be in 1988, forty years (one generation) after the declaration of modern day Israel in 1948. Edgar C. Whisenant wrote an extremely popular and compelling book, “88 Reasons Why The Rapture Is in 1988”. Jack Van Impe was certain the Soviet flag would be flying over Independence Hall by 1976. There are literally volumes filled with factual information about very prestigious authors, scholars, and Biblically learned sincere men who have made mistake after mistake in regard to what Biblical scriptures says about prophetic events. Where does this end? Do we continue in these ways of failed prediction after prediction?

How do we separate that which God hath joined together? “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. 2:28,29). “For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that
call upon him” (Rom. 10:12). “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:28,29). “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all” (Col. 3:11).

“For He is our peace, who hath made both (Jew and Gentile) one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both (Jew and Gentile) unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph. 2:14-16 parenthesis added by writer). “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19). “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13).

Futurists have Jesus returning to save “all Israel” (Rom. 11:26). This is the ONLY statement in the N.T. Epistles, of which I am aware, that contains ANY allusion to fleshly, national, Israel, which could possibly be interpreted as another restoration (in the future) of worldly Israel. So let me get this straight: God utterly destroys Jerusalem and the temple (via the Roman armies as predicted by Jesus [Mat.24]), then sets up the “Church” whereby Christ being the chief corner stone makes all “one” in “Himself” for awhile? (2000 years or so), then takes those who belong to Him (the church) out of this world (the rapture), thereby once again separating “Jew” and “Gentile”. Then as the Gentile world comes against the Jerusalem Jews, Jesus Christ returns and destroys all of the Gentile enemies thus saving His “Jewish” people to set up a kingdom on earth. He and His saved Jewish brethren will then rule the earth with a “rod of iron” from Jerusalem. It will no longer take “faith” to please God, nor will anyone need to “diligently seek Him” because He’ll be there for the entire world to see (Heb. 11:6). This goes on for 1000 years, and then the Devil is let loose once again to fool the nations for a short time (Jesus’ earthly “rod of iron” reign subsides for a “little season” [Rev. 20:3,7-8]). The Devil then deceives and draws the nations together for another final battle (Armageddon), but is defeated by Christ and the Saints. Now hell AND DEATH are defeated, the resurrection occurs, and the “Great White Throne Judgment” happens. Somewhere in all of this the heavens pass away and the earth is melted with fervent heat (IIPeter 3:10) [I don’t know where Christ and the saints are during this occurrence]. New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven creating a “new heavens and earth” and all tears are wiped from their eyes (IIPeter 3:13,Rev.21:3-4). Now God tabernacles with men. The sun disappears from the sky because God is the light (John 8:12, Rev. 22:5). The tree of life is once again available to man (Rev. 22:14).

Incidentally, what does the scripture mean, “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool (Psalm 110:1; Mat. 22:44; Mark12:36; Luke 20:42-43; Acts 2:34-35; Heb. 1:13)? Doesn’t this sound like Jesus is to sit at the right hand of the Father IN HEAVEN until His enemies are made His footstool? How does this fit in with Jesus returning to fleshly earth to destroy His enemies? This is not to
mention that “until” does not always imply a necessitated change afterward, e.g., “You children behave until I get home” does not imply that they should misbehave once he has returned. Jesus sitting at the right hand of the Father until His enemies are made His footstool does not automatically necessitate a leaving the right hand of the Father afterward.

Many of the (future?) benefits of the “second coming” of the Messiah:

Jesus finally sets up His “kingdom which shall never be destroyed (Dan 2:44)”, “an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation (Dan. 4:34;7:14).

The captives and those who are in prison are finally set free (Isaiah 61:1).

Our sins are finally atoned for and are “blotted out” (Rom. 5:11; Acts 3:19, Heb. 9:26,28).

The new covenant finally arrives, and His laws will be written on our hearts and He will be our God and we His people and he will remember our sin no more (Jeremiah 31:33-34).

All things written in the scriptures will finally be fulfilled, the mystery of God will be finished and our salvation complete (Luke 21:22; Rev. 10:7; John 19:30).

He will have finished preparing a place for us so that we may be where He is (John 14:3).

Death is finally defeated (ICor. 15:26; John 5:24; IJohn 3:14; Rev. 1:18).

How do we explain the first century Christian error of perceiving that Christ had already “come” if they expected and understood it to be an earthly visible return?

“How we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition” (IIThes. 2:1-3). If they had been expecting a physical natural return of Christ they simply could have visibly seen Him in the flesh. Isn’t it important that scripture indicates the first century church expected an imminent “coming”? Didn’t Paul say, “the day of Christ is at hand”?

How do we explain the first century Christian error of perceiving that the resurrection had already occurred if they were expected and understood it to be an earthly visible resurrection?

“And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some (IITim. 2:17-18). If they were expecting a visible earthly resurrection they could have simply looked around for the resurrected patriarchs and saints. Is it possible they were taught the resurrection to be
of a nature other than worldly and visible to the natural eyes? Is it significant that they expected it to occur in their own first century generation?

**What was it about the Gospel Paul preached that his fellow Jews found so offensive?**

Paul was, “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee (Phil. 3:5). He was preaching to his ‘own’, and yet was being persecuted for the sake of the Gospel. Why? The Jews had been looking for their Messiah and the ensuing resurrection. “I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead” (Acts 26: 5-8)? Could there have been a better theologically prepared individual than Paul, raised a Pharisee, a “Hebrews of the Hebrews” to bring the message of the Gospel to the Hebrews in an understandable contextual manner? What was so different in what Paul preached, than what the Hebrews were expecting?

**By what legitimate means do we perceive some Biblical statements as literal and others as symbolic?**

It is very interesting to observe the collection of scriptural verses that many perceive as “literal” while others are “symbolic”. How is this determined? What guidelines are used? Is it arbitrary? Some examples of verses that many interpret as literal would include: “and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Mat. 24:30); “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” (Acts 1:11); “And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth” (Rev. 19:21); “And so all Israel shall be saved” (Rom. 11:26). These verses are interpreted in the plainest, most usual, typical sense of words in the earthly objectively observable literal meaning. However, the following verses are NOT usually interpreted in the same literal sense: “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come” (Mat. 10:23); “There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom (Mat. 16:28). “This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled” (Mat. 24:34); “For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled (Luke 21:22). What exactly is the determining factor that renders the first collection of verses ‘literal’ and the latter set of verses ‘symbolic’?

2⁴And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. But when And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain” (Acts 28:17-20). Paul was sent to Rome by HIS people, and the Romans found no justification to kill him, and were prepared to release him, but “the Jews spake against it” and that is why Paul is bound in chains.
How do we explain the time indicator statements in the opening and closing of the book of Revelation? “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass” (Rev. 1:1). “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (1:3). “And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (22:6-7). “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand” (22:10). “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (22:12). “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (22:20). Today there is much speculation as to when these events are coming in our future. However, doesn’t this presuppose that these words had absolutely no meaning to the original first century audience? Were the first century readers purposely misled? Does this book say, explain, insinuate or imply in any fashion anywhere that these things “must shortly come to pass” thousands of years in the future? How is the normal sense of these time indicators transformed to or displaced to some future audience? Where is this indicated? The entire text of this book is sandwiched between time indicators: “shortly come to pass”, “time is at hand”, “the things which shortly be done”, “I come quickly”. Are we to understand that most of the apocalyptic body of this book is to be taken literally, but these obviously non-symbolic statements are to be either ignored or displaced to some future time? How can this be? Where does the Bible say this?

Who is, “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev. 17:5)?

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Mat. 23:29-38).

“For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy” (Rev. 16:6). “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood
of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration” (Rev. 17:6). “And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth” (Rev. 18:24). “For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand” (Rev. 19:2).

Jesus says that Jerusalem kills the prophets and upon them, in that generation, will “come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth”. In John’s Revelation we find, “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” where is “found the blood of the prophets, and of the saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth”. Could these two descriptions be referring to the same city of Jerusalem (see footnote 1)? Or does the account of Revelation point to some future city, maybe Rome? Jerusalem was the Old Testament harlot. Is there a different harlot in the New Testament? One thing we know for sure is that both accounts refer to a city filled with the blood of prophets and saints and all the righteous blood shed upon the earth. Before it is decided that Jesus was speaking about first century Jerusalem and the Mystery Babylon of Revelation is some other future city, we should take note of Luke 16:16, “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it”. The Bible tells us there are no prophets after John. Therefore, there can be no future city filled with the blood of the prophets after first century Jerusalem because there are no prophets! The accounts of Jesus and John must refer to Jerusalem in the first century.

How do we explain the imminent quality of New Testament “last days” and “end times”?

Many believe we are currently experiencing the Biblical “last days” and “time of the end”. What does it mean when the writer to the Hebrews says, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (Heb. 1:1-2)? “For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26)? What does John mean when he says, “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (IJohn 2:18)? What does Paul mean when he says, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (ICor. 10:11). It sounds as if the “last days” and “end time” was during the time of Jesus. Is there any indication of a distant, in-the-future, last days or end times? Could we still be in a continued age of last days that has lasted two thousand years? Did Jesus come to begin a long age of last days? Last days of what? Last days of the Old Covenant? Are we currently experiencing the last days of the Old Covenant? Does that mean we are still currently under the Old Covenant, and the New Covenant is yet a future promise? If not, and we are presently in the Christian Age, does this mean Christ is returning to destroy the very age He came to begin - the Christian Age? Should the Bible be more properly divided into three testaments; the Old
Covenant, the New Covenant, and the future earthly manifestation of the Messianic reign? Does this make sense? Is this really what the Bible says?

How do we deal with all of the ‘return of Christ’ imminence passages which pervade the New Testament scriptures? Most all Bible people acknowledge the imminence of Christ’s “coming” as written by the New Testament writers (e.g., Mat. 10:22-23; 16:27-28; 26:64; John 21:21-22; Rom. 13:11-12; 16:20; ICor. 7:29, 31; 10:11; IIThes. 2:6-7; Phil. 4:5; Heb. 9:26; 10:25; 10:37; James 5:7-9; IPeter 4:7; 5:4; IJohn 2:18; Rev. 1:1,3; 3:10-11; 11:14, 17:8; 22:6,7,10,12,20). They wrote as if they expected His “coming” was an event that was not very far in the future. It is usually assumed these writers were either wrong, or we’ve simply misinterpreted the ‘timing’ sense of their statements. Rarely is it considered that both the N.T. writers AND our interpretation in the plainest sense of imminence are indeed correct, and instead our interpretation of Jesus’ “coming” is faulty. Could our understanding of the nature of His kingdom be errored? Could Christ and His kingdom have “come” in the first century thereby upholding the inerrancy of scripture and supporting these passages of imminence in their plainest meaning and sense? Or do we continue to force God’s Word to fit into our interpretive conceptual scheme of understanding? Are there ANY N.T. scriptures that indicate, in the plainest meaning of words, that Christ’s “coming” will be delayed, or not for a long time? It was the evil servant who said his Master delayeth his coming (Mat. 24:48). On the other hand, there are scores of “coming” scriptures that speak plainly in terms of imminence.

Don’t most of us base our understanding of the “second coming” on what we think the scriptures indicate concerning the nature of this “coming”? Isn’t our interpretation based on an understanding that insists upon prophetic events manifesting in the natural, fleshly, physical world? It is commonly said the Jews missed their Messiah because they were looking for an earthly king. Since scripture has not met our expectations of prophetic fulfillment, don’t we continue to set our sights toward the future, much like the first century Jews, patiently awaiting the appearance of an earthly king? Is it possible that prediction after prediction is failing because prophecy has already been fulfilled in that first century generation as scriptures plainly says? Is it possible that Christians did not recognize the Messiah “coming into His kingdom” just as most Jews did not recognize His first advent?

Lest I am accused of “spiritualizing” and “allegorizing” let us observe a few New Testament scriptures concerning the Bible’s hermeneutical methodology:

Jesus was describing the “temple of His body” (John 2:21) while the Jews were thinking in terms of a physical temple (2:20).

Nicodemus, “the teacher of Israel” (3:10), could not follow Jesus’ line of reasoning about being “born again” (3:4): “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?”
The Samaritan woman did not understand Jesus when He spoke “a well of water springing up to eternal life” (4:14-26). She was thinking in terms of water to quench her physical thirst.

The Jews had a very difficult time comprehending Jesus’ meaning when He said that He was “the bread [of life] that came down out of heaven” (6:41). They were equally confused when Jesus stated that eternal life comes from eating “the flesh of the Son of Man” and drinking “His blood” (6:53).

Jesus said, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water’” (7:37-38). Jesus was speaking “of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive” (7:39).

Jesus described Himself as “the light of the world” (8:12), “the door” (10:9), “the good shepherd” (10:14), “the true vine” (15:1).

Any “literal” interpretation of the Bible has to be based upon how the Bible interprets itself. Who are WE to tell the scriptures how they are to be interpreted? Who is willing to tell GOD how HIS WORD is to be interpreted? Might it not be wiser to pray, contemplate, and search HIS Word in the faith that HE will reveal the scriptures? “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). “And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures” (Luke 24:31-32)? “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44).

Referring to the Roman 70 A.D. siege of Jerusalem Jesus said, “For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled” (Luke 21:22). Some might say that not all of the N.T. epistles and John’s Revelation were yet written, and therefore are not included in this “days of vengeance” all things written fulfillment. Conservatively speaking, at very least we can say that ALL means ALL of the Old Testament, for that had already been written. THAT TAKES CARE OF THE FULLFILLMENT ALL OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES. Even if Jesus did not refer to the fulfillment of the epistles and prophecy written in the near first century earthly future, WE CANNOT DIRECTLY CONNECT ANY OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY TO NEW TESTAMENT, POST CHRIST, PROPHECIES for they had all been fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. (days of vengeance). What are the implications of this? Daniel’s seventy weeks is COMPLETELY fulfilled. Daniel’s desolation and consummation is fulfilled. The tribulation, and anti-Christ theories from Daniel chapter 9.

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1 Taken from Gary DeMar, Last Days Madness, Obsession of the Modern Church, (American Vision, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia, 3rd Ed. 1997 pg. 145)
are fulfilled. ANY FUTURE-TO-US PROPHECY FULFILLMENT MUST COME FROM POST GOSPEL CANON (epistles and Revelation).

Most everyone agrees the book of Daniel and Revelation are too connected to not be related. Ezekial and Revelation are far too similar to not be related. If Jesus, Daniel, Ezekial, and John’s Revelation are all speaking of the same thing (which they are) and the focal point is the passing away of the Old Covenant (whereby sin and death thrived under the law) and the advent of the New Covenant (wherein dwelleth righteousness, forgiveness and deliverance from sin, eternal life - in Christ) there is no exegetical inconsistencies and problems. The Old Covenant, by faith, sacrificial Judaic system governed by law, sin, and death gives way to the New Covenant, by faith, spiritually sacrificial Christian system governed by grace, righteousness, and life. This is the “new heavens and earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (IIPeter 3:13). It is NOT our everlasting righteousness, but Christ’s. Our life lies in HIM never ourselves. Jesus said, “I AM the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). He also said, “I AM the resurrection” (John 11:25).

A Fresh Look
Try to set aside all of your commentaries, sermon notes, history books, and preconceived notions concerning Biblical “Last Days” and “End Times”. Let’s try to take a fresh look at what the Bible says concerning eschatology (the study of “last things”). Let’s not make it complicated.

The “Time of the End”
We should first make the distinction that the “time of the end” is not the “end of time”. The expression is found in the prophetic book of Daniel (8:17; 11:35; 11:40; 12:4; 12:9). Other than the 70th week (9:24-27) which we just said has been fulfilled in the “days of vengeance”, mostly everyone agrees the first 69 weeks and the first advent of the Messiah in the fourth kingdom occurs in Daniel’s “time of the end”. In 12:4 and 12:9 Daniel is told “the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end”. More than 600 years later Jesus says, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains” (Mat. 24:15-16; Mark 13:14). Luke says, “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains” (21:20-21). So the “abomination of desolation” was concerning the 70A.D. Jerusalem siege.

The “End” of What?
“The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world (age); and the reapers are the angels” (Mat. 13:39).

“So shall it be at the end of the world (age): the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just” (Mat. 13:49).

4 See “Some thoughts on Daniel 9:24-27” appearing on page 18.
“And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world (age)” (Mat. 24:3)?

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world (age). Amen” (Mat. 28:20).

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world (age) are come” (ICor. 10:11).

“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world (age) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26).⁶

Daniel, Jesus, Paul, and the writer to the Hebrews are making reference to the end of an age. What age? The Old Testament Age. This is the time period covering the “last days” of the Old Covenant.⁷

“And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ” (2 Cor. 3:13-14). “In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:13). “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second” (Heb. 10:9).

“This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many” (Mark 14:24). “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life (II Cor. 3:6). “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament” (Heb. 7:22). “By how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Hebrews 8:6).

Jesus came into the world to be “made a surety of a better testament”. He is “the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises”. Jesus’ first advent signaled the “last days” and the “time of the end” of the Old Covenant. Paul said, “because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain” (Acts 28:20). The hope

Daniel’s words are sealed for over 600 years. In John’s Revelation he is told, “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand” (22:10). Does it make sense that we would still be waiting 2000 years later for a book that was NOT sealed and was “at hand”?⁵

“World” in these verses is the Greek word “Aion” which is more appropriately translated “Age”. Therefore, in each case the writer has added (age) reminding the reader of the more accurate rendering “End of the Age”.

The “last days” were at the time of the Jesus’ generation: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2). At the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost Peter said, “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh” (Acts 2:16-17).
of Israel was Jesus Christ, the Deliverer that “shall come out of Sion … and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” thus “all Israel shall be saved” (Rom. 11:26). Paul’s persecution, Stephen’s stoning, and the persecution of the disciples reminds us of the words of Jesus, “Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. (Mat. 23:34-36). “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled” (Mat. 24:34).§

When is the End of the Old Covenant? What Sayeth the Scriptures?
“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (ICor. 10:11). “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Col. 2:16-17). “For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount” (Heb. 8:4-5). “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect” (Heb. 10:1).

“And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mat. 3:2). “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mat. 4:17). “And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mat. 10:7). “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Rom. 13:12). Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand” (Phil. 4:5). “That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand” (IIThes. 2:2). “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (IPeter 4:7). “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Rev. 1:3). “And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand” (Rev. 22:10).

“O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come” (Mat. 3:7)? “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell” (Mat. 23:33)? “Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation”

§ “Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation” (Matthew 12:45). “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40).
“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled” (Mat. 23:36). “Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done” (Mark 13:30). “That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation” (Luke 11:50-51). “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled” (Luke 21:32). “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). “For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled” (Luke 21:22). “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44).

“But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come” (Mat. 10:23). “Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (Mat. 16:28). “Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Mat. 26:64). “Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee” (John 21:22-23)? “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. (Rom. 13:11-12). “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Rom. 16:20). “But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none” (ICor. 7:29). “And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away” (ICor. 7:31). “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (ICor. 10:11). “And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way” (IIThes. 2:6-7).

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:25). “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door” (James 5:7-9). “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (IPeter 4:7). “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not
away” (IPeter 5:4). “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (IJohn 2:18).

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John” (Rev. 1:1). “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Rev. 1:3). “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. 3:10-11). “The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly” (Rev. 11:14). “And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done” (Rev. 22:6). “Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (Rev. 22:7). “And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand” (Rev. 22:10). “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22:12; c.f. Mat. 16:27). “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Hebrews 10:35-37).

One Final Word
The Old Covenant represented the law and “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (IICor. 3:6). “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb 10:4). “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession” (Heb. 4:14). “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:12). “For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26). “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). “The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation” (Heb. 9:10). “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of
restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21).

The time of “reformation” and the “restitution of all things”, the way into the “Holiest of all” came after the Jerusalem Temple (first tabernacle) was no longer standing. Jesus Christ, the High Priest, sacrificed Himself and the “one sacrifice for sins forever” was accepted fulfilling the prophecy, “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins” (Rom. 11:26-27). As the typology of the Israeli High Priest entered once a year into the Holy of Holies for the atonement of sins for all the people, he then “appeared the second time” indicating the sacrifice had been accepted, and the people’s sins were atoned for another year (Heb. 8). This is the meaning of, “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28). This is simply an expression to the Hebrews, who understood the priestly order and typology, that Christ’s one time sacrifice would atone their sins forever, and the way into the Holiest place would be open when the earthly tabernacle no longer stood (70A.D.). This was Jesus coming out of Sion, appearing the second time without sin unto salvation. As the King James Version puts it, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you” (Acts 3:19-21).

Paul said, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. 10:4). Jesus said, “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Mat. 5:18). Let us recall the words in Luke 16:16, “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. The Old Covenant “heaven and earth” have passed, and all is fulfilled. If not, then we are still under law waiting and have yet to receive, in the future, “the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Heb. 8:6). How much more does our dear Lord and savior need to do? How much more complete does our salvation need to be?

“And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world” (John 8:23).

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence” (John 18:36).

“And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke17:20-21).
Some Thoughts on Dispensational Millennialism

As I studied premillennial dispensationalism I noticed this system of exegetical thought was largely based on very selected scriptural references. Although somewhat simplistic and non comprehensive, the following seems to be the general doctrinal scheme. The building block appears to begin in the O.T. with Daniel 9:24-27. In addition there was a stop in chapter 12 of Daniel centering on the phrase “time, times, and an half”. There are many other verses in other chapters, which dispensationalists point out (correctly so), that share relationship with the book of Revelation. The next stop is in the Gospel books, particularly Matthew 24 where the focus is on such items as the destruction of the temple, the end of the age, the tribulation, deception, false Christ’s, famines, wars, Christ coming in the clouds with His angels, etc. After this we enter Acts 1:11 where angels tell the observers that Christ will “come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven”. The next stop is Paul’s 1Cor.15 “We shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed”. Then we find ourselves at 1Thes.4, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord”. Next is 2Thes.2 where we read about the son of perdition whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. From this point we jump right into the book of Revelation. The bulk of dispensationalism is taken from these passages, being largely built on Daniel’s seventy weeks. Interestingly enough, if it were discovered the exegesis of the seventy weeks is faulty the entire millennial house of cards falls. Why? There is not nearly enough reliance upon all of scripture, as a whole, to hold it up.

Any consistent all encompassing view of the Biblical story of redemption must be sustained by many scriptures throughout. Every system of theology has its difficult passages. Dispensationalism has an inordinate amount.

Some thoughts on Daniel 9:24-27

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy” (Daniel 9:24).

“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate” (Daniel 9:27).

The “seventy weeks” prophecy appears as four verses in our contemporary Bibles. The first thing we might notice about the prophecy is that it concerns, “thy people” and “thy holy city”. We may not understand exactly what is meant by: “end of sins”, “reconciliation for iniquity”, “everlasting righteousness” etc., but we DO understand the meaning of who and what the prophecy concerns: “thy people” and “thy holy city”.

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Now verses 25 and 26, which do not appear above, are concerning time elements and the Messiah. Verses 25 and 26 clearly state, and we understand from the Bible and history, that the holy city of Jerusalem was rebuilt. We understand the Messiah died outside of Jerusalem. We also know Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in 70 A.D.

Looking at verse 27, we might wonder what is meant by ‘confirming a covenant’ and what the sacrifice and oblation ceasing is about. We may wonder exactly what the “overspreading of abominations” is. Then we read about a “consummation” that will be “poured upon the desolate”. Referring back to verse 24 we might remind ourselves what is identified as the predominate object of this prophecy? “Thy people” and “thy holy city”? Whatever verse 27 means, it is about the Jewish people and Jerusalem. The temple and Jerusalem were besieged and left desolate in 70 A.D. as stated by prophecy. This prophecy was fulfilled as God’s prophet foretold. A “consummation” occurred. The writer to the Hebrews says, “Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9:26).

There are many today waiting for this prophecy to yet occur. Daniel’s “people” and “holy city” was the Hebrew chosen people and Jerusalem respectively. Today the chosen people are those “in Christ” who are circumcised of the heart for, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:28-29 c.f. Eph. 2:11-20). Today’s chosen people are, “of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev. 5:9 c.f. Daniel 7:14). Today’s “holy city” is the New Jerusalem spoken of by Apostles Paul and John (Gal. 4:25-26; Rev. 3:12;21:2). If Daniel’s prophecy refers to contemporary times then I guess we’ll need to expect earthly Jerusalem to be destroyed. Remember, the “consummation”, and “overspreading of abominations”, and “poured upon the desolate” relate to Daniel’s people and holy city, not to other peoples or nations. However, futurists usually insist that Christ will return to defeat fleshly Israel’s enemies and save Jerusalem. There is something not consistent here unless we shift the “desolation” from “thy people” and “holy city” to other nations. However, this is not what the prophetic text says. The other obvious solution is to interpret the text plainly and recognize the desolation did occur to Daniel’s people and the holy city.

Why is this Jerusalem “desolation” and “consummation” projected into the distant future from the first century? Is it because Christ’s fulfillment of the Father’s promises do not meet up to our personal interpretations and expectations? Is fulfillment of God’s inspired prophecy dependent upon our perceptions and understanding?

A Look at Daniel Chapter 12

“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. (1-3). “Then I, Daniel, looked and beheld, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river, and the other on that bank of the river. And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long will it be until the end of these wonders?” And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed” (5-7).

The “power of the holy people” was shattered at the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70. That was when “all these events” (including the resurrection) were “completed”. Daniel did not understand and was told to go his way, for the words were, “concealed and sealed up until the end time” (12:9). “But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age.”(12:13).
“And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." And He answered and said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. "Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear" (Mat. 13:36-43). ""So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mat. 13:49-50).

“He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9:26).