

# **Covenants & Dispensations**

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The unconventional punctuation styles you will see are related to the way these studies were originally intended for the e-mail audience, using plain text to keep file sizes smaller for bulk mailing; creatively 'formatting' with punctuation, for various kinds of emphases, in the absence of formatting the actual type. You may find occasional misspellings, and the more rare cases of a Scripture reference going to a wrong passage; those will be 'typos', not intentional. With this type of POD (Print On Demand) publishing, it seems simplest, and the most prudent use of time, to not completely go through and revamp everything, but to just leave things as they are. Please accept this book, warts and all; but rather, please pay attention to, and receive God's Truth presented herein.



# Covenants & Dispensations

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## ***Introduction:***

When the body of "Scriptural theology" is considered, it is quite possible that it could be divided into two large, generic systems, along with their variations and off-shoots. "Covenant Theology" and "Dispensationalism." For this study I am happy that I am not well-versed in each's ideologies, nor each's arguments which exclude the other. As such, I'm not going to take time to study each in order to present them here. The fact that each, typically, excludes the other, indicates "error" in -both- camps. In Paul's day they were saying, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Peter, I am of Christ." (1Cor1:12) And today that list would include, "Our church believes in Covenant Theology" or "I am not 'Covenant' ...I'm 'Dispensational'." Church doctrine is approached from the "Covenant Perspective" or from the "Dispensational viewpoint." For many it is an "either-or" situation.

In the briefest of nutshells...

Covenant theology typically takes from Scripture the things written to/about Israel, and since Israel was judged for their rebellion, it is said that those things now apply to the Church: that Scripturally today the 'Church -is- Israel'; that the original Israel no longer exists nor ever will again, because the Church -replaced- Israel; thus, you will also hear the expression, "Replacement Theology".

Dispensationalism, on the other hand, subdivides the Scripture into time periods, makes distinctions between Israel and the Church; but also often says that Salvation was obtained in -different- 'ways' during different times. Ultra-dispensationalism even goes to the extremes of nitpicking at the gnats of the N.T., speculating that the Sermon on the Mount and the Gospels are not for the Church; or wrangling about 'when' did the Church start? Acts ch2? ch9? ch13? ch28? Some will say that -only- Paul's writings are to the Church, and abandon/reject the rest.

And in many cases each viewpoint begins to add other dogmas into their system, things which are not even related to these terms...and become a complete Belief-System, the complete package being under the "umbrella" of these terms.

In case these paragraphs just "lost" you and you're wondering "what" I'm talking about, or "which" churches might represent which viewpoint; typically (not always) the Reformed, Dominion, Kingdom Restorationist, Calvinists, and many Charismatics to greater or lesser degrees will tend to be "Covenant." Pretty much all Baptists, EFC, etc. tend to be "Dispensational." Please understand, this is a very broad generalization, and does not speak to "individual" congregations and/or their pastors.

However, this series has nothing to do with church denominations; what this group believes, or that one doesn't. This explanation is given merely

for the purpose of identifying the fact that these terms are in use, and that there are misconceptions about them. But to also say that this study will not be based on those ideologies as a starting point.

This series will seek to present a brief Scriptural look at this topic. As with other studies presented here, we may not touch on every last little nuance of each segment. This is not intended to be an unabridged seminary course. But we want to approach it in a way that most readers will understand.

## ***Definitions:***

The term "covenant" first appears when God commands Noah to build the ark(Gen6:18) for the saving of air-breathing life when God destroys the earth with the flood. And then again, God covenants that He will never again destroy all humanity with a flood.(Gen9:11)

According to Strong's, these covenants were a "treaty, alliance, pledge." The dictionary defines it as "a formal sealed agreement or contract." And under Bible, "God's promise to the human race."

Here we see a basic principle of the relationship between God and man. God originates everything. "In the beginning God.."(Gen1:1) Then God said, "Let Us make man..."(vs26) He did so according to "His will." (Rom9:18-24) And it is "in Him we live and move and have our being." (Acts17:28)

God is the One Who "draws" man to Himself(Jn6:44,12:32) Even though man is busy running away as "we have turned everyone to his own way." (Is53:6) Since a covenant is an agreement, a promise, a contract; and since man is rebelling against God; the covenant is "one-sided." Man cannot be trusted to keep his promise. Thus, "when God made a promise... because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself"(Heb6:13)

Thus, we must understand one key factor about Scriptural Covenants. Covenants are God-centered. He makes the promise. He keeps the promise. Man has nothing to do with its fulfillment; but he can receive or reject it. As we shall see in each section of this study.

In this is one stark contrast to many who hold to "Covenant Theology." Many (not all) are seeking to go about to establish a MAN-MADE righteousness and "kingdom." "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God." (Rom10:3) Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world..."(Jn18:36)

Then, we have the term, "dispensation." Paul writes, "..in the dispensation of the fulness of times.."(Eph1:10) When the time was "just right", God did...something. (And we'll look at that verse in its proper sequence.) And Paul also states about his own ministry, the "dispensation of the grace of God" (Eph3:2) which was entrusted to him.

"Dispensation" is "management, oversight, administration, of" something or other. It is the act of "dealing out, distributing"; or of "preparing and giving out." It also includes "an arrangement" or "guidelines" by which a person or group of people are to conduct their affairs.

When God "chose us in Him"(Eph1:4) He did so with great planning; even before He created the universe. When the Believer is promised a future kingdom with Christ, He promised that He would "go to prepare a place." (Jn14:3) The salvation of God's grace is administered to us, after much planning and forethought by God.

And this is true of all of God's Covenants. He has planned them all out. He makes the promise and pledge. He fulfills them; He administers them; He... "dispenses" them. This act of "dispensing" His "covenant/s" is called a "dispensation." Do we see how it is not possible to have God's Covenant without His Dispensation? We cannot have a Dispensation without a Covenant, otherwise the dispensation is meaningless. There is nothing to dispense. Thus, they go hand-in-hand.

It's like God is saying 1) Here's My promise (covenant) and 2) here is how I'm going to fulfill My promise (dispensation).

How man views God's work depends upon whether or not he receives it, or rejects it. No matter what the title of the dispensation, if man in Faith receives God's work upon him, he experiences God's "grace." (Jn1:16) If he rebels, God's "wrath."(Rom1:18)

At different times throughout history God works in different ways to reveal His purpose. Much like a parent might with a child. At times a parent may use simple verbal interaction. Then, there might be a period in the child's development where the parent says, "if you behave in certain ways, the "stick" is going to be applied to your bottom. This is my promise (covenant), and you will know the (dispensation) when you feel the pain." The child grows up and now has "liberty" and has been made "free." If the child remains in good standing, the (covenant) may now be the understanding of the "will" of the "inheritance" when the parents are dead. But if the child rejects the family, often they are "written out" of the will. And the new (dispensation) may be the lack of that inheritance...since the "stick" is no longer an option. While this is a simplification, this might illustrate the aspect of how God deals with man in different ways at different times throughout history. (Heb1:1-2)

However, while God's dispensations may change, His covenants never change; and some are always in effect. First of all, no matter the time in history, Salvation has always been by God's grace through faith (Eph2:8,Heb11), comes about in repentance (Heb12:17), and is provided by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. (Gen3:15,12:3b,Acts4:12,Rev1:5,13:8)

Another thing to remember is that God never changes. "For I [am] the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. (Mal3:6) And "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." (Heb13:8) And just as God is the originator and sustainer of all things, He is also central and foremost. "In the beginning God" (Gen1:1) created all things by His power, wisdom and discretion. (Jer10:12) In His



wisdom, for a time, the "fullness" has been given to Christ. (Col1:16-19) But ultimately, all will go back to the Father "that God may be all in all."(1Cor15:28)

While God is unchanging, His covenants and dispensations vary. There are different ones, of different types, sometimes to different specific groups of people. Some are to all of humanity. Some to just Israel. Some to the Church. Some are "conditional" ...eliciting specific responses from people, with the stipulation that favorable responses will result in blessing; and rebellion, a curse. Others are unconditional; in other words, "this is just the way things are and will be" period. For example, "there will be a flood"; "there will be no more 'total' floods"; vegetarianism; carnivorousness; have dominion over creation, etc.

God has also seen to it that His message is known to man. We obviously know about Moses and the O.T. prophets to Israel, and of the apostles who started the Church and wrote the N.T. But we perhaps may not remember that Noah, while building the ark, was also a prophet.(2Pt2:5) Enoch, who was raptured before the flood, "prophesied."(Jude14) And in Abraham's day (prior to Moses) there was Melchisedek.(Gen14:18) And if a prophet was not nearby, He still did not leave "Himself without witness"(Acts14:17) as things in creation express His glory.(Rom1:19)

## ***Time Line:***

As we consider the various dispensations of God's covenants, of necessity we consider "time." Past, present, future. For the most part, history has had blocks of time in which various covenants and/or dispensations were in effect. But we say "for the most part" because God's nature is to be "merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. (Ps103:8) He does not deal "with us according to our sins."(vs10) He "knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust." (vs14) And so when David, who lived during the period of "Law", committed adultery and murder, the penalties for which should have been "death"; because his "heart" was one that continually "sought" God (Ps119:10) he experienced God's mercy.(Ps41:4) So, though he "fell" he was not "utterly cast down."(Ps37:24)

Our study concentrates on God's covenants with mankind with respect to the present creation. We know there will be a "new heavens and new earth" and this one we are now inhabiting will not be remembered when that time comes. (Is65:17,2Pt3:13) We are only given a slight glimpse of it in Revelation 21. But the present covenants apply to "this" heaven and earth, since the Scriptures begin with "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"(Gen1:1) and placed man on it. As He records, "This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created.."(Gen2:4)

God created what now exists in 6 days; and then rested the seventh day. (Gen2:2) Hebrews speaks of "enter[ing] His rest."(Heb4:3,11) While there is "everlasting life" (Jn3:16) which those who "believe in Him" receive; there is a finite limit to this "heaven and earth." Seven days for creation and rest. Peter speaks, "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day [is] as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (2Pt3:8) As we view history, it becomes apparent that this creation's lifespan is about 7000 years. 6000 years have passed, and the final "Millenium" is imminently upon us. Unlike the time of "doom" that Hollywood depicts for the "Millenium" Scripture tells us it will be a time of peace. Christ will be ruling from Jerusalem, and all nations will stream to Jerusalem to pay homage. (Zec14) There will be peace, as war will have been eliminated. (Is2:4, Mic4:3) And nature will no longer be in travail (Rom8:22) as natural predators will coexist peacefully.. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them." (Is11:6) The final millenium corresponding with the seventh day...of "Rest."

Just as creation occurred in seven days, and this creation has a life span of about 7000 years; we can also see God's dispensations dividing themselves into "seven" periods.

At the beginning of each one God performs a work. Sometimes with "signs and wonders." He makes covenants; both conditional and unconditional. Man responds according to the nature of man. God fulfills His promises; and since man has failed and sinned, there is judgment, and the next period begins, and God makes new covenants. Just as parents try, first "this" and then "that" with their rebellious children, so God dispenses "this" and then "that" in order to show man's inability to follow God, in and of his own will. And throughout the whole course of history, man's failure allows God's mercy and grace to be manifested (Rom5:20) to those who "receive" Him (Jn1:12); and His wrath to those who refuse Him. (Jn3:36,Rom1:18)

I've always been intrigued by "how old" the earth is. Dates and times. The Scofield Bible I was given as a child had 4004 BC for Genesis 1:1. A few years ago, my reading through the Bible included a pad of paper to jot down any reference to time. So-n-so was so-many years old and begot somebody or other. This king reigned so-many years and died, and his son took over, etc. When all was said and done, Genesis 1:1 calculated out to be 4095 BC. I'm not saying my figure is correct, as there were some places where some things were a bit confusing; and it's quite likely that scholars have a better handle on this. If we take into account that calendars and methods of keeping track of time have changed from time to time, and sometimes from empire to empire, and that older records are not always clear, we come to understand that we may not be able to know, precisely, how many years from creation we are living today. As we attach certain year-labels to this study, we will round out to a near-by 100-year spot. If you were to check out various reference materials, you would find many of them differ from each other anyway. The years we attach here will be based on Gen 1:1 being approximately 4000 BC, and intervening years, based on my aforementioned calculations. It will be close enough for our purposes.

However, we can know that God knows. He is "not slack" concerning His promises.(2Pt3:9) The word "slack" means "not late, delayed, or loitering." Scholarship Dave Hunt presents in his book "How Close are We" shows how Jesus died at the very precise day and hour, according to the time of Daniel's prophecy in 9:24-27. And the Holy Spirit arrived right "on time" too.(Acts2:1) Thus, we can also know that early events were right on schedule, as God's "planning" is precise, since He created the whole universe as one gigantic "clock" to "let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years"(Gen1:14) Therefore, we can be assured that the future is all "under His control" as well.

The seven periods we will outline, will no doubt cause some to say, "see, you are 'dispensational!'" Yes, God is. But please remember the "definitions" we gave in the previous section.

## **The Seven Covenant-Dispensations:**

Label/characteristic	Ending Judgement
1) Gen 1:1 -Perfection/Innocence	--cast out of Eden
2) 4000 BC -Conscience	--flood
3) 2400 BC -Government/Religion	--languages confused
4) 2100 BC -Promise	--slavery/10 plagues
5) 1400 BC -Israel/Redemption -(Crucifixion)	--dispersion
6) 30 AD -Church -(Wrath 7 yrs)	--rapture
7) 2000 AD -Peace/Rest	--burned up

Please notice, that while they don't qualify as "periods of time" in the same way the Covenant Dispensations do, the Crucifixion and Wrath are primary events, garnering attention to themselves as "bookmarks" in the pages of history. Both of them being related to "all" of history, albeit, occurring during specific times. As such, they will each receive individual treatment in this series, also.

See Also Addendum: Terra Firma? (Eighth Day)

See Also Online: "Biblical Timeline" [www.a-voice.org/library/timeline.htm](http://www.a-voice.org/library/timeline.htm)

## ***Perfection & Innocence: -Creation (~4000 BC)***

"In the beginning God..."(Gen1:1)

In these four words is wrapped up the sum of theology, wisdom, understanding, life issues, destiny. For modern man to claim theological sophistication while denying God is an oxymoron. The very word "theo" (God) "logy" (study of) indicates the existence of God. As well, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Pr9:10) "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts17:28) The One Who began it all, and sustains it now, also knows the future destiny. God "Most High" (Is14:14,Dan4:25,32,Hos7:16) is the only "god" Who can claim, and this is His distinguishing feature from all other gods... "I God, and there is no other; I God, and none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times [things] that are not [yet] done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,' (Is46:9-10)

As such, these four little words are also the "answer" to any and all questions man may think of; being the ultimate rebuttal against evolution, and anything else man may be in rebellion with.

So now...in the beginning is God. And God begins to perform a work with His "fingers."(Ps8:3) He begins making some "unconditional covenants." "Let there be light"(vs3) Land & water (vs9) vegetation (vs11) the universe arranged as a master clock (vs14) water & air animals.(vs20,24)

Then, God makes man. Of all creation, man is the only thing that is made "in the image of God."(vs27) Man was created for "mercy" and "glory."(Rom9:23) God's desire, continually, is for fellowship with man. He called out to Adam "where are you?"(Gen3:9) Jesus communes with the Father, "that they also may be one in us."(Jn17:21) As the "two shall become one flesh" Paul spoke "concerning Christ and the church." (Eph5:31-32) Man was "crowned with glory and honor."(Ps8:5)

And now, folks, we come to true "Dominion Theology"! "You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,(Ps8:6) And in this we have God's next unconditional covenant with man. "Dominion" over everything on the earth. He does not say, "hug all trees and save the spotted owl" ...but He says "fill the earth and SUBDUE it."(Gen1:28) "Subdue" means to "bring under subjection, dominate, make it subservient" TO MAN. The earth was made for man's dwelling. The first act of being "in charge" was Adam's chore of naming all things. (Gen2:19-20) However, this authority is to be used wisely. Wise stewardship would certainly not include polluting with carcinogens, as God gave Adam charge to "tend and keep" Eden. (Gen2:15) "Keep" meaning to "guard, protect, save life." In other words, subdue the earth, keeping in mind the benefit of it and those deriving life from it.

Vegetarianism was the order in the beginning, as well. God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food."(Gen1:29) While it doesn't say so here, I think we can assume this applied to animals, as well; since the restoration of peace will include a "truce" between predatory animals during the final millenium. (Is11:7,65:25) And in this, we can be pretty sure that the famous ol' T-Rex dinosaur was NOT a "meat-eater." For such a carnivor as the lion is going to eat "straw like the ox."(Is11:7) I don't think there's any reason why the T-Rex couldn't have been a plant-eater, too. For God Who called everything "good" as He made each part, and then Who "rested" the seventh day, animals going around killing each other would certainly NOT be in keeping with this idyllic beginning where, once man was created God says, "indeed it was [VERY] good."(Gen1:31)

God's "rest" was built into this initial existence. This was God's will. He rested.(Gen2:3) And it is His desire for those who believe in Him to "enter into His rest." (Heb4:3) As those who "die in the Lord may REST from their labors."(Rev14:13)

The perfection, purity, and bliss included Adam and Eve being "naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."(Gen2:25) Can you imagine being in such a state all the time...not just the bedroom. Literature for nudism groups presents a supposed picture of such idyllics, where everyone is "free" and it is so wonderful and pure. But what I've heard from those who have participated while unregenerate, is that they are characterized by flagrant sin, as one might suspect in our present world.

So, here we have "perfection." And with their nakedness, "innocence." Man has dominion. They are in charge. They can essentially "make the rules" and do whatever they want. The whole creation is before them, providing all their needs.

Into this idyllic realm God presents ONLY ONE "conditional covenant." (All covenants up to this point have been unconditional. 'There it all is. Go for it.) You have "free[dom]" regarding "every[thing]" that's out there. (Gen2:16) Just one little boundary. JUST ONE TREE whose fruit you are not to eat. You can eat of ANY OTHER plant. However, if you do eat of that ONE TREE, you will die.(vs17)

As we will see spelled out more specifically in later sections; the "blessing" and the "curse." The Blessing to exist on the earth, do whatever, eat whatever. Be blessed and multiply. But, if the one commandment is broken, the promise of the curse with its consequences.

As we have noted in other studies, man failed. They ate the forbidden fruit. Now, it's time for consequences.

Now, when God came to commune, they ran to hide, as man has been doing ever since, "All we like sheep have gone astray."(Is53:6a) And yet, even though God knew what had happened, He calls out to them, "Where are you?" (Gen3:9) This characteristic of God to call out to the sinner we will see throughout history. "Cast away all your transgressions from you by which you have transgressed in them, and make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit; for why will you die...? (Ez18:31 -Lit)

The promise of the conditional covenant now begins to see its fulfillment. They disobeyed, and now a new covenant was established, "For dust you are, and to dust you shall return."(Gen3:19) This new covenant of "corruption" will be in effect until the resurrection and rapture, where the "corruptible [will] put on incorruption" since "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."(1Cor15:53,50) This new covenant of "rotting back to dust" was part of the "death" God promised..."in the day you eat...you shall surely die."(Gen2:17) Even as we live, the cells of our body are continually dying, and being replaced by new ones. Eventually, as we get old, the new cell production doesn't quite keep up with the dying of the old ones. And we die.

And there is now no more "rest" as man must toil to eat. The earth which was designed to be only good, is now also going to produce weeds and thorns. Man no longer has total control over the earth. It is going to "resist" man. It is "cursed."(3:17) And was through Noah's time. (Gen5:29)

No longer is there freedom to do/eat anything. They are expelled from Eden. The place of God's "rest." No longer do they have access to the "Tree of Life."(Gen3:24) It will, now, no longer be available until the Believer joins God in Paradise (Rev2:7) and also in the new heaven and new earth. (Rev21-22)

And then, that which was so beautiful is gone. No more innocence. They notice they are naked!(3:7) Now, nakedness is a "shameful" thing. (Is47:3) And a companion event, the blessing God had blessed them with, to be "fruitful" and multiply...will be painful.(3:16) And, instead of the woman coming "along-side" (from the rib), she is now "under" the man.(vs16)

After such an idyllic beginning, for however long a period of time it lasted--Scripture doesn't say; all the beauty and wonder is shattered. And by all thoughts, things could seem hopeless for man.

However, while God has been faithful to His covenants, and has fulfilled His promised consequences if they disobeyed...He does not leave man floundering. He establishes some new covenants, and makes provisions...

First of all, God curses the serpent. (Gen3:14-15) Later in the study we will see this curse fulfilled at the Crucifixion and again during His Wrath as Satan is defeated. And in terms of his "host animal" ... while all the rest of

creation is at "peace" during the final millenium, "dust shall be the serpent's food."(Is65:25)

And then, the woman's "seed" (3:15) This "One's" identity will be progressively explained as succeeding periods unfold. But, in hindsight, we know Him to be the Son of God, Jesus Christ. (Gal4:4) And as a visual symbol of this promise, which would not occur until 4000 years into the future, God killed an animal to cover their shame (Gen3:21) and explained the substitutionary animal sacrifice (Gen4:4) as a ritual of faith. (Heb11:4)



## ***Conscience: -Holy Spirit*** (~4000-2400 BC)

"Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground."(Gen4:1-2)

Here we see the first two human offspring. The timing of their arrival may provide a clue to us that the previous period of "Innocence" may have been rather short-lived. If we consider from Scripture and previous studies, that our "sin nature" is inherited at birth, "in sin my mother conceived me"(Ps51:5) and the fact that "[ALL] have sinned" (Rom3:23); there were no human births in Eden during their innocence. They weren't there long enough to discover each other in that way. Because of this, some have speculated that Eve may have been deceived the very first day she was brought to Adam. I don't know that Scripture tells us, specifically, one way or the other. But this is an interesting deduction...and one that would seem to have merit. But I won't claim it as "fact" until the Lord possibly confirms it for us at some future date.

In addition, Cain and Abel represent the beginning of the struggle between good and evil amongst the human race. Those who choose, in faith (Heb11:4) to follow God, and those who rebel and persecute the righteous.

As these periods have overlapping covenants, the judgment which ended "Innocence", the killing/sacrifice of the animal, also became part of the provision for "Conscience" and succeeding periods. The promise of future redemption. (Job19:25-26) Abel chose to follow God by offering an animal sacrifice...according to God's plan.

When Cain brought to God the work of his own hands ("of works" -Eph2:9 or "works of righteousness" -Tit3:5) he was rejected. He knew he was rejected. And he saw that Abel was "accepted in the Beloved." (Eph1:6)

What was Cain's reaction to this rejection? Did he seek God with, "I'm sorry, God...I must not have understood correctly. Please tell me, again, what is acceptable"? No. He became angry. And God even confronts him. "Why are you angry?" If you're doing what's right, it will be accepted. But if not, you're struggling with sin. You need to face it squarely and resist. (Jas4:7) If you don't, you will be enslaved by it." (Jn8:34) Paul would write later of "PRESENTING [ourselves]" to either righteousness or sin. (Rom6:16)

Now, this "sin" was between Cain and God, wasn't it. Cain was doing wrong, and receiving God's reprimand. But what does Cain do? Repent and correct the wrong? According to God's words he certainly had that option. But no. He becomes angry WITH ABEL, of all things, and kills him. Abel wasn't even part of the equation where Cain and God's dialogue was

concerned. But, Abel had one thing. Acceptance by God. As Cain was "talk[ing]" with Abel (vs8), perhaps he was saying, among other things, "So, you think you're better than me!! Well, I'll show you...!" ..?

Abel was the first martyr for righteousness. And, for the same reason martyrs for Christ are thus in recent years. The same reason the Believer is persecuted. Righteousness shines like light in a dark world. (Mt5:14) The Believer is a light because of the light of Jesus Christ's righteousness shining through us.(Jn8:12,Col1:27,2Cor5:21) But "men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."(Jn3:19) The Believer doesn't even have to DO or SAY anything. Just the fact that they exist in the same vicinity, the evil is "exposed."(Eph5:11) And the unrighteous will accuse the Believer of "judging" and "condemning" them, when the Believer may not have said even one word.

And now "Conscience" comes into play. God speaks, "Where is Abel your brother?" This is what the Holy Spirit does; He convicts of sin. (Jn16:8) So, Cain lies, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"(4:9) In essence, God says, "yes you are."

And because of this murder, the earth is further cursed.(4:12) And Cain is exiled.(vs14) While capital punishment hasn't yet been established, people know they should not kill fellow-human beings, as Lamech is terribly worried when he had to kill someone in self-defense.(vs23)

But the situation with humanity becomes totally corrupt during these 1600 years. As we read Genesis ch6, we see an essential "free-for-all" regarding sex. (6:2) And "the earth was filled with violence."(vs11) And also a "corruption."(vs11) The root word behind "giants" (vs4) means "fallen." Putting the combination of these verses together, it is thought by many that there was an intermarriage between fallen angels and humanity. The angels whom Jude speaks about who "did not keep their proper domain (in the spirit realm), but left their own abode." (Jude6) Whatever the case, one senses that the offspring of these unions was something rather "awesome" compared to the norm.(6:4b)

Do we have any "proof" of this theory? Well, perhaps not. But if one considers that much regarding mythology has basis, somewhere in ancient times, in fact; where did such creatures as the pegasus come from? Or "Pan" with the human torso and goat's legs. Or Medusa with serpentine "hair"? "Why" would such corruption come about? Was it just by chance? Man's evolutionary tendencies to change? Or is the plot more sinister?

Out of the judgments at the end of "Innocence" remember God's "promise"? The woman's "seed." Redemption from the curse of death because of sin. God's plan was that Jesus Christ would be born "4000 years hence." But, Satan wants preeminence. He wants to be "like the Most High."(Is14:14) He wants the glory for himself...not God. He is fighting God for every inch of territory he can muster. What better way to

totally wipe out God's created humanity, than to keep that "seed" from ever arriving on the scene! That would totally frustrate God's plan for redemption, would make God into a liar who couldn't keep His promise. If humanity is corrupted at the chromosome level of genetics, then, the "seed" will no longer be a "man."

Did you ever wonder why Noah was picked for salvation, out of all humanity on the earth at that time? Was it because he was a "good boy?" No. He was "perfect IN HIS GENERATIONS."(Gen6:9) The word "perfect" means "complete" or "without blemish." The genetics of his family had not been "corrupted" (vs11)

At this point God makes two covenants. 1) My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh.(6:3) and 2) I will destroy [all flesh] with the earth.(6:13)

First of all, do we see how God's Holy Spirit was active during this time? And because of man's corruption, God says, "enough is enough. I'm not going to keep doing this." What was the Spirit doing? What He does today. Jesus said that He "convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."(Jn16:8) as Paul writes of the times prior to the Wrath, "He who now RESTRAINS..."(2Ths2:7) When Adam sinned and hid, God called out to him, "Adam where are you?" During this time of "Conscience" what was the "agent" of conscience? God Himself, through the Holy Spirit. The whole earth was corrupted...and God was continually "striving" with man to keep (restrain) him from following the "fallen ones." Even back then, He was "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."(2Pt3:9) They did not have a multitude of prophets or written Scriptures to know right from wrong. They had God's Holy Spirit, Himself. But they rejected Him.

So God says, "no more"; and does He at this point "remove" Himself? Perhaps when Enoch was "raptured?"(5:24) A foreshadowing of a future event when the Holy Spirit and the Church will be removed from the earth?(2Ths2:7) Remember, Enoch was a picture of righteousness, because it says, "Enoch walked with God.."(vs24) And of Jesus' second coming He says, "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of man."(Lk17:26)

And then, the flood. Destruction of ALL "breathing" flesh.(7:15) But a remnant (Zech14:2,Rom9:27,11:5) was saved in the ark, to preserve life. (6:19) To preserve the "seed."

And while God is destroying the whole world, bringing to a close the age of "Conscience" God makes a promise for the future to Noah. "But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark--you [and your family]"(6:18)

We cannot let this section pass us by without noticing more directly the "example" for the times in which we now live. The days which are imminently upon us in July, 1998. Again, Jesus said, "just as it was in the days of Noah." What were the primary characteristics? Sexual promiscuity, relationship with the fallen angels, and corruption of genetic things. What do we see today? Pretty much everything is sexually motivated, starting at the White House, on down. Everything in society has some sort of occult/pagan/demonic connection, even into the "church". And now, science is even dabbling around with genetics; being used as evidence in the courts, as well as cloning experiments, as they consider "manufacturing" body parts.

What happened around the time of the flood? God's Holy Spirit stopped "striving" with man. What is prophesied for the future? He (Holy Spirit) is restraining (2Ths2:7) until "it comes out of the midst." (vs7-Lit) What is the "it" here? Those who "walk according to the Spirit."(Rom8:1,4) That is, characteristically, the Church.(Rom8:9) Those who are "CHRISTIans." Just as Enoch "walked with God" (Gen5:24) and was a prophet against the wickedness of his time(Jude14-15); and was "taken"... so it will be again... "one will be taken and the other left." (Mt24:40-41)

And then, we have the remnant who were kept safe in the ark. They went "through" the flood, and came out the other side preserved. They were there because their "generations" were perfect. Based on "seed." So, likewise, a "remnant" of ISRAEL will be saved and come out the other side of God's Wrath, preserved.(Zech14:2,Rom9:27,11:5) Israel is an entity based on "seed" of Abraham and heredity. I don't find a Scriptural reference to "remnant" connected with the Church. The Church is "taken out" of the Gentiles "for His name."(Acts15:14)

For those willing to see it, here is yet another example of the distinction between Israel and the Church. The "pre-70th week" rapture of the Church, and Israel's preservation "through" it.

# **Government/Religion:**

## **Babylon, spirit of antichrist** (~2400 BC-2000 AD)

"And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark."(Gen8:1)

When considering God and His covenants, here is a key thing to remember. "He remembers His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations."(Ps105:8) Remember Peter says, "He is not slack concerning His promises." (2Pt3:9) All air-breathing life is in this huge "life pod." With all the rain, tidal waves, and swells, they are no doubt initially experiencing motion-sickness. But they are safe. They may have felt a bit confined. But it was God's provision for them. And after a full year in the ark, the waters are dried up, and they come out to be on land again.

And now God issues more covenants. First of all He renews the covenant for life to "be fruitful and multiply on the earth."(Gen8:17) And then, as Noah is offering a sacrifice, God lifts the curse on the ground; and also covenants to never again destroy "every living thing."(8:21)

He establishes the "seasons." The flood changed some fundamental things for the earth. Before, it had never rained, but the earth was watered with a mist.(Gen2:6) Archaeological evidence points to pre-deluvian tropics-like "greenhouse" effect, with fossil evidence of lush vegetation at both poles. Thus, an ideal climate for Adam and Eve to be naked. Now, there is to be what has been ever since. Hot and cold. Planting and harvesting. How long is this covenant good for? "While the earth remains." In other words, the earth worshippers don't need to worry about their ozone layer being depleted. "Global warming" will not result in another greenhouse.

Another fundamental change. The relationship between man and animal. Animals will now be "afraid of" man. (This kind of puts a crimp in Hollywood's style, depicting an adversarial relationship between dinosaurs and people, doesn't it..since fossil evidence shows that dinosaurs would have existed prior to the flood; and this covenant.)

In addition to this, man is now given "meat" to eat. (9:3) Good reason for animals to now be "afraid" eh! Is this, then, also when carnivorous animals begin to be carnivorous?

However, now comes a conditional covenant. First of all, while eating meat, man is not to eat the blood. The "life, that is, its blood."(vs4) Man is to respect life, even animal life. Make sure the blood is all out, or cook it until it is. And you notice, God keeps a "reckoning" of this. "Surely for your

lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man."(vs5)

And then, "capital punishment" is now instated. "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man."(vs6)

God seals this whole series of covenants with the rainbow. It is the "sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you.."(vs12) The rainbow is visible when a special combination of moisture in the clouds is present for sunlight to refract through. This is a reminder of "weather" and seasons. Something they didn't have prior to the flood. God's promise "while the earth remains" to all flesh. A reminder, to Himself, even, to not ever destroy all flesh on earth again with a flood.(9:15)

OK. Covenants are established, and life is ready to progress. We still don't have very many rules do we. There is still relative "freedom." In actuality, the rule about respecting life is only changed, in that now there is a spelled-out "consequence" for murder.

The fact that Noah and his family were NOT "good boys" is illustrated quite quickly with the incident of what Ham did to Noah.(9:22-24) They were not saved through the flood because they were perfect in their behavior. But the "seed" was preserved through God's grace.

The next 100 years establishes the character of humanity for the following millenia. Everyone is speaking one language, and they migrate from the regions of Turkey to what is now Iraq and Kuwait. And they begin a system of worship that will dominate the whole world. They build a "tower." Archaeologically known as a ziggurat. A kind of pyramid. At the tops of these structures would be symbols and images of sun, moon, stars, constellations. And what was their purpose for this? To make a "name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."(11:4) Again, rebellion. God had said, "be fruitful..and FILL the earth."(9:1) Man says..."No, we want to stay right here."

Furthermore, the worship they begin on these structures will be the basis for all world religions. It will spread into the region where Israel will fall into idolatry. It will become the basis for Egyptian worship. It will spread to Greece and Rome. And ultimately into the present apostate "church." But, what we see today, and Revelation speaks of as "mystery Babylon" all had it's origins right "here" after the flood. It is the basis for the present "United Religions." And while they claim "unity in diversity" it is Babylon that is "in charge."

What is Satan's strategy with all this? God had given the animal sacrifice. Babylon and Nimrod (10:8-10) had their sacrifices. God was going to send His Son in the form of Jesus, born of a virgin, Who would die and rise

again. All the variations of Babylon have their "mother-son" figures. In Egypt the son even dies and comes back to life. And through the millenia comes to become the "madonna and child" of the Roman religion. While God would establish an offering of the first-born "animal" as a foretaste of God's "Firstborn", Babylon corrupted this, and the various religions threw their human offspring into the sacrificial flames. Things of which God said, "they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind" (Jer19:5)

Satan's strategy? Counterfeits. Substitutes. He wasn't able to corrupt the "seed" and his emissaries ended up in confinement.(Jude1:6) So now he needs a new method. If the "seed" is going to make it, then, the next best thing is to have people not recognize Him when He comes. Have all the look-alikes in place before Jesus arrives, and after He comes, attach His name to all the pagan entities, architecture and art. "This is the [spirit] of the Antichrist, which...is now already in the world." (1Jn4:3) The world religion? Satan's ABC's. [A]nything [B]ut [C]hrist. To capture the minds and hearts of humanity in delusion.

What is God's reaction to all this? And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their languages, that they may not understand one another's speech."(11:6-7)

It was called "Babel" because of the ensuing "confusion." And God "scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth."(vs9) And then, about 100 years into this period, God splits the earth into continents, furthering the effect of this dispersion. (10:25)

An interesting observation about the days we live in. Remember how Jesus said, "as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of man be."(Mt24:37) At the flood, Noah was 600 yrs old. Noah died when he was 950 yrs old. That means, he was alive through this whole period, and Abram was probably about 50 when Noah died. So, in one sense, we could say that this period of Government/Religion, as mankind is organizing itself into cities and worship, is also the "days of Noah." Not just the time prior to the flood, as we usually think of it.

During this time they said "let's all be united...let's work together..let's worship as one." And God scattered them. Today, after millenia of separation, we again have a "global village." The entire world is connected up together via satellite, internet, rapid transportation. Worship together is now possible on a global level and was done at the past two Olympics. And man is boasting that the language barriers are all-but eliminated with software and machines which are capable of instant translation. Boasting at having circumvented God's counsel, as they say "Let us break Their [God's] bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us."(Ps2:3) There

is a purposeful, militant effort currently, to get the whole world united, both governmentally and religiously.

What does God counsel? "He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision"(vs4) And His Son in the very near future "shall break them with a rod of iron; [He] shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."(vs9)

So, the beginning of human Government/Religion was judged by a confounding of the languages and forced division of the peoples. And yet, while other periods will come and go, this one still progresses, and will be ultimately, finally, judged during the "Wrath." It took a mere 100 years to get Babylon started. God mixed up the languages and scattered humanity. But man would continue to try to unite. And Egypt will be destroyed. And then Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome will attempt to conquer the whole world, in their times, and make a united world. But in each case, God will bring disaster upon them. But Babylon, the religion, will continue in the minds and hearts of humanity.

While the next section of this series begins after 300 years, Babylon is still continuing on. There will become two sets of covenants in effect. What we see now will remain essentially unchanged for around 4000 years. But God will establish special covenants with specially chosen people...alongside these "generic" covenants with the world.

This "Babylon" is the backdrop in front of which God will now display His plan of redemption. This is the world of Satan's evil, and man's willful self-expression, before which God will shine His light of righteousness, crafting His plan through specially chosen people who provide the focus for the remaining Dispensations.

The stage is set.



## ***Promise: -Abraham*** (~2100-1400 BC)

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen12:1-3)

Here we see what has become known as the "Abrahamic Covenant." Continental drift has now put some distance between peoples. The confusion and turmoil of different languages is settling down. Families and cities are becoming established. The earth is beginning to be repopulated since the flood. Out of all these people, God calls out a single person to travel a special journey of Faith. To leave the "multitudes" on the "broad way"(Mt7:13) to travel a life of wandering as a sojourner. Without going into details of his family relationships, he takes off, as would be said of him later "And he went out, not knowing where he was going."(Heb11:8)

"Get out of your country." He had to leave Babylon. (Ur was right nearby to Babel.) As Believers are told "Come out of her My people." (Rev18:4) It took him a little longer to leave his family, as his father "took" him part way.(Gen11:31) Jesus spoke of the necessity to forsake "family" to follow Him. (Lk14:26)

But God blesses Abram. Specially chooses him, and sets him up as a standard by which to judge "all the families of the earth." Those who act favorably towards Abraham (and his descendants) will experience God's blessing. Those who are otherwise, God's curse. (Remember? the blessing and curse.) And then, we see the "seed" of the woman (Gen3:15) showing up here again. "In you all families of the earth will be blessed." This is looking ahead to the "seed" which would come in the future, from Abraham's lineage.

Until he obeys the first step, the promise is that there is a land "that I will show you." But Abram has not yet seen it. He must step out in Faith.

After his father dies, he finally leaves his family in Haran. (12:4) But Lot tags along. Eventually there are more family squabbles, and Abram tells Lot, "take your pick and move away." And once Lot is gone, and Abram has finally "rid himself" of his family, as God had told him to do "years ago" THEN the next covenant comes. This covenant is with "just" Abram. Not all his tag-along relatives. (13:14)

"Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are...for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth...arise, walk in the land...for I give it to you."(13:14-17) This is the covenant of the "land." This is the

territory the Palestinians and other Arabs would like to take away from Israel. They claim heritage back to Abraham. But let's continue...

But you notice something here. Abram was in the land of promise, but didn't know its extent. He had to get rid of the "encumbrances" which were weighing him down. It is not enough to follow God partially. When Abram had finally fully obeyed God, then, and only then, did God disclose the fullness of the blessing.

Now, Abram had no direct heir yet, and begins to try to "figure out" how he is to have descendants. God promises his offspring to become as numerous as the "stars"(15:5) And it says "he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."(15:6) While Abram had offered animal sacrifices, what we see God accounting to Abram's benefit is "Faith." And we will see this being the foundation for salvation prior to circumcision, Law and Church. (Rom4:12,13, Gal3:7) And while circumcision, Law and Grace will come about with all their covenants and rituals, the core essence of salvation is "Faith." "The just shall live by faith." (Hab2:4,Rom1:17,Gal3:11,Heb10:38)

Only after Abram has thus been converted through faith does God now present him with a very solemn, official covenant. Genesis 15 records this incident. As the writer of Hebrews says (6:13) "since He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself." This is a one-sided covenant, as Abram is in a trance-like state. God promises that Abram's descendants will be in bondage a while, but that God will deliver them. And He then spells out the boundaries of the "land" which is bequeathed to Abram's descendants. This "covenant" is in dispute, even today, by the peoples of that region. Let's continue, and see why it belongs to Israel...

Abram has a lapse in faith, and fathers Ishmael through a servant, not his wife. (Gen16) But that is not God's covenant. Finally, after many years, when things seem hopeless, God gives Sarah Isaac. As Isaac is promised, God changes his name from Abram (exalted father) to Abraham (father of a multitude). ...so far just "one" baby is on the way...!

In faith, Abraham obeys and begins the institution of "circumcision." (17:10) But not until he has first suggested to God, "let Ishmael" be the one. And here God clarifies the covenant. "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him."(17:19) So, you see...the Arab nations with lineage back to Ishmael do not have claim to this covenant territory. But we also see another lesson here. We should be careful "what" we pray for, because sometimes God answers. He answered Abraham's desire for Ishmael to prosper, and so God grants it. See how much of the current struggles in the middle-east would be diminished if Abraham hadn't stepped in and asked God... The number of Israel's enemies would be much less today. They are

Abraham's "seed" (21:13). But the "PROMISE" was through Isaac; "the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with... Isaac."(vs10)

However, circumcision becomes a defining characteristic for those being obedient to God's covenant for around 2000 years. Salvation is by Faith. And circumcision was the physical symbol of obedience.

As we continue, Isaac has two sons, and God's covenant is, "Two nations are in your (Rebekah's) womb, two people shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger."(Gen25:23) The babies "struggled within" the womb, and at birth Esau came out first and then Jacob, having a hold of Esau's heel.

We won't repeat here the story of the stolen birthrights and blessings. Suffice it to say that, to Jacob was given the "blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham."(28:4) Which God confirms to him in the dream, "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants...and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed."(28:13-14)

You see, we still have only a "promise" of the inheritance. The land has been given to Abraham's descendants...but it is not theirs yet. They haven't yet "tak[en] possession" of it.(Josh22:19)

Then, Jacob (supplanter) finds himself wrestling with God and is given a new name, "Israel" (God prevails). This, as he is about to meet his brother, who he expects wants to kill him. Well, some of Israel's enemies today are descendants of Esau; and they would like to "kill" Israel. But, as God promised, the older will serve the younger, as "God prevails." From prophecy, we know what the ultimate outcome will be.

As we know the story, famine comes, and the whole clan moves to Egypt to be sustained by Joseph. And they are then enslaved for 400 years as God had said to Abraham.

But the covenants of 1) BLESSING all "families of the earth" and of the 2) LAND, were repeated to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This repetition makes it clear "who" the recipients are. They are not the descendants through Ishmael and Abraham. Nor of Esau (Edom), Isaac and Abraham. But of "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."(Ex6:8,33:1,Nu32:11,etc.)

When "God" is named, it is not "Allah" the god of Ishmael via Abraham. Nor any of the other gods of the region. There is only One God Who presented Himself to "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

So, the "land" and the "nation" are distinguished. God has promised it. But Israel find themselves in bondage in Egypt. Again, according to God's workings, He seems to delight in allowing man to get to the edge of what seems like a hopeless situation, to then, show His mighty works. Abraham and Sarah "just weren't" having any success having children. Almost to an "impossible" age. And God had promised a "multitude." Rebekah had problems having children. Their numbers are still in the "single digits" and still no "multitude" to borrow from. Now, with a name like "Israel" (God prevails)...they are in slavery under the mightiest nation on earth at that time. (Ex1:10-11)

This period of "Promise" seems to have died "in a coffin in Egypt."  
(Gen50:26)

## ***Law: -Israel & redemption*** (1400BC -30AD)

Babylon is firmly entrenched. Egypt is the world leader in religion and scholarship. Anyone wanting the best education of the day would go to Egypt to find it. Their leadership in religion even extends to the present times, as many of their obelisks have been removed, transported and erected in various other locations around the world, including USA's own "Central Park" in New York City, thus, effectively spreading that aspect of Egypt's "Babylon" to these places in the world.

Into the middle of this is a little thorn in satan's side. The "seed." A "Hebrew" has just been into Egypt's financial institutions, and has bought up all the land for Pharaoh during the famine. But now, anti-semitism is setting in. It doesn't matter that Joseph has saved the lives of countless thousands during the harsh famine, now there must be a "Jewish plot" and we must take care of this "problem." Just look how they are multiplying! We can't trust them. Let's put them to servitude. (Ex1:9~) And when they keep multiplying, a new edict is handed down. "Drown all male babies" of the Hebrews.

Satan has established his counterfeit religion; the "spirit of antichrist." But, he is going to still continue making attempts to keep the "Seed" from arriving. So, if all male children are killed, pretty soon the race will be eliminated. The one flaw in his thinking was to not have Pharaoh just off and slaughter all the people, because they provided cheap labor. But the children of Israel are crying out to God. (Ex3:7)

In the midst of this, one mother, by faith (Heb11:23) disobeyed Pharaoh. And through a course of events, Moses was raised up and educated right under Pharaoh's nose. (Like they say, the best place to "hide" is right "in plain sight.")

Through a series of events, Egypt is destroyed. This instance of Babylon is judged, as the ten plagues, each, scoffed at an Egyptian deity. God shows His marvelous power and "outstretched arm" (Ex6:6) through "signs and wonders" (De6:22) and brings Israel out of Egypt through seemingly impossible odds.

Israel, as a nation has now become an "entity." Clearly, God's hand is upon them. And He establishes some covenants. While there are many laws and dictates regarding everyday living and society, there are some key covenants and symbols which have dispensational significance.

First of all, circumcision, as instituted to Abraham, continues. It remains a symbol of Faith to Israel. Anyone, even from other nations, wanting to partake in God's covenants has their males circumcised. (Ex12:44,48) They "become" Jewish.

The covenant regarding the promised "land" is remembered. (Ex6:4)

And then God institutes some new covenants. They can be categorized in three segments; the Ark, the Law and the Feasts.

The one most important physical item to Israel was the "Ark of the covenant." (Nu10:33) On the Ark was the "mercy seat." This was a physical representation of God's "presence" in the midst of Israel. As the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth," (Ex34:6)

Another most important thing was the "blood of the covenant." (Ex24:8) As the writer of Hebrews states, "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb9:22) Essentially all of God's covenants with Israel were based upon the sacrificial animals and the collecting of the blood. This blood would be used to sprinkle on the people, to cleanse people and things. And once a year the High Priest would sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant. (Heb9:7)

Remember earlier God had made a point of mentioning "blood" with regard to eating meat. And of shedding man's blood. That the "life is in the blood." He reiterates this, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." (Lev17:11) Remember how God "breathed into [Adam's] nostrils the breath of life" and he became a "living soul."(Gen2:7 -kjv) When man sinned, the curse was "death." Until the "Seed" should come, the sacrifice, the shedding of blood (life) would symbolize what the "Seed" would do when He would give His own life, and shed His blood. (Rev1:5)

Then, God gives a complete set of instructions for living pleasing to Him. Remember that the "generic" covenants essentially only cover how the physical world and nature will function, and the value of life... against murder. Otherwise, there are basically no rules for the rest of the world. And yet, everywhere man turned, his rebellion against God was called "wickedness" and "iniquity"(Gen6:5,15:16) Based on what? Some sort of "intangible" things of the "conscience."(Rom2:15)

So, the Law is given. The "Ten Commandments" as well as a whole host of rules and regulations for just about all areas of life. And we will find that Israel is not capable of keeping them. As Paul would write, in hindsight, the Law was given to show sin to be sinful. (Rom3:20) Sin was in the world prior to this, but it was not imputed (Rom5:13) because there was no standard (or gauge) by which to judge it. And although God is "abounding in mercy" without a gauge to illustrate just "how sinful" sin is, His grace is meaningless. (Rom5:20) Modern theology wants to have God's grace, without a sinful man. they go around saying "grace, grace,

graaaeessss!" all-the-while, telling everybody that they are "worth so much" to God and that God doesn't really expect them to change...that that's what "grace" is. But the true measure of God's grace comes about when the full extent of sin is understood. The realization of "just how far away from" God the person is, to then, understand "how far" God reached down to redeem us. Thus, the Law was given.

In addition, finally, are the annual Feasts. In the feasts is contained a keyed puzzle to the rest of history; ..to God's redemptive plan.

### **PASSOVER**

Jesus' crucifixion. God said "when I see the blood..I will pass over" (Ex12:13) and not destroy. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord."(Rom6:23)

### **UNLEAVENED BREAD**

Part of Passover. Christ's burial. The removal of sin. Paul speaks of "purg[ing] out the old leaven" because of Christ our Passover being sacrificed. That leaven represents "malice and wickedness."(1Cor5:7-8)

### **FIRSTFRUITS**

Resurrection. "bring a sheaf of the firstfruits...on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it." (Lev23:10-11) "Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn.." (Mt28:1) they found Jesus had risen. "But now Christ is risen from the dead, has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." (1Cor15:20)

### **FIFTY DAYS**

Holy Spirit. "Count fifty days..you shall bring two wave loaves..they shall be baked WITH leaven." (Lev23:16-17) "When the Day of Pentecost had come..." (Acts2:1~) Here the leaven represents the "filling" (Eph5:18) of the Spirit, and leaven's tendency to expand, the overflowing of the water of life "springing up into everlasting life." (Jn4:14)

### **TRUMPETS**

Rapture. "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. The dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.." (1Ths4:16-17)

### **ATONEMENT**

Jacob's trouble and Wrath. "Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it. (Jer30:7) He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and

silver, That they may offer to the LORD An offering in righteousness. (Mal3:3)

### **FEAST of TABERNACLES**

Kingdom during Millenium. "And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles." (Zec14:16)

See Also Addendum: "Feast of Ingathering" & "The Next Feast of Israel"

Every year Israel celebrated these feasts. they were divided into three groups. In the spring of the year was Passover, which included Passover, Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits; signifying the work of the "Seed." The second trek was for Pentecost; the coming of the Holy Spirit. And finally, the "Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year." (Ex23:16) The "end of the year" signifying the "end of the age" (Mt13:39,etc.) The gathering in prior to "Rest." The Church; then Israel; then peace. Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles.

These covenants Israel lived with year in, year out. Not understanding their significance..since Jesus had to explain it all to the disciples after He had risen from the dead. "Then He opened their understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures." (Lk24:45)

But, we're not finished with Israel yet. After many ups and downs, around 1000 BC, along comes David whom God chooses to lead Israel. David is significant, not only because he establishes Israel among the nations and gives them credibility as a power to be reckoned with, but he is also the person for the "Seed" to become better focused. We have known for 3000 years that there was to be "a" seed. And for 1000 years, we know the nationality. Now we have a specific lineage "name" to attach to Him. Another covenant...

The "Davidic Covenant." God says, "My covenant I will not break..I will not lie to David: his seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me.."(Ps89:34-36) "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given..of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice..the zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." (~Is9:6-7)

OK. Now we know "where" the "Seed" is to come from. So, the strategy becomes focused. We have the Babylon conterfeits in place. Now we need to focus on two areas. We know that a group of people will follow their leader. So, the kingly line of Israel (Judah) became corrupt throughout many generations. And, if the king is corrupt, then #2 naturally follows; the whole nation will become corrupt, and can be enticed into the



Babylon system, to worship the pagan gods of the surrounding nations. Eventually, they become weak and are captured.

Once in captivity, it is easy to plot a total annihilation of the race. (Esther) There can be plots to kill all the royal heir, etc. And once the "Seed" is born, after the nation is back in the land of promise, an angry king can be called upon to kill all babies under 2yrs old. (Mt2:16-18)

We'll cover the work of the "Seed" next section. But, we find that Israel, although being "the" nation through whom the "Seed" came, they rejected Him. "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him." (Jn1:11) When the Holy Spirit came, they rejected Him. Throughout their history God desired fellowship. He desired, "Oh that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them..." (De5:29) But as Stephen preached as he was about to be martyred, "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised IN HEART and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit.." (Acts7:51) And so, in keeping with "the curse" ..."But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:"(Du28:15) ...and the rest of the chapter lists all the things which came upon Israel. And ultimately, in 70 AD, the Romans came and finished the job of "scatter[ing] them like stubble that passes away by the wind...this is your lot, the portion of your measures from Me," says the LORD. (Jer13:24-25)

Now...according to Jesus' words, the period of "Law" ended when John the Baptist was on the scene. (Mt11:13,Lk16:16) And the work of Jesus on the cross brought an end to the curse of the Law. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." (Rom10:4)

If only Israel would have received Him! The eternal plan has been fulfilled. The "Seed" came and died. They, as a nation, have fulfilled their purpose, and now could have been enjoying "rest." (Heb3) But they are scattered. And will be for nearly 2000 years. Things seem hopeless for Israel.

But Paul writes, "...have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! ...so all Israel will be saved.." (Rom11:11,26) Because God says to them, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel!" (Jer31:3-4)

God promises a "new covenant" with Israel. (Jer31:31) Not like the old one. But rather than a covenant of physical law, the new covenant will be written on their hearts.

"In those days" there will not be an ark. "It shall not come to mind." (Jer3:16) They will not need the ark, because Messiah, Himself, will be ruling, as "Jerusalem shall be called "The Throne of the LORD." (vs17)

The fact that they are still looking for the ark, and some think they know where it is, means they don't yet know the Lord. But when "Wrath" is over, and they have recognized their Messiah with "mourning" as they "look on [Him] whom they have pierced"(Zec12:10) God will draw them to Himself as He says, "I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, and they shall be remembered by their name no more. In that day...I will betroth you to Me forever..in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy...and you shall know the LORD." (Hos2:17-20)

God's promises to Israel He certifies to them. Just as sure as His "covenants" about the sun rising and setting each day, so sure is His covenant about the Seed ruling on David's throne. (Jer33:21) If during "this" heaven and earth the seasons should not come and go in their time, then His covenant to restore Israel is also false. (33:24-26)

## ***Crucifixion: -the Seed fulfilled*** (30-33AD)

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. (Rev12:1-5)

In this passage we have the complete story of Israel and the Seed, that we have been talking about, in one concise paragraph. The "woman" is obviously "Israel." Remember Joseph's dream? (Gen37:9) The "male Child" she bore is obviously the Messiah "who was to rule all nations" (Is9:7, Ps2) And then Babylon-dragon. The 10 horns representing the world government system; the seven diadems the religious system; and the "third of the stars", the fallen angels (demons). Do you see satan's purpose to keep the Seed from arriving? But He does, does His work and is now "seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." (Heb8:1)

On one occasion Paul was speaking to a gathering of Babylon's "generic covenant" people on the "Hill of Ares", one of their Ziggurat deities. (Acts17:22) In their ignorance they worshipped all sorts of various deities, and just in case they were missing anybody, they had an inscription "To the unknown God." Paul proclaims "God Most High" to them. He does not approach them from the Jewish perspective of knowing Jehovah, "I AM" (Ex3:14-15) but from a pre-Abrahamic perspective. They only know about the "generic" post-diluvian covenants. He reasons with them how, although they are worshipping their babylon system, that God "the Creator"(vs24) has left witness of Himself and has been providing for them. But that in ignorance they have been worshipping idols. (vs29-30) OK...those are the "generic covenant" people.

Also, there is the group that has been experiencing a knowledge of God's standards. They are not in "ignorance" as the generic people are. And yet, they, too, have not been able to measure up to God's standards of righteousness. They had been breaking the law. (Rom2:21~) Because the "carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be..those who are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom8:7-8)

Both groups have failed. So, "when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.."(Gal4:4) There have been many different covenants, and prophets proclaiming God's will.

Now, the covenant was His Own Son, in person. And, in that Jesus is a physical representation of God, we could say that the "Seed" so long predicted, was God Himself. (Heb1:1-3)

Jesus "had to be" born as a "Jew." Under the Law. Under the standard (gauge) of God's perfection. Remember, before the Law came, man did not have a detailed accounting of "what" was good or evil. If the substitutionary sacrifice is to be considered "blameless" He must come within this perfect system, which other men were not able to fulfill.

When He was born, everything was "performed..according to the law of the Lord." (Lk2:39) When He was tempted to sin, He was "without sin." (Heb4:15) And when it was time for Him to be offered as the Passover Lamb, He came to Jerusalem and was at the temple every day Passover week, to be on display, as the Passover lambs were set aside to make sure they had no blemishes. (Mt21, Ex12:3-6, Lk19:29-20:19) And then, in His crucifixion, everything was done "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.."(Jn19:24) And when He had finished His work it says, "Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished..." and then after receiving the sour wine, He said, "It is finished! And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit." (Jn19:28-30)

What was "FINISHED?"

"..redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins..that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him." (Eph1:7,10)

Jesus did not die on the cross "just" to redeem man, but also to crush satan. Remember way back in the beginning? The woman's "seed" satan would "bruise His heel" but He would "bruise [satan's] head." (Gen3:15) The rulers didn't know what they were doing (1Cor2:8), but Satan, who had power over death (Heb2:14) probably thought he had succeeded in eliminating the "Seed." But when Jesus died, He destroyed satan. And when he rose from the dead, He destroyed death. (Rom6:5,1Cor15:54-57) This "body of death" (Rom7:24) was transformed to be "incorruptible." (1Cor15:53) And for the Believer, it is "reserved in heaven." (1Pt1:4)

Remember how Adam and Eve ran from God? And, even though they had the Law and the covenants, Israel was continually running away from God. But "you who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ." (Eph2:13) The fellowship which God desires, which was broken at Eden...the whole progression of getting the "Seed" into the picture...the purpose of the "Seed" was to restore that broken fellowship.

In the "fullness of times" this happened. God's total plan became fulfilled...and "then" Christ came. Man was shown to be totally incapable of keeping any promises (covenants) with God. Remember, at the beginning

we said these covenants are "one-sided." God makes the promise; God keeps the promise. And when it was demonstrated "fully" that man was totally incapable, "at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom5:6)

For those who are part of Babylon and the "generic" world covenants, God says, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts17:30)

To the Jews, who were under the covenant of Law, but were failing miserably, God says, "Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? (Ez18:31)

## ***Church: -Holy Spirit*** (~33-2000 AD)

The 4000-year promise is now fulfilled. The "Seed" has come. We now know what it was that God had promised back in Eden. Redemption is past tense. It is no longer a mystery.

Now what?

As mankind under two different simultaneously running covenants was not able to follow God successfully prior to the work of the "Seed" ...maybe they would think, "that's an intangible concept...a sacrifice for something that is GOING TO HAPPEN will make me righteous NOW?" Well, now Christ has died and risen. Now let's see what man will do with God's new covenant.

At the Last Supper Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."(Lk22:20) Remember how He had said "The law and the prophets were until John."(Lk16:16) In other words, God was proclaiming, those covenants are now finished, and here's a new one.

What is the nature of the new covenant? What are some of its characteristics? Jesus was preaching the "kingdom of heaven." (Mt5:19,7:21,etc.) Israel and the Law was based on earthly concepts and the "land" given to Abraham. Jesus' "kingdom" was "not of this world." (Jn18:36) And in this is a distinct contrast to typical "covenant theology" adherents. They are busy trying to establish an "earthly" kingdom on behalf of Christ. While it is true, and in the last section we shall see, that Jesus will rule on the earth on David's throne, His "kingdom" is a HEAVENLY kingdom.

In addition, before the cross, there was a barrier between God and man; sin. (Is59:2) But since the cross, we now have bold access to the "throne of grace." (Heb4:16) Jesus said, "No longer do I call you servants...but I have called you friends."(Jn15:15) When Jesus cried out, "It is finished" (Jn19:30) another accomplishment was the "unity" about which He prayed to the Father in John 17. It would now be a new relationship between God and man. For the one who was "justified by faith in Christ" (Gal2:16) we are now "in Christ" (2Cor5:17) and it is "Christ in you" (Col1:27) as the believer now has "been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Gal2:20) Thus, many Christians speak of a "personal relationship" with Jesus Christ.

The "agent" of this relationship is the Holy Spirit. Where there always used to be a kind of "ambiguity" about righteousness or wickedness and one's standing with God, now there is "certainty" because "the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." (Rom8:16) And,

if a person doesn't have the Spirit of God, he is not His child. (vs9) Simple as that.

And thus, Jesus' words begin to have meaning, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." (Lk17:20-21) Note this paragraph well, because it will be "key" to the "Church" age.

But, let's back up just a bit; back to Israel.

God had chosen Abraham to make a nation for His glory and for fellowship. As a nation, He viewed them as the "apple of His eye." (De32:10) But they crucified Him.

After Jesus was crucified, God is still working with Israel. The Holy Spirit Who is the defining characteristic of the Church came precisely at Pentecost, the "middle" Jewish annual feast. (Acts2:1) The apostles and the early converts (by the thousands) in Acts were all "Jews." Initially, the Church is intended to be a continuation of God's working in the world through Israel. Remember, God had covenanted with Abraham, "In you all families of the world shall be blest." (Gen12:3) While that referred to the "Seed", Israel was placed where they were to be a "blessing" to the nations. (Zec8:13)

But as the early Church begins, the Jewish rulers persecute them because they are rejecting the "resurrection" of Christ (Acts4:2) Whom they had crucified. And as they are ready to martyr Stephen, he lays it out before them, "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit." (Acts7:51) The one thing that Jesus said would not receive forgiveness was a rejection of the Holy Spirit. (Mt12:31-32, Mk3:29, Lk12:10) And ultimately Paul would declare, "...the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear." (Acts28:28) And in 70AD, Israel ceased to be a nation at the hands of Rome, as they have been in exile until 1948.

However, while the official declaration is that things have moved from Israel "to the Gentiles", faith in Christ is now an "individual" thing. The Church is no longer a national or genetic entity. Although Israel, nationally, was put on the "back burner" for a while, both Jews and Gentiles have been "reconcil[ed]..to God in one body through the cross."(Eph2:16)

Now, satan must develop a new strategy. The "gates of hell" have been attempting to "prevail" against the Church. (Mt16:18) There are now two fronts against which to fight against God. While Israel is now scattered, the promise is that they will be restored. (Rom11:26) So, his aim against them is extermination. Nothing more he can do. The "Seed" came. So that battle continues.

But now there is a new group that needs dealing with. The "rest of the offspring" of the "woman" who "have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev12:17) When Israel came on the scene, he already had Babylon's counterfeits in place with the ritual sacrifices, etc. But now, the Church is not offering sacrifices. The relationship between the Believer and God is "personal." So, two strategies are developed. One is out-n-out persecution. These Christians are meeting in homes and forests. They are followed, hounded, tortured, killed. As Jesus promised would happen. (Jn16:33,15:18-21)

The other, again, is a new counterfeit. The world emperor "becomes a christian." And now, Babylon is adapted most cleverly. All the old pagan deities and rituals now receive "christian" labels. The female deity and child now are named "Mary and Jesus." The Lord's Supper receives pagan "modifications." And it's called "christian." After many years of this, another clever scheme is concocted. It is recognized by some that this "church" is not Scriptural, so a "reformation" happens. Trouble is, the reformation is no more "Christian" than the entity it is supposedly "reforming." Its leader ultimately persecutes Jews and Christians, too. And there become various factions (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Church of England, etc.) of this religion of Babylon, all fighting each other...labelled the "church."

In the mean time, the True Church of Jesus Christ is existing separate from all the hoopla. Remember above? "The kingdom of God is in you." While all the "visible" cathedrals and buildings are displayed all over the place, the True Believers exist in a state of "not with observation."

Now, for everything, the big "hoopla church" has appeared to be the real thing. And so, as they are "falling" into apostasy, they fulfill what was prophesied for the end times as they "give heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons." (1Tm4:1) But John assures us that the fact they "went out" means that they never were "of us" in the first place and so, their falling away proves what they really were all along. (1Jn2:19)

But to those whom Jesus called His "friends" (Jn15:14) He made a promise. He left for awhile to "prepare a place" with the promise that He would "come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (Jn14:3) This is the event often called the "Rapture." The Rapture will not be for the "hoopla church." They are busy scoffing in their apostasy that they are "blessed" to be going through God's Wrath (next section), poking fun at the few who in faith are "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." (Tit2:13) But the True Church of Jesus Christ is busy "walk[ing] just as He walked"(1Jn2:6) and will follow in the footsteps of Enoch who "walked with God and was not, for God took him" (Gen5:24) who had the testimony "that he pleased God." (Heb11:5)



## ***Wrath: -Babylon destroyed*** (7 yrs)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, (Rom1:18)

For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. (Eph5:5-6)

Six periods have passed, and it is about time for the seventh, and final, period of "rest." Of the new heavens and earth it is said, "But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." (Rev21:27) That speaks of the future, where the old will no longer be remembered. (Is65:17) The seventh period is one in which the "Seed" rules, on "this" earth. He will rule "with judgment and justice" (Is9:7) and in "righteousness, and princes will rule with justice."(32:1) The earth will experience peace. In order for this to be the case, some "house cleaning" needs to be done on the earth. How can the "Seed" rule with continual competition from His arch-enemy the "serpent?" And if He is to rule over the people of the seed-covenant, their rebellion must be purged, as well.

Three entities need to be dealt with. 1) Serpent, 2) world which is still under the post-diluvian "generic" covenant and has become Babylon, and 3) Israel. These three entities have been in rebellion.

The "Church" is not here. They have been "walking with God" (Gen5:24) and "have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev12:17) and had their sins washed "in His own blood."(1:5) Because they are "worthy." (Lk20:35,21:36,Rev3:4) Remember, the Scriptural "Church" is not that "hoopla organization." But it is the group of "individuals" scattered here and there throughout the world who are "In Christ." (2Cor5:17)

And so "war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."(Rev12:7-9)

Some of the time of devastation on earth during the time of wrath is going to come from the serpent (dragon). It says "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."(vs12) Short time for, or until, what? "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the

dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished..."(20:1-3) This is temporary confinement, along with those judged from the pre-diluvian period (2Pt2:4-5) who had left their spirit domain to become like, or indwell, humans. (Jude6) They are there, "reserved for judgment."(2Pt2:4b) That judgment is yet future. But at least "now", humanity can have a "level playing field" (so-to-speak) with God.

And then, Babylon must be dealt with. While the serpent enticed mankind, mankind was a willing subject. In over 4000 years this system has become quite sophisticated. Governments, religion, and secret societies behind these things. Everything in life is permeated with evil; sex, occult, pagan worship of idols. As depicted in a Star Trek rerun recently, a particular society didn't have any deities, and they were about to make him "The Picard" because they saw the transporters make people disappear, etc. (Technological advancements) And he was adamant that humanity in its evolution had finally "gotten rid of" the notion of any "supernatural being." That having done so was a "good thing." And just as only Jean Luc can do, his whole being was dead-set resolute that "There is Not to Be a god" for this culture they were visiting; they would not allow this same "error" to become part of their culture! While he did the right thing in persuading the culture that "he" was not a deity, he did not recognize the True one and only God Most High, creator of the universe.(Gen1:1,Acts17:24)

As Babylon is about to fall, the indictment against her is that she "has become the habitation of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk the wine of the wrath of her fornication." (Rev18:2-3) Just as she had rendered, it will be given back double. For the pleasure she has had, give her torment and sorrow."(vs7)

Babylon has had ONE "conditional covenant" from God which she has been breaking; regarding "murder." (Gen9:6) Only "ONE" covenant, and she's militantly rebelling against it. Think about the very worst kind of murder there is. To murder people who, as a result, cannot come to an age of accountability to choose for themselves to receive or reject God. Abortion. As we have studied elsewhere, a baby born of unregenerate parents ("conceived" in sin -Ps51:5) does not have the "holy" protection until that age, but is "unclean." (1Cor7:14) The indictment against her is the "pleasure she has had" ...the choice to have "free sex" and not suffer the consequences of the "inconvenience" of a baby. And today's society, more than any other, MILITANTLY INSISTS on their "RIGHT to MURDER" these helpless babies! While they refuse to "train up" [their "living" children] in Godly fear (Pr22:6) intoning the excuse, "We'll let them decide what they want" ...for these poor helpless souls, they are MAKING the DECISION [for] them... UNTO DAMNATION!!

Remember also that Babel started as a worship system. A world religion. And when she falls, the whole world will be affected. As one reads ch18 we see that the world economy is going to be affected worst. But it will also involve music and the arts. (vs22) Every aspect of life.

What will be the nature of her fall? How will she fall? We are not told. The parts of Jeremiah 50-51 dealing with the future may give clues. But we do know it will be catastrophic. Over 4000 years of development (rebellion) wiped out "in one day."(vs8)

Remember how Babel was a religion of being "united." That's what we see today. Another voice from heaven said, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."(vs4)

And then, Israel. Babylon and her author, the serpent, have been dealt with. Now, the entity which God had chosen out of Babylon, but which was corrupted by Babylon, needs to be "cleaned up" to be back in good standing with God.

This period of "Wrath" is designed specifically around Israel. Babylon only had the "generic" post-diluvian covenants, so their judgment was cataclysmic, as though God was taking this huge fire torch; torches them and sweeps away the debris. But Israel is God's own special people. The "apple of His eye."(De32:10) God "determined" seventy weeks for Israel from the time of Daniel's prophecy. The purpose for that determination was "to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." (Dan9:24)

Out of those 70 weeks, 69 have been fulfilled up to the time of the crucifixion, when "Messiah [was] cut off [killed]." (vs26) And then Israel has been scattered. The "people of the prince who is to come" (Rome) destroyed Jerusalem, and it has been in "desolations." (vs26) But as the time has been approaching, "the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel..and He shall feed His flock."(Mic5:3-4) As Jesus foretold, "He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Mt24:31) where they had been scattered. (Jer13:24,18:17)

The O.T. speaks often of "in that day." "Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." (Jer30:7) Jesus said of that day, "unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened." (Mt24:22)

Let's clear up two falsities that are flying around recently. First of all, when Scripture speaks of seven years (70th "week")(Dan9:27) or of three and a half years (Rev12:14), this word "shortened" does not mean that the seven

years will not be seven years, or that the three and a half years will be less than that time. It means that for all the thousands of years of rebellion for which wrath is being poured out, God is limiting His judgments to only seven, and three and a half years. If this time was any longer than that, the whole world's population would be decimated. And the other point is "who" the "elect" are. This is NOT the "hoopla church." (They are judged as part of Babylon.) It is Israel. Remember back in this series how God chose Abram "out of Babylon" to make a special chosen nation. And God speaks of Israel as His "elect." (Is45:4,65:9,22)

Why is Israel being judged? To bring an end to her sins. (Dan9:24) She was scattered first of all for idolatry. (Ez6:5) And then, for rejecting the Holy Spirit. (Acts28:28,7:51,Mt3:29,Heb10:26-30) As God had said, "your affliction is incurable, your wound is severe." (Jer30:12) Here, Israel "knew" what God's law was, but they rejected Him. Thus, Jesus said that from the "blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah..whom you murdered...assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation." (Mt23: 35-36) And as Jesus was "in the balances" before Pilate, Israel shouted out, "His blood be on us and on our children." (Mt27:25) If only they had known what they were saying that day!! God granted their wish!

This time of wrath judges Babylon. It also judges the "nations where I have scattered [Israel]." (Jer30:11) And while they have been so rebellious, God promises, "yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished...because the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done only evil before Me from their youth. For the children of Israel have provoked Me only to anger with the work of their hands" says the Lord. (Jer32:30) This wrath is to "spank Israel's bottom."

This time is so horrific that Malachi says, "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? ..He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." For what purpose? "That they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness." (Mal3:3) And once that is done, the offerings which God had "despised" (Amos5:21), now in their purity "will be pleasant to the LORD."(vs4)

Israel will "loathe [themselves] because of the evils [they] have committed."(Ez20:43) And as Christ returns, they will "look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son.."(Zec12:10)

Do we understand why the "Church" will NOT be going through this time? That which calls itself the "church" ...the apostates from Babylon, have quite a campaign in these last days to deceive, telling anybody with the label "C/christian" that the "church" will be going through this time of "purification." However, the "church" they speak of is NOT the True Church

of Jesus Christ. It is Babylon's counterfeit. The True Church is made up of "individuals" who are "In Christ" due to having been washed in Jesus' blood. We have "fellowship" with Christ. (1Jn1:6) We are His "friends" (Jn15:14) we are the "righteousness of God in Him (2Cor5:21) and as such He has "not appointed us to wrath" (1Ths5:9) because we are "worthy." (Lk21:36) It is our characteristic that we "walk with God" and so like Enoch prior to the flood, Christ will come to "receive us to" himself. (Jn14:3) The time of Wrath is for those who have been in rebellion against God. (Rom1:18) "To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity.." (Dan9:24) By definition, that is NOT the "Church."

See Also Addendum: *"Tribulation vs Wrath" & "Extra Thoughts regarding 'Wrath'"*

## ***Peace & Rest: -Christ rules*** (~2000-3000 AD)

And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Rev11:15)

"Men of Galilee [Israel], ..this Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts1:11) "Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives..." (Zec14:3-4)

God has confined Satan, judged the nations, disciplined Israel; and now Messiah comes to reign. TBN is not sitting at the Mt.of Olives with their TV cameras, as Pat Robertson and Promise Keepers are all gathered around, to "give the kingdom" to Jesus!! No, not hardly!!! Messiah has been doing some "house cleaning" and gotten rid of all this filthiness and sin. He has just been waging war, and is now coming to claim His conquest in "power and great glory." (Mt24:30) He is coming to reign "upon the throne of David and over His kingdom."(Is9:7) The "Davidic covenant" will thus be fulfilled.

His process of setting up His kingdom will be the "sheep and goat" judgments. (Mt25) Remember, this kingdom is over Israel, and the rest of the nations will be streaming to Jerusalem to pay homage to the King. (Zec14:16) The name "Israel" (God prevails) will be fully understood by all the nations, as they "[say] to Zion, 'your God reigns'."(Is52:7) The nations will be judged in accordance with their treatment of Israel throughout the years. (Presently, this is about USA's "ONLY" redeeming factor!)

And then, Messiah will begin the healing process with Israel. They will have "acknowledg[ed] their offense. They will seek My face; in their affliction they will diligently seek Me. Come, and let us return to the LORD; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight. Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD." (Hos5:15-6:3) Israel has been "stricken" for 2000 years (2 days). Then, He will raise them up.

"Therefore, behold I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her. I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord."(Hos2:14,18-20)

And a new covenant will be established with Israel. Not a covenant of Law, but a covenant in their hearts. God will write His law into their heart. They will not need instruction to "know the Lord" because with this heart relationship "I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (Jer31:33) "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn

away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me...I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me." (Jer32:40,33:8)

This "kingdom" will be characterized by judgement, justice and peace. (Is9:7) There will be no more idolatry. (Hos2:17) The animal realm will be at peace (vs18) as the lion, even, will "eat straw like the ox." (Is11:7,65:25) Implements of war will be made into agricultural tools. (Is2:4,Joel3:10) and "neither shall they learn war anymore. (Mic4:3) And people will, again, live a long time. (Is65:20)

Messiah's rule will be absolute, "with a rod of iron." (Rev19:15) And the nations will stream to Jerusalem to learn of Him. (Is2:3,Mic4:2)

Who will be Messiah's deputies? "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him." (2Tm2:12) Blessed and holy [is] he who has part in the first resurrection...they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. (Rev20:6) Is this, perhaps, part of the "good and faithful servant" scenario? (Mt25:21,23,Lk19:17,19) It is, for certain, the "saints" who come with Him. (Dan7:18,Zec14:5)

But, in the end, again, it will be shown that man, alone, does not follow God. There will be peace for 1000 years, and people will follow Messiah...until Satan is released. He will again deceive the nations. They will, again, surround Israel. And God isn't going to waste any time with them this time, but will burn them up in short order. (Rev20:7-9)

## ***The End: -final judgments*** (~3000 AD)

As we said when we began this series, many, many details have been left out. It is simply not possible to speak of everything without making this into a full-blown seminary course. There are so many more things that could be said about each section; why, Israel, alone, could be a complete topic unto itself; not to mention the whole area of Law and Grace.. "For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (Jn1:17) But we have seen here a little sketch of this heaven and earth's history. A simple look at 7000 years and God's workings, condensed into a short little series, to help us see God's plan as one complete "whole."

However, "this" heaven and earth do have an end. And there are several judgments that come during that process. With prophecy it is often difficult to know exactly "when" certain things happen. So, let's lump together, here, a few final judgments. Some, no doubt, happen during "Wrath." But others, after the Peaceful Millenium of Messiah's rule.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them." (Rev20:4) Who is "them" here? Does this include Believers "judging angels?" (1Cor6:3) Perhaps this is where the hoopla-pretend "christians" will "worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you." (Rev3:9)..??

There is the final judgment of the devil. He will be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are." (Rev20:10) And their torment is "day and night forever and ever."

The "Great White Throne" is the final judgment of unbelievers. Anyone who has ever lived on the earth will be roused up to "stand before God." (Rev20:12) They will be judged according to their deeds, as found in the "books." The most important book of all is the "Book of Life." Anyone not found in that book shares the same fate as Satan. The Lake of Fire was prepared for "the devil and his angels."(Mt25:41) It was not God's intent for man to go there. But man sinned. The "wages of sin is death" (Rom6:23) "as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."(Heb9:27) This is "that" judgment! This torment will be "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." (Rev14:10) "And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." (Is66:24)

And then, one final judgment. Genesis 2:4 records, "This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens." "Now" that history is ended.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with



fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."  
(2Pt3:10)

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...Then, I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev21:1-2) And John records in the next two chapters a picture of fellowship with God. Tears being wiped away. The absence of anything evil. (21:8,27)

While we are still in this life on this heaven and earth, Peter admonishes, "what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God...we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." (~2Pt3:11-13)

But let us not forget, "The Lord is not slack (delaying) concerning His promise...but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (2Pt3:9) But His "longsuffering" patience is not forever. There will come a time when He says, "thus far, and no further." "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work." (Rev22:11-12)

Just as Jesus invited, "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt11:28) and God is always calling out to sinful man, "Adam, where are you?" The True Church of Jesus Christ (Spirit and bride) invites, "Come! ..and let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely...Come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat...without money and without price...Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." (Rev22:17,Is55:1,6-7)

Amen!

## ***Addendum:***

### ***"Terra Firma?"***

~ Eighth Day ~

"These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Jehovah God was making the earth and the heavens..." (Gen2:4)

This is an interesting expression God uses, primarily in Genesis: "THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF..." It is a kind-of 'legal' genealogical term used when naming the various family trees: of Noah (6:9), sons of Noah (10:1), Terah (11:27), Ishmael (25:12), Jacob (37:2), Aaron & Moses (Num3:1), the Messianic line through Perez (Ruth4:18) The following of the line of the woman's "Seed" (Gen3:15) was of great importance, as Jesus' lineage is listed through both Joseph and Mary (Mt1:1-17, Lk3:23-38) This is an expression that would be found on today's equivalent documents one might find by going to one's local court-house and searching through official records, etc. Names of people are documented. Land ownership is documented.

God proclaims, "Everything under the heavens is Mine" (Job41:11) "Heaven is My throne, and earth My footstool." (Is66:1) And God has documented the title deed and official description of that which is His; at the very beginning in Gen2:4. In the series (in the Library) "Covenants and Dispensations" we observed how 'this' heavens and earth has approximately a 7000 year lifespan. 'Not going to cover all those details here. But we are currently right about at the end of 6000 years, corresponding to the end of God's creative 6th day. (Remember: the prophetic "day" corresponding to "1000 years" -2Pt3:8) On the "seventh day..God..rested" (Gen2:2) Thus, the O.T. observance of "Sabbath" (which means "rest"). And creation is presently poised to receive God's judgment, to "winnow" (Is41:16) away the "wicked..chaff" (Ps1:4), and usher in the prophesied thousand year reign of Messiah (Rev20:4,6) from Jerusalem, on David's throne, in justice and peace. He will "rule..with a rod of iron". (Is9:7, Ps2:9, Rev2:27, 12:5, 19:15) And with God's justice prevailing, the earth and all creation will again be at peace. (Is11:7, 65:25)

But what comes -after- the 7000 years are finished?

As regular readers and subscribers know, I don't usually spend time naming everybody out there who proclaims false doctrine. If I were to spend all my time doing that (like some 'discernment' entities do), there would be no time left to proclaim "Thus says the Lord Jehovah". (Eze2:4) But every once in awhile, something specific comes to my attention, which the Lord says to address. On Sunday evenings, after the late news, Jack Van Impe is on one of the local TV stations; and I watched their little show

a couple weeks in-a-row here recently. Their little snake-oil doctrine needs to be refuted, here, for a moment. The one evening Jack was proclaiming that -this- earth is going to last indefinitely..."forever, and ever and ever..." Vehemently proclaiming that this earth is NOT going to ever be destroyed. That Christ is going to reign on -this- earth "forever and ever and ever and ever!"

After that show I found their website, and e-mailed them, showing them some Scriptures (that we will take a look at here in a moment) that proclaim that this earth will be burned up. While I did not receive a reply, I know they read it, because by the next show, they had taken note of another comment I had made, and made a little change in their presentation. But in the 'next' show, they were even MORE ADAMANT about this false doctrine, ignoring the Scriptures they had been given, but with even raised vocal decibels, eyes opened wider, pounding/slapping the desk. Of course, this time they were not giving any 'supportive' Scripture references like they had before (in my e-mail I had shown how the word they were reading as "forever" was a mistranslation, and really should be rendered as "perpetually", "always", etc), but rather, pushing their "Rapture" video, for people to buy it...because this matter is "documented in the video", they said.

Now, in their adamancy about a "forever-ness" for -this- earth, their true colors also came out. One of their reasons was not from Scripture, as a Believer would have hoped; but (of all things!!) from the Catholic "catechism"! Speaking of the Catholic "Eighth Day".

Since this was the first I had heard the expression "eighth day" spoken of in quite that way, I went and did a little bit of web surfing, hoping to find the catholic catechism somewhere, and read up on this matter. But before I ever found anything 'catholic', I found tons of other stuff. And actually, with everything else I was seeing, I didn't bother pursuing to the 'catholic' further. There is a whole genre out there of metaphysics and spirituality around this one lone concept.

At one website was an explanation of "Sukkot" (booths). After the 7th day of Sukkot was the 8th day. They would come out of the booths. The seven days representing the "natural" world, the 8th day, the "world to come". A deliverance like the "8" in the ark. Jesus rose the 8th day. The number "7" is "completion", and "8" is what follows. There might actually be -some- 'elements' of truth in this one (Does not most false doctrine also contain elements of truth?)...as we will see as we close this discussion. The Jewish feast that all nations will observe during the coming Millennium is Sukkot (Feast of Booths). (Zec14:16-19)

Another was called, "Eighth Day Fellowship". (That's what their church was called) Dealing in a lot of numerology. They even proclaimed that the events of 9/11 were of significance, because, they say, Jesus was born on Sept 11, 3BC.

There was an "Eighth Day Faith Community" in Washington DC. One of their photos showed them in some sort of peace march, toting a huge (occult) "peace symbol" made up with flowers. Judging by their ages, they would have been some of the original "flower children" of the 60s and 70s.

Some of the teachings out there: 1) The world was created in seven days...8th is beyond -physical-...."metaphysical". 2) An "eighth day life center" (interdenomination/episcopal) was proclaiming a "new day of creation" 3) There was a: transcendental day "morning star" proclaiming, "enter the feminine door".

Another website: Why circumcision on the 8th day? "7days represents the earthly, natural. The 8th on the eighth day, the child reaches the level of the soul that is capable of connecting with the G-dly light that transcends nature. Thus, through the act of circumcision, the Jew is given the power and ability throughout life, to overcome all obstacles in his service of G-d; he is able to rise above his own natural limitations."

See why, after seeing all these things, I didn't feel the need to keep looking to find the 'catholic' one? In any other doctrine, catholicism's traditions are typically just as non-Scriptural as all these things. I had seen 'enough'...more-than-enough, thank you very much!

So...

after the Millennium of Christ's rule, when satan is released from his 1000 year captivity in the pit, where he again stirs up the earth's unbelievers to come against Christ and the Believers, and they are destroyed (Rev20:3,7-10); what comes after that? Does -this- earth continue on, as Van Impe says, "forever and ever and ever and ever"?

What does Scripture say? It says that the earth is "passing away".

Jesus says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My Words will by no means pass away." (Mt24:35) In fact, the passing away of the earth won't happen until all Scripture has been fulfilled. (Mt5:18) One reason we don't know much about what follows is because the Scriptures are, specifically, God's Document regarding the "generations of the heavens and earth". When you go to your local court house, you find documents dealing with -that- court house's jurisdiction. If you are from small-town, USA, you will not find titles, deeds and birth/death certificates dealing with Russia, China, Canada, etc. In fact, your "small-town" documents will not even cover "big-city" USA. They are specifically for 'your' municipality and/or county. In similar fashion, the Scriptures are God's Document regarding 'this' -present- "heavens and earth". That's why this earth won't pass away, until the title/deed Document for earth, the Scriptures, have been fully fulfilled. (Mt5:18)

After the flood, when the annual earthly seasons become established, God says, "While earth remains..." (Gen8:22) Such an expression suggests that at some point in time, there will be an 'end'. Those are the kind of words "while" and "remain" are. "While" is some period of time; which, depending on the context, its length may be specified or not (for this earth, it's on the order of 7000 years). But then, when the period of time "while" is concluded, and it stops "remaining", that is its 'end'.

"And all the host of the heavens shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; and all their host shall wither, as a leaf withers off the vine, and as fruit falling from the fig tree." (Is34:4) "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look on the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall become old like a garment..." (Is51:6)

"Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They shall perish, but You will endure; yea, they shall all grow old like a garment; like clothing You will change them, and they shall be changed; but You are the same, and Your years shall not be consumed." (Ps102:25-27)

So, if this present creation is going to get "old" and be destroyed, but Believers have Eternal Life with God, where will we spend eternity?

God says, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. And the former shall not be remembered, nor come to mind." (Is65:17)

Peter explains how this will happen: "But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same Word (Scriptures, its title/deed), are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men....the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with intense burning; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up...the Day of God...through which the heavens will be dissolved, being set on fire, and the elements will melt with intense burning... Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." (~2Pet3:7-13)

And John is given a brief vision of the 'new'. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev21:1-2)

Aside from the Scriptures saying so, there's a couple of reasons why, as things exist now, it would be IMPOSSIBLE for this present earth to remain "forever". Eventually, earth's resources would run out. Eventually, the elemental 'fuels' of the sun would get used up. While, compared to man's infinitesimal-ness, the sun and earth's resources seem 'vast', a finite amount of their resources will not last "forever".

In addition, the "New Jerusalem" and this present earth are a totally IMPOSSIBLE mismatch. There is no possible way the New Jerusalem could come down out of the heavens and be 'planted' on -this- earth. Let us observe:

The city is a 'cube'. "Its length, breadth, and height are equal." (Rev21:16) The walls are a little over 200 feet (72m) thick. (vs17) And the city is 1363 miles (2180km) cubed. That's a size that would take up the entire eastern half of the United States, from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean. Or, looking at it another way: slip a cube inside the moon, strip away the convex surfaces, and that's how big it is. (Seems to me we've addressed this before a couple years ago?) There is no geophysical way in which such a cube could 'sit' on this earth, without the earth's crust/mantle buckling in, and the 'cube' ending up half-way into the earth's molten core...if the two didn't explode first due to the effects gravitation and Roche's limit. Trying to put the New Jerusalem on 'this' earth would be like taking a chicken egg, strip off the shell, but leave the membrane on it around the 'fluid' interior, suspend it in space, and expect it to hold an automotive wheel lug nut on its surface. Folks, it's just not going to happen!

In addition, even if it were possible, the earth's atmosphere only extends upwards a very limited number of miles. The 'cube' would be extending upwards clear into the Van Allen radiation belts. Not only would there be no air to breathe, the radiation would be deadly. So, we will have new bodies...but still...you get the picture being drawn for you here. The earth that hosts the New Jerusalem cannot possibly be 'this' earth we 'now' live on. Physically impossible. It will HAVE TO BE an earth built according to totally different design parameters.

Now, certainly, during the Millennium this earth is going to be "healed". (Ez47:12, Zec14:8) Nature will be at peace. (Is11:7, 65:25) It would seem that the earth will be moved into a different orbit, farther away from the sun. (Is13:13, Zec14:6-7) But it is still an earth with the sun.

But the 'new' heavens and earth will not have a sun. Jesus will illuminate it. (Rev21:23, 22:5) There will be "no more sea". (Rev21:1) This present earth is 70% covered by seas, and its water mass is its primary climate control.

Is it not clearly seen, that something totally 'new' is coming, after this present has been destroyed. Yes, 'this' heavens and earth make up "seven days", and then comes the "eighth day".

The eighth day will not be like Star Trek's "Borg" cube, flying through space, dark and ominous, coming to new 'species' and announcing, "You will be assimilate; resistance is futile." with a goddess-like queen who invites the prey to join her to become like her...in essence, to become little

gods...but when her shell is stripped away, what remains is a pitiful writhing serpent-like essence. (You see, folks, the world understands Godly, Scriptural historic/prophetic symbolism quite well. Better than many who claim to be "christians"!)

But the New Jerusalem is brilliantly dazzling in beauty. Read about it in the last two chapters of Revelation. In stark contrast to satan, who seeks to imprison his subjects with Borg-like shackles into his 'collective' against their will, God INVITES....

When Jesus came to earth He invited "Come to Me...I will give you rest" (Mt11:28) Not, "you will be assimilated...you will service us" And regarding the New Jerusalem, it is a similar invitation: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take of the Water of Life freely." (Rev22:17) It is the ultimate fulfillment of what Jesus promised the woman of Samaria, the waters overflowing to Eternal Life. (Jn4:14) Where Adam and Eve sinned and were banned from the Tree of Life, those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb (Rev7:14) will have healing from its leaves, as there is no more curse (vs2-3) to those who have received "right to the Tree of Life" (vs14) Outside are "dogs" and every perverse thing. (vs15) But the Water of Life is available freely (vs17), with "no money". (Is55:1) After all, the money that is so valuable on 'this' earth, its gold, will be the 'streets' there. (Rev21:21)

No, this earth is not so "terra -FIRMA-". In fact, what a cruel joke it would be, for God to promise the glories of Eternal Life in His presence, if eternity was going to be spent on -this- ol' world! Who would 'want' to? Tears are going to be wiped away (Is25:8), there will be no more tears, crying or pain (Rev21:4), as "the former (where we are now) shall not be remembered, nor come to mind." (Is65:17)

But other than a slight glimpse at the end of our Scriptures, we are not told much about the coming "eighth day", because the Scriptures are the "generations" (the official Document) of -this- heaven and earth. Anything more that other people might proclaim is mere human conjecture, and does not come from God; certainly nothing around which to be creating new cults! This so-called "eighth day" (Eternity) is for those who have come to God in 'repentance' and to Jesus in 'faith' (Ac20:21), having "received" Jesus (Jn1:12) and been washed in Jesus' blood. (Rev1:5) And it is SO MUCH -BETTER- THAN -this- earth! Just as the resurrected/changed bodies are so much better, in incorruption, than these bodies (1Cor15:42-54), so too will be the living environment for those new bodies, and those whose spirit/souls inhabit them. As Jesus spoke of the seed that is planted, and sprouts (Jn12:24); a tiny insignificant seed sprouts and grows into something so much more, and fantastic. On -this- earth we are yet 'seeds'. This earth is "dust", and so are these bodies. (Gen3:19, Ps103:14) But that which is to come is the "Lord from Heaven"

(1Cor15:47), as "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is..."  
(1Jn3:2)

Paul expresses it: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it dawned upon the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (1Cor2:9)

Amen!



# ***Feast of Ingathering***

Recently my daily Scripture reading found me in Leviticus and Numbers, reading about the Jewish feasts and sacrifices. About the same time, thinking of end-time prophecies I sat down and read through Zechariah, and was fascinated by the repetition of the fact that all the nations would come to Jerusalem to celebrate the "Feast of Tabernacles" after Christ sets up His kingdom. Knowing that Passover and Pentecost were already fulfilled, I was curious to know more about "Tabernacles" and its importance that would require "all" nations to participate; and discovered it is part of a larger, inclusive festival of "Ingathering."

The following is my personal collection of notes, in outline form. This was not intended to be all-inclusive, or answer-all. Just a look at the pieces of the End-Time "puzzle."

(Recommended: that you have your Bible open next to you and look up all the references. In this format this study is not being spoon-fed to you, but the pieces are cut up and arranged in order on the plate; and now you can examine each piece as you savor them. You won't get the full benefit/understanding of the outline, if you don't also look up the passages.)

## ***Introduction:***

...The 3 Annual Jewish Feasts: (Ex23:14-17, Deut16:16)

### 1) Unleavened Bread .."Passover" (Lev23:5)

- Redeemed out of Egypt (Ex23:15, De7:8, Mic6:4)
- Blood (Ex12:7,13)
- First-born (Ex34:19)
- Firstfruits (Ex23:16)

Fulfilled in Christ: (1Co5:7)

- Redeemed out of sin (Ga3:13, Re5:9)
- Blood of Christ (Heb9:14, 1Pet1:19)
- Only-Begotten of the Father (Jn1:14,3:16)
- Firstfruits from the dead (1Cor15:20)

### 2) Harvest .."Feast of Weeks" (Ex34:22)

- 7 weeks..50days after Firstfruits = Pentecost (Lev23:15-16)
- With leaven (Lev23:17)
- Leave gleanings for strangers (Lev19:9-10,23:22)

Holy Spirit:

- Day of Pentecost (Acts2:1)
- Spreading of Gospel (Mt13:31-33, Acts5:28,8:4,13:49,26:20,16:6)
- Gentiles (strangers) (Eph2:12-13)

### 3) Ingathering

-End of the year (Ex23:16,34:22)

Yet to be fulfilled...

-at the "end of the age" (Mt13:39,24:3)

### \*\*\* FEAST OF INGATHERING \*\*\*

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#### Trumpets:

-1st day of 7th month (Lev23:24)

-Sacred assembly

-Trumpet - Rapture: (1Cor15:52,Rev4:1,1Ths4:16)

-Announcement, signal (Num31:6,1Sam13:3)

-To "come up" to God's "presence" (Ex19:13,19-20)

-Assembling the people (Nu10:7)

Announcing the coming of the Lord ...God is coming to make an end of sin. Restore His people, Israel. Come to rule on David's throne.

#### Day of Atonement:

-10th day of 7th month (Lev23:27)

-Afflict your souls--downcast, depressed, humbled

-Sacred assembly

#### Jubilee:

-Trumpet on 50th year (Lev25:9)

-Day of Atonement

-Return to possessions/family (Lev25:10,28)

-Goes free WITH children (Lev25:41,54)

#### Purify the sons of Levi: (Mal3:3)

-Purge, punish (Mal3:2,Jer30:11)

-Jacob's trouble-to-freedom (Jer30:7-8)

-Israel gathered to Land of Heritage

(Mt24:31,Is11:12,Jer29:14)

Israel goes through purging, purifying as they are gathered together back in their land. Ultimate freedom from her enemies. Once and for all.

## Feast of Tabernacles:

- 15th day of 7th month (Lev23:34)
- Gathered fruit (Lev23:39)
- Booths for 7 days (Lev23:40)
- Rejoice (Lev23:40)

### Year of Release:

- End of every 7 years at Feast of Tabernacles (Deut31:10)
- Release of debts (Deut15:1)
- Servant goes out free..by himself..NOT children (Ex21:3)
- Read the Law (Deut31:12)
- Hear
- Learn to Fear the LORD
- Observe all the words

### Nations will stream to Jerusalem: (Zech14:16, Is2:2-3)

- Holiness to the Lord (Zech14:20)
- All will know the Lord (Jer31:33-34, Is11:9)

Every one will know the Lord. God Himself "writes" His laws on their hearts. Finally, Israel will experience peace and holiness, and will be the "leader" of the nations, in the knowledge of the Lord, that God had intended all along.

Feast of Ingathering involves ALL the world. It begins with the Church at the Trumpets/Rapture. Then Israel is gathered in under time of God's Wrath. And once the world has been judged, the nations of the world will stream into Jerusalem to gain knowledge of the Lord.

## God's Salvation:

### REDEMPTION before Jubilee (Lev25:48-52)

- Christ has "redeemed" us (Church) (Gal3:13,1Pet1:18,)
- Through [by means of] Faith (Rom3:30) -----
- Mystery (Rom16:25-26,1Cor2:7-8,Col1:27)

### RELEASE at Jubilee (Lev25:54)

- Israel "released"
- from Broken Covenant(Rom3:20;Lev18:5;Jer31:31-34)
- By [out of,away from] Faith (Rom3:30) -----
- Nations celebrate Feast of Tabernacles (Ex33:7,Rev21:3)
- Christ Himself is "present" (Ez34:28-30)
- & rules (Rev19:11-16)
- More mysteries?

Feast of Tabernacles will be a continuing celebration of Christ's presence among men as He rules on this earth. And foretells the New Heavens and New Earth, and the New Jerusalem...after the final rebellion has been crushed...in which God the Father, Himself, dwells amongst man.

## ***The Next Feast of Israel*** - Leviticus 23

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: The set feasts of Jehovah, which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, these are My appointed times:" (Lev23:1-2)

In the past we have observed the Feasts that Israel was commanded to observe before God. "Three times a year" all the males were to "appear before Jehovah" for 1) Feast of Unleavened Bread, 2) Feast of Weeks, and 3) Feast of Booths. (Deut16:16) In Ex23:14-16 they are called: 1) Feast of Unleavened Bread, 2) Feast of Harvest, and 3) Feast of Ingathering ("at the end of the year").

We have also observed how #1 includes Passover, Unleavened Bread and Waving the Sheaf of Firstfruits; and how #3 includes Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles. Thus, within the 'three' annual pilgrimages are nestled a total of 'seven' observances.

Typically we have been used to seeing how Jesus' 1) death, 2) burial and 3) resurrection fulfilled the three aspects of #1; and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) fulfilled #2. And so, at the "end of the year (age)" we look prophetically for #3 to be fulfilled; it hasn't yet been fulfilled.

Now, while many are able to correctly discern the three aspects of #3 being fulfilled in the 1) Rapture, 2) 70th Week (Jacob's Trouble) and 3) Millennial kingdom; there are many who confuse them, lumping them together. Some have the rapture coming at the end of everything; some don't think there is going to even be a rapture; others don't believe in the coming Millennium. They have 'mushed' future prophecy into a mangled mess in their minds, denouncing those of us who clearly see 'distinct' events yet to come.

While going through Leviticus recently, in the on-going VW-Edition project, a very interesting observation caught my attention about all this from ch23. But before we observe ch23, let us notice something about the way the Scriptures have been put together for us, and then more specifically... Leviticus. And then, I think you-all will agree about what we will see in ch23.

When the O.T. Scriptures were written in their original Hebrew, there were no chapter headings. There were no paragraph markings. There was no table-of-contents to distinguish subject matter and topics to send the reader to "page so-n-so". But what there are is 'word-patterns'. Particular distinctive phrases. Let us observe:

In the account of creation, each day is distinguished by closing each day's account with, "Thus, the evening and the morning: Day One/Two/Three, etc" (Gen1:5,8,13,etc)

When a special section of historical/genealogical 'records' is given in Genesis, such sections begin with the typical expression, "These are the generations of..." (Gen2:4, 6:9, 10:1, 25:12, 37:2, etc)

Now, Leviticus does a similar thing, which I had never noticed before in all my years of reading the Bible. The pattern is the first half of our opening Scripture quoted above:

"And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them:"

Each time you see any variation of this pattern, you will notice the subject changes to a new topic: Sacrifices for sin, for unintentional sin, burnt offerings, the priests' service, eating of foods, leprosy, cleansing after being healed of leprosy, sexual morality/purity, bodily discharges, touching of dead bodies, business dealings, etc. I'm not going to reference them all here; this is a background for us to understand ch23; if you're interested, just leaf/browse through Leviticus, and you will see it. Sometimes a topic will carry along for several chapters; in other cases, you will see the subject change in mid-chapter.

So now, we get to ch23. The first section, based on this observation, is vs1-8. What we have there is the Sabbath (vs3), Passover (vs5) and Unleavened Bread (vs6).

Next section is vs9-22. It begins with the Sheaf of Firstfruits (vs10) which is observed on the "day after the sabbath" (vs11)(in other words, "Sunday"), counts 50 days to "the day after the seventh Sabbath" (vs16)(Sunday), which is Pentecost. And notice how this section ends: Leaving the gleanings for the "poor and the sojourner" (vs22)

Ch23 has five (5) such sections regarding Israel's festal observances.

Now, let's stop here a minute for observation. The first section has been fulfilled. Do you recognize it as Israel and the O.T. with the Law? When Israel continually sacrificed animals, that all dealt in "death". Passover and Unleavened bread was fulfilled when Jesus was crucified (He gave His life), and was buried. It fulfills the end of Daniel's 69 weeks as Messiah was "cut off". (Dan9:26)

Now we typically see Jesus' first coming as His 1) Death, 2) Burial and 3) Resurrection. Indeed, that is true, as that is how Paul outlines the "gospel" in 1Cor15:3-4. But notice this -subtle- distinction God was making, clear back 1500 years before Christ came. Jesus not only ended one era, but also began another.

So the next section begins in the middle of the first of the 'three' annual pilgrimages. The last item from #1 is also the first item of the second section. The "day after the sabbath" the waving of the firstfruits. Jesus' Resurrection, as Jesus was the "firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1Cor15:20)

In addition, 50 days later, their bread was to be baked "with leaven". (vs17) For everything else, they were not to use leaven in any of their sacrifices, or else, "that soul shall be cut off". (Lev2:11, Ex12:15) Their firstfruit grain offerings, also, were with "green" (signifying 'life') heads of grain. (Lev2:14) Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday, and Pentecost was on Sunday. The Holy Spirit came in Acts ch2 on Sunday "the day after the seventh sabbath" (vs16) (Note: Is it any wonder the Church typically meets on Sunday?), and thereafter the Church grew and expanded (like leavened bread) throughout the world (Ac17:6); being indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom8:9), overflowing and "springing up into eternal life". (Jn4:14)

Now, here's the precious part for us who are Gentiles. Why would God speak of the leaving of "gleanings" in connection with the Feasts? Why would that not be included with one of the laws about land possession, or land-sabbaths, or the treatment of the poor and the welfare system, etc? Because it wasn't about 'welfare' or 'farming' techniques, but was a foreshadow of the -gentile- "Church". In God's foreknowledge, He knew that Israel would rebel, and in that context He already had provisions for "servants" that He would "call..by another name". (Is65:15) When the Jews in Rome grumbled, Paul says, "..the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it" (Acts28:28) as God has "looked upon the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name." (Acts15:14)

But why merely the "gleanings"? By the time the Church came into being, how did Jews look upon Gentiles? As "dogs". (Mt15:26-27) They were, to the Jewish mind, somehow "less" in estimation. Think of how many whites and blacks look 'down' at each other... well, Israel's view of Gentiles was even lower than that. But God was preparing the mind of Israel for the Church, as Paul speaks to the Gentiles as "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel" how they have been "..made near by the blood of Christ" (Eph2:12-13)

So, this second section of ch23 is about the "Church". Why does it begin with the sheaf of firstfruits? What was the message of the early Church, that the Jewish leaders despised and rebelled against? They were preaching "..in Jesus the 'resurrection' from the dead." (Acts4:2) When we have been buried with Christ for salvation, we are also raised to "newness of life". (Rom6:4) The O.T. dealt in 'death' with their continual animal sacrifices and blood. (Heb9:22) The N.T. deals in "eternal life" through God's "only begotten Son"! (Jn3:16, 14:6)

But also notice that the (predominantly) Gentile "Church" is not the -main-harvest. It is the 'gleanings' for the "poor and sojourners". Sojourners, not

the permanent native residents, as Paul speaks of the "wild" branches being grafted in. That which calls itself "Church" has got rather a 'big-head' these days, thinking themselves to be the main enchilada; but Paul warns against boasting against the "natural" branches, which is Israel. (Rom11:17-18)

So, vs1-8 is O.T. Israel; that was past tense. Vs9-22 is N.T. Church; present tense, not quite fully completed yet.

Now, what of the future?

For the Feast of Ingathering (#3)(Ex23:16,34:22) there is what are typically called:

- 1) Trumpets (Lev23:23-25),
- 2) Atonement (vs26-32),
- 3) Tabernacles (vs33-36).

Let's pass over 2 & 3 quickly first, and then come back to "trumpets". Fulfillment of all three of these is yet future tense. While Rosh Hashanah (trumpets) is on the Jewish calendar, the most solemn annual observance is Yom Kippur (Atonement). It is at this occasion that the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies (once a year) to atone for the sins of Israel, and there was the ritual of the scapegoat that symbolically took the sins far-away into the wilderness to never return. (Lev16, Heb9:7) It was the feast where they would "afflict [their] souls". (Lev16:29) It is the fulfillment of this that is likely to be the 70th week of Jacob's Trouble (Jer30:7), where the "sons of Levi" are "purified". (Mal3:3)

While Sukkot (booths) is a Jewish holiday, it is apparently not significant enough in the modern mind for it to even appear on the calendar above my desk, here, dedicated to "Images of the Holy Land". But we know that its fulfillment will be the Millennial rule of Messiah, as the Feast of Booths ("tabernacles" is not -quite- as accurate in those passages as "booths" is) will be the primary annual celebration for all nations of the world. (Zec14:16,18-19)

Yes, Feast of Booths will be a bit in the future yet. And certainly Israel needs to do some heart/soul searching as Atonement is soon upon them, as they are now seeing the precursors of that time. But, taking these feasts 'in-order' (which, thus-far, since everything has been fulfilled in order, there is no Scriptural reason to suspect that God will now suddenly change the order of what He established, and proclaimed through these annual feasts, which Israel observed yearly for 1500 years), the -next- one to be fulfilled as the current one comes to a close, is the one commonly called, "Feast of Trumpets".

First of all, as we speak of fulfillment "in-order", please notice that it comes -before- Atonement and Booths. If Atonement is the 70th week, whatever 'Trumpets' is, it comes -before- the 70th week. "Each one in his own order:

a) Christ the firstfruits (which began the Gentile Church 'age' we are presently in), b) and afterward those who are Christ's (Christians/Church) at His coming. c) Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power." (1Cor15:23-24) Is not this "end", as described here, the very definition of what we understand the 70th week to be, as Christ's enemies are defeated in order for Him to set up His Millennial rule of peace, righteousness and justice?

So, what fulfills "Trumpets"?

First of all, let's look at this word typically translated "trumpets". That is not really a most accurate term. The actual word suggests, "alarm of war, blast, shouts, war-cry, shout-for-joy". The only way "trumpet" can really come into the meaning, is as an adjunct to the word "blast", as in, "trumpet blast". Indeed, in this matter, the NASB (while rated as one of the perVersions) is more faithful to the text in this spot, in that they have italicized the words "of trumpets", because they don't technically appear in the text. However, from historical context, and other passages that talk about blowing trumpets and shofars for battle, we can 'assume' that trumpets are involved.

But most technically, the meaning of this Feast can have two implications: 1) Celebration with joy, and 2) Call-to-arms and battle cry. And I suspect it actually includes both, but more likely a heavier emphasis on the second..

Rosh Hashanah is considered to be the Jewish 'New Year'. I don't know any place in Scripture that says this, but Jewish tradition (and we know how flawed that is in many things! -Mk7:13) says that it represents the time of year, the anniversary (if you will), of when God created the heavens and the earth. (Gen1:1) That the "shouts of joy" would represent how the "sons of God shouted for joy" when the "foundations of the earth" were laid. (Job38:4-7) And so, many scholarly types will use the date of Rosh Hashanah upon which to pin the passing of the millennia since Genesis 1:1. I don't know enough on the matter to either agree or disagree with that suggestion.

However, considering that Atonement of the 70th week follows, and understanding the nature of the warfare in the heavenlies where satan and his demons are cast down to the earth (Rev12:9-13), as the one who sits on the white horse goes forth "conquering", and the kingdoms of the world change hands over to Christ (Rev6:2, 11:15); which sounds pretty much like 'warfare' to me (doesn't it to you?); does it not make sense that this next Feast to be fulfilled is a 'battle-cry'! We also know that there will be warfare on the earth.

In the past we have made the observation that, in order for the 70th week to commence, what the world is waiting for is God's "starting-gun". We have spoken of it in the manner of a race or timed event that is begun with



the "bang" of a starting pistol. So many things in the world keep developing, and coming to the fore...and people's expectations are that some major events are 'just-about-to' burst forth. But these preparations continue to develop, but nothing yet bursts forth. That is because God has not yet said, "Now!" In ancient times when armies would face off and line up opposite each other, when the time to charge came, it was done with blowing of trumpets, to coordinate everybody to charge at the same time...and as they began to charge, they would shout the 'battle-cry'.

Notice: "For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shouted command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God..." (1Th4:16) "For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised.." (1Cor15:52)

"As it was in the days of Noah...So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark BECAUSE OF THE WATERS OF THE FLOOD...so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man" (Lk17:26, Gen7:7)

In many sporting events, the beginning of the contest occurs when the official gives a signal. In basketball, the referee throws the ball up in the air, and the representatives from the two sides compete to get their hands on it first. In hockey, the two face off, and the ref drops the puck...and they "go-to-it". Well, the coming 70th week, the Time of Jacob's Trouble is going to be like basketball. The "Referee" is going to "snatch up the Church" into-the-air. When the contestants see the Church rising up to "meet the Lord in the air.." (1Th4:17), 'that' is their signal that the final 'contest' has begun.

Seeing how events were fulfilled in the past, it will be so again: the 'second section' (Church)(vs9-22) must conclude for (vs23-25)(rapture) to commence; which must conclude in order for (vs26-32)(70th week) to commence.

Will this battle-cry also involve -physical- military (battle) conflict? It could-well-be. It could-well-be that as we see the war drums beating over there with Israel, that 'just' as the conflict begins... 'that' will be when we go up to meet the Lord. The Rapture of the Church is part of the 'battle-cry' (No, not a "secret" slinking away in fear!) for the "end" to commence. Noah and crew were finishing getting into the ark -as- the flood waters had begun. It seems apparent that Israel's final conflicts have also already begun.

"So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near; at the doors!" (Mk13:29) To be sure, just as Israel observed them year after year... It is a "set feast"; it will be right on schedule... Even if we don't know the "day and hour" (Mt24:36), God does. It is -His- "appointed time".

Amen!

# Chart: to help visualize this article

Jewish Required	Lev 23 "Set Feasts"	Who Fulfills It
-----	-----	-----
every sabbath	1) vs1-8 vs3 Sabbath	Israel
-----	-----	-----
1st annual   Passover	vs5 Passover vs6 UnlvnBread	Crucifixion Messiah "cut off"
-----	-----	-----
Resurrection/OTsaints		Church
-----	-----	-----
2nd annual   Pentecost	vs16 50days1stFrt vs22 Gleanings	Holy Spirit Gentiles
-----	-----	-----
3rd annual   Ingathering	3) vs23-25 vs24 Trumpets	Dead-in-Christ/Rapture
-----	-----	-----
	4) vs26-32 vs27 Atonement	Israel 70th Week
-----	-----	-----
	5) vs33-36 vs34 Booths	Millennium Israel/World
-----	-----	-----

# ***Tribulation vs Wrath... or 70th Week?***

## READER QUESTION:

I guess I am confused.. I don't see the tribulation as being the same as Gods Wrath.. they are talked about as two different occurrences in the Bible.. and if we as Christians are not going to suffer any of the tribulation, why is it discussed in the Bible , telling us about suffering tribulation.. and what do you say to those Christians who are and have suffered tribulation and are dying for Christ all over the world ? ..and Christ tell us what to look for and it is Tribulation he is telling us of... When it comes to the point of God's Wrath.. I agree that the Church is not mentioned again.. except for the 144,000 Jews... So I do believe we are gone by this point.. But Christ tells us that we will, as followers of Him, suffer Tribulation.. He even tell how some of us will die Loosing our heads)...

## VW ANSWER:

The term "tribulation" is misleading. 'Everybody' uses it, so sometimes I do, too. But it is because of this that I often speak, instead, of the "70th week". Messiah was "cut off" after 69 weeks. (Dan9:26) And there is yet a "one week" where they will "confirm a covenant" (vs27)

"Tribulation" represents "affliction, trouble, anguish, persecution, oppression, distress, straits" When Jesus promised that "in the world you shall have tribulation" (Jn16:33) He was following up the nature of the walk with Christ, that the Godly life is at odds with the world, and brings a "sword" into relationships, rather than "peace". (Mt10:32-38) In more repressive regimes, Believers are carted away and locked up in prison and/or tortured. Muslim countries are most gruesome in their persecution of Christians. In "free" societies, the persecution takes more the nature of words and politics. Jesus didn't necessarily raise one form of distress over another, "Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall SAY all kinds of evil against you falesly for My sake.." (Mt5:11)

However, by definition, "tribulation" can also refer to the end results of God's wrath, as well. By the time God is finished with the world, they will have been through "distress, anguish, trouble, straits, etc" Thus, "tribulation" goes both directions: that which the world foists upon Believers, and also that which God pours upon the unregenerate.

For being one of the primary books on this time period, Daniel does not contain the word "tribulation". Once past the "Church chapters" of Revelation 2-3, the word only appears once, in connection with Believers.(7:14) Otherwise, the word doesn't appear in that book, either. Thus, perhaps Christians have been in error to label the 70th week as "the tribulation"? Jesus speaks of the characteristics of the end of that time period as the "tribulation of those days". (Mt24:29) He speaks as though there will have been events prior to "tribulation" as He says, "for THEN shall be tribulation" (vs21)

The 70th week will begin with some sort of "covenant with many". (Dan9:27) A peace treaty which leaves Israel feeling rather secure; feeling "at ease, who dwell securely.." (Eze38:11) The "wonders in the heavens" don't happen until "afterward". (Joel2:28,31-32) Or, at the end of that time. Furthermore, we are not told whether the beast's "mark" will be given right at the beginning of that seven-year period, or at some point 'into' that time. We are not told if it is seven-years 'full' of beheadings for refusal to worship the beast's image, or some limited time within that period. However, we know that the covenant will be broken in the middle of the time, as Israel will also flee into exile for 3½ years. (Rev12:14) We know that the gentiles will overrun Jerusalem for 3½ years. (Rev11:2) The two "witnesses" will be proclaiming for 3½ years. (Rev11:3) It would seem that the seven-year period will begin with a false peace (Jer6:14, 1Th5:3). But in the middle of that time, there will be a drastic change in events. And it will then end with the astrological upheavals.

In these days in which we live, 3½ years is not long to set up global events from one phase to the next. By re-election time (1996), how many people remembered that Bill Clinton's -VERY-FIRST- piece of legislation enacted when he took office (1993), to set the 'tone' of his administration, was the matter regarding "gays in the military"? How long did it take Egypt to change from being a treaty-signed ally of Israel, to withdrawing their ambassador from Tel Aviv? How long did it take Russia from being a "neutral" nation, to becoming an active player, even putting its "arm around" China to draw China ("kings of the east" -Rev16:12) into the current middle-east "peace" process?

The reason why "tribulation" is a wrong label for the 70th week is in understanding what the 70th week is. For better understanding I am sending a 'rerun' along with this Q/A from the study series, "Covenants and Dispensations..." which we did a couple years ago. For the best understanding (for newer subscribers), it would be recommended to go read the entire series (in the Library). What comes before in the series establishes the background for proper understanding of this section called "wrath":

Daniel sums it up: "Seventy weeks are decreed as to your people [Israel] and as to your holy city [Jerusalem], to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." (Dan9:24)

These seventy weeks, first of all, are -about- "Israel", and Jerusalem. As we are in these end times, that's why the world's attention is focused on Israel and Jerusalem.

There are two forms of "wrath" that will exist during this time: 1) satan's wrath as he is cast to the earth and knows he has a "short time" left

(Rev12:12), so he goes about to persecute Israel (the "woman"-vs13), and 2) God's wrath against "ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.." (Rom1:18, Rev6:17) and Israel's enemies.

Thus, the 70th week has several key features:

Time of wrath... satan's and God's  
Setting up of Christ's kingdom (Dan9:24b, Rev11:15)  
Restoring of Israel (Mal3:3, Mt24:31, Jer31:31-34, etc)

It contains many things: deception and intrigue, world religion with antichrist, world economy, killing of converts, increasing distress and plagues, battle of Armageddon (Joel3, Rev16:16), culminating in the final geological/astrological upheavals which makes the earth "move out of its place" (Is13:13) It will begin with and contain elements of "peace". But it will also -contain- elements of "tribulation". But its essence is not "tribulation"; it only 'contains' it. That is really an erroneous label. It is likely more appropriate to call it the "70th week". Or, "Christ's revealing and Israel's restoration"..?

The time period is NOT -about- the Church. It is about Israel. Since the focus is "Israel", it is not really 'appropriate' for the Church to still be here. Just as there was a time of transition between when Messiah was "cut off" (Dan9:26) and the "disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts11:26), it seems that we are presently in a time period where the "church" (as an organized entity) is "falling away" (2Th2:3) and becoming what Israel was before the Church came into being. There are still those scattered individuals who are "Israel of Israel" (Christian christians) (Rom9:6b), but the overall entity is about to be "vomited" out of Christ's "mouth". (Rev3:16)

Thus, while we speak in terms of the Church-Church not being here for "God's wrath" (1Th5:9, Lk21:36), it would perhaps actually be more contextually correct to proclaim that we will not be here during the "70th week"... including everything the 70th week represents... its peace, its war, its period of prosperity, its plagues, its wrath, etc.

We are the "Church", not Israel. The 70th week "finishes up" Israel's -decreed- "seventy weeks". (Dan9:24)

And never forget, there -will- be converts during the 70th week. Of -that- time it says, "..whoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved.." (Joel2:32) What will they be called? "Christians"? It doesn't say. But it says the focus will be that "salvation shall be in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem..." Perhaps Converts will be persecuted and martyred and derisively labeled "JEW"? That which is of the heart, "..he is a Jew who is one inwardly...of the heart" (Rom2:29)

## ***Some extra thoughts regarding Wrath...***

When Cain killed Abel, he did not receive the death penalty; but God promised that if Cain, in turn, should be killed, his death would be "avenged" (Gen4:15) After the flood, God issues a specific covenant regarding the sanctity of life. Blood was not to be eaten, and any murder was to be avenged by the death penalty. (Gen9:4-6)

As I was working through Isaiah recently, some little words and phrases popped out at me, which are appropriate to consider in connection with the study on "Wrath". Let's observe them briefly in the order we would find them as we read through the book of Isaiah. (I would really suggest a reading of it from the VW-Edition. There are some little nuggets that have been obscured by the translations we have been used to. Read the whole book; you will see God's nature revealed, His arguments with man regarding His own existence, and the nature of the world's coming judgment.)

Is24:5 "The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants.." It is interesting that today's worshipers of "Mother Earth" are all concerned about 'polluting the environment'. You know, I read recently, that some of these militants will even go to the extremes of 'planting evidence' of some rare life form in areas that are not the natural habitat for these life forms. Perhaps a tuft of fur from a coat of an animal normally indigenous to another part of the world, "suddenly discovered" in a place they wish to seek governmental restrictions against human use. God made earth for man to "have dominion" over it. (Gen1:26,28)

But notice what God says is the "defilement": "they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, and have broken the perpetual covenant". How many of these earth-worshipping environmentalists have had abortions? They claim a sanctity for the earth and animals, and "worship and serve the created things more than the Creator" (Rom1:25). And so, as they reject the Creator, they also reject the sanctity of that which was created 'in-His-image', the life of mankind, and the embryonic life in the womb. The world's defilement isn't toxic waste, but the blood of man, shed in rebellion against God.

What is man's judgment from God for this? "Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are held guilty; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned (Is9:19,Rev16:9) and few men are left." (Is24:6)

Is26:18 Israel has not been a light to God's salvation. Israel was planted in the center of the world, as a blessing to the "ends of the earth" (Gen12:3, Ps65:5, 67:7, etc). But as Israel "writhed in pain" to "give birth" and become a nation, they did so "(as it were) to wind". As Isaiah says, "We have not produced any salvation in the earth; nor have the inhabitants of

the world fallen [out in birth]." Israel has not fulfilled her mission before the world, but rather took on the world's paganism. Instead of being the source of Life to the world, it became a repository of the world's filth. They were to reject idolatry and be a source of God's Law to the world, but instead, they took on the world's idolatry, and in a mockery of "separation", loathed being around Gentiles, considering them "unclean" (Ac10:14) and "dogs" (Mt15:26); the very ones to whom they were supposed to be a witness.

Is26:19 But even in the midst of speaking of Israel's failure, the promise of the Resurrection. "Your dead ones shall live, together with My dead body they shall arise." Which happened, "...and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and were manifest to many." (Mt27:52-53) Notice, it says "saints". Yes, even though "with most of them" God was not well pleased (1Cor10:5), the "saints" were raised with Christ.

Is26:20 When Jesus said, "...unless those days were shortened...but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.." (Mt24:22), people often wonder what that means. It was foretold here in Isaiah. "Come, my people, enter into your rooms and shut your doors behind you; hide (as it were) for a few moments, until the indignation has passed." This is written to Israel... not the Church. Enoch who "walked with God" was Raptured. The 'seed' of Noah, whose "generations" were perfect (Gen6:9), was kept safe "a few moments" behind the 'doors' of the ark while God wiped the wickedness off the earth.

Is26:21 Notice -whom- God is judging. "Jehovah comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for -their- iniquity.." When Jesus promised to "keep" Philadelphia "from the hour of trial" (Rev3:10), that was because that hour of 'trial' is -for- "those who dwell on the earth". Jesus is "not of this world" (Jn18:36), nor are His "servants". The Believers' "citizenship is in Heaven". (Phil3:20)

Why are the INHABITANTS of the WORLD going to be judged? "...for their iniquity.." What is the nature of that iniquity, which will be judged? Again, we come back to that word, "blood". We have discovered in the past that the "life [soul/nephesh] is in the blood" (Lev17:11) America is charging around like a wild bull in warfare against "terrorists" who killed a little over 3000 people on 9-11. But twice that many are killed, regularly, -DAILY-, within the womb. The blood of those little babies is being shed in the secrecy, safety and comfort of abortion factories.

Commercials are openly popular for various brands of devices which help women keep certain things "secret" to themselves, during certain times of the month. Again, involving "blood".

Well, see how America is going after terrorists in vengeance over a relatively 'few' deaths. Now, understand the scope of God's judgment for

all the -blood- that is shed. Man thinks he is doing it in privacy. The woman is exercising -rights- over "her -own- body". Notice the wording regarding judgment...

"..the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.." (vs21b)

OK...that's the 2) world (Babylon), and 3) Israel.

And now... "1)"

Is27:1 "In that day Jehovah with His great and fierce and strong sword shall punish Leviathan, the fleeing serpent; Leviathan, that twisted serpent; and he shall kill the dragon in the sea." Remember it was the "serpent" that came to Eve. (Gen3) And in judgment it is "..the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan.." (Rev20:2)

The evil of the Far-East is depicted as a serpentine dragon. Modern science fiction conceives of symbiotic demonically evil entities (like in Star Gate) as little dragon/serpent-looking creatures. Even the relationship of satan before Israel is depicted as the "fiery red dragon" (Rev12:3)

In Scripture quite often the word "sea" is symbolic of the masses of humanity; the overall world system. This "Leviathan" is not an actual physical creature in this instance. Whatever the actual physical creature may have been (perhaps TRex?), here it is symbolic of God's judgment against satan.

But notice regarding Israel through all of this. Note this well, you who think that Israel is "done for", and that the Church permanently replaces Israel, and that it would be just as well for Israel to be annihilated, therefore, many of your kind go over there and 'help' the PLO...

Is27:2~ "In that day sing to her, a vineyard of desirable wine. I, Jehovah, keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day...He shall cause those who come from Jacob to take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

Yes, Israel rebelled. But God is going to "purify the sons of Levi.." (Mal3:3) Yes, Israel sinned against God. But God will see to it that "..the iniquity of Jacob be atoned.." (vs9)

Yes, Jesus called His followers (Church) His "friends". (Jn15:15) The Church is likened unto the Bride of Christ. (Eph5:32) But Israel also still has a special place. Israel came first. They are the "natural branches". (Rom11:21,24) And Israel will be restore to fellowship. (Rom11:26) Israel left her husband, but God has been pleading with her to "return". (Jer3:1) And He will see to its completion. If you wish to scoff at Israel, just keep in mind that, "..He has sent Me after glory to the nations who plundered you;



for he who touches you touches the pupil of His eye." (Zec2:8) His retribution against Israel's enemies, on Israel's behalf, will be like when "...Jehovah shall go forth and fight against those nations, like the day He fought in the day of battle." (Zec14:3)

Suggested reading: Isaiah ch24.

Don't be found, in that day, a foe of God!

Amen!