

June 17, 2010 (9:53am)

Chapter 13 *The Reaping*

Daniel 12:1 *"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time;"*

Introduction - The Coming Judgment of Humanity. The book of Daniel prophesies of a coming "reaping" for humanity for individual and corporate sin. In this "reaping," humanity will bear the consequences of its many choices of sin and rebellion against God. The principle of "reaping" is found in many of the Bible's passages, among which is Galatians 6:7-8:

Galatians 6:7-8 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

"Reaping" is also described in prophetic passages. One of the most descriptive is Revelation 14:14f below. As you read the passage, be sure to notice in whose hand the sickle is held:

Revelation 14:14 "Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." . . . 20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles." (Emphasis added)

The "Reaper" is the Only Begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, and His angels. Because of humanity's sins against God, divine wrath has been "stored up" and a judgment is due humanity in the last of this age. This judgment will be referred to in this chapter as the "Reaping" (with an upper case "R"). Through this Reaping, the world and the covenant people of Israel will be made ready for the return of Jesus, the establishing of His 1000 year Kingdom reign on earth (the "Millennial Reign" of Christ, Revelation 20:6), and the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem.

In this chapter, we will interpret the "Tribulation period," the period often interpreted by Bible scholars as the 7 years of tribulation immediately preceding the 2nd coming of Christ. As we will see, this period is the 3rd part of three dependent but separate parts of the Reaping. This 7 year period is often times referred to as the "70th week" based on Daniel 9:26-27. Throughout this chapter, we will use the terms "Tribulation period,"

“70th week,” and “Reaping” all to refer to the same period, the 7 years preceding the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ. This chapter will also interpret the “rapture,” that time when believers in Jesus are “carried away” to join Jesus in heaven. As we will see, the rapture and the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ are two separate events.

The Reaping - Introduction. Daniel 9:24-27 describes three separate and dependent periods of judgment decreed by God for humanity to bear the consequences of its sins and bring in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. In the discussion following, we will refer to each of these three dependent periods as a separate period of one “Reaping.” As we will see, the total length of judgment decreed by God is 70 “weeks of years,” i.e., 490 years. At the end of the 490 years, God will *bring in* “everlasting righteousness, seal up vision and prophecy, and anoint the most holy place.” The affect, then, of the Reaping is to purify the world, open the hearts of humanity for the finished work of Christ, and enable the Millennial Reign of Christ (Rev 20:4) to be brought in. Through the Reaping, the Word is fulfilled: “*that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” Phillipians 2:10-11.

As one might expect, *the 490 years are not consecutive years.* Humanity’s sins are not limited to one nation or people group or even to one or more generations of humanity’s existence. Rather, humanity’s sinfulness extends over all nations, over all peoples, and over all time periods of human existence. The three dependent (but separate) periods of Reaping, likewise, extend over multiple generations of humanity, and each is separated by many generations.

The Divine Purpose of the Reaping. You might wonder the Divine purpose of the Reaping? Here is what scripture says:

Luke 17:26 "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 " It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; 29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed." (Emphasis added)

Here is what Luke’s gospel was referring to by the phrase, “in the days of Noah”:

Genesis 6:5 “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His

heart. 7 And the Lord said, " I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, . . . " 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. . . 9 Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God. . . . 13 Then God said to Noah, " The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth." (Emphasis added)

God, the Creator, acts to reverse His own plan. He blots from the face of the earth the very work of His own hand, work He had previously declared, "very good" (Gen 1:31). Unlike Noah, who "walked with God" (Genesis 6:9), humanity has not. Humanity has gone its "own way" (Isaiah 53:6). In the process, evil has claimed the heart of man much like a sarcoma claims the health of its host. Noah and his family are saved by God's hand, and become the root through which God will, once again, accomplish His original plan. The evil of man having been removed, God begins anew. Man has another chance, but only after the earth has been purified, and only after man has been judged by God.

The Psalmist put it this way:

Psalms 110:1 "The Lord says to my Lord: " Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet." . . 5 The Lord is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. 6 He will judge among the nations, He will fill them with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country."

We find the divine purpose of the Reaping revealed in the 6th century BC destruction of Jerusalem and the ensuing seventy year exile of the Jews. The prophet Ezekiel, a Jewish exile in Babylon at the time, is instructed by God to lie on the ground for 430 days (Ezekiel 4:4). This period of time was "calculated" for the time of the people's sinfulness against God (Ezekiel 22:31). Ezekiel's laying prone was a visual statement to the Jewish exiles in Babylon that until this reaping was completed, they would not return to their beloved Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 4:4 "As for you, lie down on your left side and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel on it; you shall bear their iniquity for the number of days that you lie on it. 5 "For I have assigned you a number of days corresponding to the years of their iniquity, three hundred and ninety days; thus you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. 6 "When you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah; I have assigned it to you for forty days, a day for each year." (Emphasis added)

Thus, the people "bore their sins" by reaping the consequence, and the wrath of God was "satisfied":

Ezekiel 5:13 'Thus My anger will be spent and I will satisfy My wrath on them, and I

will be appeased; then they will know that I, the Lord, have spoken in My zeal when I have spent My wrath upon them."

God's intention in Israel's judgment was not punitive, but redemptive. That is, God's purpose was to reveal Himself through the fulfillment of prophecy.

Ezekiel 24:24 *"Thus Ezekiel will be a sign to you; according to all that he has done you will do; when it comes, then you will know that I am the Lord God.' "*

It will likewise be the purpose of God in the Reaping – to satisfy the wrath of God, and to prepare the world for the coming Millennial Reign of Christ. In the Reaping, the world will be *purified* much like the world was purified in the time of Noah. The flood wiped the wickedness of man off the face of the earth (Genesis 6:5). The Reaping will do the same; *"For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will. Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days."* Mark 13:19-20

The Holiness of God Demands a Response to Sin. So devastating is the 70th week, that Daniel 12:1 describes it as *". . . a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time. . ."* Matthew 24:21 states, *"For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will."* (Joel 2:1, Mark 13:19).

How can a loving God allow such a time for humanity?

We fail to grasp the depth and depravity of our own sin; nor do we grasp the purity of God and His holiness. God's holiness requires a "consequence" for the sin that we have individually chosen. Otherwise, "right" and "wrong" have no meaning and divine "righteousness" is without substance.

The plight of sinful humanity before this Holy God is pictured by the prophet Isaiah, who finds himself in quite a dilemma as he "views" the Lord God Almighty on His throne:

Isaiah 6:1 *"In the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. 2 Seraphim stood above Him, . . . 3 And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." 4 And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. 5 Then I said, " Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, with a burning coal in his hand which he had taken from the altar with tongs. 7 And he touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and*

your sin is forgiven."

Isaiah sees Holy God in a vision. His response? *"Woe is me, for I am ruined! . . . For I am a man of unclean lips . . . (living) among a people of unclean lips."* Oh, that we would know how desperately we are in need of a Savior (Romans 3:23, 6:23)! Our sin has "ruined us," and we should be in the same state of mourning that Isaiah found himself in. Merciful God then provides the remedy for Isaiah that grants him "safety" in the presence of Holy God: Isaiah's lips are "purified" by a touch from a burning coal. Isaiah's sin is forgiven (6:7).

In the same way that God provided the means for Isaiah's sin to be forgiven, so He has provided for ours to be. In the process, the coming "Indignation" of God is placed upon the back of His Son:

Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him."

Christ became the object of God's wrath. By God's plan, Christ died on a cross over 2000 years ago to save us from the coming wrath of God, to save us from "reaping that we have sown." God did so at a very great cost – the cost of His Only Son, the Incarnate God. When humanity rejects Jesus Christ, they reject the provision of God not only for eternal life but also from the coming wrath of God. To those who are alive in the 70th week, the following verse prophesies of what is coming:

John 3:36 (NIV) "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

The "Indignation" of God, in one sense, accomplishes a "purification" of sins for humanity. The trauma of the 70th week concludes with the 2nd coming of Christ. The world looks upon the one who was crucified, but this time, He comes, visibly, from the heavens (Matthew 24:29-30). The earth is purified from her sins having come to Messiah Jesus:

Zephaniah 3:8 "Therefore, wait for Me," declares the Lord, "For the day when I rise up to the prey. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, To assemble kingdoms, To pour out on them My indignation, All My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured By the fire of My zeal. 9 "For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, That all of them may call on the name of the Lord, To serve Him shoulder to shoulder." (Emphasis added)

The following passages describe God's outrage at our sin and rebellion against Him. As you read the passages, notice the word "indignation" that frequently occurs. "Indignation" is one of the words the scripture uses to describe God's outrage. It is His

emotive and active response to man's sins. Dictionary.com defines the word, "indignant" as: "a feeling, characterized by, or expressing strong displeasure at something considered unjust, offensive, insulting, or base."¹

Why this word to describe God's response to sin? *God is holy; so holy that our unending sin is an insult to Him. Our sin repulses Him! And, it is unjust to Him. He is our Creator, Sustainer, and Provider who not only brought us into existence, but provided the way, in Jesus Christ, for us to know Him, experience forgiveness and eternal life through Him, and experience abundant life because of Him!* Our response of disobedience and rebellion is not only unjust, but grossly ungrateful. Indignation is God's just and appropriate response to humanity's sin and ungratefulness. It is also God's response to humanity's rejection of Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son, and God's provision of Himself as the object of His own wrath (Isaiah 53:5-6):

Here is how scripture describes God's perspective on humanity's sin against Him.

Ezekiel 22:29 *"The people of the land have practiced oppression and committed robbery, and they have wronged the poor and needy and have oppressed the sojourner without justice. . . . 31 "Thus I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; their way I have brought upon their heads," declares the Lord God.*" (Emphasis added)

Obadiah 1:15 *"For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head. 16 "Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, All the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow And become as if they had never existed."* (Emphasis added)

Zephaniah 3:8 *"Therefore wait for Me," declares the Lord, "For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, To assemble kingdoms, To pour out on them My indignation, All My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured By the fire of My zeal."* (Emphasis added)

Isaiah 26:20 *"Come, my people, enter into your rooms And close your doors behind you; Hide for a little while Until indignation runs its course. 21 For behold, the Lord is about to come out from His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; . . ."* (Emphasis added)

Isaiah 34:1 *"Draw near, O nations, to hear; and listen, O peoples! Let the earth and all it contains hear, and the world and all that springs from it. 2 For the Lord's indignation is against all the nations, And His wrath against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to slaughter."* (Emphasis added)

John 3:17 *"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that*

the world should be saved through Him. 18 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (Emphasis added)

How long will the Reaping Require? Daniel 9:24 describes three periods of Reaping which have been "calculated" for humanity's sins and the *bringing in* of the Kingdom of Christ. Bible scholars have interpreted this period of "70 weeks of years" in different ways. This writer has used one of those interpretations in the calculation of the 70 weeks of years below.

Here is the text that describes the decree of God:

Daniel 9:24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place."

How long is "70 weeks?" Daniel 9:24 describes the total period of Reaping to be "seventy weeks." Literally, 70 weeks is 490 days (70 x 7 days in a week). Is the seventy weeks (490 days) literal or metaphorical? If literal, the 490 days would be over shortly after the angel transmitted the prophecy to Daniel in the 6th century BC! Hardly the correct interpretation.

If metaphorical, then one day in a week is symbolic of some other period of time. Also, our method of interpretation has been to interpret prophetic texts metaphorically, first, and then, to find the literal truth behind the metaphor. To be consistent, we must find the meaning of the metaphor, first. An Old Testament passage helps us to interpret the period best represented by a "day" in the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24:

Leviticus 25:8 "You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, namely, forty-nine years."

"Seven sabbaths of years" is defined for us by Leviticus 25:8 as: "seven times seven years, namely forty-nine years."² Therefore, each day in a week is symbolic of one year, and one "week" symbolizes seven years (not seven days). Likewise, we just read Ezekiel 4:4-6 where Ezekiel lay prone for 430 days, each day representing one year of the people's rebellion against God. Using this same definition in Daniel 9:24, brings us to a total length of time of 490 years (70 x 7 "weeks," with each day symbolizing one year). This period must be divided into three separate but dependent periods as can be seen in the remainder of the text:

Daniel 9:25 "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks

and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26 "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, . . ." 27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."
 (Emphasis added)

Notice the three periods: "seven weeks" (v 9:25), "sixty-two weeks" (v 9:25), and "one week" (v 9:27), the sum of which is 70 weeks (7 + 62 + 1). Also, notice that the 70th week is separated by an indefinite period of time from the preceding 69 weeks (7 + 62) by the insertion of the phrase "after the sixty-two weeks" (9:26). The 70th week could come immediately after the 69th week or it could be delayed indefinitely until the prophecies are fulfilled for this last week.

We can summarize the three periods as below:

Daniel 9:24 - 27			
v 24	Total Reaping Period (all 3 periods)	70 x 7 years =	490 years
<i>Divided into Three Nonconsecutive Periods of Reaping over a Span of Centuries:</i>			
v 25	1 st period - the rebuilding of Jerusalem	7 x 7 years =	49 years
v 25	2 nd period - until Messiah begins	62 x 7 years =	434 years
v 27	3 rd period - the time of the "desolater"	1 x 7 years =	7 years

The dating of the periods could be as follows:

- 1st Period (49 years): Decree issued in the 7th year of Artaxerxes (457-56 BC; the mission of Ezra; compare Ezra 7:8ff), confirmed and extended to the 20th year of the same king (compare Neh. 2:1ff; 6:15-16), around 445BC.³
- 2nd Period (434 years): The 483 years (49 + 434) extends from 457 BC, the date of Artaxerxes decree, through 27-28 AD, (457 - 483) when Christ's public ministry began.
- 3rd Period (7 years): The last 7 year period, i.e., the "70th week," a future period that will end just before the return of Christ.

There are many different views on the dating of the three periods above. None of the views are able to date the 1st period without questions. The presence of unanswered

questions on the dating of the 1st period is a fact. We cannot let the unanswered questions of the 1st period keep us from pressing forward on the remaining two periods. Unanswered questions on these two later periods are less problematic. This writing is primarily concerned with the third period, the 70th week. This is the only period that is future, and the one that is most relevant to the the modern day.

The Reaping - To Whom Does it Apply? Daniel 9:24 states the prophecy is decreed “for your people and your holy city” to “finish the transgression. . .” Initially, one might conclude that “your people” refers solely to the Jewish people, because they are literally Daniel’s “people” at the time of the prophecy. The context of the passage seems to further support this initial conclusion as well. The verses immediately preceding the prophecy include Daniel’s specific request of God to hasten the return of Israel to Jerusalem from their 70 years of exile in Babylon (9:2, 17-19; and Jeremiah 25:11). *However, God’s response to Daniel’s prayer goes far beyond Daniel’s request.* Daniel’s specific request is answered in the 1st period of Reaping, i.e., the first period of 49 years (seven 7’s), when the people of Israel were released from exile in the 1st year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia (539 BC; Ezra 1:1). However, the work to rebuild the Temple and walls of the city was stopped by Israel’s disgruntled “neighbors” (Ezra 4f; *some things never change!*) some time after their return from exile. The walls remained uncompleted for many years. The next time the walls become a focus is in the time of Nehemiah in the reign of Artaxerxes some 100 years later (Nehemiah 1:3). In the 20th year of Artaxerxes, King of Persia (Nehemiah 2:1), around 445 BC, Nehemiah left Babylon to successfully lead the efforts to rebuild the walls of the city.⁴ This appears to be the beginning date for counting the 7 seven’s of the 1st period. It was under the leadership of Nehemiah that the walls were successfully rebuilt and completed (Nehemiah 6:15).⁵

The 2nd period of Reaping requires an additional “sixty-two sevens” (434 years) to be added to the “seven sevens” (49 years) to arrive at the time of Messiah the Prince (9:25). “Messiah the Prince” is a reference to the Only Begotten, the Savior of the world, Jesus (Isaiah 53), who was born, crucified, and rose from the grave on the third day. This 2nd period of Reaping did not satisfy the wrath of God for the Jews. *The Jews rejected Jesus in the 1st century.* Their rejection continues to the present day, so they cannot have satisfied the wrath of God in the second period of Reaping, and their “transgression” cannot be “finished.”⁶ Gentiles received Jesus as Savior beginning in the 1st century AD. To these, the 2nd period of Reaping brought in the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy, including forgiveness of sins. To Christians, the 2nd period of Reaping has begun to have been satisfied. “Your people” *must include Christians*, since fulfillment occurred for the Christians in the 1st century AD.

Further, if this view is correct, then we should not expect to see Christians subject to the “wrath of God” during the 70th week. That is, the “rapture” would take place some time prior to the “pouring out of the wrath of God” in the 70th week. As we will see, this is precisely the case. Christians will be raptured in the midpoint of the 7 years.

The Reaping will Require Six Separate Spiritual Events to Occur. Daniel 9:24 provides six specific spiritual events to occur. Here are the six events. For those interested in more detail for the six, please see the endnotes for each.

1. To finish the transgression⁷
2. To make an end of sin
3. To make atonement for iniquity⁸
4. To bring in everlasting righteousness⁹
5. To seal up vision and prophecy¹⁰
6. To anoint the most holy place.¹¹

The first three spiritual events deal with sin and what God will do to “finish” it. The last three deal with what will happen once the 1st three have been completed. We might describe the first three as the “negative” events of the 70 weeks, and the last three as the “positive” events of the 70 weeks.

Christians might initially conclude that the six events have been fulfilled already by the coming of Jesus Christ, for Christ’s death on the cross certainly accomplishes the first three, and the first three allow the last three to be “brought in.” But this view cannot be adequately supported because the prophecy itself is not “finished” with the coming of Jesus in the 1st century AD. Notice:

Daniel 9:26 "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined."

Daniel 9:26 prophesies that after Messiah “*is cut off and (has) nothing,*” *the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. . .*” If “sin, transgression, and iniquity” were “finished” within the context of this prophecy by Messiah Jesus, then no part of the seventy weeks of judgement would remain following His coming for Christians. That is, Jesus, having been crucified and raised on the third day, would have “satisfied” the wrath of God, and nothing more would be required. *Such is not the case; for satan has not been bound and will not be until the 70th week has been finished.*

The prophecy states that the six events are not completed until all 70 weeks have been finished. Two primary reasons. First, satan has not been bound and judged in the Lake of Fire. So long as he is “loose,” he will wage his unending war against God by attacking the children of God. We make this conclusion by virtue of Revelation 12:17 which states that he continues his war against those “who hold to the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus.” Second, *because Messiah Jesus has been rejected by most of humanity* – including the Jewish people, the decree is not finished until this transgression has been atoned for. As we will see, until the 70th week is

completed (specifically, the last 3 ½ years), these two occurrences have not been accomplished; and, the wrath of God has not been satisfied.

The “People of the Prince Who is to Come,” the Destruction of the “City” and the “Sanctuary.” Daniel 9:26 has a very important prophecy that we have already interpreted in our chapter on the Revived Roman Empire. We will not discuss this part of Daniel 9:26 again. The “people of the prince who is to come” are the Muslims; the destruction of the “city” and the “sanctuary” are the destruction of Constantinople and the Hagia Sophia Cathedral on May 29, 1453 by the Muslims under Sultan Mehmet II (not the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD by the Romans). The “parenthesis” of time between the 69th week and the 70th week continues through the present day as we await the beginning of the 70th week.

Part 2 - Two Periods of Wrath during the 70th Week

We have laid the foundation to understand the coming Tribulation, a period of 7 years just prior to the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ. The Bible divides the Tribulation into two equal periods of 3 ½ years each:

Daniel 9:27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; . . ."

Revelation 13:5 "There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. . . . 7 It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him."

Daniel 7:25 "He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time."

Daniel 12:9 He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. . . 11 "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days."

Daniel 9:27's “one week” is the 7 years that are the 70th week, i.e., the Tribulation period. The text includes a mid-week event referred to as “he will put a stop to sacrifice” in the “middle of the week.” The middle of 7 years is 3 ½ years. Revelation 13:5 prophesies that the 1st beast will be granted “authority” for forty-two months. Forty-two months are 3 ½ years. Daniel 7:25 prophesies of the “other horn” who will “wear down the saints.” The period they are worn down is a “time, times, and half a time.” This phrase is interpreted by most Bible scholars to be 3 ½ years (time = 1 year; times = two years; ½ a time = ½ year).¹² Finally, Daniel 12:9 prophesies 1290 days (3 ½ years, plus one month) until the “abomination of desolation” is set up. One month

beyond the 3 ½ years does not change the importance of this recurring time period of 3 ½ years in the end of days. Over and over again the Bible gives significance to this period. Why? Because the 70th week is divided into two equal periods of 3 ½ years each.

Metaphoric or Literal Interpretation of the 3 ½ years. We are interpreting this time period using a literal reading of the text rather than a metaphoric reading. Yes, I know this violates our interpretation model. We have been using a model that interprets prophetic texts first as metaphor, then finds literal meaning behind the metaphor. We have done this with all of the prophecies except for Ezekiel 38/39. Ezekiel 38/39 was a prophetic text, but without the symbolic characters found in texts such as Revelation or Daniel; and so we departed from our model of interpretation for valid reason. How can we depart now and interpret the prophecies on “time,” literally, rather than symbolically? My response is to offer the “antichrist type” provided by Antiochus Epiphanes IV’s desecration of the Temple (167 BC) and the ceasing of the worship of Jews for approximately 3 ½ years thereafter until his death in 164 BC. Antiochus’ sacrilege is mentioned in both Old and New Testament prophecies (Daniel 8:9-12, 11:31, 12:11; Matthew 24:15). It stands as the “abomination desolation” of history upon which the future Antichrist/false prophet will duplicate according to Daniel 9:27. This was a 3 ½ year period and it “matches” with many of the prophetic texts specifically. Further, when we look at the book of Revelation, a recurring number appears, 7. This number, biblically, is a literal number. It is also a number that acts as a metaphor to communicate a truth. Easton’s Bible Dictionary describes it, in part, as follows:

“This number occurs frequently in Scripture, and in such connections as lead to the supposition that it has some typical meaning. On the seventh day God rested, and hallowed it (Gen 2:2, 3). The division of time into weeks of seven days each accounts for many instances of the occurrence of this number. This number has been called the symbol of perfection, and also the symbol of rest. . . the seven churches, seven spirits, seven stars, seven seals, seven vials, and many others, sufficiently prove the importance of this sacred number” (see (Lev 25:4; 1Sa 2:5; Ps 12:6; Ps 79:12; Prov 26:16; Isa 4:1; Mat 18:21, 22; Luke 17:4)). The feast of Passover (Ex 12:15, 16), the feast of Weeks (Deut 16:9), of Tabernacles (Deut 13:15), and the Jubilee (Lev 25:8), were all ordered by seven.”¹³

The point is that the number 7 is a literal number, biblically. It is also a symbol of divine perfection, completion, and rest. If the Bible uses the number in prophecy it seems best to interpret it literally just as God has used it literally.

Let us suppose, however, that we should use a metaphoric interpretation rather than a literal interpretation? What difference would it make in our conclusions? Very little. The point is that the 70th week, that is the Tribulation period, be it 7 years or something longer (or shorter) will be a period of tribulation unlike anything humanity has ever experienced. Whatever the length of time, this period will be traumatic. Further,

whatever the length of the Tribulation, be it 7 years or some other length of time, half way through this Tribulation period, a “breach” will occur. The mid-point of the “week” will be reckoned by the “putting a stop to sacrifice and grain offering,” to the “granting of authority” to the first beast (Revelation 13:5), to the “wearing down of the saints” (Daniel 7:25). This is the real point, not whether the mid-week is 3 ½ years or 12 ½ years or whatever; in the middle of the Tribulation an event of significance will distinguish time and history. Until a better interpretation is provided, this interpreter will “loosely” hold to the 3 ½ years as a literal period of time.

The “Wrath” During the Tribulation Period. The Bible tells us that believers in Christ will not experience the “wrath of God.” Christ has already been subjected to the wrath of God on our behalf.

Romans 5:9 “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”

1 Thessalonians 1:10 “and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

However, the Bible also tells us that believers in Christ will experience the wrath of satan:

Revelation 12:12 *“For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time. . . . 17 “So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”*

The Division of the Tribulation Period - the wrath of satan and the wrath of God.

Suppose the 7 years of tribulation of the 70th week are divided into two periods of 3 ½ years each: the first period being the time of the wrath of satan (inflicted against Christians and the world) and the last period being the time of the wrath of God (inflicted against the world)? That is, Christians are saved from the wrath of God but not from the wrath of satan!

Remember who the “Reaper” was in Revelation 14:14 in the beginning of the chapter? He was “holding the sickle and wearing a “golden crown.” The text referred to him as the “son of man.” The Reaper was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice who was being “reaped”:

Revelation 14:9 *“Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which*

is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb."

The Reaper is Christ and His angels. The wrath is specifically described as the "wrath of God" (14:10,19), and those who are being "reaped" are those "who worship the beast and his image" (14:9). They receive a "mark" to demonstrate they have converted to the worship of the beast, Allah. The mark is the mark of the beast, 666. Revelation 13:16. It is the mark of Islam, the cloak under which satan will wage his war in the Last Days. The mark 666 is not literal, but symbolic, identifying the individual as having converted to the religion of the beast, Allah. But notice what happens to Christians relative to the worship of the 1st beast:

Revelation 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

Christians do not worship the 1st beast - their names *have been* written in the book of life of the Lamb.¹⁴ They are not "reaped" by the "sickle of God, because it is only those whose names have not been written in the book who are reaped. Christians will not be on earth when the Reaper "*gathers the clusters from the vine of the earth.*" Why? The first 3 ½ years of the 7 years are the years of the wrath of satan, and the last 3 ½ years are the years of the wrath of God. *Christians are raptured in between the two periods.* We experience satan's hand, but not God's hand, for Christ has already taken the wrath of God's hand. There will be quite a difference between the two. If you think about it, a mid-tribulation rapture just prior to the unleashing of the wrath of God makes sense, Biblically. Christians are referred to in scripture as adopted "sons of God." Romans 8:14-15. How then can God "reap" those He has adopted as His Sons? He cannot and He will not:

Romans 8:35, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, . . .? 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor . . . any created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Christians shall not be reaped by God. If they were, Romans 8:39 would be violated – Christians would be separated from the love of God!

This interpretation is further supported by two texts given many times before, both of which describe a "wearing down" of Christians for 3 ½ years: Daniel 7:25 ("wearing down") and Revelation 13:5 ("overcome"). This "wearing down" occurs during the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation Period, for it is by the hand of the "other horn" and the 1st beast, respectively.

Biblical scholar Gleason Archer is my source for much of this view. In describing the 7 year period of tribulation, he distinguishes the wrath of God from the wrath of man/wrath of satan. He states,

“Thus we see that chapters 8 - 19 [Revelation] relate to the terrible strokes of judgment by which the wrath of God is poured out upon man. These stand in clear contrast to the preceding chapters (6-7) [Revelation] which relate the period of the wrath of man against the loyal, Christ-confessing church. . . The sixth seal ushers in the final phase of the wrath of God upon the Antichrist and his realm.”¹⁵

The Rapture of the Saints - The “Rescue” of Daniel 12:1. The closing phrase of Daniel 12:1 describes a “rescue” that will take place during the Tribulation. This rescue is commonly referred to as the “rapture.” Rapture” is translated from the Greek word, *“harpadzo,”*¹⁶ meaning, to be “carried away,” and has come to mean the secret coming of Christ for His followers to remove them from the difficulties of the Tribulation Period. The texts below support this view.

Matthew 24:37 “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of **Noah**. . . .⁴⁰ “Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left.⁴¹ “Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left.” (Emphasis added)

1 Thessalonians 4:15 “*For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.*” (Emphasis added)

John 14:1 “*Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”* (Emphasis added)

Daniel 12:1 “*Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.”* (Emphasis added)

When will Christians be “rescued?” There are entire books written on the “when” (and, the “whether”) of the rapture, i.e, pre-, mid-, or post-tribulation rapture. It is not the purpose of this writing to review the merits of these three views nor the many

variations of each. Readers are directed to one excellent source for a complete discussion of this event: *Three Views on the Rapture, pre-, mid-, or post-tribulation?* Stanley N. Gundry, Editor, by Gleason L. Archer, Jr, Paul D. Feinberg, Douglas J. Moo, Richard R.. Reiter.

We have already reviewed the dividing of the 7 year Tribulation into two periods of 3 ½ years. We have provided passages supporting the view that Christians will be subject to the wrath of Satan but not the wrath of God. The issue then becomes rather simple: when is the wrath of God poured out – Christians will have been raptured just prior to this “pouring out.” The answer is found in Revelation 6 - 8.

The multitude of Revelation 7 that “comes out of the tribulation.” In Revelation 7, the Apostle John is in heaven, having been brought there by an angel to see the “things which must shortly take place” (Rev 4:1). In the 7th chapter, John is shown two groups. The first group is 144,000 in number, and the second group is too numerous to count. The second group “stands before the throne and before the Lamb.” They are physically present in the heavenly throne room (Revelation 7:9) worshiping the Lamb. This great number is further described as from “every nation, tribe and tongue,” all of whom are clothed in “white robes, washed by the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9, 14). The second group are clearly believers in Jesus.

The question we must address is when did this group arrive in heaven? Are they believers who have died since the time of Christ and now gather in the heavenly throne room? Are they all martyrs similar to the group of martyrs described “under the altar” in the preceding chapter? Or, are they the raptured saints who have just arrived in heaven immediately prior to the time of the wrath of God?

The group is specifically described as follows:

Revelation 7:14 “. . .And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

The timing of the scene in Revelation 7 is important. It occurs immediately after the breaking of the 6th of 7 seals (by the Lamb, Jesus Christ). The 6th seal begins the “great day of the wrath of the Lamb,” followed by John’s vision of the two groups in chapter 7. As John observes the second group too numerous to count, *this group is already present in the heavenly throne room when his vision begins*. The angel has just been instructed not to “harm the earth or the sea or the trees,” until the “bond-servants of our God are sealed on their foreheads” (the group of 144,000). This means that the 6th seal which begins the wrath of God is stopped, temporarily, until final preparations are made. Final preparations include the “sealing of the bondservants,” and the rapture of the saints. The text tells us that the second group “are those who come out of the tribulation”; and these are present and visible to John in the throne room (Revelation 7:9)? They have come “out of the great tribulation” (Revelation 7:14) so that the 6th

seal, i.e., the wrath of God, can begin the wrath of God. These are believers - their robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14), and they have been removed from the tribulation about to be unleashed on the world.

The multitude in the throne room is that group that has just been raptured, prior to the pouring forth of the wrath of God in the 6th seal opening. This view is further supported by the absence of the saints from the plagues and disasters that occur in the remainder of the book of Revelation.

The Tribulation “Treaty” of the 70th Week. Daniel 9:27 prophesies of a very important Treaty that will occur in the Tribulation. This passage is important as it also supports the view of a mid-tribulation rapture. The text states,

Daniel 9:27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

The “firm covenant” with “the many” has been interpreted by Bible scholars to refer to a “treaty” of some sort that is entered into between “the many” and the “one who makes desolate,” i.e., the Antichrist.¹⁷ There is one very important phrase that must not be overlooked. Daniel 9:27 states that some type of “breach” occurs in the mid-point of the 7 year Treaty. As we will see, this mid-point breach also tells us what takes place at the beginning of the 7 year Tribulation period when the Treaty is first entered into. The text states that in the “*middle of the week*,” the Antichrist will “*put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering*.” This means that half-way through the Treaty period of 7 years, the Antichrist will end the worship of all gods, other than the one to whom he stands for, Allah. This begins the time of humanity’s “one-world” religion (Revelation 13:8). This is not the only treaty factor that Antichrist /false prophet revokes. The entire Treaty will be broken. However, this is the one factor that scripture specifically names, and therefore, it is the only factor important for this writing.

This phrase, “*put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering*,” refers to an event that occurred in the 2nd century BC when the Jews were no longer allowed to practice Judaism by Antiochus Epiphanes IV. This is the one “antichrist” type that keeps reappearing in prophetic passages. Antiochus sought to enforce the Greek pluralistic religion upon the Jews. He refused to allow the Jews to practice circumcision, observe the Sabbath, or read the Torah. Those Jews who refused were killed. The prohibition reached its high point when in 167 BC Antiochus sacrificed a pig on an altar erected to Zeus in the Jerusalem Temple, thereby desecrating the Temple and rendering Israel desolate of its Jehovah God. No further Temple sacrifices to Jehovah were allowed by Antiochus. This prohibition continued until Antiochus’ death in 164 BC, a period of almost 3 ½ years, and led to the Maccabean Revolt against Antiochus’ forces. The Jewish people celebrate “Hanukkah,” an eight day annual celebration, to commemorate the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem in the 2nd century BC.

What occurred to the Jews under Antiochus is a “type” that will repeat itself in the 70th week, i.e., the 7 years of the Tribulation. The Antichrist will put end all religions except his own; but not until the mid-point of the 7 years. Since the Antichrist does not break the Treaty until the midpoint, this tells us that when the 7 year Treaty was initially entered into, religions existing at that time were allowed to continue to be practiced.

The Breaking of the 4th Seal. We have discussed what occurred breaking the 6th seal, i.e., the raptured saints are present in the throne room just prior to the unleashing of the wrath of God in the midpoint of the Tribulation. However, we must briefly describe one event that is prophesied at the breaking of the 4th seal:

Revelation 6:8 “And I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. And authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.”

The 4th horse thunders along with his rider, the only of the four who is named, “Death,” and appropriately so. The consequences upon humanity are the death of 1/4 of the world’s population. There are presently 6 billion people on the earth. At the breaking of this seal, 1.5 billion people will die.

If one looks closely at the words one can see that man has just destroyed man. The four methods of death, i.e., sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts are not to be taken literally, but metaphorically. These are the four methods of death named in Ezekiel 14:21 when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians (586 BC). The text is simply stating that humanity will die in various ways, all of which will be related to the first method of death listed – the “sword.” The “sword” will in all likelihood be the “sword” of nuclear weapons as mankind will have finally succeeded in destroying itself. This prophecy was mentioned in the interpretation of the pre-Tribulation conquest that necessitated the kingdoms of the world to enter the Treaty. The first 3 ½ years of the 7 years will be a time of tribulation that continues from where it began; but not by the hand of God but by the hand of satan. Believers in Christ will be present on earth for the opening of the 4th seal. It is not until the 6th seal that the wrath of God is poured forth. Believers will endure man’s wrath upon man in the same way that believers will endure satan’s wrath upon man.¹⁸

Some will be martyred. We find in Revelation 20 a scene of John’s heavenly visit. There he sees the “souls of those who had been beheaded” because of the “testimony of Jesus and the word of God, . . .” (20:4). The text describes further the reason for their martyrdom: “. . . who had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received the mark . . . on their hand.” This event is an end time event occurring during the 1st or the second half of the 70th week. The closing sentence of the verse implies this because the blessings given to the beheaded souls are reserved for the Millennial Reign which follows the 70th week: “. . . they came to life and reigned with Christ for a

thousand years.” Since the failure to worship the 1st beast (we have interpreted to be Allah) is a 70th week event, and since there are believers who have been martyred by the 1st beast during this 7 year period, the rescue *cannot take place until some time during the 70th week*, the 7 year period of tribulation.

The plight of the Jews in the Tribulation. There are two passages we must address to determine the plight of the Jews in the Tribulation. The first is Revelation 7:4-8:

Revelation 7 describes an “interlude” between the breaking of the 6th and the 7th seals (by Jesus Christ). This writing cannot interpret the opening of the seven seals and their meaning. Readers will have to choose other sources, for the words to do so are simply too many. However, to the extent necessary to understand the Bible’s prophecy for the Jews, we will do so.

The seven seals are opened one at a time as the Apostle John, present in heaven, observes the happenings of each seal as it is opened. With the breaking of the first seals, four horses usher forth beginning with a white horse, followed by a red, black and ashen steed. Riders on each horse are representative of what the future bodes for humanity. When the 6th seal is opened, humanity makes its first verbal expression of what is about to happen. Those on earth make this statement: “. . . *hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand.*” (Revelation 6:16-17). The 6th seal ushers in the time of the wrath of God; but before the wrath is poured out, something must be done:

Revelation 7:3, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the bondservants of the our God on their foreheads.”

The phrase “do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees” looks back to the immediately preceding 6th seal that was just opened. The 6th seal included natural disasters emanating from the heavens as stars fell to the earth and the sky was split apart. (6:13-14). So terrible were the natural disasters that “kings of the earth and the great men. . .and the rich. . ., hid themselves in the caves. . .”. This group then exclaims to the “mountains and to the rocks,”

“Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?” (6:15-16). (Emphasis added)

The divine instruction to “not harm the earth. . .” until the bondservants were “sealed on their foreheads” (7:3) means that this special group is going to be protected by God from the terrible consequences of the 6th seal. The prophesied natural disaster was not to unleash its calamities until the bondservants were appropriately “marked,” that is, sealed and protected. This protection is further described in Revelation 9:1-12 when

the 5th trumpet is blown which begins the unleashing of “locusts” from the bottomless pit. In 9:4 we read,

“And they (the “locusts”) were told that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.” (Emphasis added)

Who is the special group that is accorded protection from the wrath of God? The scripture tells us. They are 144,000 in number, 12,000 each from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. These 144,000 are Jews who will come through the Tribulation but will not experience the consequences of the wrath of God. They represent the “remnant” of Jews that God has saved for himself and who are living in the midpoint and beyond of the 70th week of Tribulation. Isaiah 11:11-16; Jeremiah 23:3. At the time of the opening of the 6th seal, the 144,000 are not believers in Jesus. By the end of the 70th week, i.e., the time of 2nd coming of Christ, these will be believers in Jesus. In the meantime, they must be protected from the wrath of God; i.e., the plagues and disasters that are coming on unbelieving humanity during the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation. When the 70th week is completed, the Jews (and unbelieving humanity that has been brought to the Lamb) will have brought in the six prophetic events of Daniel 9:24.

The 144,000 will experience the wrath of God but will not be harmed by it. They will be taken through the Tribulation and, in the end, they will look upon the One whom they have “pierced” and will receive Him as their Savior. Revelation 1:7. This is the group of Jews that will come to Christ in fulfillment of Romans 9:25:

Romans 11:25-29 “For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.” 27 “And this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.” 28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” (Emphasis added)

This is the group that will ultimately be saved by God at the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ at the end of the Tribulation. We discussed this event in our previous chapter on Ezekiel 38/39. Another passage supports this conclusion. Revelation 11:1-3 describes the happenings to Israel in the Tribulation:

Revelation 11:1 “Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, “Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it.” 2 “Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the”

holy city for forty-two months." (Emphasis added)

The "measuring rod" that measures the "temple of God" and those who "worship in it" is a metaphor for those Jews who have faithfully honored and believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and are living during the last half of the Tribulation Period. They are "measured" meaning they are "protected" from what is to come. Again, this is the same meaning as that present for "sealing on the forehead" of the 144,000 (Rev 7:3). The reason we can conclude that this group is the 144,000 Jews (and not the body of Christ) is the phrase "those who worship in it" with reference to the Temple and the altar. Certainly, the "Temple" and the "altar" (of sacrifice) is included as a metaphor for the practice of Judaism; and the phrase, "those who worship in it," a metaphor for the true Jewish people.

However, the text continues to state, "leave out the court outside the Temple. . . it has been given to the nations. . .for forty-two months." The text is telling us that other than those Jews who will convert to Christ upon His return, i.e., the 144,000 remnant, the Jewish people are given over to the 1st beast, Allah. The city, Jerusalem, will be occupied, i.e., tread down, during the last half of the Tribulation. It will not be destroyed, but it will be tread down, occupied by the 1st beast. At the return of Christ, Jerusalem will be liberated based on our previous interpretation of Ezekiel 38/39. Here are other passages that support the occupation of Jerusalem during this last half of the Tribulation:

Daniel 8:18 *"Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand upright. 19 He said, "Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end." . . . 24 "His power will be mighty, but not by his own power, And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree And prosper and perform his will; He will destroy . . . the holy people." (Emphasis added)*

Daniel 12:7 *"I heard the man dressed in linen, . . .; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed."*

What about Ezekiel 38/39? As we saw in our last chapter, Ezekiel 38/39 prophesy of a victory by God over the forces of Gog. Yes; but the question is when is the victory? Is it at the beginning of the last 3 ½ years or the end of the last 3 ½ years? Is the battle of Ezekiel 38/39 one battle or a series of battles? Is it possible that Ezekiel 38/39 begins with victory for Gog only to be followed up (at the end of the 3 ½ years) with the defeat of Gog?

It is the view of this writer that Ezekiel 38/39 prophesies of an initial "trampling" of Israel by Gog's forces. Then, following this victory, Gog is "turned about," along with his forces, and brought out of Israel to be annihilated on the mountains of Israel.

Ultimately, Israel is victorious; but only at the end of the Tribulation at the 2nd coming of Christ. Here are the passages that support this view:

Gog's assault upon Israel. The "summoning" of Gog and his Alliance is prophesied beginning in verse 38:8 (not verse 1):

Ezekiel 38:8 "After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations . . . 9 "You will go up, you will come like a storm; . . . , 11 and you will say, 'I will go up against the land of unwalled villages. I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely, . . . and against the people who are gathered from the nations, who have acquired cattle and goods, who live at the center of the world.' . . . 16 and you will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog."

Gog's Alliance is initially successful in its quest "to gather spoil" (v 38:12) from Israel. This initial success begins the 42 months of the "trampling of the "holy city" described in Rev 11:2. However, the initial success is limited in its duration. After 3 ½ years, Gog's forces are "turned about," with "hooks in your jaws," i.e., *they are removed from the Holy City:*

Ezekiel 38:3 "and say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. 4 "I will turn you about and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out, and all your army, . . . ; 5 Persia, Ethiopia and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet; 6 Gomer with all its troops; Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you."

The verses that begin Ezekiel 38 (vv1 - 6) are an introduction of the ultimate fulfillment of chapters 38/39. The phrase "put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out" is what God will do once Israel has been trampled by Gog's forces for 42 months. Gog will be "brought out" of Israel much like a fish is "hooked" and brought out of the sea. The two chapters are not to be interpreted as one battle that Gog is defeated in, but a series of battles that initially begins with Gog's success against Israel. The forces that "storm" against Israel are initially successful. This success is not an "annihilation" of Israel, but rather, a success sufficient to induce Israel to negotiate the 7 year Treaty of Daniel 9:27 discussed previously. Then, when the Treaty is broken in mid-point, the trampling prophesied by Rev 11:2 begins. The "turning you about" does not occur until the end of the 42 months; the time that Messiah Jesus returns to earth.

The 144,000. Lastly, the 144,000 are not a literal number of Jews that are sealed, redeemed by Messiah Jesus. The number is a metaphor for the "whole" of the "remnant" of Jews "who hold to the commandments of God" (Revelation 12:17), and, at

the return of Jesus Christ repent of their sin of unbelief and receive grace through Jesus Christ. (Zachariah 12:10). The text supports this view when exactly 12,000 are “sealed” from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The text is telling us that God has chosen the “complete remnant” of Israel that will be saved.

Conclusion. It is finished. The cross of Jesus Christ opened the doorway to eternal life to humanity. The wrath of God, having been satisfied by the death of the Only Begotten One, will need not be satisfied again for those in Christ. Those who have placed their faith in Christ will not experience the Reaping of God’s wrath. It is finished for them. In Christ, the sins of the whole world have been paid (1 John 2:2). In Christ, the wrath of God has been satisfied (Romans 5:9). Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, the Only Begotten One has finished the work of God.

Endnotes to Chapter

1. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/indignant>.
2. Add quote from Amillennial view.
3. A C Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel*, p. 136. For a review of different interpretations of the first period, the seven 7's, see Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel, New American Commentary*, p. 253. Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 202f; John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 257f.
4. *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel*, translated by Gleason L. Archer, Jr., p. 96.
5. Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, p 194, and other sources cited there.
6. Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, 194.
7. To Finish the Transgression. When we look at the second event of Daniel 9:24, it is important that we not miss the definite article, "*the*." The text states: ". . .to finish the transgression. . ." It does not state, "*to finish transgression. . .*" The text is speaking of a specific transgression, not sin, in general. Sin, in general, was atoned for with the death of Christ as we discussed above (1 John 2:2). The specific transgression the text is referring to is a particular event that has reference to a particular people, the Jews:

John 19:14 "Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he said* to the Jews, "Behold, your King!" 15 So they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

Matthew 27:24 "When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves." 25 And all the people said, "His blood shall be on us and on our children!" (John 1:11-12)

"The transgression" Daniel 9:24 is referring to is the rejection by the covenant people of God, the Jews, of one of their own: Jesus of Nazareth, the Only Begotten, Son of God, descendant in the line of King David (Ps 89:36-37), and Himself, a Jew. This specific sin can only be finished when the Jewish people have repented of their rejection of Jesus as Messiah, and come to Him as Savior. Until they do, their own words quoted above will continue to condemn them, and their experience of the three positive elements of Daniel 9:24 will be beyond their grasp. The "transgression" has not yet been finished for the Jewish people (nor unbelieving humanity). It will be finished in the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ when Israel repents of their sin of unbelief. They will then experience forgiveness and their "sins will be taken away" (Romans 11:27); but it will take the completion of the 70th week of Reaping to do so.

8. To Make an End of Sin; and, Atonement for Iniquity. When Christ died on the cross 2000 years ago, His death was the atoning event for the sins of the world. Through this event, forgiveness for sins could be offered to humanity (1 John 2:2). Christ's death was the "propitiation" for humanity's sins. "Propitiation" translates the Greek word, "*ilasmos*," which has also been translated "atoning sacrifice." That is, Christ is the "atoning sacrifice," the "satisfaction" or "required payment," for the sins of the whole world. His death thereby "atones" for the sins of humanity much like a criminal, having served his sentence, is freed from further condemnation for his crime. (Colossians 2:13, Isaiah 53:5) The work of Christ on the cross is the "atonement for iniquity" that is prophesied in Daniel 9:24. *It has already occurred*, and is not a future event that the Reaping will "bring in." Further, the death of Christ "finishes sin" in the sense that the atoning work of Christ removes the sin that separates us from Holy God; the atoning work of Christ makes up that which believers have "fallen short" (Romans 6:23). Satan, the "accuser" has lost his voice. He cannot accuse believers of that which Christ has paid for on the cross (Rev 12:11).

9. Everlasting righteousness is impossible so long as satan, the "prince of the air" (Eph 2:2), the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31, 14:30), continues his reign on earth (Luke 4:6). The Bible prophesies that at the 2nd coming of Christ, satan will be bound up and imprisoned for 1000 years (Rev 20:1-3). This "binding up" is referred to when Daniel 9:27 prophesies that the "one who makes desolate" will come to his "destruction." Although Daniel 9:27 is not referring specifically to satan, it is referring to his false prophet; and, satan, his false prophet, and his 1st beast, are all three "thrown alive into the Lake of Fire." Thus, when satan and his agents are bound in the Lake of Fire, the Millennial Reign of Christ can begin and everlasting righteousness can be *brought in*. The "bringing in" of everlasting righteousness is implied in another passage. Revelation 19:1f describes the "resurrected" and "raptured" saints that accompany Christ upon His return to earth to set up His Millennial Kingdom on earth who are clothed in "fine linen, bright and clean." This phrase is a metaphor for the spiritual condition of those who accompany Christ in His 2nd coming: they are made pure by the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:6), and accordingly, can bring in everlasting righteousness, not of their own, but of Christ's, which has been imputed to them (2 Cor 5:21). Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the "ruler of the kings of the earth," who has ". . . released us from our sins by His blood. . ." (Revelation 1:5-6) will return with His kingdom. When He does, He will bring in everlasting righteousness.

10. Vision and prophecy cannot be *sealed up* until the prophecies of the New Testament have been fulfilled as well as those of the Old Testament. There are many prophecies of both Old and Testament that have not been fulfilled. Consider these few:

Daniel 12:9 "He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. 10 "Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. . . . 13 "But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

Philippians 2:9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Revelation 20:1 “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.”

Neither of these prophecies have been fulfilled – yet. Neither can be fulfilled until the end of the present age, the end of the 70th week. When they are fulfilled, the Millennial Reign of Christ can begin.

11. The third positive event referred to in Daniel 9:24 is that the “most holy place” will be “anointed” (Daniel 9:24). The “most holy place” is the Temple in Jerusalem previously located on the Temple Mount. The Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. Since then, it has been desecrated by the construction of numerous pagan shrines, the latest being the Dome of the Rock, Islam’s shrine to Muhammad and Allah. The Temple cannot be “anointed” until it is rebuilt; and, it cannot be rebuilt until the Dome of the Rock, Islam’s shrine to Muhammad and its blasphemy against Jesus Christ, is removed from its present site. Then, the blood of Jesus can purify the site, and the altar of sacrifice can be consecrated (Ezek 43:26). When this occurs, it will likewise be a fulfillment of all prophecies of Ezekiel 40 - 48 regarding the Millennial Temple. The “anointing of the holy place” is a distant future event occurring subsequent to the 2nd coming of Christ and during the Millennial Reign of Christ.

12. Stephen R. Miller, p 214, cites, Montgomery, *Daniel*, 312, Lacocque, *Daniel*, 154; Archer, *Daniel*, 94; Jerome, *Daniel*, 81.

13. Easton, Matthew George. *Illustrated Bible Dictionary: And Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature*. London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1897. WORDsearch CROSS e-book.

14. See Phillippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5, 17:8, 20:12, 15, 21:27, 22:19.

15. “*Three Views on the Rapture*,” by Gleason L. Archer Jr., Stanley N. Gundry, Paul D. Feinberg, and Douglas J. Moo, 1996, p. 104-106.

16. “Rapture” comes from the Latin word, “*raptus*,” the Vulgate; which translates the Greek word “*harpazo*,” meaning “to pluck” or “to catch.” Hence, “caught up” (verse 4:17) becomes the English translation, sometimes rendered, “rapture.” Strong's Talking Greek & Hebrew Dictionary.

17. Stephen R. Miller, p. 270.

18. *Three Views of the Rapture*. Gleason L. Archer view, p. 104.